Winning the Wrong War

How the United States Lost the Will of the Iraqi People

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Undergraduate Honors Thesis
Professor Alexander Dracobly
2014

<u>Introduction</u>

On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush declared the mission in the Iraq War accomplished. Three years later, Iraq was on fire. Immediately after the removal of Saddam Hussein in April of 2003, the streets and neighborhoods of Iraq began to flood with increasing violence. By 2006, a sectarian civil war and a furious insurgency engulfed the nation in a pyre, creating a war zone attracting fundamentalist terror groups from around the world. Iraqi civilians were being caught in the cross fires of both sub-conflicts every day. Within the first six months of that year, approximately 14,000 Iraqis had died, with 3,000 of those deaths occurring in June of 2006 alone. To make matters worse, the Iraqi Security Force (ISF) began to become actively engaged in the sectarian conflict in some parts of the nation as well. Disappearances among civilians for ransoms became regular and daily car bombs littered the nation's public spaces.[1] Death was around nearly every corner. While the Bush administration claimed that Iraq had been liberated three years prior, the steady rise of violence that culminated in the complete breakdown of social order between 2006 and 2007 was a clear indicator that the mission had, indeed, not been accomplished.

The events of 2006 and 2007, thus, marked a failure of the United States in achieving its outlined goals as defined by the Bush administration. Stability had not been established throughout the nation, and Iraq had become a beehive for terrorist groups.[2] Iraq was a hopeless pit of tragedy and suffering. Hayder Mohammed Jodah, a Baghdad native, recalls the loss of Iraq's new hope,

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[1] Thomas Mowle, et al., *Hope Is Not a Plan: The War in Iraq from Inside the Green Zone*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), ix-x.

[2] Mark Kukis, *Voices From Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 69.

> All of us were fully supportive of the American invasion. We were glad to see Saddam go…we were looking forward to a better life…But it didn't turn out the way we had hoped. We wound up suffering more as a family after the invasion than we did during Saddam times.[3]

By 2006, Iraq had become the epicenter of turmoil in the Middle East, the polar opposite of what the Bush administration had hoped for earlier. Although the administration intended to establish a friendlier image of America among Iraqis, resentment towards the United States spiked as the nation plunged into carnage.

The cause of the mayhem that defined the period between 2006 and 2007 starts with the Bush administration's management of post-Saddam Iraq. The United States failed to stabilize Iraq by 2006 in part because the Bush administration operated with a complete lack of viable, strategic planning. While U.S. efforts were often well intended, they lacked the guidance and conceptual understanding from the Bush administration to transform their goals into a reality. This allowed for the implementation of various policies that ultimately alienated the population over time and, in many ways, promoted instability.

The absence of a comprehensive strategic direction resulted in reconstruction efforts that were incapable of restoring social order and security to Iraq. By failing to provide Iraqis with basic needs and services, the Bush administration increasingly lost Iraqi public support and as Iraqis increasingly felt oppressed rather than liberated. A fissure began to develop between the two, and it only widened over time. Waning Iraqi support for U.S. efforts was a critical issue that the Bush administration found itself unable to address. In doing so, they ultimately failed to maintain their initial image as liberators, a fundamental prerequisite for all hopes of America's success in Iraq. Conversely, as the Bush administration lost America's title as a liberator, they

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[3] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq,* 207.

laid the foundation for Iraqis to dub them as occupiers, an image that would make failure in Iraq inevitable.

In order to accurately explain the causation of the events of 2006 and 2007, however, the initial years of the Iraq War must be understood from a military viewpoint as well. While the Bush administration's policies contributed to the crucial shift in Iraqi opinion between 2003 and 2006, the policies implemented by the U.S. military also proved to have destabilizing effects. U.S. soldiers often worked around the clock to establish order in post-Saddam Iraq. Yet, scores of blood, sweat, and tears were shed to no avail. The explanation of the aforementioned discrepancy lies within the military's strategic vision.

The military adopted an operational mindset prior to 2006 that was fundamentally combat-oriented rather than peacekeeping-oriented. Within this strategic framework, the military engaged in operations that ironically alienated the Iraqi population in its pursuit to win their hearts and minds, thus, exacerbating the destabilizing and estranging effects of the policies that the Bush administration implemented. These two themes will serve as a viable explanation as to how the United States failed to achieve its goals and ended up with the debacle of 2006 and 2007 in Iraq.

Part I

How the Bush Administration Lost the Will of the Iraqi People

Strategic Goals – What the Bush Administration Wanted to Achieve in Iraq

The Bush administration's primary and immediate goal was to remove Saddam Hussein from power and install a friendly regime in his place. They viewed Saddam's regime to be a danger to the United States due to its strong anti-American sentiment, which, they understood to act as a promoter of hostilities in the Middle East. COBRA II, the official U.S. war plans for Iraq, states the Bush administration's goals in Iraq clearly, "The purpose of this operation is to force the collapse of the Iraqi regime and deny it the use of WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] to threaten its neighbors and U.S. interests in regions…the end-state for this operation is regime change…"[4] Through toppling Saddam's regime, the Bush administration believed that the world would have one less potential safe-haven for anti-U.S. militant groups. Success in the Iraq War would provide the U.S. with a much-needed ally in the region and the Middle East with a government completely void of toleration for terrorist organizations and other anti-U.S. militant groups.[5]

Yet, the administration also hoped to achieve much broader goals in Iraq as well. The establishment of a new political apparatus would also serve as a beacon of light for the rest of the Middle East. The administration saw that many nations in the region were on increasingly poor relations with the United States, its allies, and its interests. Therefore, they hoped for the new Iraqi regime to serve as a source of de-escalation in what they viewed to be a growing hot spot for anti-U.S. sentiment in the world.[6] Charles Dunne, the Director for Iraq at the National Security Council between 2005 and 2007, elaborates further,

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[4] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq,* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 117.
[5] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 128.
[6] Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 423.

> …the central ideological aim of the war was highlighted by Bush in a November 2003 speech to the National Endowment for Democracy. This was the promotion of democracy in Iraq as the foundation for its extension throughout the Middle East. In his speech, Bush noted that 'the establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution.'[7]

Through initiating Iraq's path to freedom and democracy, the Bush administration believed that it could instill a friendlier image of America in Arab minds while simultaneously inspiring other nations in the Middle East to follow Iraq's example through democratization as well.[8] A new democratic Iraq, therefore, would act as a lighthouse within a sea of antagonism , ready to guide resentment in the Middle East into pacification.

While removing Saddam's regime was the administration's immediate and short-term response to terrorism, establishing a democracy in the Middle East was their long-term objective of combating terrorism. The administration believed that a democracy in Iraq could create a domino effect reaction throughout the Middle East in which anti-American sentiments would collapse piece by piece. Anthony Shadid, a journalist who followed the early years of the war closely, explains the administration's mindset, "If we can change Iraq, George W. Bush and his determined lieutenants maintained, we can change the Arab World, so precariously adrift after decades of broken promises of progress and prosperity."[9] The Bush administration, therefore, understood Iraq to be the West's second chance in the Middle East. Through liberating Iraqis from a tyrant and providing them with the opportunity to rebuild their own nation in a democratic manner, the administration believed that it could attack anti-American sentiment from its roots through chipping away at the desire in the Arab world for terror directed at the

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[7] Shahram Akbarzadeh, et al., *America's Challenges in the Greater Middle East: The Obama Administration's Policies,* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld provides more examples of the administration's ideology during the Iraq War in his memoir *Known and Unknown*, "Islamist totalitarian ideology fuels an international movement that considers the United States and the West as enemies…" (Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 420).

[8] George Packer, *The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 116.

[9] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War. (*New York: Picador, 2006), 9.

United States. The hearts and minds of Iraqis, therefore, had to be won in order for the Bush administration to achieve their objectives.

Analyzing the Bush administration's war plans, however, unearths flaws in their strategic thinking. The administration's crucial strategic fallacies provide a foundation for understanding why their attempts at reconstruction ended in failure. Clearly, the Bush administration had two issues at stake as they embarked on their mission in Iraq. On the one hand, they faced regime change, and on the other, they faced a much more complex issue of democratizing and pacifying the entire Middle East. These two separate issues needed to be addressed with full attention on their own. The success or failure of one would not necessarily guarantee the same outcome for the other. Yet, examining the Bush administration's planning suggests that many key members were not fully aware of this dynamic.

Rumsfeld's Strategic Approach - How the Defense Department Planned to Have No Plan

As one of the main leaders in pre-war planning, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld focused the bulk of his efforts on achieving the administration's first objective. Rumsfeld's planning was centered on assessing the most efficient way to topple Saddam Hussein. He believed that the key to the Iraq War was quickly defeating Iraqi military forces while making a mad dash to Baghdad to overthrow Saddam's regime with speed. He asserted that if the Department of Defense (DoD) could reorganize the United States' military into a Network-Centric Warfare (NCW) oriented fighting force, he could achieve his central objective of getting in and out of Iraq as quickly as possible.[10] A question Rumsfeld posed to CENTCOM (Central Command) commander Tommy Franks in January of 2002 embodies his prioritization of a quick

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[10] Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy,* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 328.

conflict, "If dozens of key targets could be destroyed simultaneously, would that put pressure on the regime, cause it to crumble, and preclude the need for a long war requiring a large force?"[11] It is quite clear that Rumsfeld planned extensively for the administration's first set of objectives of removing Saddam from power. Through focusing on NCW and quick regime change, Rumsfeld and the rest of the DoD planned the war so that a protracted occupation could be avoided. However, in doing so, he widely ignored planning for the stabilization of Iraq - the key factor to achieving their second set of political objectives.[12]

Rumsfeld prioritized the ability of the United States to withdraw its armed forces with agility over anything else primarily because he saw a prolonged occupation to be inherently counterproductive to U.S. goals in Iraq. Rumsfeld and the rest of the DoD asserted that a long occupation would create a "culture of dependence" among Iraqis and foster an expectation for the U.S. to govern and administer Iraqi society.[13] Furthermore, they believed that a U.S. occupation would be met with great resentment among the population because Iraqi politics were intrinsically hostile towards the United States.[14] With these assumptions about post-Saddam Iraq, the Bush administration concluded that major reconstruction efforts were simply a job that was not theirs to have. Despite the administration's goal of establishing a democratic, pro-U.S. political apparatus, planners within the DoD treated nation building as a matter to be left up to the international community and Iraqis themselves.[15]

One can see the inherent flaws in the Bush administration's reasoning as they set extensive planning for reconstruction operations, otherwise known as Phase IV, on the

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[11] Kagan, *Finding the Target,* 329.
[12] Ibid.*,* 318-319.
[13] Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq,* 285.
[14] David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 67.
[15] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 67-68.

backburner. They hoped to change the politics of Iraq through military force, while abandoning the bulk of the reconstruction efforts that were to follow. In other words, the Bush administration adopted an end plan in which they would have their cake and eat it too.

The question remains, however, as to how the Bush administration concluded that it could and would achieve its defined goals in Iraq while largely ignoring the importance of Phase IV. The answer to this lies in their overestimated trust placed in exiled Iraqi political leaders, which created a false sense of reality in what was to come in Iraq.[16] The Bush administration invited large numbers of Iraqi political exiles to act as advisers in drafting plans for Phase IV. The most notable among these exiled politicians was Ahmad Chalabi.

Chalabi, a well-known Iraqi politician throughout Washington, was staunchly opposed to Saddam from the onset of his career, and had been lobbying for regime change in Iraq since the Clinton administration. He demonstrated his anti-Saddam sentiments clearly in 1992 when he founded the Iraqi National Congress, a political party with the specific goal of removing Saddam from power.[17] His political ideology was similar to that of the Bush administration's war hawks in that he, too, pushed for swift and decisive military action in Iraq to replace Saddam Hussein with a new democratic government.[18] With his anti-Saddam political background and strong support for invasion, Chalabi was one of the administration's most trusted Iraqi advisers. Yet, Chalabi was desperate in his desire to remove Saddam and was willing to exaggerate and bend

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[16] Peter Galbraith, *Unintended Consequences: How War in Iraq Strengthened America's Enemies*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 48.
[17] Philips, *Losing Iraq*, 67.
[18] Ibid., 68.

the intelligence he provided to the administration if it facilitated the assurance of invasion.[19] The Bush administration failed to see past this and mistakenly took his advisory intelligence to heart.

Chalabi asserted that the vast majority of the Iraqi population yearned for America's arrival to overthrow the brutal dictatorship. He even went as far as claiming that most Iraqis would greet American troops with "roses and sweets."[20] Chalabi and many other Iraqi exiles went further to claim that both the Iraqi infrastructure and administrative apparatus would largely remain intact and functional upon the removal of Saddam Hussein.[21] In making these claims, Chalabi depicted Iraq as the perfect case for an in-and-out war. Ultimately, he was successful in convincing Rumsfeld, Bush, and the rest of the administration that winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi population could be achieved by simply relieving the nation of their oppressive dictator.

While Chalabi's claims may have had some truth to them, it is clear that he used his role as the most trusted Iraqi advisor to manipulate the administration into invading Iraq. Chalabi saw the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as his opportunity to finally achieve what he had been lobbying for in Washington for so long. Invading Iraq was a tough sell by any standards due to its limited connections with 9/11. However, Chalabi presented it as an opportunity for the United States to pacify anti-American sentiments in the Middle East with ease and minimal burdens, thus making it a proposition difficult to refuse. While he was aware that his infamous "roses and sweets" comment was overly optimistic and plainly false in some areas of the country, he knew that it would depict Iraq to the administration as a short war with massive long-term political

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[19] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 98.
[20] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 68.
[21] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 110.

benefits.[22] Yet, in doing so, Chalabi led the Bush administration to believe that Iraq would essentially reconstruct itself and not require extensive plans for Phase IV.

Based on the expectations and assumptions established by Chalabi, military operations were planned accordingly. Rumsfeld and the rest of the administration believed that they had no reason to commit more troops and resources to Iraq than required to bring down Saddam. After all, their intelligence suggested that post-war security requirements would be at most minimal. Thus, Rumsfeld planned military operations in Iraq to be focused on defeating Saddam's military forces.[23] Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, explained the reasoning behind these strong expectations in an interview in November of 2003, "…nobody planned for security because Ahmad Chalabi told us everything was going to be swell".[24] With the anticipation for the post-war situation to be innately stable, the Bush administration concluded that a force capable of providing stabilization was unwarranted and excessive for victory.

As Rumsfeld began collaborating with CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks, he made the consolidation of troop levels a top priority. Franks initially proposed in December of 2001 that approximately 500,000 troops would be required to successfully manage regime change. Yet, a month later in January of 2002, Rumsfeld strongly urged Franks to reconsider. Franks dutifully responded later that month with a much lower number of approximately 105,000 troops needed to defeat Saddam Hussein.[25] Ultimately, the administration settled on entering Iraq with three small Army divisions, one Marine division, and a British coalition division: which

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[22] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 98.
[23] Diamond, *Squandered Victory,* 289.
[24] James M. Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad: America's War in Iraq*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 45.
[25] Kagan, *Finding the Target,* 328-330.

amounted to approximately 145,000 men.[26] Thomas Ricks, a journalist who covered the war early on, explains Rumsfeld and the DoD's adamancy over the consolidation of forces,

> The war plans called for additional forces to be sent after the fall of Baghdad…but the two top civilians at the Pentagon remained skeptical. 'I don't see why it would take more troops to occupy the country than to take down the regime,' Wolfowitz said in one meeting…Rumsfeld had similar reservations…[27]

Rumsfeld was set on keeping the Iraq War a short conflict like Chalabi made it out to be. He believed that sending massive numbers of troops to Iraq had the potential of bogging U.S. forces down for a useless mission. If the U.S. military would not have to worry about security and stability in post-Saddam Iraq, then Rumsfeld saw no justification in sending over a force centered on those objectives.

Rumsfeld also altered the administration's war plans as time went on so that the relatively small U.S. force would be used solely for the invasion and removal of Saddam's regime rather than an occupation. Although the original plans called for the invading force to be reinforced after Baghdad's fall, Rumsfeld and the DoD concluded that reinforcements would have the same aforementioned effects of initially sending over a large fighting force. Approximately fourteen Coalition combat brigades entered Iraq in March 2003, and that number was supposed to rise to approximately twenty-five in order to reach troop level requirements to execute the objectives of Phase IV. Yet, Rumsfeld canceled the deployment of the reinforcements, and implemented an immediate drawdown of the 145,000 troops. For example, the 1st Cavalry Division was scheduled to receive three additional combat brigades to secure their specified areas, however, Rumsfeld canceled their deployment as Saddam's removal suggested that the mission was already accomplished. The 82nd Airborne Division began their extraction almost instantly after

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[26] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 117.
[27] Ibid., 121.

Saddam's removal as well.[28] It is apparent that the administration's strict adherence to Chalabi's predictions regarding the invasion's aftermath led them to treat security and social order as afterthoughts.

Overly optimistic intelligence also dictated planning for civilian operations in post-war Iraq. The Bush administration believed that Iraq's infrastructure would remain largely functional and that basic services could be reinstituted with ease, just as Chalabi had previously explained. Therefore, they planned for a rather small administrative body, with nowhere near the capabilities required to run a country, to assume authority immediately after Saddam's removal. The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) was tasked with overseeing Iraq's infrastructure and restoring utilities such as electricity and water to the public. However, Rumsfeld, a doubter of Bush's greater nation-building ambitions of the Iraq War from the beginning, had envisioned ORHA to be a humanitarian organization, capable of providing food and basic aid to refugees.[29] Conversely, establishing governance and enforcing order in a lawless environment were not tasks ORHA was designed to handle. This explains ORHA's failure in addressing the issues that were to develop in the early aftermath of the invasion.[30] Rumsfeld and the DoD simply did not expect massive administrative requirements in post-war Iraq, nor did he believe that the United States should be responsible for such demands if they arose, therefore, extensive planning for civilian operations were close to nonexistent prior to the war.

