



The U.S Foreign Policy Failures of Regime Change in Iraq; A hegemonic Realism

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ABSTRACT

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist's attacks on the United States main land, President Bush in response declared Global War on Terror (GWT) and states that sponsor terrorist organizations either by providing them a safe haven, training, or ammunition. This quest was made entrenched in the 2002 National Security Strategy which precipitated the birth of a controversial foreign policy referred to as the Bush Doctrine (of preemption). Afghanistan and Iraq became main targets for the implementation of this new policy. This paper critically examines how the doctrine of pre-emption as articulated in the National Security Strategy (NSS) created the platform for the invasion of Iraq and the elimination of Saddam Hussein and its Ba'ath party. It assesses the official reasons for the invasion as expressed in the aforementioned document and highlights possible covert reasons behind the war game plan. This work refutes the claims that pre-emption represents an emerging norm of international law and is attuned with the United Nations Charter. This paper concludes that the policy in its entirety failed and thus resulted to unprecedented consequences.

Keywords: Regime change, The Bush Doctrine, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Global War on Terror, ORHA, Counter Insurgency

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“What we know about the strategy of rollback indicates we should approach the concept of regime change with extreme caution. It should be seen not only as a last resort but also as one with important disadvantages. Perhaps the most serious disadvantage is that President Bush's policy of regime change violates international law. Pre-emptive war is merely a euphemism for aggression. The dangers of serious harm to the United

States have diminished considerably since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ours is still a world that harbors weapons of mass destruction, with many people busy dreaming up ways to turn the stuff of daily life into weapons. We cannot possibly predict what American attempts at regime change might set off. In what some consider reckless attempts by the Bush administration to head off myriad threats, the administration may trigger something far worse than



the immediate danger. During the Cold War, rollback was a dangerous fantasy we, fortunately, tried only once. Its 21st-century cousin, regime change, is an equally dangerous delusion, even when the United States believes no enemy is powerful enough to challenge its superior weaponry. We no longer face atomic retaliation. Nonetheless, there is no reason to risk provoking new forms of retaliation in our rush to use force to reorder the world". Michael D. Richards (2002)

Are these words which were uttered by Michael D. Richards during the heat of the war campaign of President George W. Bush and his partner in crime, Prime Minister Tony Blair substantial with ultimate veracity to have cautioned these leaders to think of a peaceful means of dealing with Iraq? Did the outcome of the war prove these words baseless or add more value to them? Are the reasons put forward by the Bush administration for the invasion of Iraq realistic or just superficial to the covert intention of the war? Where there any post-war plan before the invasion? Did the U.S get the approval of the international community (the United Nations in particular)?

The core objective of this paper is to make clear that US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq War was driven by a hegemonic quest. Another objective of this paper will be to present palpable proofs of the fiasco of the Bush Doctrine and the U.S policy of regime change toward Iraq. It will present evidence of hegemonic realism, unilateralism into play and how the entire process lacks legitimacy and was not in conformity with the tenets of

the just war principles, international law, talk less of United Nations Security Council's approval. Also, the paper seeks to surpass theory to provide qualitative evidence that the claims put forward by the Bush administration for invading Iraq were phony, the act lacks legitimacy and the war was a failed course.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.2 Understanding Hegemonic Realism?

Even though all versions of realism have distinguished lineages, the hegemonic version of realism arguably arrived in front of the balance-of-power version – "making an appearance in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War". The idea that order arrives from an imbalance of power– instead of a balance of power – is also central to the realist interpretation of the state, which is based on what Max Weber typically viewed as a monopoly of the legitimate use of force. For this version of realism, order, inside and out, is derived from concentrations of power. Hegemonic realists' perceive international history as cyclical, with periods of order as a result of concentration been replaced by periods of disorder as power diffuses to more actors.

Like their equilibrium opponents, hegemonic realists also view modern European history as an example of Pax Britannica, a hegemonic order based on British naval and mercantile dominance.¹In this account, this long period of order and relative peace was accompanied

¹Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise, and Fall of Naval Mastery* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1976); and Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise, and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).



by a hegemonic interregnum which brought about the emergence of Pax Americana. In the company leading theorists of this school of realism are E.H. Carr, Robert Gilpin, Paul Kennedy and William Wohlforth.² A stronger version of this school of thought appears in Mearsheimer's 'offensive realism', which believes that states seek security by maintaining regional hegemony, an idea that appears to align with the policies of "American primacists" in the Middle East.³ Hegemonic realists maintain that a leading power provides order to the whole system by propagating and supporting a set of rules and institutions that add consistency and predictability for actors major and minor. The leading state plays a marked role from the roles of the smaller powers, therefore adding an intensity of 'functional differentiation' to global politics. A hegemonic order is not dependent solely on the preeminent power of the leading state but also on its capacities and willingness to address common problems that confront all states in the system. The hegemonic order gains permanence and legitimacy as the leading state embodies and propagates a model for managing societies with wide application and appeal. Although hegemonic orders are based on centralization of power, they fail to become empires

because the lesser powers hold on to their formal sovereignty as well as considerable room for manipulation and even influence on the leading state.

Similar to its equilibrium-realist sibling, hegemonic realism offers a roadmap for policymakers on effective courses of action. Most significantly, a hegemonic state must take actions to avert the rise of potential rivals while forestalling commitments that surpass available resources. In taking up the role of hegemon, the leading state is obliged to apply military force more frequently than smaller states, but to do so in manners that do not undermine the legitimacy of its dominance or excessively tax its capacities. The ideal situation for a hegemonic state is when the minor states share its leadership principles and ideologies, which renders its position legitimacy and makes it cost effective in policing and imposing order on noncompliant outliers.

In taking the responsibility of hegemon, the leading state must prioritize territories within its sphere that have the greatest power potential. In addition, the leading state must assume an enlarged and extended set of interests that are not just its own but encompass the important interests of its clients.

Moreover, a hegemonic power must be conservative of scarce military resources, and therefore should be particularly attentive to ensuring