In accordance with Rumsfeld's reluctance to commit to a major occupation, the Bush administration intended to return power to Iraqis soon after major combat operations ceased. After reinstating social order in Iraq, the governing authority would transfer power to a

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[28] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 342.
[29] James Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour: An Insider's View of Iraq's Reconstruction,* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), 38.
[30] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 129.

transitional Iraqi government in quick increments. The transitional authority would then lead the nation into drafting its own constitution and elections for a democratic government.[31] While the Bush administration had not formally appointed a governing body to become the transitional authority in Iraq, they had strongly hoped for Ahmad Chalabi and his supporters to play a prominent role in developing a legitimate transitional government shortly after Saddam's removal.[32] A massive troop drawdown would begin almost immediately after the removal of Saddam Hussein, and the DoD predicted ORHA to leave Baghdad by August of 2003.[33] Hence, the entire process of reestablishing governance and completely overhauling Iraq's political apparatus would implement the administration's in-and-out doctrine.

With the administration's sources of intelligence in mind, it is conceivable why Rumsfeld prioritized planning for the invasion over all other aspects of the war. The Bush administration saw that they could indeed achieve their political end in Iraq while avoiding a major occupation because of the nature of the Iraqi population's condition.[34] As Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz explained in a Senate hearing on February 25, 2003, "Based on what he [Wolfowitz] had heard about Iraq from them, he said, 'I am reasonably certain that they will greet us as liberators, and that will help us keep requirements [troop levels] down.'"[35] The Bush administration adopted a set of plans that heavily relied on a set of expectations, which, to begin with, were debatable at best. Their refusal to commit resources for extensive post-combat plans was a conscious decision to make a wager that the situation in Iraq would pan out the way they

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[31] Phillips, *Losing Iraq,* 122. Also see Ibid., 155.
[32] Eric Herring and Glen Rangwala, *Iraq in Fragments: The Occupation and its Legacy*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 261.
[33] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 32.
[34] Phillips, *Losing Iraq,* 125.
[35] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 98.

projected it to be. It was a wager that proved to be fatal to the administration's defined goals for the war.

How the U.S. Occupation Alienated Iraqis

The occupation that immediately followed Saddam's removal failed to address what was at stake in their operations. Iraqi public support was the foundation for the administration's success in the war. Without the faith and confidence of the majority of Iraqis, insurgency and destabilization would inevitably ensue, rendering the administration's efforts a failure. The main issue the Bush administration faced in post-Saddam Iraq was the inherently precarious nature of Iraqi support. As most Iraqis saw things, their support rested on a simple yet critical question posed to the Bush administration: did the Americans come to their country as liberators or occupiers?[36] The Bush administration's success or failure in the Iraq War rested on how the majority of Iraqis would answer this question in the coming months.

The precariousness of Iraqi support is perhaps best understood in briefly analyzing Arab culture, which dictates that one must first witness another's actions over a period of time in order to understand where their intentions truly lie. This holds especially true for foreigners with a reputation in the Arab world as being dishonest with their intentions, such as previously colonial Western powers.[37] Shadid's interaction with Faleh Hassan, a restaurant owner present at the infamous removal of Saddam's statue in Firdos square, demonstrates Iraqi apprehension and hesitancy towards U.S. support,

> He was thankful for Saddam's end, but in a sentiment I heard often that day, still suspicious of the Americans. 'We feel peaceful and we feel relieved, but we are still frightened by tomorrow…We will see the American and British intentions over the next few months. People were oppressed for

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[36] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 20.
[37] Mowle, *Hope is Not a Plan*, 42.

thirty years. They're looking for hope. They hope there will be a change, because people are fed up with what has happened before'.[38]

While many Iraqis were excited with the removal of Saddam's oppressive regime, they also remained skeptical of U.S. intentions immediately after the invasion. Iraqis were reluctant to give the Bush administration their full support until they fulfilled their promises of providing the nation with the foundation to have a better life.

It is worth noting that for many Iraqis, freedom from oppression was not synonymous with freedom from Saddam. Rather, freedom from Saddam was the first step. To most Iraqis, liberation meant a new life. It meant the opportunity to live their lives as they wish in safety - a basic ambition denied under thirty years of dictatorship.[39] Therefore, proving that America had come to Iraq as a liberator entailed much more than regime change. Rather, it required the assurance of prosperity as well.

The Bush administration had a clear opportunity to develop Iraqi hope into support through policies that would fulfill their promises of liberating Iraqis from oppression. However, the feasibility of achieving this transformation rested in a window of opportunity that was brief at best. In hindsight, a Pentagon advisory panel seemed to have been correct in their assessment of the situation when they claimed, in July of 2003, that, "The window of opportunity for the CPA to turn things around in Iraq is closing rapidly."[40] Shadid's interview with Wamidh

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[38] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 141. Shadid's interview with Nazir Mustafa, another Iraqi eye witness at Firdos Square that day provides further evidence to this claim, "He [Mustafa] worried about what was ahead. 'It's up to the Americans what becomes of this…Every person has an opinion. Maybe it will be colonialism, maybe it will be liberation from the regime…The truth will soon become apparent'" (Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 150). Also see Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 30.
[39] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 117.
[40] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 42. The Pentagon advisory panel's claims of a window of opportunity were based off Iraqi surveys and polls. The full report made extensive use of Iraqi sources to formulate an idea of public sentiment (Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 158). Thus, the idea of having a limited, set amount of time to win Iraqi support is a concept formulated off growing Iraqi disconnect during the early occupation rather than a product of isolated scholars.

Nadhme provides further evidence for this claim, "How long did they have [to win the support of the Iraqi population]? I asked him. Two to three months, he told me. Judging by what I had seen in Baghdad so far…I wondered if the window hadn't already closed".[41] With Saddam's regime removed from power, the Bush administration was faced with a wobbly situation in which the support of the population, while shaky at best and prone to being lost easily, had to have been secured quickly.

Polls taken on Iraqi opinion immediately after the invasion showed that a small window of opportunity, indeed, existed. Initially, 46% of the country saw the United States as liberators, whereas 43% saw the United States as occupiers. Yet, when the same poll was taken in October of 2003, more than two-thirds of the Iraqi populous viewed the United States as a hostile occupying force and only 15% continued to see them as liberators.[42] Polls taken from city to city show the same trend as a survey of Baghdad in early 2003 claimed that 41% of the city saw the United States as liberators and 40% saw them as occupiers. Yet, 82% of Baghdadis saw the U.S. as occupiers and only 4% still saw them as liberators when the same poll was taken in the spring of 2004.[43] Finally, polls taken in August of 2003 in Basra, Ramadi, Mosul, and Kirkuk showed that 47% of Iraqis claimed that any attacks on U.S. or Coalition troops were an act of resistance to occupiers.[44] Clearly, a substantial portion of Iraqis were willing to give the United States a chance to finish their jobs and fulfill their promises of creating a foundation for a stable democracy. While the margin between Iraqis who initially supported U.S. efforts and those who did not were very narrow, the former still had a majority nonetheless that the Bush administration could have capitalized on to secure their political goal in Iraq. The clock was

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[41] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 216-217.
[42] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 51.
[43] Herring and Rangwala, *Iraq in Fragments*, 202.
[44] Ibid., 202.

ticking, and the administration did not have long before they passed the threshold of successfully winning the hearts and minds of Iraq.[45]

As U.S. forces pressed forward towards Baghdad, they left a trail of cities without any source of authority or governance. Jay Garner, the Director of ORHA, had been pressing General Franks for clearance to enter Iraq as soon as combat operations had started in order to resume services in Iraq and begin massive humanitarian assistance. To his dismay, Garner did not receive the green light until April 20, 2003, a full month after combat operations had started in March 20, 2003.[46] Meanwhile, Iraqi cities remained stagnant in anarchy as they waited for humanitarian aid and the restoration of utilities and security. As a result, looting and lawlessness immediately began to engulf Iraq.

Although U.S. troops still had a sizeable presence on the ground, they never received direct orders to intervene in the chaos that followed the removal of Saddam Hussein. The DoD had prioritized the abolition of all former regime elements and remnants of Ba'athist loyalists. Thus, commanders were forced to order their men to stand by as the looting went on while U.S. forces were preoccupied with searching for Saddam Hussein and his top officials.[47] Lieutenant Douglas Hoyt of the 3rd Infantry Division recalls standing idle as Iraq was being pillaged, "'I remember looking through the sights on my tank at people and trying to determine if they were hostile or not…We didn't stop them. It was not our mission at the time'".[48] While members of the Bush administration, such as Rumsfeld and Garner, asserted that the looting had occurred

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[45] Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour*, 36.
[46] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 138.
[47] Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, 163.
[48] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 150. Colonel Joseph Cramer also recalls a similar experience to that of Lieutenant Hoyt, "Up to this point, the museum had already been raided. The Iraqi museum of culture and history, that had already been raided…not by Americans, we did not do that. Now we didn't secure it, though. When we saw that it was being raided, we tried to secure it, but a lot of thefts had already taken place at that time. That wasn't that we did it, we just couldn't secure it at that time. That was probably the worst of the cultural deals, but we just didn't do it" (Joseph Cramer. Interviewed by Neema Sahebi. Personal Interview. Beaverton, January 20, 2014).

before Coalition boots hit the ground in Iraq, the After Action Report of the 3rd Infantry Division claimed otherwise. The looting was right in front of them, yet they allowed it to resume largely unchallenged because of the strategic policies implemented by the DoD. After all, the mission was not to secure the population and provide stability, but rather it was to topple Saddam's regime as quickly as possible.[49]

As U.S. and Coalition forces were forced to stand idle during the anarchy, the Bush administration's previous efforts to preserve Iraqi cultural sites and administrative buildings were rendered useless. The DoD had done a fair amount of research into what they deemed to be legitimate targets. Through this screening process, the military had come up with a sizeable list of museums, shrines, mosques, and government buildings that were to remain unscathed. Indeed, U.S. and Coalition air campaigns kept true to their words and used precision bombing to leave all of the designated sites on the list untouched. However, in the absence of direct orders to have boots secure those sites, the looting destroyed them.[50] Good faith efforts of the Bush administration did not achieve their desired goal of protecting those sites because of larger strategic errors.

The looting that swallowed Iraq did a great deal of damage to elements of Iraqi society that were to be crucial cogs of the quick reconstruction process. Much of the bureaucratic infrastructure that the Bush administration had so heavily relied on to stay intact was immensely damaged. Administrative buildings were rendered worthless when they were ransacked dry of desks, official records, electrical schemes, windowpanes, and roofing. The only thing left

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[49] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 133-134.
[50] Ibid., 134. Also see Joseph Cramer, Personal Interview.

standing in many buildings was the structural frame.[51] Colonel Joseph Cramer remembers the

looting's massive destruction and how it fundamentally thwarted reconstruction efforts,

> You'd see all these buildings that must've been, had to have been corrugated steel…you'd see whole towns of frames because the people had come in and stole all of the corrugated steel off of them. There was no wire ever…like electrical wire. It was all stolen, in one week…gone. But it was survival. That wasn't the Americans, but that was still destruction…that was still infrastructure that had to be replaced and caused chaos. It was definitely one step [forward], two steps back.[52]

Baghdad and nearly all of Iraq's other major cities had essentially lost all administrative and

logistical capabilities. Of the twenty-three major ministry buildings in Baghdad, seventeen were

completely destroyed by the looting. It is worth noting that the administration had planned to use

most of the ministry buildings so that civilian staffs could implement reconstruction policies

swiftly.[53] The looting caused an estimated $12 billion in damages to Iraq's economic,

communication, and administrative infrastructure. Massive repairs were required just to get

Iraq's infrastructure back to pre-war levels, which were already in shambles to say the least.[54]

The administration's lack of response to the looting greatly hindered its abilities to

quickly restore order to Iraq as the plan had called for. As Iraq was robbed of its physical

capabilities to run and govern itself, the burden of reconstructing the nation fell entirely on U.S.

and Coalition forces instead of the Iraqis as originally planned. In doing so, the administration

ironically set itself up to be obligated to take over a situation, which it had purposefully rendered

itself incapable of doing.

The psychological effect of the looting and lawlessness on the Iraqi population was

perhaps the greatest repercussion of the anarchy. Iraqis were baffled by the sight of such

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[51] Galbraith, *Unintended Consequences*, 49.
[52] Joseph Cramer, Personal Interview.
[53] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 135.
[54] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 282.

lawlessness. They could not understand how a nation with such grandeur, wealth, and physical

power could allow for crime and looting to occur throughout Iraq on such a large-scale. Most

Iraqis were in utter shock to say the least when it took U.S. and Coalition troops simply three

weeks to topple the tyrant, whom they had learned to perceive as invincible over the past thirty

years. Now, many wondered how a nation could do the latter and then seem helpless in

preventing the lawlessness.[55] The two did not add up for the demographic of Iraqis that had been

hopeful for a new Iraq. Ali al-Shaheen, a native of Baghdad, recalls the disbelief shared by so

many Iraqis,

> The looters came like ants. They started ransacking houses near us, in sight of the Americans. There was a tank at either end of the main road in our neighborhood…The Americans were just sitting in the tanks overlooking this for days but never coming out. I went with some neighbors of mine who also speak English to try and talk to them. They shooed us away without speaking. So, we were left on our own…[56]

The anarchical state of Iraq greatly tarnished the American image among most Iraqis. The fact

that it went on largely unchallenged for nearly six weeks after the fall of Saddam amplified this

sour taste.[57] Colonel Terence Daly puts it in simpler terms, "I was horrified when I saw the

looting and the American inaction afterward. If I were an Iraqi, it would have shown me that

these people are not serious."[58] While the Bush administration had claimed that U.S. and

Coalition troops would march into Iraq as liberators, they did not appear that way to the many

Iraqis who experienced the brunt of the post-invasion chaos.

Although the looting was mostly conducted by Iraqis themselves, the majority of Iraqis

placed the blame on U.S. and Coalition efforts. If they were to storm into Iraq and remove the

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[55] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 135.
[56] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 31.
[57] Peter Galbraith, *Unintended Consequences*, 49.
[58] Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, 166.

centralized authority, then it was their responsibility to quickly restore governance so chaos and

looting would not ensue.[59] Shadid explains the root of Iraqi discontent,

> While the Americans were not fully responsible [for the looting], Iraqis perceived them as
> allowing the plunder and pondered whether the condition of their country was the result of
> malicious inattention or inattentive malice.[60]

Iraqi resentment, thus, was founded on the observation of perceived carelessness. L. Paul

Bremer, the director of the Coalition Provisional Authority, was correct in his reflections of the

looting, "We paid a big price for not stopping [the looting] because it established an atmosphere

of lawlessness".[61] Most U.S. and Coalition troops had no intention of purposefully harming

Iraqis or allowing anarchy to unravel. In fact, quite the opposite was true. Yet, without direct

orders to intervene in the looting, Iraqis did not understanf their intentions. Instead, Iraqis began

to adopt a view opposite to what U.S. and Coalition troops hoped to project.

Indeed, the flaws of the administration's strategic thinking were highlighted in the early

aftermath of post-Saddam Iraq. The near absence of planning for Phase IV came back to haunt

the administration as the civilian institutions sent to reconstruct Iraq were quickly overwhelmed

by unforeseen phenomenon such as looting and infrastructural damage. In hindsight, ORHA and

its failure to stabilize the situation in Iraq provides one with an example of all the problems with

the administration's strategic thinking.

Although ORHA's purpose was to provide basic services until the transfer of power, Jay

Garner and the rest of his team were incapable of handling the post-invasion pandemonium.

Caught off guard, ORHA did not have anywhere near the required levels of staffing or funding to

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[59] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 216.
[60] Ibid., 236.
[61] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 288.

handle the situation.[62] As a result, Iraq remained in disorder even after the looting had ended. Iraqis, suffering from a lack of basic services and authority in the streets, looked to ORHA for immediate solutions. Yet, Garner had none, and thus, frustration soon turned into hopelessness. Ayad Allawi, the future Interim Prime Minister, explained further at a conference with Garner in the spring of 2003,

> …we were euphoric…we were going to have a real democracy with rule of law, a country worthy of its citizens…The looting was heartbreaking…Jay Garner and other senior American officials had been holding a series of meetings with various opposition figures like us…and he opened the meeting by saying he had called us in to get our views on how to set up a new government in Iraq. Frankly, I was shocked…They had no plan. None. Here was the United States of America, the only super power in the world. And their leading decision makers on Iraq had no idea what to do?[63]

As the official, and virtually only, authority figure, ORHA was the face of U.S. and Coalition efforts in Iraq. Its inability to stabilize Iraq in the anarchical aftermath of the invasion gave a damaging first impression of incompetence and arrogance to Iraqis. ORHA's inherent powerlessness to stop the looting and restore public order allowed for the initial tarnish of the American image to become ever darker.

ORHA's infectiveness in stabilizing post-Saddam Iraq was exacerbated by its lack of communication with the Iraqi population. Iraqis remained uninformed of any U.S. efforts to stop the looting while they watched stolen televisions and desks go by. Consequently, resentment began to brew.[64] Although Garner hosted several conferences with prominent sheikhs and politicians to promote dialogue between the U.S. and Iraqis, they largely went to no avail. The purpose of the Baghdad Conferences, as these meetings came to be known, was to understand the sort of humanitarian effort the people needed. Yet, Garner usually held these meetings with a

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[62] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 289.
[63] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 48.
[64] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 138.

vague speech and a very limited Q & A. His conferences never provided Iraqis with any detail as to how ORHA would specifically change the situation in localities. As a result, sheikhs and politicians repeatedly left these meetings feeling unheard and on their own.[65] A post from Riverbend, a Baghdadi blogger, from September 29, 2003 recalls these events and how poorly they were run,

> Shortly after the occupation, Jay Garner began meeting with the prominent members of Iraqi society…The sheikhs were important because each sheikh basically had influence over hundreds, if not thousands of 'family'…Almost every single sheikh had his own woeful story to tell. They were angry and annoyed. And these weren't people who loved Saddam. Many of them hated the former regime…The whole group, in a storm of indignation and helplessness, rose to leave the meeting…When one of the prominent sheikhs was asked how the meeting went, he angrily said that it wasn't a conference-they had gathered up the sheikhs to 'give them orders' without a willingness to listen to the other side of the story…[66]

The Baghdad Conferences were unsuccessful because Garner and ORHA led them as vague lectures rather than back-and-forth dialogue with important members of Iraqi society. As a result, Iraq's voice went unheard. Tragically, even if Garner had engaged the sheikhs and actively sought to address their issues, ORHA most likely would have lacked the means to do so. Regardless, ORHA's lack of outreach further solidified the growing trend of Iraqis seeing their liberators more and more as occupiers.

Furthermore, ORHA lacked a basic strategy for accomplishing its limited scope of humanitarian goals as well. Garner had arrived in Baghdad with no protocol or strategic understanding to direct his team on how to accomplish their assigned tasks. Although Douglas Feith had conducted a minimal amount of postwar planning in the fall of 2002 for assistance to the Iraqi population, Garner had not seen any of the work. Garner had not even heard about

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[65] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 34.
[66] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog From Iraq*, (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2005), 88-90.

Feith's plans until ten days after he arrived in Baghdad.[67] Rumsfeld and other members of the administration repeatedly advised Garner to devise his own plan for how ORHA would achieve its objectives. The issue with the DoD's advice, however, is best explained by Garner himself, "This is an ad hoc operation, glued together over about four or five weeks' time. [We] didn't really have enough time to plan."[68] After all, ORHA had been established on January 21, 2003, a mere two months before the invasion. Garner simply did not have the regional expertise and time to conduct thorough planning for his objectives in Iraq.[69]

Garner repeatedly attempted to gain regional expertise from the State Department in order to assist ORHA with implementing humanitarian assistance; however, his attempts were repeatedly shut down by the DoD. Feith had vetoed every single State Department regional expert that Garner had nominated for ORHA's Civil Administrator position. Instead, Feith nominated Michael Mobbs for the job, a DoD official who lacked any relatable experience to administrative planning and had virtually no cultural knowledge of Iraq.[70] Mobbs's incompetence for the position is best exemplified in his work at ORHA. While working as the Civil Administrator in Iraq, Mobbs had devised detailed plans for protecting the oil fields, yet planned virtually nothing on how to restore services.[71]

Garner's attempt to create a solid team of translators was also thwarted by Rumsfeld and Feith. Garner had arrived in Baghdad with four translators when he was initially estimated to require approximately two-hundred. The four he had were Arab-American career officials who were among the best the State Department had to offer. Yet, Rumsfeld and Feith strongly

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[67] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 31.
[68] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 131.
[69] Ibid., 125.
[70] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 30.
[71] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 35.

advised Garner to remove them all in lieu of DoD translators that they trusted more with the Bush administration's policies.[72] In their strident efforts to monopolize U.S. policies in Iraq, Rumsfeld, Feith, and the rest of the DoD had cut Garner short of the skill he desperately needed for ORHA's nearly impossible task. The DoD's adherence to its own ideological approach to Iraq seemed to take precedent over implementing the actual skills and expertise necessary to execute ORHA's objectives.

The Bush administration's dismissal of the State Department research initiative The Future of Iraq Project is perhaps the best example of denied assets to ORHA.[73] The Future of Iraq Project was a research committee created by the State Department to develop viable predictions of what post-invasion Iraq would look like, what Coalition forces would need to do to restore order, and what factors Coalition forces would need to focus on in order to solidify public support quickly. Beginning in October of 2001, it was the earliest and most comprehensive pre-war planning effort for post-war Iraq.[74] The committee was comprised of Iraqi exiles and refugees, State Department regional experts, academic scholars on Iraq, and other officials. Ultimately, they used their $5 million grant to produce a 2,500 page advisory document to serve as a foundation for swift and effective post-war procedures.[75] It was by far the most developed strategic road map available for how to achieve the Bush administration's goals

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[72] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 34.

[73] Many other projects existed before the war as well that conducted research along the same lines as The Future of Iraq Project. The RAND Corporation, CIA, CENTCOM, USAID, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College all funded research initiatives before the invasion to assist in developing a strategic concept of conducting reconstruction and drafting a viable plan for how to implement said strategy. All of these projects came to similar conclusions in that they all strongly advised against the expectation of Iraq's administrative, communication, and economic infrastructures to remain functional. They all strongly argued that immediate security would be the key to winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi population, and that Coalition forces would have a limited window of opportunity to achieve that (Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 324). The Future of Iraq Project was the most extensive research initiative and is perhaps the best example of pre-invasion planning that could have been used to conduct Phase IV in a much different manner.

[74] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 27.

[75] Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour*, 37. Also see Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 325.

in Iraq during Phase IV. Yet Rumsfeld, Feith, and Wolfowitz deeply distrusted the State Department initiative. All three thought that the State Department was determined to debunk the administration's efforts in Iraq and that The Future of Iraq Project was ammunition for anti-war doves.[76] Aware of the difficulties the Bush administration may have had for rallying public and Congressional support behind the war, the DoD pushed the project aside and denied its content to war planners.

Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Feith never mentioned the project's research to Garner and his team at ORHA. Garner had not heard about The Future of Iraq Project until late February of 2003. Upon coming across the research initiative, Garner tried to incorporate its findings and guidance as much as possible into ORHA. However, Tim Garney, an ORHA official appointed by Wolfowitz, recalled that Garner was "instructed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to ignore The Future of Iraq Project" because he asserted that the State Department was attempting to take over reconstruction efforts.[77] Garner even attempted to bring Tom Warrick, the leader of The Future of Iraq Project, into ORHA to assist him in developing a post-war plan. The interaction between Rumsfeld and Garner that followed this attempt demonstrates the administration's prioritization of monopolizing the war effort, "Jay, have you got a guy named Warrick on your Team?...This came to me from such a high level that I can't overturn it, and I've just got to ask you to remove Mr. Warrick."[78] Rumsfeld saw the project as an effort to thwart the administration's in-and-out doctrine and implement a prolonged occupation instead. Thus, the Bush administration effectively shut out all possible strategic thinking with regards to Iraq. In hindsight, ORHA's mishaps in the early occupation and reconstruction of Iraq seem inevitable.

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[76] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 327-328.
[77] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 128.
[78] Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, 95.

Yet, the situation in Iraq and the tarnished image of U.S. efforts were greatly exacerbated by what followed ORHA and the early occupation.

By late April of 2003, the Bush administration had decided to replace ORHA with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), an institution more fit to carry out reconstruction in Iraq. The CPA officially assumed authority in Iraq on May 12, 2003 when its director, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, landed in Baghdad.[79] The establishment of the CPA, however, marked the formalization of the U.S. occupation.

The quick transfer of power that the administration hoped for, rested on the expectation that the Iraqi exiled advisors, led by Ahmad Chalabi, would be able to form a legitimate government immediately following Saddam's removal.[80] The DoD sent Chalabi and approximately seven-hundred other exiles to Iraq to do just that as soon the invasion began. Yet, Chalabi and his followers proved to be much less popular among Iraqis than the administration had hoped. Chalabi and the rest could not muster the necessary support to create a transitional authority.[81] Bremer's advisors later explained the administration's disappointment, "We gave them [Chalabi and his followers] a chance. We bankrolled some of them. But they just couldn't get their act together. It was amateur hour."[82] The foundation for a quick withdrawal had crumbled beneath the Bush administration when the exiles proved to be ineffective. With no clear and viable option for a transitional government, the Bush administration decided that the CPA was in Iraq for the long haul. This did not bode well for Iraqi support.

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[79] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 155-158.
[80] Herring and Rangwala, *Iraq in Fragments*. 260-261.
[81] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 141. Also see Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 173.
[82] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 78.

Iraqis began to feel differently about their liberators as U.S. reconstruction efforts increasingly resembled foreign rule – a far too familiar demon from their nation's past. The CPA's assertion that it would remain indefinitely in power until authority could feasibly be transferred to an interim government established an image of U.S. dominion in Iraq.[83] Bremer insisted on holding the reins of authority in Iraq until a constitution could be drafted and elections held. Although he had appointed an advisory council, known as the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), to assist him in drafting elections, Iraqis viewed the IGC to be illegitimate.[84] Thus, as the weeks rolled by and Iraqis had no voice in the reconstruction of their nation besides that of an illegitimate council with only advisory capabilities, they began to see their liberators more as an occupying force. While Riverbend's blog posts began in the summer of 2003, her comments arise from the sentiment that began to flourish in Iraq during the CPA's early days in the spring, "Call it whatever you want – to me it's an occupation."[85] Although U.S. and Coalition forces had freed the nation from a dictator, they began to overstay their welcome as the situation remained unstable and the United States increasingly appeared to be yet another tyrant in Saddam's place.

Iraqi sentiment plummeted with the CPA's official recognition of itself as an occupying power. The formal occupation of Iraq by the CPA was declared on May 22, 2003.[86] Much of the Iraqi outrage spurred from Bremer's use of the word occupation itself. Mohammad Hayawi, an Iraqi civilian, explains further,

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[83] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 155.
[84] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 41.
[85] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 15.
[86] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 235.

> Before the war, they said they wanted to help the Iraqi people. They wanted to rid us of a great dictatorship. They didn't come as an occupier…We won't accept them as occupiers…The word 'occupation' is a huge word…The Americans shouldn't use this word.[87]

Although many Iraqis displayed exuberance over the removal of Saddam, they simultaneously feared a foreign occupation. While Bremer may have had the reconstruction of post-WWII Europe in mind when he described the CPA as an occupying authority, Iraqis know the term only by a negative connotation, forged in their history with Western imperialism. Naturally, Iraqis felt a deep hostility towards the notion of the word.[88]

Although Bremer's declaration was merely the official recognition of the realities in Iraq since the removal of Saddam, Iraqis were extremely sensitive towards this declaration. The Arabic word for occupation, *ihtilal,* is commonly used to describe the Arab struggle in Palestine against Israel as well as the decades of colonial rule in the Middle-East following WWI.[89] It reminds Arabs of their oppressive history in the face of superior foreign powers. Shadid goes further to describe the immense repercussions of word choice,

> By definition, *ihtilal* denotes inequality, a relationship of two unequal powers, the weaker submitting to the will of the stronger. By imposing the occupation, the Americans declared that the situation was different from what most Iraqis perceived it to be…[90]

Clearly, to many Iraqis the word occupation does not mean the temporary seizure of sovereignty by a foreign power for the purposes of a nation's reconstruction. Rather, it is a repetition of a history of domination and national embarrassment. This was a part of Iraqi history that many wanted to have kept in the past. Yet, the formal occupation of the CPA suggested that Iraq's past was coming back to haunt them once more.

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[87] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 260.
[88] Ibid., 236.
[89] Ibid., 237.
[90] Ibid., 237.

By late spring, the situation in Iraq that the CPA had inherited was grim at best. Yet Bremer led the CPA into making fatal policy decisions early in its establishment. These policies ultimately exacerbated waning public support, and thus, greatly contributed to the growing destabilization. The first of the CPA's drastic and consequential choices came only days after Bremer's arrival in Baghdad. CPA Order No. 1, commonly known as de-Ba'athification, was issued on May 16, 2003. This decree removed all senior Ba'ath party members from public office and barred them from any future government employment.[91] Bremer's definition of what it meant to be a senior Ba'ath party member, however, made the decree much more damaging to reconstruction efforts than beneficial. Of the six tiers of membership within the Ba'ath party, CPA Order No. 1 affected all but the bottom two. An estimated 85,000 Iraqis lost their jobs.[92] Iraqis could apply and appeal for an exemption from the blanket policy; however, doing so was much easier said than done.

In order to be exempt, Iraqis had to fill out an application, find their way through the dense foreign bureaucracy, and then make their case directly in front of Bremer himself. Of the 85,000 newly unemployed Iraqis, approximately 9,000 were able to apply for and receive exemptions due to the immensely strenuous process.[93] Riverbend explains Iraqi discontent,

> The first place it [de-Ba'athification] began in was the universities. Any Ba'athist with administrative positions, were asked to step down…any Ba'athist professors should be made to quit. That was too much…Things were already tough before the war, this would make things impossible.[94]

Bremer's intentions of removing government corruption and preventing ex-Saddam loyalists from gaining power again was indeed well-spirited, yet it failed to accomplish its strategic aim of gaining the support of the population. Aside from angering and alienating thousands of affected

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[91] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 145.
[92] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 160.
[93] Ibid., 160. Also see Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, 27.
[94] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 133. Also see Ibid., 21.

Iraqis and their families, Bremer's first decree simultaneously destroyed the bureaucratic

capabilities of Iraq to manage what was left of the nation's less-than-functional administrative

infrastructure.

CPA Order No. 1 caused great long-term damages to the CPA's reconstruction efforts in

Iraq. Bremer's policy removed thousands of qualified and experienced workers from Iraq's

professional sector. In a socialist society in which virtually all public service employment and

professional promotions required party membership, the effects of de-Ba'athification were

devastating. Thousands of teachers, doctors, university professors, engineers, and other public

service employees were laid off.[95] Bremer had sent home thousands of professionals that the

Bush administration had originally expected to stay on the job for quick reconstruction.

It is evident how the Bush administration's lack of strategic guidance to its assets in Iraq

ultimately hindered their efforts to achieve their political goals as people like Garner and Bremer

were left astray with no direction. Tomislav Z. Ruby, an Air Force advisor, explains further,

> …no matter how strong the leadership within the Coalition was, and no matter how precisely
> national leaders knew what they wanted, military commanders, intergovernmental planners,
> Coalition partners, and Iraqis did not have a written, agreed-upon common objective.[96]

In the absence of a centralized political strategy to refer to, Bremer made a drastic decision,

which had great repercussions for the entire U.S. operation. The burden of restoring public order

and civil services now rested completely on the back of the immensely underfunded and

understaffed CPA. Bremer began the road to a prolonged U.S. occupation, the dilemma that the

administration had previously hoped to prevent.

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[95] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 146.
[96] Mowle, *Hope Is Not a Plan*, 33-34.

Weeks later, Bremer destabilized Iraq further by issuing CPA Order No. 2 on May 23, 2003. CPA Order No. 2 disbanded all branches of the Iraqi army and militias in hopes to rid Iraq of the institution that Saddam previously used to oppress the Iraqi people.[97] Yet in doing so, Bremer left approximately 385,000 soldiers, many of whom were conscripts, without the jobs they desperately relied on to support their families. Furthermore, Order No. 2 also dissolved the Ministry of the Interior, which, laid off approximately 285,000 Iraqis, many of whom were police and security forces.[98] Riverbend explains the grave repercussions of Bremer's decision through her observations of laid off soldiers during the summer of 2003,

> Over 65% of the Iraqi population is unemployed. The reason for this is because Bremer made some horrible decisions. The first major decision…was to dissolve the Iraqi army. That may make sense in Washington, but here, we were left speechless. Now there are over 400,000 trained, armed men with families that need to be fed. Where are they supposed to go? What are they supposed to do for a living? I don't know. They certainly don't know. They roam the street looking for work, looking for an answer. You can see perplexity and anger in their stance, their walk, their whole demeanor.[99]

Order No. 2 alienated a substantial portion of the Iraqi population. Studies in 2005 estimated that disbanding the Iraqi Army and Ministry of the Interior directly affected approximately 2.4 million Iraqis, or 10% of the entire population.[100] With no native security forces and thousands of jobless, aggravated young men in the streets, the situation in Iraq came to a very critical tipping point. If Iraqis previously felt hopeless, Order No. 2 amplified and transformed their sentiments into raging bitterness.

Bremer had clarified that pensions would be paid along with a termination fee of twenty U.S. dollars. However, all ranks above colonel were considered to be senior Ba'ath party members and were denied payment of any sort. Furthermore, the CPA had immense difficulties

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[97] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 149.
[98] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 162.
[99] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 21.
[100] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 152.

in distributing the pensions to all those that qualified. As a result, much of the rank and file did not receive their pensions.[101] Khairi Jassim, an officer in the Iraqi army commented on Order No. 2 with outrage and haunting foreboding, "All of us will become suicide bombers…"[102] Another former Iraqi officer supported the Jassim's claim, "The only thing left for me is to blow myself up in the face of tyrants."[103] Iraqi resentment began to immediately spike as young men remained jobless and families scraped by without their main source of income. CPA Order No. 2 enraged a substantial portion of the Iraqi community, many of which were passionate young men with few opportunities and extensive military training – the exact demographic that a guerrilla recruiter would look to infiltrate when forming an insurgency.[104]

Unfortunately, the potential for disgruntled veterans to be drafted into the insurgency became an observable reality later in 2003 when militia recruiters saw the vast potential in Iraq's unemployed soldiers. Fanatical religious militias as well as political paramilitary organizations began offering these men jobs to fight U.S. and Coalition forces in exchange for income. Riverbend recalls this development in her blog post from December of 2003,

> Islamic parties supported by Iran…are currently recruiting followers by offering 'wages' to jobless men (an ex-soldier in the army, for example) in trade of 'support'. This support could mean anything – vote when the elections come around, bomb a specific shop, 'confiscate', abduct, hijack cars…[105]

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[101] Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, 27. Also see Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 149-150. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning*, 122.

[102] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 165.

[103] Ibid., 165. Major Saad Omri also demonstrated strong resentment and warning of what the Iraqi military would do if they did not immediately get their jobs back in an interview with Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "We don't want to be treated this way…if the Americans don't change this policy, there will be trouble. The Iraqis will not tolerate this" (Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 76).

[104] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 181.

[105] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 20.

Furthermore, while resentment was rampant, many ex-soldiers began joining armed forces not out of political or religious ideology, but rather, out of desperation for work. Shadid's encounter with several Iraqi veterans who joined various militias elaborates further,

> 'We have children, we have families, and we need to live'…From a family of ten, Yusuf had two daughters, aged three and four, and two sons, aged two and five. 'We don't love the Americans, but we need the money,' he said. 'It's very difficult, but there's no other alternative.' Awad nodded his head in agreement. 'There's no work. Otherwise we have to steal. You have to become an Ali Baba [American and Iraqi slang for an insurgent]'.[106]

It did not take long for U.S. and Coalition forces to feel the brunt of the repercussions of Order No. 2 as the CPA's policy created an atmosphere of hopelessness. Even if men did not want to fight the occupation or support religious fundamentalist terror campaigns, their financial situations often left them with no other choice. In failing to provide this demographic of Iraqis with opportunity and stability, as they had promised, the CPA created a new class of enemies.

Aside from being a disaster, CPA Order No. 2 was also an enormous miscalculation of the realities at hand in Iraq. Upon invasion, most Iraqi servicemen dropped their uniforms and weapons and fell in with the population. Bremer insisted that the Iraqi military had disbanded itself and that he was simply making the developments official.[107] Yet, Paul Hughes, an Army Colonel who worked for ORHA claimed that Iraqi military officers had repeatedly approached him in the early occupation for clearance to reform their units and contribute to the reconstruction effort.[108] Mustafa Duleimi, an Iraqi Lieutenant Colonel, supported Hughes's claim in an interview with Rajiv Chandrasekaran days after Bremer's arrival in Baghdad, "We're waiting for our orders…We are ready to help our country…The army was formed long before Saddam became president. We are loyal not to one man, but to our country."[109] Colonel Baha'a

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[106] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 338.
[107] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 161.
[108] Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, 161.
[109] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 76.

Nouri Yasseen also provides evidence for yet another unit willing to participate in reconstruction,

> The real military men like me didn't care whether the army was under the control of Saddam or whoever. We were the army of Iraq, a professional army for the country. Many of us wanted to continue working for the country regardless of the political changes. We had the same mentality as most other good armies of the world. We served the state, not individual rulers.[110]

Although the Iraqi military was absent due to U.S. military presence, substantial amounts of the 385,000 men in uniform were still willing to continue their service through aiding U.S. efforts. Bremer failed to understand the goodwill of many Iraqi commanders. In doing so, he overlooked the potentiality of a valuable asset in the Iraqi military to immediately aid the sparse U.S. and Coalition troops with their massive security responsibilities.

Bremer seemed to have realized the vast consequences of Order No. 2 shortly after its implementation. The Bush administration and CENTCOM had always envisioned using elements of the Iraqi army to assist in the swift establishment and maintenance of security in post-Saddam Iraq. Bremer issued another CPA order in which he invited non-Ba'athist officers to return and be screened for possible reinstating of their positions in the new Iraqi army.[111] Yet, the damage had already been done through ensuring a society of strong male pride that they were losers, and that their passion to serve their country would be denied.[112] An interaction between journalist Rajiv Chandrasekaran and a former Iraqi soldier weeks after Bremer's reinstating order had been issued demonstrates the irreversible effects of Order No. 2, "'What happened to everyone [former soldiers]?' I asked. 'Did they join the new army?' He laughed, 'They're all

[110] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 17.
[111] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 77.
[112] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 342.

insurgents now,' he said. 'Bremer lost his chance.'"[113] Army Colonel Alan King with the 3rd

Infantry Division remembers the immediate effects of Order No. 2 as well,

> When Bremer did that, the insurgency went crazy. May was the turning point for the U.S. occupation…When they disbanded the military…that was it. Every moderate, every person that had leaned toward us, was furious. One Iraqi who had saved my life in an ambush said to me, 'I can't be your friend anymore.'[114]

Although Bremer attempted to make amends, the CPA clearly lost its opportunity to win the

support of a substantial portion of the population. The Iraqi army could have been used to

maintain security and allow U.S. and Coalition troops to be sent home, thus, adhering to the

administration's in-and-out doctrine. There could have been several different ways for the

administration to go about dealing with the Iraqi army, all of which would have had the potential

of yielding positive results. In failing to use the Iraqi army as it stood at all, the administration

allowed it to indefinitely serve as one of the pillars of the developing Iraqi insurgency.

<u>How Iraqis Came to See the U.S. Occupation as an Enemy</u>

By early 2004, the crucial question had been decided. Iraqis lost hope in the occupation

and concluded across the board that they had come to their country not as liberators, but as

occupiers. Basic living conditions were abysmal and walking the streets of Iraq was becoming a

death sentence in itself. Consequently, Iraqi morale plummeted into disillusionment as any hopes

for a better life without Saddam were met with quite the opposite. Abdul Wahab Fuad, a civilian

who lost his legs due to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was one of many Iraqis who was

met with a rude awakening:

> …I was thinking it would be a good thing if the Americans came before the invasion. We saw the countries following American policies, like the Perisan Gulf states, and they all were living a

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[113] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 77.
[114] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 164.

good, prosperous life. Even countries like Jordan. We expected to see the same thing happen to us, a better life. What can I say? I thought it would be something different.[115]

Wamidh Nadhme also explains why Iraqis concluded that the Americans were, indeed, occupiers instead of liberators,

> They promised they would bring democracy and liberation to Iraq. Where is the democracy and liberation? We have seen looting, we have seen the burning of hospitals, we have seen the robbery of the central bank. The Americans, up until now, have failed to win the support of educated, respected, credible people.[116]

Any Iraqi who previously supported the U.S. invasion or remained open to supporting it now found themselves staunchly and aggressively opposed to it. Within this environment of discontent, insurgents and all others willing to take arms against the occupation were not perceived to be firebrands, but rather, freedom fighters. In viewing the United States as occupiers rather than liberators, Iraqis felt that they were left with no other option but armed resistance. Therefore, in failing to secure Iraqi support, the key issue at stake during post-Saddam operations, the Bush administration made enemies out of an entire nation.

The aforementioned sentiment created utter instability, rendering the achievement of the Bush administration's goals impossible. Without a stable social sphere, Iraq could not be the ally the Bush administration needed, let alone the beacon of light in the Middle East. Furthermore, instability created the perfect atmosphere to highlight and amplify sectarian divisions to hostile levels. Without a strong nation to tie all sects together, a resurgence of fundamentalism developed as Iraqis began to re-identify with their different sectarian groups in the wake of desperation and fear. Therefore, in failing to stabilize Iraq, the Bush administration allowed for the foundation for a civil war to develop as well. By 2004, Iraq was well on its way to the chaos that was to explode in 2006.

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[115] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 77.
[116] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 216.

The U.S. occupation greatly alienated Iraqis over time through its inabilities to provide a constant flow of utilities and basic services. The U.S. struggled to provide Iraqis with water, electricity, and sewage from the onset of the occupation. The city of Wasit, for example, had virtually no sewage services between 2003 and 2006. As a result, three-fourths of the city's sewage laid openly in the channel that flowed into the Tigris. There was a shortage in almost every utility and most services such as electricity were rationed. Necessities such as cooking oil and gas were also in extremely short supply in a country laden with oil because the CPA could not bring the oil refineries back to necessary production levels to meet the demands of Iraqis.[117] Staff Sergeant Mike Brase recalls the inability of the occupation to provide adequate living services as late as 2005,

> You got a major city, like one of the largest in the world is Baghdad, and you would have sections of the city that would be completely blacked out due to lack of power. One part of the city would have it on while another part of the city would have it off, and then they would have to switch cause the power grids were so screwed up… There was raw sewage for instance that would be covering a road way…There would be some major neighborhoods with nothing but raw sewage in the streets. Simple things like garbage services and trash services. A trash plan for removing the trash out of cities wasn't in place until towards the end of my tour. I mean, I'm thinking to myself, 'we're half way through 2005 and they still don't have a trash service going?'…it was ridiculous…[118]

The CPA struggled to keep up with the demands of major cities such as Baghdad, and struggled even more to provide a nation as large as California with proper utilities. It was a job for a highly efficient bureaucracy with a great deal of staffing and proper funding – everything the CPA was not. As a result, people that were used to living under a dictator who was able to provide them with adequate services on a consistent basis were met with a rude awakening.[119]

While pre-war expectations asserted that Iraq's infrastructure would remain functional, the Bush administration failed to grasp the realities behind Saddam's façade. Although Saddam

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[117] Mark Etherington, *Revolt on the Tigris,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 93.
[118] Mike Brase. Interviewed by Neema Sahebi. Personal Interview. Eugene, January 30, 2014.
[119] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 166. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 169.

had been very effective at delivering basic service such as electricity, water, sewage, and trash

services to major metropolitan areas, Iraq's infrastructure as a whole was in shambles.[120] Just

prior to the invasion, 70% of Iraq's sewage plants needed major repairs and 80% of the electrical

grid was working at half its capacity.[121] Shadid puts it bluntly, "The Americans had failed to

account for the state of Iraq's infrastructure, aged, decrepit, and worn down as it was by more

than a decade of sanctions."[122] Indeed, while Saddam had been successful in providing major

cities with services, he was doing so with a system bound to collapse under its own weight at any

moment.

Although it is extremely difficult for intelligence to assess the conditions of a hostile

country's infrastructure, proper planning for Phase IV could have potentially provided the Bush

administration with viable options to address the unexpectedly decrepit infrastructure in a timely

manner. Moreover, the state of Iraq's infrastructure can be expected for a nation that has

experienced decades of warfare and harsh economic sanctions. Yet, the Bush administration

seemed to overlook this fact when they predicted a quick restoration of utilities and basic

services.

The issues the U.S. occupation inherited were exacerbated when the repercussions of

earlier developments such as looting and de-Ba'athification settled in. The administration had

previously seen Iraq's oil fields to be the key to financing the nation's own reconstruction;

therefore, U.S. and Coalition troops guarded them vigorously. However, in doing so, other

aspects of Iraq's infrastructure such as water treatment plants and electrical power plants were

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[120] Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, 45.
[121] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 135.
[122] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 159.

overlooked and largely unguarded.[123] Iraq's subpar infrastructure was damaged by the looting and lawlessness to the point in which it was essentially useless. The electrical grid alone had been so heavily damaged by the looting that its power supply was reduced to one-fifth that of pre-war levels.[124] The CPA had to spend massive amounts of money and resources to just to bring Iraq's infrastructure functionality back to lousy pre-war levels.[125]

Moreover, de-Ba'athification had left Iraq's heavily damaged and inadequate infrastructure with minimal numbers of workers to manage it. Saddam's jimmy-rigged grids and plants now had a lack of expertise on how to run them. The CIA station chief in Iraq put things into perspective in his response to CPA Order No. 1, "These are the people who know where the levers of the infrastructure are, from electricity to water to transportation…Take them out of the equation and you undercut the operation of this country…"[126] The Bush administration's early decision making had long-term repercussions for the occupation. With no conceptual understanding of how to compensate for heavily damaged infrastructure and minimal administrative capabilities, the CPA was a deer in the headlights. It quickly found itself in a serious predicament with practically no option on hand to react in a timely manner.

The CPA's efforts to restore services were ultimately unsuccessful. The 2004 fiscal year allocated $18.4 billion to the CPA for funding infrastructure projects in Iraq. This program, known as 2207, largely focused on large infrastructure projects to provide Iraq with a stable foundation for new and modernized power, water treatment, and sewage plants. Although Iraq needed long-term projects like this, the people would not see their benefits until decades later. The CPA did not realize that it needed to focus on small-scale distribution projects

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[123] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 41.
[124] Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, 92.
[125] Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour*, 30.
[126] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 159.

simultaneously so that the Iraqi population could immediately feel the effects of U.S. goodwill to restore services. Big sewage plants were now capable of treating much more waste than before; yet, Iraq's cities still had no garbage collection services. Gigantic water treatment plants were being restored, yet, they still lacked the means to distribute clean water. It was not until late 2004 when Major General Chiarelli of the 1st Cavalry Division made successful attempts to reallocate 2207's funding to distribution projects.[127] Unfortunately, Chiarelli's work may have come too late. By late 2004, Iraqis had been scraping by without proper services in the heat of the desert for more than a year and a half. By the time 2207 could begin its distribution projects, antipathy had already established itself well within the masses.

To make matters worse, the Bush administration's efforts to restore Iraq's infrastructure went largely unnoticed by the Iraqi people. Major infrastructure projects began early in the occupation; however, most of these projects were nowhere near the major metropolitan areas. Most of Iraq's main power plants are located in unpopulated areas outside of the major cities. Furthermore, most of the basic materials required for these projects had to be shipped in from neighboring countries because Iraq could not supply them on its own. As a result, all of the work being done was out of sight for the average Iraqi. Iraqis could not physically observe U.S. efforts to restore the infrastructure, and the material being shipped in was assumed to be for the American occupation. Therefore, Iraqis largely concluded that no work was being done at all.[128] The administration's lack of communication and absence of outreach clearly hindered their efforts. Without an active effort to report the truth to the population, Iraqis believed what they

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[127] Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour*, 59-60.
[128] Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, 46.

saw in front of them.[129] While the administration assured Iraqis that work was being done, Iraqis wanted proof. After all, despite the administration's claims, Iraqis were not seeing any results.

The Bush administration's efforts to restore basic services also proved to be counterproductive. Early on, the CPA was determined to bolster the American image through appearing to be better for Iraq than Saddam's regime. They intended to do this through providing electricity and water services to all Iraqis throughout the nation. Previously, Saddam had left many rural areas of Shiite Iraq without electricity or other services. Rather, he focused to ensure services to the major metropolitan areas such as Baghdad.[130] Under the CPA, many Iraqi villages were given electricity and running water where they were previously denied under Saddam's regime. However, this was done at the expense of providing constant services to the major metropolitan areas, many of which had previously enjoyed some of the highest standards of living in the Arab world.[131]

Iraq's fragile infrastructure could not handle the new demands, and the administration could not improve it to do so. Many major cities, used to having a constant flow of services over the past thirty years, were now forced to ration them. The impact of the rationing was especially harsh in places like Baghdad where Saddam had previously prioritized in its maintenance. This would explain a survey taken by the Iraqi Research Institute in the autumn of 2004, which revealed that 70% of Iraq was unhappy with the availability of power.[132] Shadid explains further as well,

> There wasn't all that much love for the Americans in those days, as U.S. promises propelled Iraqi expectations. Of course, the weather didn't help. Every day seemed to grow hotter as summer

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[129] Mowle, *Hope Is Not a Plan*, 44.
[130] Ibid., 45.
[131] Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian. *Collateral Damage*, (New York: Nation Books, 2008), 98.
[132] Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, 46. Also see Ibid., 91.

arrived in Baghdad, a desert but for the Tigris…In most neighborhoods, residents were almost frantic in their complaints about basic needs remaining unmet – there was still not enough electricity to keep food from spoiling, not enough water to drink…[133]

While U.S. efforts may have been strident, they did not yield adequate results to prove to the Iraqi people that the liberators had indeed implemented change. Rater, the portion of the population that was most vulnerable and sensitive to changes in living conditions experienced it in the opposite of what the Bush administration had intended it to be.

The lack of basic utilities created a sense of mass disappointment among Iraqis. The Iraqis that greeted the arrival of U.S. and Coalition forces believed that the United States would eradicate Iraq's growing poverty and transform the nation into a first world country similar to Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates. Yet, as the occupation wore on, their liberators could not restore electricity for more than three-hour spurts throughout the day in many parts of the country.[134] Other times, water would shut off without notice for prolonged periods. Many wondered about the prosperity they were promised.[135] Shadid's interaction with ISF police Sergeant Sami Jalil sheds light on these hardships for Iraqis,

> With water in short supply or of poor quality, he [Jalil] bought a bottle of mineral water every two days for his daughter – a cheap variety, but still another fifty cents. Sewage flooded daily into his home, where four families totaling thirty people shared six rooms. And, with electricity running no more than six hours a day in his neighborhood, he worried that the heat would make Rusul [Jalil's daughter] ill. 'The truth has revealed itself,' Jalil said. 'The Americans painted a picture that they would come, provide good things to the Iraqi people, spread security, but regrettably…' His voice trailed off.[136]

Tariq Talib, an Iraqi electrician explains further, "We expected the Americans would make the country an example, a second Europe. That's why we didn't fight back. And now we are shocked, as if we've gone back a hundred years."[137] Iraqis felt like they were moving back

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[133] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 245.
[134] Ibid., 124.
[135] Ibid., 258.
[136] Ibid., 251.
[137] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 166.

towards the stone ages. Their liberation seemed to be short lived as they suddenly found themselves struggling to obtain life's basic necessities. As a result, many began to question whether their supposed liberation had been a liberation at all.

As time wore on, Iraqi disappointment turned into rampant discontent. The initial jubilation over Saddam's removal was quickly diminishing as the U.S. occupation seemed to be worse than Saddam's regime in its abilities to provide for the people. Saddam had managed to quickly restore basic services to localities in the aftermath of massive bombing campaigns directed at Iraq's infrastructure during the Gulf War in 1991.[138] Yet, the all-powerful Americans, with their wealth and technology well in sight, could not manage to do the same. Iraqis were baffled.[139] Shadid explains Iraqi discontent as he recalls an encounter with Mohammad Hayawi,

> 'The mind of the Iraqi is on electricity. He wants to find a generator to get a little electricity in his house so that he can drink cold water.' Other men in the shop nodded in agreement…'Everyday at the Baghdad airport, the airplanes are taking off and landing. Is it possible the Americans cannot bring generators for power to improve the electricity here? Is it possible these are the same Americans who brought three thousand tanks, who brought three thousand artillery pieces in two days?'… 'The tanks, the airplanes, and the supplies, and no generators?' Mohammed recalled the 1991 Gulf War…'Saddam returned the infrastructure to the country in eighteen days.'[140]

Many Iraqis could see the occupation fly in immense amounts of munitions and supplies for their own men, yet, Iraqis seldom saw the same efforts and mass shipments being done to restore the infrastructure.[141] Many began to reconsider the goodwill of U.S. and Coalition forces. Either the occupation was grossly incompetent or malicious in its intent. Regardless, Iraqis began to feel that the occupation was overstaying its welcome.

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[138] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 166.
[139] Ibid.,167.
[140] Ibid., 259.
[141] Ibid., 177. Also see Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 52. Fuad Musa Mohammad, a Shiite who had previously supported the U.S. invasion, also provided the same response to this observance, "They brought tanks by an airplane. They can't bring generators, from Kuwait or Turkey? They brought everything. They can't bring generators for the people?" (Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 180).

The inability of U.S. and Coalition forces to provide security and stability in the increasingly violent streets of Iraq was perhaps the greatest source of Iraqi aversion and alienation. Crime, rape, theft, and murder flourished as disgruntled people and former criminals were free to roam and settle past disputes with blood. A poll taken in September of 2003 showed that 94% of Baghdad's residents believed the city to be more dangerous than it was under Saddam, and 84% of Iraqis throughout the nation feared to go out at night for lack of security.[142] While the crime was largely carried out by outlaw Iraqis themselves, that fact remained irrelevant to public opinion. Riverbend demonstrates this sentiment in a blog post from August 20, 2003, "America, as an occupying power, is responsible for the safety and security of what is left of this country…They have been shirking their duties horribly…"[143]As far as Iraqis were concerned, the U.S. invasion destabilized the nation in the first place. Moreover, if the occupation cared about the well-being of Iraq, then they would use their massive wealth and power to establish order.[144] As time passed and Iraq remained stagnant in violence, many began to question the integrity and intentions of the Bush administration.

While U.S. and Coalition soldiers were extremely vigilant and diligent in their efforts to provide Iraqis with safety, there were simply not enough boots on the ground to secure Iraq.[145] As Colonel Kevin Benson, one of the commanders to lead Phase IV military operations, said in 2004,

> Iraq is a country bigger than California. This troop-to-task analysis was done to identify a minimum level of forces needed to exert some control over the populated areas of the country…We had fewer troops than Governor Schwarzenegger [of California] had police.[146]

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[142] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 26.
[143] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 9.
[144] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 262. Also see Mowle, *Hope Is Not A Plan*, x.
[145] Mark Etherington, *Revolt on the Tigris,* 73.
[146] Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 340.

As Chalabi's predictions crumbled early on during the occupation, the Bush administration found itself in an unforeseen situation. With the new development came a set of issues that the U.S. occupation lacked the tools to address. As a result, the security situation spiraled out of control.

Politics, constitutions, and democracy were all issues that Iraqis did not care about as long as they feared for the safety of their families in their own homes. Tribal leaders brought in by the CPA to discuss democracy in Iraq urged officials to establish security first before engaging in politics, "we have anarchy in the streets…we don't care about a constitution right now, we need order".[147] In a poll taken from five different cities between November and December of 2003, 62% of the 1,167 Iraqis interviewed claimed that security was "the most urgent issue facing them."[148] An excerpt from Riverbend's blog post on August 30, 2003 demonstrates how dangerous the security situation was becoming,

> We…dragged E. out of the house…to go visit my aunt on the other end of the city. We heard the usual instructions before we left – stop at checkpoints, return before dark, and if anyone wants the car, give them the keys – don't argue, don't fight it…Being out in the streets is like being caught in a tornado. You have to be alert and ready for anything every moment…The looting and killing of today has changed from the looting and killing in April. In April, it was quite random. Criminals were working alone. Now they're more organized than the CPA and the troops combined…By the time we got to my aunt's house, every muscle in my body was aching…the cousin's hands were shaking almost imperceptibly – knuckles still white with tension.[149]

In the absence of security, protecting the population was the most pressing issue for the U.S. occupation. Simple everyday errands were now a dance with the devil as the streets of Iraq began to look more like the battlefront. All eyes were on the occupation to provide order, however, its efforts continued to fall short of containing the growing issue.

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[147] Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 34.
[148] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 213.
[149] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 40-41.

The lack of security, therefore, functioned as a crucial cog in the shift of Iraqi public opinion. As time wore on and an increasing number of Iraqis experienced tragedy, the initial elation of many turned into resentment and later into hatred.[150] Luay Ali Hussein of Fallujah explains the quick shift from greeting the Americans in his city to turning against them,

> At first the Americans were welcome in Fallujah. They came saying they were liberators, and we felt they were. They freed us from a terrible regime. But people's feelings toward them began to change as the occupation wore on…I began to think so too, even though I supported the invasion…Having the Americans in our city was painful for many people, including me.[151]

Sergeant Jesus Boncanegra recalled this development as well from the American perspective,

> I sort of felt a shift in the people. When we got in, the little kids were dancing…everybody was clapping, 'the Americans are here'…then 4, 5 months in the period, it just started getting like…real hectic, a lot of attacks and stuff. Just talking to regular Iraqi people, they'd by like, 'y'all could leave already.[152]

Although there were many factors that contributed to the changing tide of opinion, security was the foundation for Iraqi support. While the American occupation spoke of a new Iraq with human rights and prosperity, Iraqis were looking over their shoulders out of fear for car bombs, kidnappings, or other forms of tragedy. It was impossible for any Iraqis to continue what support they may or may not have had within this tense climate.

The insurgency that developed in the summer of 2003, therefore, was a product of discontent. If the Americans could not provide security, then Iraqis saw that they should be fought to compel them to leave. This sentiment was augmented with the growing belief that the American presence was a source of destabilization in itself. Rasheed Majeed, a resident of Najaf who joined the insurgency in late 2003, exemplifies the sentiment that an increasing amount of Iraqis began to adopt,

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[150] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 281.
[151] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 68-69
[152] Hedges and Al-Arian. *Collateral Damage*, 97

> I took aim in the darkness towards the American positions as best I could and pulled the trigger. I knew I probably wouldn't hit anyone. But at least they would know I was there. I just wanted to let them know that yet another person ready to fight them was there.[153]

The hatred that pushed people like Majeed to the pull trigger on U.S. and Coalition troops was not an ideology instilled by Saddam or radical clerics. Rather, it was a blatant outcry that U.S. efforts to reconstruct Iraq were not working. Violence against the occupation was a response to a broken American promise in a land with a history of far too many.

The security situation was exacerbated as foreign influence began to go unchecked. The small number of troops in Iraq allowed the nation's borders to become porous. As a result, foreign extremist groups looking for *jihad* against Westerners began to flow in rather freely.[154] Staff Sergeant Mike Brase recalls the surprisingly high amount of foreign militiamen in Iraq during his tour between April 2004 and April 2005,

> …a lot of the times it wasn't the locals who were the insurgents…it was people from other places that were usually the ones causing problems… I've fought people from Egypt, I fought people from Syria, Chechnya, Iran, Sudan…[155]

Sergeant Phil Johnson of the 10th Mountain Division recalls something similar as well during his tour between August 2005 to August 2006,

> It became a cause for everybody who hated America to come into Iraq. There were bounties. People were getting paid. If you killed an American you made money. So there were tons of outside soldiers who had nothing to do with that war, who didn't give a shit about Iraq. They were just a group of terrorist organizations or what not who just hated Americans. They were coming into Iraq for the sole purpose of fighting and killing Americans.[156]

The sudden influx of radicalized foreign militias caused serious issues for the American occupation as each group had its own political and religious agenda to adhere to, and was willing

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[153] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 73.

[154] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 147. Riverbend recalled this development in September of 2003, "…there are terrorists in Iraq. It's true. Ever since the occupation, they've been here by the hundreds and thousands. They are seeping in from neighboring countries through the borders the 'Coalition of the Willing' could not protect and would not let the Iraqi army protect" (Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 57).

[155] Mike Brase, Personal Interview.

[156] Phil Johnson. Interviewed by Neema Sahebi. Personal Interview. Portland, January 1, 2014

to use Iraq as its battlefield while it pursued them, regardless of collateral damage.[157] U.S. and Coalition troops, already bogged down by the insurgency, could not keep up with the growing security situation as a new battlefront opened up.

Sectarian paramilitary organizations and religious militias also began to flow into Iraq as it became clear that their comrades in Iraq were not safe and living in appalling conditions. The Badr Brigade, a Shi'a paramilitary organization, was previously asked by U.S. intelligence to stay out of Iraq in the spring of 2003. For the most part, the Badr Brigade followed that request. Yet, as the situation began to deteriorate, members of the Badr Brigade insisted that they provide security to Shi'a neighborhoods themselves since the United States appeared to be incapable of doing so. By late 2003, a substantial amount of the organization had returned to Iraq.[158]

Perhaps the best example of this trend lies with Muqtada al-Sadr, a highly popular Shi'a cleric and leader of the Mahdi Army. He moved into Shi'a neighborhoods early on as U.S. forces proved to be ineffective at providing security and stability. Sadr and the Mahdi Army were able to provide Iraqi neighborhoods with traffic services, waste services, food, protection, and police services.[159] Sami Hilali, a truck driver from Huriya, recalls the stability and order that Sadr brought to his neighborhood,

> …gradually they started doing community services, things the government should have been doing but wasn't. They organized trash pickups when no one else would. That was a big thing everyone in the neighborhood was happy about. They did traffic control, and posted night guards around the streets since police almost never entered. They would try to solve people's problems, too. For example, a neighbor of mine was accidentally wounded by the Americans, and the Sadr Office paid his rent for seven months while he recovered…They distributed gasoline and kerosene when both were scarce. These were the kinds of things they did to give themselves a good reputation in the neighborhood. I have to admit they kept order on our streets, and we were grateful, especially in the early days of the looting.[160]

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[157] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 360. Also see Ibid., 219.
[158] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 164.
[159] Ibid., 198.
[160] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 88.

Sadr was able to gain the support of the people in these neighborhoods very quickly as he presented himself to be a far better candidate for leadership than the United States in an increasingly desperate situation. This contributed to the growing violence in Iraq because the Mahdi Army eventually declared *jihad* on the occupation, and Sadr's aforementioned services provided it with a sizable pool of supporters and fresh recruits.[161]

Iraq's new population of foreign extremists and militants also destabilized the nation as they amplified the sectarian divisions amongst Iraqi society. A resurgence of fundamentalism developed as militias and extremist paramilitary organizations began to take over cities and implement terror campaigns targeting Iraqis of different religious sects.[162] The increasing levels of violence drove a substantial amount of Iraqis to adopt the fundamentalist doctrines of their new foreign neighbors. In their desperation, Iraqis began to feel that faith would be the only thing to save them. Riverbend explains further in a blog post from August 23, 2003,

> We are seeing an increase of fundamentalism in Iraq which is terrifying…Every religion has its extremists. In times of chaos and disorder, those extremists flourish…There's been an overwhelming return to fundamentalism. People are turning to religion…the first and most prominent reason is fear.[163]

The chaotic environment acted as a self-perpetuating cycle of violence. Without adequate security, Iraqis instinctively fled to their faith for protection. As things became worse, their religious zeal increased.[164] Although sectarian divisions seemed to be somewhat dormant in Iraq in early 2003, the aforementioned development allowed for them to rekindle and reach hostile

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[161] Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, 198. It is worth noting that Sadr had initially been undecided on his views of the Americans. He was glad to see Saddam leave, yet, remained suspicious towards U.S. intentions. In an interview with Anthony Shadid shortly after the invasion, Sadr declared that he hoped the U.S. would ally itself with him and the rest of the Shiite community. Yet, he warned that if the U.S. imposed its will upon Iraqis, a rebellion would follow (Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 201). Although it is debatable, perhaps Sadr's immense influence and power could have been put to use by the American occupation early on to win the support of the Shi'a population. However, when Sadr turned against U.S. efforts, so did a substantial portion of the Iraqi population.
[162] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 426.
[163] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 17-19.
[164] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 403.

levels. This development greatly exacerbated the growth of violence and with it, the growth of fundamentalism as well.

As time went on and fundamentalism continued to rise amongst the population, foreign militant groups had an easier time recruiting people and convincing them to use their faith to engage in *jihad*. Whether it was *jihad* against the Americans or other religious sects, the aforementioned tactic proved successful. As George Packer explained in his book *The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq*,

> It was one measure of America's inability to achieve its goals in Iraq that a man like Bashir Shaker, who had everything to gain from the overthrow of Saddam and the opportunity it opened up, now felt himself pulled toward a harsher brand of Islam in reaction to the pervasive insecurity of the occupation.[165]

The inability of the occupation to provide Iraq with security created the perfect vacuum for fundamentalism to flourish. A completely new war developed as violence amongst Iraqis grew simultaneously to the violence aimed at the occupation. With these two trends entrenched, Iraq was well on its way to the events of 2006.

Iraqis who refused to adopt fundamentalism and sectarianism also got caught up in the emerging civil war. Whether Iraqis supported civil war or not was irrelevant as many foreign militias and extremists used coercion to force Iraqis into participating with their religious military campaigns. Luay Ali Hussein, a Shiite resident of Fallujah, recalls this development,

> Foreign fighters began to drift into the city as things got tenser, Yemenis, Saudis, Moroccans, Palestinians, Lebanese. An uncountable number came. Thousands of them. They took over the whole city. Eventually…the foreigners outnumbered us…They began to run the place, ordering us around as though we were slaves to them…It was these foreign fighters who began to start with the sectarianism. I never had any troubles being a Shi'ite in Fallujah during all my years there.

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[165] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 263

> Neither did other Shi'ites….But as the foreign fighters began to take over, Shi'ites like me were pushed to the side. We began to feel ignored and eventually threatened by these outsiders.[166]

Sergeant Phil Johnson also provides valuable insight as to why Iraqis seemed unable to resist the will of the foreign militants who began overrunning their neighborhoods,

> It was just general fear. If they didn't keep quiet about those people [foreign terror organizations and extremists] then those people would murder their wife and kids. We're not gonna do that…so they [Iraqis] really feared them [terrorists and extremists]. Fear speaks…they became fearful of what the others could do, and without a steady presence of Americans there to protect them, cause you know we'd drive into town and then leave, well…they're out of luck. They'd shut up and not help us because we weren't there to protect them.[167]

The Bush administration's earlier decisions to keep troop levels as low as possible came back to haunt the occupation as sectarian tensions rose. U.S. and Coalition troops did not have the resources and muscle at their disposal to contain and thwart the growth of fundamentalism and sectarian violence. Thus, as time progressed and the occupation remained ineffective in securing Iraq or preventing the coming civil war, the events of 2006 and 2007 became inevitable.

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[166] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 69. Saddam Hatif Hatim al-Jabouri, a college student at the University in Diwaniyah, also recalls the sudden influx of foreign fighters. He remembers seeing an increasing amount of extremists, most of which belonged to the Badr Brigade or the Mahdi Army, on campus between 2003 and 2006. These foreigners began to act as the campus security and dictated social standards. Members of the Mahdi Army eventually brought al-Jabouri and his friends into their local offices and lectured them on their fanatical brand of Islam, the war against the Americans, and social rules that they believed needed to be enforced on campus (Kukis, *Voices From Iraq*, 85).

[167] Phil Johnson, Personal Interview.

Part II

How the U.S. Military Lost the Will of the Iraqi People

<u>Strategy – How the United States Military Conceptualized the War</u>

While civilians implemented the Bush administration's policies within the confines of the Green Zone, the average Iraqi interacted with the soldiers of the United States military on a daily basis.[168] In this respect, the U.S. military acted as America's ambassadors. Their mission was to demonstrate that the United States had come to liberate Iraq and usher in an era of stability and prosperity. Yet, America's ambassadors were tragically unsuccessful in convincing Iraqis of the message they embodied. As Riverbend explained in October of 2004, "'America' has become synonymous with 'empire,' 'hegemony,' and 'warfare.'"[169] Although the ambassadors worked to associate America with liberation, many in Iraq began to associate it with the opposite as the war dragged closer to 2006.

As the insurgency solidified in the summer of 2003, the military engaged in methods that were inherently counterproductive to their mission. Although the Bush administration's absence of a comprehensive strategic vision left the U.S. military without the manpower, political framework, and essential resources to secure and stabilize Iraq, the military's operations simultaneously made matters much worse. Lieutenant Colonel Gregg Reilly from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment recalls this dynamic: "The tactical activities I conducted to bring security – tactical checkpoints, raids, and patrols – often had a destabilizing effect."[170] Given the circumstances, stabilization was already a daunting feat. However, the way in which the military conducted its operations made it virtually impossible. An analysis of how the U.S. military

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[168] The Green Zone is a common term to refer to the U.S. occupation in Iraq. It was a cordoned off section of Baghdad where Saddam's palaces resided. The CPA and all other government bodies involved with Iraq's reconstruction operated out of the Green Zone.

[169] Riverbend. *Baghdad Burning II: More Girl Blog from Iraq*, (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2006), 13. Emphasis in original.

[170] Nir Rosen. *In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq*, (New York: Free Press, 2006), 76.

operated both strategically and tactically may explain the failure to transcend its message and the immense repercussions that ensued as a result.

CENTCOM Commander General Tommy Franks envisioned the war primarily as a conflict between the Coalition and Ba'athist enemy forces. He understood the military's role for Iraq to be simple – to provide necessary conditions for regime change. In order to achieve the military's task, Franks constructed an operational strategy that focused on destroying Saddam's regime and continuing to eliminate all possible regime remnants after its destruction to ensure the successful establishment of a democracy. Phase IV reconstruction operations, therefore, were not a part of the military's strategy.[171] Rather, the military's top command initially saw its mission in post-Saddam Iraq as a scaled-down continuation of offensive combat operations to weed out Ba'athist dead-enders.

When Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez took command of Coalition forces in June of 2003 and General John Abizaid took over Franks's position as CENTCOM Commander in July of 2003, they both quickly realized the need for an entirely new strategy for Phase IV. Although Franks's policy of actively and aggressively seeking out and destroying regime remnants was continued for several months under Iraq's new command, Sanchez and Abizaid also realized that the war in post-Saddam Iraq was primarily one of hearts and minds.[172] The two understood that the military's mission to ensure conditions for successful regime change could only be achieved through securing and maintaining the support of the Iraqi people. They thus sought to construct

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[171] Ricardo S. Sanchez. *Wiser in Battle: A Soldier's Story*, (New York: Harper, 2008), 171.
[172] Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 235.

military operations in a fashion that would demonstrate America's dedication to safety and prosperity in Iraqi.[173]

While Sanchez and Abizaid embodied a correct understanding of the nature of the war in 2003, the operational strategy that they constructed did not. Sanchez realized that the key to winning the hearts and minds of Iraqis was establishing security. However, he ultimately devised a strategy for the U.S. military that was fundamentally enemy-centric. Sanchez's plan for securing Iraq was simple – identity all of the insurgents and either kill or capture them.[174] Through eliminating all hostile elements in Iraq, Sanchez believed that the military could maintain a secure and safe environment for Iraqis, thus ultimately winning them over.

Additionally, Sanchez envisioned intelligence to be a key component in his plan. He asserted that if Coalition forces had a deep understanding of who the enemy was, then they could successfully bring the fight to them and destroy them. This would eradicate the destabilizing factors within Iraq and allow the military to establish the foundation for prosperity. As Sanchez later explained,

> I was having multiple intel updates, understanding that…our effectiveness against the insurgency was going to come from our ability to harvest human intelligence…The only way you're going to get yourself inside of their decision cycle and their operating system is by getting individuals to talk.[175]

Intelligence, therefore, was the foundation of Sanchez's strategic framework for Iraq. The military's efforts would amount to nothing without an in depth knowledge of the elements they needed to remove from Iraqi society.[176] The problem was that Sanchez could not see how to get

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[173] Peter R. Mansoor. *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 25.
[174] Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 232. Also see William Brent Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Narrative: Culture and Change in the U.S. Army, 2005-2007,* (Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, 2012), 59.
[175] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 223.
[176] Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 248.

the intelligence without an active and aggressive campaign to gain accurate intelligence. His plan relied on intelligence to lead to military action. Yet his only means of acquiring that intelligence was through military action. Sanchez's strategy for winning the war, therefore, was fundamentally conflicted by a paradox.

Sanchez understood that security was essential to winning hearts and minds, but his methods for obtaining security undermined that very possibility. A U.S. Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel observed this strategic error in 2003, "What you are seeing here is an unconventional war fought conventionally."[177] Sanchez's entire approach to securing Iraq relied on the large assumption that Coalition forces could successfully and accurately identify all sources of instability in Iraq, separate them from the population, and then destroy them with minimized collateral damage.[178] Yet this strategic framework failed to realize the impracticality of successfully executing such operations without using a heavy hand and alienating substantial portions of Iraqi society. The U.S. military worked long and hard between 2003 and 2006 with the belief that they were working towards Iraq's stabilization. In reality, the opposite was true and their tactics proved to be conducive towards destabilizing Iraq instead.

<u>How the United States Military Operated in Iraq Prior to 2006</u>

In accordance with Sanchez's strategic framework, the military embarked on a vigorous campaign to identity and destroy the insurgency's roots.[179] The campaign began on June 15, 2003 with a nation-wide counterinsurgency operation known as Operation Desert Scorpion. This was the largest offensive maneuver since the invasion of Iraq, as it required resources from all elements of the V Corps – the entirety of America's military force in Iraq. The focus of

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[177] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 214.
[178] Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 76.
[179] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 222. Also see Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 207.

Operation Desert Scorpion was to eliminate all remaining remnants of the Ba'athist regime as well as all forces hostile to the occupation or the Iraqi people.[180] Sanchez's campaign called for the military to rely heavily on human intelligence. That is, the sources of information as to who and where the enemy was needed to come from the population. In an effort to gain this type of intelligence, commanders used what little information they initially had to engage in cordon and sweep operations.

Cordon and sweep operations became one of the operational centerpieces of the campaign to seek out the enemy and bring the fight to him. Essentially, units would go out on patrol and look for any sort of person they deemed suspicious. U.S. soldiers often times used what little intelligence they had to confront certain individuals, however, in the absence of such intelligence, they often confronted people based on personal opinion.[181] Ricks explains further,

> The key to actionable intelligence was seen by many U.S. commanders as conducting huge sweeps to detain and question Iraqis. Sometimes units acted on tips, but sometimes they just detained all able-bodied males of combat age in areas known to be anti-American.[182]

Staff Sergeant Mike Brase recalls his unit working under a similar mindset,

> …it's funny cause here in America it's so bad to racial profile, but there it's ok. If you are a full African black man, you have no business being in Baghdad. There was nothing there for you other than to kill Americans. If we were driving around on patrol and we saw a group of black guys we would roll 'em up and start interrogating them cause they had no business being there. Here in the States, the NAACP would be all over you, but there it's like common sense…they're not Arabic.

Bringing the fight to the enemy and securing Iraq was quite the arduous task as few had an inkling of an idea of who the enemy was. In their strident efforts to identify the enemy, the military lost sight of their relations with the Iraqi people and the crucial role it played in stabilizing the nation.

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[180] Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 216.
[181] Brase. Personal Interview.
[182] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 224.

As units were constantly attempting to find Iraqis with potential intelligence value, they often times arrested innocent bystanders along the way. Without knowing whom the enemy was, many units concluded that the only practical thing to do was to detain all males of potential fighting age and send them to interrogation centers.[183] Lieutenant Colonel David Poirier of the 4th Infantry Division recalls this view, "With the brigade and battalion commanders, it became a philosophy: 'Round up all the military age males, because we don't know who's bad or who's good.'"[184] Although such operations may have been fairly effective in detaining insurgents or insurgent supporters, they also made wrongful arrests of civilians a high probability. For every insurgent captured during these operations, potentially dozens of Iraqis were simultaneously alienated as non-combatants were regularly caught up in the mix. By using blanket policies in cordon and sweep operations, the U.S. military antagonized a substantial portion of Iraqis when they otherwise could have avoided doing so [185]

Indiscriminate detention most often took place in instances of enemy contact. When convoys were ambushed or struck by IEDs, units would engage in combat and frequently pick up males of fighting-age that were nearby while their veins were still laden with adrenaline and rage. Tony Lagouranis, a Military Intelligence (MI) interrogator recalled this trend in early 2004:

> Two of the prisoners were working in a field slightly removed from the IED but with a good view. They were hundreds of yards away, but they were the closest ones and that was reason enough to pick them up. The patrol went into town to question people. They got no information, but found one old man who acted evasive and suspicious. They arrested him too. [186]

This practice became common enough for the phrase "50-Meter Detainee" – detainees arrested for being within fifty meters of IEDs regardless of evidence pertaining to innocence – to became

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[183] Tony Lagouranis and Allen Mikaelian. *Fear Up Harsh: An Army Interrogator's Dark Journey Through Iraq,* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2007), 149. Also see Ricks, *Fiasco,* 195.
[184] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 233.
[185] Mark R. DePue, *Patrolling Baghdad: A Military Police Company and the War in Iraq*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 219. Also see Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 70.
[186] Lagouranis, *Fear Up Harsh,* 54.

somewhat of a standard military term.[187] Gary Deland, a civilian contractor who helped to prepare Abu Ghraib prison as a military detention facility, observed this protocol in early 2003, "They [detainees] were picked up in sweeps, and nobody knew what to release them for. Their only charge might be 'wrong place, wrong time' literally written on their arrest sheet." [188] In the frantic setting of urban warfare with an unidentifiable enemy, many units resorted to desperate measures to gain the intelligence their operations required. Regardless of the circumstances, these tactics did not help establish strong relations with the people they were tasked with protecting.

Cordon and sweep operations also incorporated the use of raids. While interrogating individuals picked up from patrols, military intelligence strived towards locating the pockets of anti-American sentiment. This intelligence was then used to lead missions, usually conducted in the middle of the night, to raid civilian houses suspected of housing or supporting the insurgency.[189] It was commonplace for units to storm into target homes. While many raids were conducted by knocking first, allowing the residents a choice to open their door or have it kicked down, often raids were conducted without that option. Soldiers would then proceed to separate the men and women, search the entire house, and subject all the males of the household to on-the-spot interrogations.[190]

Raids were problematic as they were frequently conducted on innocent civilian residences. Raids were usually a shot in the dark as units operated on intelligence that was vague at best. Entire blocks were regularly raided in search of a single potential insurgent. Yet in many

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[187] Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 35. Also see Trish Wood, *What Was Asked of Us: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It*, (New York: Back Bay Books, 2006), 183.
[188] Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 23. Also see Ricks, *Fiasco,* 276.
[189] Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 55. Also see Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 208.
[190] Hedges and Al-Arian. *Collateral Damage*, 52-53.

instances, units were on the completely wrong blocks.[191] Marine Gunnery Sergeant Patrick

Tracey recalls conducting a raid with abysmal intelligence,

> I had the feeling we were on another goose chase. Intel hasn't been exactly on the money and we never know until the mission is over if they were right or wrong. Well, the mission is over and intel sucked as usual…all we did was scare the shit out of some women and children…[192]

Captain John Brown of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment experienced similar results despite

operating on intelligence gathered over four months, "Each male was asked his name. None of

them matched the names on the list. It was the wrong house."[193] Although raids may have

captured insurgents, weapons caches, and insurgent supporters at times, they most often yielded

no results at all. Civilian harassment was largely the most common outcome.

While raids were intended to be a means of providing security, soldiers lacked the

intelligence resources necessary to achieve their strategic goals. Instead, raids often ended up

alienating an innocent family rather than capturing an enemy of the state.[194] Staff Sergeant T.J.

Wesphal's experience during his tour in 2003 can attest to the ineffectiveness of raids,

> Most of the people were terrified…we knew that this was not the way to win hearts and minds. You don't come in the middle of the night and harass people and expect them to give you flowers the next day.[195]

If being arrested for being at the wrong street at the wrong time was not a significant fear in itself

for Iraqi civilians, being woken up in the middle of the night by armed men certainly was. Raids

were strategically ineffective in the grand scheme of military operations in Iraq. They made

sense on paper, yet in practice, they gave many Iraqis a reason to despise the American presence.

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[191] Patrick Tracey. *Street Fight in Iraq: What It's Really Like Over There*, (Oceanside: Leatherneck Publishing, 2006), 52. Also see Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise,* 120.
[192] Tracey. *Street Fight in Iraq,* 60.
[193] Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 89.
[194] Ibid*.,* 47.
[195] Hedges and Al-Arian, *Collateral Damage,* 70. Also see Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 99.

Considering that Iraqi support for the U.S. occupation was shaky at best, this was a surefire method to fail in winning the will of the people and sway the nation towards opposition.[196] In hindsight, Major General John Batiste found cordon and sweep operations to be counterproductive: "Probably 99% of those people [detainees] were guilty of absolutely nothing, but the way we treated them, turned them against the effort in Iraq forever."[197] Cordon and sweep operations were a strategic failure. Although these tactics may not have completely alienated the majority of Iraqis, they also did little to win them over.

Cordon and sweep operations and raids were not a means to an end in themselves. The purpose of cordon sweep operations was to provide MI units with all possible suspects of the insurgency so that they could sift through them and identify the true enemies. Yet, as soon as detainees arrived at detention centers, they were usually regarded as captured enemies or enemy supporters. Suspects became perpetrators as soon as they were dropped off.[198] As Colonel Joseph Cramer recalls,

> On a tactical level, I never saw anything – to include Abu Ghraib – that I would change. I include Abu Ghraib in that because everything that takes place in Abu Ghraib takes place in the Oregon State Prison, every day, every hour of every day…it was run like a prison. There were interrogations and everything else…but it was a prison. If you got into Abu Ghraib…you were not a nice guy. We weren't just bringing little old guys off the street, you were there for a reason. Was Abu Ghraib a nice place? No, prisons aren't supposed to be a nice place.[199]

Although a sizable amount of criminals, insurgents, and terrorists were brought into detention centers, the aforementioned mindset does not take the flaws of cordon and sweep operations into

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[196] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 383.

[197] Hedges and Al-Arian, *Collateral Damage,* 72. A civilian DoD employee who worked at the 4th Infantry Division's detention facility on base in Tikrit shared similar views, "I think 80 percent of the people we bring in are 'at the wrong place at the wrong time' [and] have no intelligence value" (Ricks, *Fiasco,* 280).

[198] Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 41.

[199] Joseph Cramer. Personal Interview. Colonel Cramer is referring to the infamous prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib Prison that leaked onto the media in 2004. It is well known that this scandal became the face of the U.S. occupation in the Arab world, and was a major source of Iraqi grievance. Also see Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 30.

consideration.[200] Criminals should be treated as criminals in a combat setting. However, criminals are deemed that title after a fair trial – a process detainees never experienced before being subjected to imprisonment, intense interrogations, and occasionally abuse.

Tensions ran high in detention centers as units believed to be directly handling the enemy they hated so dearly. The upper echelon of the military exacerbated tensions as it put a great deal of pressure on both Military Police (MP) units and MI units to extract valuable intelligence at nearly all costs.[201] Sanchez elaborates, "So we must push our interrogation to the limits of our authorities as defined by the Geneva Conventions. Each of you [MI interrogation officers] must know when our techniques are approaching the limits allowed, but you cannot cross those boundaries."[202] The top brass wanted to see a constant flow of intelligence coming from detention centers. However, its willingness to push and bend the limitations of international war law indicates flaws with its strategic framework as it implied to MI officers that abuse could be accepted if not encouraged.

Under the intense push to obtain actionable intelligence for infantry units, detention centers soon became breeding grounds for abuse. Good men with strong moral fiber were pushed by the bureaucracy of the military to engage in highly questionable techniques to gain intelligence. While it was known that physical contact was prohibited and punishable under military law, MPs often used loopholes to obtain the same results. Tripping, shoving, and pushing detainees down stairs or into walls was ordinary at several facilities when the high

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[200] Hedges and Al-Arian. *Collateral Damage*, 73.
[201] Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 38.
[202] Sanchez, *Wiser in Battle,* 262. The pressure to push the limits of legalities as a means to extract intelligence was exerted by the Bush administration as well. Vice President Cheney once explained, "We've got to spend time in the shadows in the intelligence world. A lot of what needs to be done here [in the Global War on Terror] will have to be done quietly, without any discussion, using sources and methods that are available to our intelligence agencies" (Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 29). Also see Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 146.

command was absent.[203] Putting detainees in painful stress positions that simulated bones breaking and the exploitation of pressure points were commonplace because such techniques were not explicitly prohibited.[204] In other instances, detainees were forced to drag their own genitals along gravel or rough pavement to get them to speak.[205]

Arab sexual taboos were also exploited in detention centers with alarming frequency. Many prisoners were constantly naked and forced to wear women's undergarments on their heads while in the presence of women.[206] Detainees were constantly deprived of sleep as well. MPs and MI officers were required to give detainees only four hours of sleep per twenty-four hours. However, this regulation was regularly bent through breaking up detainees' allotted amount of sleep in small increments within every twenty-four hour period.[207] Abusing detainees became standardized in 2003 and continued to be somewhat usual even after the Abu Ghraib scandal went public in 2004.[208]

Abusing detainees seemed to be an acceptable method to stabilize Iraq given the principles detention facilities were often ran with. This sentiment was amplified as many MPs and MI interrogators were told that getting detainees to speak would save American lives.[209] Sergeant Ken Davis recalls this belief in an interaction with Specialist Charles Graner,

> And he [Graner] says, 'I've got a question for you. They're making me do things that I feel are morally and ethically wrong. What should I do?' And I [Davis] said, 'Don't do them.' He says, 'I don't have a choice…Every time a bomb goes off outside of the wire…one of the OGA [Other

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[203] Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 80. Also see Ricks, *Fiasco,* 271.
[204] Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 41, 113.
[205] Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 84.
[206] Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 93.
[207] Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 99. Also see Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 137.
[208] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 272. Also see Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 104. Also see Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 99.
[209] Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure*, 218-220.

Government Agency] members would come in to say, That's another American losing their life, and unless you help us get this information, their blood is on your hands as well.'[210]

In the rush to obtain the information that all other military operations relied heavily on, detention centers lost sight of the crucial importance of establishing an image of America that ran counter to that of Saddam's. Consequently, detention centers ultimately became a symbol of oppression and occupation for many Iraqis.

Detention centers were in many ways the quintessential examples of the flaws of the military's strategy. In order to extract the information needed to identify insurgents, prisoner abuse was essentially a prerequisite. Moreover, in order to extract the sources of such information from the population, indiscriminate arrests were also a prerequisite. An MI officer from a detention center in Babel explains further,

…maybe not everyone's [detainees at Abu Ghraib] guilty, but they know something. We're casting a wide net. We're going to get everyone we can…I'm not concerned about whether we have 'evidence' or not. We're trying to stop an insurgency.[211]

The constant need for prisoners of intelligence value and the simultaneous need to produce actionable intelligence created a toxic combination. Alienating the Iraqi population became an acceptable piece of collateral damage as the military remained set on finding and destroying the enemy.

When units were not engaged in cordon and sweep missions, they were most often on patrol in the streets of Iraq. The lack of troop strength made establishing a presence within many major metropolitan areas extremely arduous. The military attempted to compensate its lack of numbers with an excess of firepower and aggression. The idea was simple – to show insurgents

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[210] Wood, *What Was Asked of Us*, 91.
[211] Lagouranis and Mikaelian, *Fear Up Harsh,* 197.

amongst the population that any attack on U.S. forces would bring a storm of destruction with devastating intensity.[212] Gunnery Sergeant Patrick Tracy recalls the purpose of patrols,

> …to provide a presence and prove to these jackasses [the insurgents] nowhere is safe, and we're willing to go into any part of town and into any house we want. This lets the good people know the terrorists need to fear us and we don't fear the terrorists…of all the people on Earth, the Iraqis understand and respect that power resides with the most aggressive, committed, and ruthless person or group. Don't for a minute think anyone forgets the last thirty odd years under Uncle Saddam. Guess what? There's a new sheriff in town. That's us![213]

An immense display of force regularly served as a means to deter any insurgent from destabilizing the security situation. While this tactic seemed rational in theory, especially when considering the military's reoccurring issues with its troop strength, it was not a viable method for establishing a friendly image of America. Instead, it most often created an image of fear.[214]

In peacekeeping settings, patrols serve a twofold purpose. On the tactical level, they are a means to establish a steady presence within areas cleared of enemy activity. On the strategic level, they are a means to win the support of the people through displaying a concern for the population's well-being. Aside from security, patrols are the military's methods for establishing friendly and personal human contact with locals to foster relationships. Yet, the way in which the U.S. military conducted patrols focused too heavily on achieving the tactical goal. In doing so, they overlooked the strategic goal.

American patrols between 2003 and 2006 were not very effective at the tactical or strategic levels because they were not necessarily conducted to protect the population. Rather,

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[212] Hedges and Al-Arian, *Collateral Damage,* 68-68. Also see Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Era,* 84.
[213] Tracey, *Street Fight in Iraq,* 76.
[214] Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 40,

they were overwhelmingly conducted to fight the insurgents.[215] As Specialist Colby Buzzell states,

> Mounted patrols are also known as 'movement to contact' missions. The Army used to call them 'search and destroy' missions…Movement to contact is when we would go strolling around the streets of Mosul in our Stryker vehicles to see if we could lure some terrorist or insurgent to take the bait and attack us.[216]

Although patrols are supposed to be population-centric, they were strategically designed to be enemy-centric in Iraq. U.S. soldiers demonstrated to Iraqis that they were in their nation as combatants and combatants only – willing and eager to fight in their backyards. This did not help associate the United States with peacekeepers and partners of the Iraqi people.[217] Openly inviting combat amongst the population centers did little to provide stability. Instead, it provoked belligerents to destabilize the nation further though establishing Iraq's cities as the war's designated battlefields.

Additionally, the establishment of patrols as an active combat mission instilled a combatant mindset amongst U.S. forces. Within this context, soldiers often behaved as any combat mission would regularly require – as ruthless warriors prepared to kill at any given moment.[218] This mindset is necessary to ensure one's survival and effective performance within a combat setting. In Iraq, however, it led to the treatment of all civilians as enemies. Sergeant Mario Mihaucich explains further,

> …for us [U.S. soldiers], one minute these people [Iraqis] were the enemy, and now it's coddle and woo them. Two minutes ago, I was killing them. So now how do you flip a switch automatically? You really can't…It's very hard for us to go from the trigger pullers to basic peacekeeping.[219]

Cavalry Scout Garrett Reppenhagen provides similar insight,

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[215] Tracey, *Street Fight in Iraq,* 82.
[216] Colby Buzzell, *My War: Killing Time in Iraq,* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005), 168.
[217] Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise,* 53.
[218] Tracey, *Street Fight in Iraq,* 17. Also see Buzzell, *My War,* 91. Also see DePue, *Patrolling Baghdad,* 143-144. Also see Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 265.
[219] Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 49.

> I've pointed my weapon at some of them [Iraqis], trying to push them away. I've hit them with my weapon to push them back…I know it wasn't helping. It wasn't building a love relationship with the Iraqi people. I wasn't winning friends and influencing people. The environment I was in basically called for it.[220]

This sort of behavior is warranted in regular, conventional wars. Iraq, however, was not a conventional war. As the top brass engaged in combat-oriented missions, it essentially ordered soldiers to win hearts and minds through brute force with an enemy that was indistinguishable from the population.[221] Therefore, patrols were strategically at odds with the military's mission.

The military's inability to secure Iraq was also greatly exacerbated by its policy of operating out of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). FOBs were used as a means of force protection. In an effort to minimize casualties amongst its relatively small force size, the military established large and impenetrable fortresses in remote locations outside of city centers.[222] This greatly hampered the military's ability to maximize the effectiveness of the resources it had at its disposal through regularly relinquishing territory to enemy fighters. Sergeant Phil Johnson explains this dynamic eloquently,

> …they way it worked was that you'd go out and do your mission and drive back. We had patrols around, and all they did was drive around and if they hit a roadside bomb or an ambush, then you'd fight that battle and then you'd just drive and leave. All you did was allow the bad guy to go and do the same thing again. It boils down to being the same thing as Vietnam. You'd go out on a patrol, get ambushed, fight, and then you'd leave. You never controlled any ground…there were no lines or anything. I think that due to the increasing violence, and whether that be the Iraqi population or what like I experienced with outsiders coming in, you needed to keep a more steady presence on the ground. Guys would go out on patrol all day and drive back and then the streets would be vacant all night. So they'd [insurgents or terror groups] place bombs and do all that and then the next day when they'd [American troops] go out they'd get blown the fuck up. So a more steady presence on the ground would prevent a lot of that from happening.[223]

Given the circumstances of operating within an extremely hostile and unpredictable environment, prioritizing troop protection was indeed important. Yet, the military failed to understand that FOBs could also compromise the achievement of its mission if they separate

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[220] Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 186.
[221] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 235. Also see Ibid., 237.
[222] Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Era,* 64. Also see Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise,* 295.
[223] Phil Johnson. Personal Interview.

personnel from the population too much. The repercussions of using FOBs in an unconventional war was overlooked as units constantly gave up the security they established during the days to go back to the safeties of their bases at night.

Classic counterinsurgency doctrine demands for military forces to live and operate among the population they are attempting to protect. This creates an atmosphere of permanency, which renders the ability of insurgent activity to destabilize areas much more difficult. FOBs allowed the security situation to worsen as they isolated soldiers from the population that they were supposed to win over.[224] As Colonel Peter Mansoor states,

> Baghdad simply could not provide the degree of semi-permanency necessary to keep the insurgents at bay inside the city. No matter how many daily patrols were sent outside the gates…you cannot commute to the fight – to protect the people of a city, units must be inside the city.[225]

Without establishing any level of permanency, the military not only allowed for insurgent activity to continue but to increase in intensity as well. While the military fought extremely hard to quell the insurgency, operating out of FOBs rendered what success and progress units had in securing areas ultimately ineffectual in the grand scheme of the war.

Moreover, operating out of FOBs amplified the influence of foreign militants. Adamant on stirring the pot of dormant Iraqi sectarian tensions, these groups continued to push the nation towards a bloody civil war as their influx remained largely unchallenged.[226] Colonel Peter Mansoor explains further, "I believe had we remained positioned inside Baghdad to secure the Iraqi people…the sectarian cleansing that tore the fabric of Iraqi society two years later would not have occurred."[227] Sectarian civil war, therefore, became an increasingly inevitable

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[224] Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Era,* 64-65. Also see Buzzell, *My War,* 145.
[225] Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise,* 297.
[226] Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 38. Also see Ricks, *Fiasco,* 191.
[227] Mansoor, *Baghdad at Sunrise,* 299. Also see Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Era,* 84-85.

phenomenon as foreign fighters continued to gain footholds in Iraqi metropolitan areas. While

soldiers roamed the streets during the day, foreign militants were often busy enticing sectarian

tensions at night.

Security at the degree required to win Iraqi hearts and minds was virtually impossible if

units were not even living among the population. FOBs served as an operational solution to a

tactical issue. The problem was that they also served as a tactical impediment to the greater

strategic issue.[228] Without understanding the truly damaging effects of FOBs in a peacekeeping

and counterinsurgency setting, the U.S. military's top command allowed for the situation in Iraq

to spin out of control. Their failure to understand this dynamic guaranteed to lose the will of the

people as limited military resources were used in some of the worst ways possible.

<p align="center">The Iraqi Response – How the Liberators Became the Enemies</p>

Although the greatest contributing factors to the growing discontent among Iraqis were

issues created by the civilian occupation, the U.S. military's operations simultaneously

contributed to this trend. Its policies pushed a substantial amount of Iraqis into opposition.

Shadid's account of Operation Peninsula Strike, a large-scale cordon and sweep operation in

mid-June of 2003, explains further,

> More than two dozen homes were raided in the sweep through the town…About four hundred residents were arrested, all but fifty of whom were released after a few days at the makeshift detention center…The damage was done. Despite the releases, and the apologies issued by the military as they were freed, many residents of Thuluyah were already speaking of collective punishment when I arrived…Ibrahim Ali Hussein, a sixty-year old farmer…told me, 'After this operation, we think one hundred Saddams are better than the Americans.'[229]

While U.S. operations may have been somewhat effective in weeding out insurgents and other

destabilizing elements of Iraqi society, they concurrently alienated the population and failed to

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[228] Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Era,* 85-86.
[229] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 266.

win their unabashed support.[230] By 2004, most Iraqis had decided that the Americans were indeed occupiers. If this decision was not based on the utter inability of the occupation to provide security and services, then it was based on military tactics.[231]

The U.S. military's combined use of cordon and sweep operations, detention centers, aggressive patrols, and FOBs established an image of malicious dominion among the population. Aside from being disgruntled by appalling living conditions, Iraqis soon began to feel intimidated by the Americans as well. After all, if one happened to live in a troublesome neighborhood, random apprehension and arrest was somewhat common.[232] Riverbend recalled fear among Iraqis in August of 2003,

> People are terrified of the raids. You never know what will happen…who might react wrong – what exactly the wrong reaction might be…But the truth is, the raids only accomplish one thing: they act as a constant reminder that we are under occupation, we are not independent, we are not free, we are not liberated. We are no longer safe in our own homes – everything now belongs to someone else.[233]

The effectiveness of raids in capturing insurgents was irrelevant as they were also surefire ways to provoke Iraqis into hatred. They served a tactical purpose for the military; however, to the average Iraqi, they served as a constant fear factor.[234] The use of raids served no strategic value as fear did not offer Iraqis an organic desire to support and help the American effort in their nation.

Furthermore, cordon and sweep operations often served as a direct cause of instability and militancy. Iraqi men were forced to constantly watch over their shoulders in fear as convoys sped by urban areas. This did not bode well for winning the hearts and minds of a society

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[230] Mike Hoyt, John Palattella, and Columbia Journalism Review, *Reporting Iraq: An Oral History of the War by the Journalists who Covered It*, (Hoboken: Melville House Publishing, 2007), 26.

[231] Salam Pax, *The Baghdad Blog*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), 186. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning II,* 23.

[232] Hoyt and Palattella, *Reporting Iraq,* 35.

[233] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 8.

[234] Hoyt and Palattella, *Reporting Iraq,* 56. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 261.

centered on strong male pride. Iraqi culture practically obligates men to retaliate to regain their

honor if it is compromised through humiliation.[235] Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Holshek

recognized this development:

> He [Holschek] asked his commander to imagine himself the head of a household in an Iraqi village. 'Two o'clock in the morning, your door busts open. A bunch of infantry guys burst into the private space of the house – in a society where family honor is the most important thing – and you lay the man down, and put the plastic cuffs on? And then we say, 'Oops, wrong home?' In this society, the guy has no other choice but to seek restitution. He will do that by placing a roadside bomb for one hundred dollars, because his family honor has been compromised…Simply to restore his own self-respect, the Iraqi would have to go out and take a shot at American forces.[236]

Fawzi Saud and his relatives elaborate on Iraqi culture,

> Soldiers, they said, entered without knocking and without the men of the houses present. They kept their fingers on their triggers all the time…No rooms were left unsearched, they said, including bedrooms. 'This is a violation of our dignity…They have no right to enter our house and search it. I'm not a soldier, I'm not a policeman, I'm not a party member…We have traditions and customs…For them it may be natural, but not for us. If an Iraqi had done this, we would have killed him.[237]

While establishing security was indeed the key to establishing a strong foundation for Iraqi

support, the military attempted to do so in a highly counterintuitive way. Cordon and sweep

operations and raids created the foundation for Iraqi resentment. Commanders failed to realize

that their tactics mirrored the image of an occupier. Indiscriminate arrests and midnight raids

ultimately created an aura of terror – a trait not commonly associated with a liberator.

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[235] Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 124.

[236] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 251. It is worth noting here that a substantial portion of small arms fire directed at Coalition forces was often purely honor driven rather than revenge driven. That is, the shots being fired at convoys and bases were usually not intended to be lethal. Rather, blindly shooting at the direction of Coalition forces was commonly a means for disgruntled Iraqi men to retaliate in order to regain their honor that they felt was taken from them in some shape or form (Ricks, *Fiasco,* 252). Major Isaiah Wilson, the official historian of the 101st airborne division explains in detail, "Some of the attacks we originally saw as 'poor marksmanship' likely were intentional misses by attackers pro-progress and pro-U.S., but honor bound to avenge a perceived wrong that U.S. forces at the time did not know how to appropriately solve" (Ricks, *Fiasco,* 252).

[237] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 274-275. A sheikh from al-Anbar province provided similar evidence in an interview with Nir Rosen in the spring of 2004, "They arrest the relatives and wives of wanted men and hold them hostage. They are holding 100,000 Iraqis in their prisons. Iraqis have lost their dignity and for this reason the resistance grows" (Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird,* 104).

Cordon and sweep operations were in many ways a perfect set-up for the instability that engulfed Iraq in the years leading to 2006. They pushed a population undetermined in its support into unrest and created a cause for armed resistance. Joining the insurgency or falling in with the ranks of foreign fundamentalist militias became increasingly attractive options for desperate Iraqi men. Iraqi blogger Salam Pax, a secular moderate, explains further,

> Think about it…if I wanted to instigate anti-American sentiments in a neighborhood which was until now indifferent towards the Americans, what would be the best thing to do? I would find a way to get the Americans to do bad things in that neighborhood. For example …make them go on house-to-house searches, tie up all the men and put sacks on their heads and scare all the children. This would tilt your American-o-meter from the 'I-don't-really-care' position to the 'what-the-fuck-do-they-think-they-are-doing?' position.[238]

Shadid also recognized the ramifications of U.S. tactics, "…it [cordon and sweep operations] had huge repercussions. It created vendettas that I don't think the American military understood they were creating."[239] Indifferent Iraqis often became hostile after experiencing cordon and sweep operations. These methods, therefore, defeated their own purpose through creating potential insurgents and militants in the pursuit to capture potential insurgents and militants.

If the massive arrests of Iraqi men was not enough to alienate individuals, then the treatment detainees received at detention centers certainly was. Iraqis became greatly resentful as detention centers descended into abuse and more men made their way through the system. Experiences at detention centers usually left released detainees vehemently against the American occupation and in support of any group in arms against them.[240] Reporter Thanassis Cambanis with The Boston Globe could attest to this trend, "…the people who were being released were claiming that this experience was turning them against the United States and towards the

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[238] Pax, *The Baghdad Blog,* 196-197.
[239] Hoyt and Palatella, *Reporting Iraq,* 66.
[240] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning II,* 22.

insurgency."[241] Ra'ad Jamal Habib, an Iraqi bus driver who was wrongfully arrested during a raid and detained for a year at Camp Bucca detention facility, remembers his abuse vividly,

> I said, 'Man, I didn't serve in the regular army. Why the hell would I serve in the Mahdi Army'...And then he slapped me so hard I fell off the stool. I started to cry...Neither the guy in front of me nor the guy behind me knew why they had been arrested. None of us had a chance to talk much...No one knew what the charges against them were. All the arrest stories were more or less the same. People going about their normal daily lives suddenly surrounded by soldiers and taken away. We were laughing actually. Because that was exactly how Saddam used to do it. We used to hear stories about how America was a democratic country, a free country, that would never suppress people. I found the opposite to be true...Two led us into a room and told us to strip...We stripped to our underwear. They told us to take that off too, but we both said no. We're people from the East, you know. It's not in our culture to just take off our clothes like that. We were told again to take off our underwear. When we didn't, one of the soldiers came and shoved me hard against the wall. Both of us started crying. We were terrified and humiliated. There was nothing we could do.[242]

Treating all inmates as terrorists had an extremely damaging effect as it crushed all hope or optimism Iraqis may have previously held towards the United States. Conversely, detention centers served as blatant proof for Iraqis who were initially hostile towards the United States, thus, entrenching and amplifying their aggression. Regardless of how Iraqis felt about the American occupation before they were detained, sentiments toward the U.S. upon their release were predominantly the same – immensely hostile and determined for retaliation.

Iraqis who made it out of their holding cells brought their often brutal and inhumane treatment back with them to their communities. While some believed the stories of abuse, the population as a whole usually treated them as rumors. Indeed, a substantial number of the prisoner abuse rumors circling Iraqi communities were either fabricated or loosely backed by evidence. When the Abu Ghraib scandal became a public sensation, however, nearly all of the

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[241] Hoyt and Palatella, *Reporting Iraq,* 67.
[242] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq,* 170-171.

rumors in Iraq began to be treated as facts regardless of the evidence supporting them.[243] As

Riverbend said in late April of 2004,

> Those pictures are horrific…the most prominent feeling was rage…We've been hearing terrible
> stories about Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad for a while now, but those pictures somehow spoke
> like no words could. Seeing those naked, helpless, hooded men was like being slapped in the face
> with an ice cold hand. I felt ashamed looking at them…[244]

While the Abu Ghraib scandal was only the tip of the prisoner abuse iceberg, it had some of the

most damaging effects for the American image throughout the entirety of the war. Much of the

goodwill demonstrated by soldiers instantly went down the drain.[245] If the majority of Iraqis did

not view the U.S. as an occupier by late 2003, the outbreak of the scandal in the spring of 2004

did much to change that.

The shift in public opinion in the wake of the publicity of prisoner abuse is perhaps best

exemplified in the sudden spike in violence that immediately followed the Abu Ghraib scandal.

Scout Sniper Garrett Reppenhagen recalls the increase in violence,

> They're fighting to the death. No Iraqi, no insurgent, wants to be captured by American forces
> now because they envision themselves in Abu Ghraib…There's a huge fear in the Iraqi population
> and the insurgency that if they get captured, they're going to be treated horribly. I knew that the
> entire Muslim world would just freak out. I knew the insurgency was going to escalate. It recruited
> tons more people to fight against us, and I knew that there'd be an increase in violence in sectors
> and that I'd have to deal with that. It happened. I mean, the violence definitely increased and
> people really changed their minds. The Iraqis that were on the fence pretty much jumped over on
> the side of the insurgency when news of what was happening at Abu Ghraib got out.[246]

The treatment of detainees at detention centers fundamentally worked against the strategic

mission of the U.S. military in Iraq as it created more unrest and instability. Prisoner abuse did

little to keep insurgents and militants off the streets of Iraq and did much more to create them.[247]

This significantly contributed to the deteriorating security situation as it created more enemies in

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[243] Hoyt and Palatella, *Reporting Iraq,* 70.
[244] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 258-259.
[245] Buzzell, *My War,* 155. Also see Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 250. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 263.
[246] Woods, *What Was Asked of Us,* 192-193.
[247] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning II,* 83.

a battle zone that the Bush administration had previously rendered the U.S. military dreadfully handicapped to secure.

Aggressive patrols also facilitated the momentous shift in Iraqi public opinion. The way in which patrols were conducted did little to show the benevolence of the U.S. military as Iraqis were constantly being treated as enemies.[248] Soldiers pointing their guns at civilians were a common grievance among Iraqis.[249] Sami Jalil, a Sergeant with the ISF, explained how the average Iraqi felt around patrols, "They're [U.S. soldiers] arrogant. They treat all the people as if they're criminals."[250] Mohammad Ghani, a native of Baghdad and initial supporter of regime change, also shared similar views of patrols, "They treat us like cowboys…they use guns. They don't respect us. They don't know anything about the Iraqi character, the culture of Iraq, the history of Iraq. Saddam destroyed the character of the person, now they've destroyed the country."[251] In their strident efforts to bring the fight to the enemy as a means to establish security, the U.S. military ultimately alienated the population as it struggled to make the difference between friend and foe.[252] Given the constant struggle to identify the enemy, soldiers were forced to treat Iraqis with a degree of hostility as a means to ensure their own survival. Yet, in the process, Iraqis began to build up barriers of their own towards U.S. forces as well.

A Marine patrol conducted on April 13, 2003 is perhaps one of the best examples of how these tactics contributed to Iraqi estrangement. During patrol, a Marine unit came across a Friday prayer service in a Sunni town. They decided to enter the service to check for any possible insurgent operatives or suspicious activity. However, they did so with loaded rifles, as if they

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[248] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 356.
[249] Hoyt and Palattella, *Reporting Baghdad*, 55.
[250] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 250.
[251] Ibid.*,* 164.
[252] DePue, *Patrolling Baghdad,* 141-142.

were on a combat mission. Entering a religious service on the Muslim holy day with weapons was deeply disrespectful to the followers, and they immediately became extremely agitated. The soldiers, however, refused to leave until their mission to seek out the enemy was finished so that the area could be deemed clear.[253] Reporter Nir Rosen recalls the tense situation,

> I went up to the officer and I told him, 'Hey man, it's Friday prayers, people are angry, you shouldn't be here,' and he told me something like, 'I don't care, that's why we've got the guns'…It was so tense that it was amazing that it ended peacefully – they just walked away. The crowd was very, very, angry.[254]

This is an early indicator of the immense repercussions that were to come from patrols. The unit was not achieving its strategic objective as their operations gave Iraqis a reason to support the resistance rather than the occupation. Unfortunately, early examples of the agitation that patrols created were either ignored or not understood.

The nature of patrols as seek and destroy operations required soldiers to isolate themselves. Interactions with the crowds were limited as the military operated on the perception that all civilians were potential enemies until their benevolence was proven. Convoys usually sped through towns without stopping and soldiers were often holding their rifles at the ready position as they searched for potential targets. The 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division was one of many units that did not receive positive results from these methods: "Overall, the unit had extremely poor relations with the Iraqis who felt that the U.S. soldiers were violent and arrogant; while the U.S. soldiers believed that nearly all Iraqis were the enemy."[255] The patrols did not prioritize the establishment of personal relationships with the locals. As a result, America's ambassadors lost an opportunity to make leeway in winning the hearts and minds of Iraqis through daily interaction.

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[253] Hoyt and Palattella, *Reporting Iraq,* 27.
[254] Ibid., 28.
[255] Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Narrative,* 80. Also see Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 147. Also see Ibid., 159. Also see Ricks, *Fiasco,* 144. Also see Ibid., 140.

As Americans roamed the streets of Iraq with immense firepower, Iraqis found it difficult to view them as the harbingers of prosperity and stability. Instead, it was much easier to view them as occupying warriors – thirsty for combat. Abu Mustapha, an Iraqi bureaucrat, shared this sentiment,

> I had never seen such soldiers before and did not know what to make of them, honestly. They had all this equipment and strange eyewear and were always pointing weapons around. I felt scared whenever I saw them. And embarrassed, especially if my wife was with me. We didn't know what they might do…I had read in history about the armies that had captured Baghdad, like the Mongols. I never thought I would be forced to watch an army enter Baghdad in my lifetime. It's not easy to witness such a thing…I cried many times during those days.[256]

Aggressive patrols did little to gain Iraqi respect for attempting to secure the nation and failed to invite them to support the American cause.[257] Major William Brent Chastain explains the repercussions of aggressive patrols further, "As the Americans appeared more and more like wanton, faceless occupiers, the local Iraqis were less likely to assist them against the insurgency."[258] Patrols established an impersonal and ferocious image of America instead of the symbol of benevolence they needed the Iraqis to accept. Resentment brewed until it transformed into volatile belligerence as the occupation approached 2006 and U.S. soldiers remained to appear as occupiers.[259]

The alienating effects of cordon and sweep operations, detention facilities, and overly aggressive patrols were exacerbated by the military's policy of operating out of FOBs. FOBs fundamentally hindered the military's ability to demonstrate its intentions to Iraqis as they created a barrier between the two.[260] Although many soldiers were benevolent and determined to help create a better life for Iraqis, the population seldom saw these characteristic traits of a

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[256] Kukis, *Voices From Iraq,* 52.
[257] Shadid, *Night Draws Near,* 383.
[258] Chastain, *The Iraqi War and the Post Vietnam Narrative,* 84.
[259] Pax, *The Baghdad Blog,* 202. Also see Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning II,* 23.
[260] Hoyt and Palattella, *Reporting Iraq,* 66.

liberator.[261] Rather, they overwhelmingly observed street-side battles, indiscriminate arrests, and overly aggressive demeanors – all classic traits of an occupier.

These trends had a devastating impact on Iraqi opinion. As Riverbend said in May of 2004, "There was a time when people here felt sorry for the troops…That time has passed…People look at troops now…and we burn with shame and anger and frustration at not being able to do something."[262] As the occupation wore on without basic services or security and the military's heavy-handed tactics simultaneously continued to alienate the public, the answer to the question on almost every Iraqi's tongue soon became apparent. The majority of Iraqis concluded that the United States had indeed come to their nation as occupiers. In losing any chances of securing Iraqi support, the United States military greatly contributed to the growing trend of the inevitability of what was to come in 2006 and 2007.

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[261] Chastain, *The Iraq War and the Post Vietnam Narrative,* 89.
[262] Riverbend, *Baghdad Burning,* 261.

Conclusions

Few could foresee the eventual calamity of the Iraq War when it officially began on March 20, 2003. After all, Rumsfeld's military makeover proved to be exceedingly effective as it took U.S. and Coalition forces approximately three weeks to enter Baghdad and end Saddam's regime on April 7, 2003.[263] In hindsight, President Bush's declaration of total victory less than a month later was perhaps, in itself, the greatest indicator of what was to come in 2006, as it suggested a grave misinterpretation of the nature of the Iraq War. In analyzing their pre-war planning and post-invasion operations, it is clear that the Bush administration mistook the Iraq War to be a fight against Saddam Hussein, whereas in reality, it was a fight for the will of the Iraqi people. In their misunderstandings, the administration adopted a strategy that completely overlooked the decisive issues at stake, and thus, was doomed to lead Iraq into darkness.

While Saddam Hussein's removal was required for democracy to follow, it was never the key to establishing a new, democratic Iraq. The Bush administration failed to understand that Saddam was merely the tip of the iceberg. The key to the Iraq War rested within the hearts and minds of every single Iraqi citizen. It was never a war that the administration could win with bullets or democracy. Rather, it was a war that could only be won with the establishment of a stable Iraq and the reassurance of a prosperous future. Transforming Iraq into a beacon of light for the entire Middle East was always a separate conflict, which simply required the absence of Saddam Hussein as a prerequisite.

The Bush administration seemed to have misconstrued and inverted this nuance as it concluded that Iraq would essentially reconstruct and democratize itself. In expecting Phase IV

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[263] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 117. Also see Ibid., 127.

to be a walk in the park, the Bush administration became increasingly bogged down with the removal of Saddam Hussein. This caused the administration to lose sight of transforming Iraq into the region's symbol of Western prosperity – their greater political objective. Although initially Saddam's removal was to serve as the stepping-stone for pacifying the Middle East, regime change became an end in itself. Colonel Cramer's experience exemplifies this development,

> 'Mission Complete'…well mission was complete, we had gone up there, beaten him, we had destroyed his army, he was on the run very quickly…this is what the mission was. It wasn't until after that we went into the nation building and the peace keeping. We were never in a peace keeping mode…peace enforcement is a completely different mentality. Peace enforcement is a step below combat. So, they changed the mission and they extended us. We were going to come home…I mean, we had all marked it on our calendars…you know, September we're home. Then about August, they said, 'nope, everybody is here for a year' and we were like, 'what the fuck!' But they didn't send anymore troops over even though they extended us and extended our mission to be completely different…[264]

Army Major Michael Eisenstadt had a similar reflection as well, "When President Bush landed on that carrier with the 'Mission Accomplished' banner, it was right: The mission, as defined for the military as getting rid of the regime, had indeed been accomplished".[265] While Rumsfeld's revamping of the military created a far more effective fighting force, it also shifted the focus of the war. His reconstruction of U.S. forces designed it to be capable of achieving Phases I-III, military operations up to and including the removal of Saddam Hussein, and little more. Although the theoretical goal of the U.S. military in Iraq was to establish necessary conditions for the reconstruction of the Iraqi political apparatus, removing Saddam Hussein from power was now, in reality, its central purpose.

The Bush administration was willing and eager to enter Iraq with virtually no viable strategy for Phase IV because the grand strategy they adopted did not understand Phase IV to be

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[264] Joseph Cramer. Personal Interview. Also see Wood, *What Was Asked of Us,* 14.
[265] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 135.

the center of gravity. Rather, Phase IV was perceived to be the aftermath of victory instead of the final step to victory that it actually was. [266] The administration's strategy asserted that extensive military operational planning would achieve their political objectives in Iraq. It was a conclusion based on the mistaken assumption that a direct fight with Saddam Hussein would lead to a stable and democratic Iraq.[267] With these conclusions in mind, the Bush administration was completely oblivious to the decisive factors at stake. Security, economic stability, and basic living conditions were never a part of the administration's strategy as popular support was crucially and fatally overlooked.

Additionally, the U.S. military's fundamental misunderstanding of the war ran parallel to that of the Bush administration's. Although the top brass were aware that winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi population was central to victory, the enemy-centric strategy it implemented demonstrated a gross lack of awareness of the dynamics and nuances that a war for hearts and minds inherently embodies.[268] In opting to operate with an enemy-centric approach, the military too overlooked the decisive issues at stake as it fought the wrong war. Insurgents and militants were never the true enemy. The real enemy to America's mission in Iraq was the precarious nature of the will of the people.

In its pursuit to kill all insurgents and militant forces, the military neglected the fact that it was destabilizing the situation further. The issues with Sanchez's enemy-centric strategy and the pathways to destabilization it both contributed to and created are apparent in Gunnery Sergeant Patrick Tracey's reflection on routine raids,

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[266] Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 119.
[267] Mowle, *Hope Is Not a Plan*, 34.
[268] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 260.

> Occasionally, I feel sorry for these people, but if they come up on a target list…I no longer feel any remorse…I know, I know, what if they're innocent, right? What if someone gave bum scoop or Battalion has bad info? How about TFS and TFB, as in tough fuckin' shit or too fuckin' bad…We go where we're told and do what we're told and if that takes assholes off the streets, or weapons and such out of the hands of the enemy, then a few hurt feelings along the way don't mean dick to me.[269]

The military's willingness to alienate portions of Iraqi society during its campaign to destroy hostile forces is a clear indicator that it overlooked the crucial factors at stake. A few hurt feelings, in fact, go a long way to hinder an institution's ability to win a war when the conflict is primarily about hurting as few feelings as possible. This is a basic and central pillar of the Iraq War that the military's top command either did not understand or purposefully ignored as it chose to continue fighting the war with a conventional mindset.[270]

Although the Bush administration left the military with a great handicap to achieve its arduous mission in Iraq, U.S. forces threw out any possibilities of success they may have had in early 2003 through fighting the war in a manner guaranteed to lose popular support rapidly. Lance Corporal Travis Williams explains further,

> There's no way that you can go in repeatedly into these people's houses, search through everything they own, put their women and their children in a room, you scare the crap out of them every morning, and honestly believe that you're making anything better. Sometimes we offered medical aid to people who were sick, or we went in and fixed something, but for the most part I would say that searching these people's houses constantly over and over, kicking them out of the house and staying in their house overnight and doing stuff like that, that just doesn't win over the public opinion.[271]

Sanchez's strategic framework was ideal for winning a battle against conventional combat forces. Yet, the same strategy does not yield the same results when the enemy fights unconventionally and gains strength through popular support. In fighting the wrong war, the

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[269] Tracey, *Street Fight in Iraq,* 317.
[270] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 184.
[271] Woods, *What Was Asked of Us,* 271.

military made enemies out of a population that was otherwise initially indifferent or undecided to America's presence.[272]

Iraq was prone to plummet into mayhem and civil war from the beginning, as Saddam's removal created utter instability – the perfect element to promote anarchy and reawaken dormant, yet ever-present sectarian tensions. The adoption of a strategy that understood how critical Phase IV would be, however, could have led the Bush administration to prevent these threats from developing. Yet, through adopting a strategy rooted in fighting a war contrary to the realities of Iraq, the Bush administration made what was to come in 2006 and 2007 highly probable. The military simultaneously transformed those possibilities into inevitability as it adopted a strategy that exacerbated the issues at stake. The volatile combination of these two themes rendered the task of winning the will of the Iraqi people to be impossible. As destabilization ensued, it was simply a matter of time before Iraq entered into flames.

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[272] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 274.

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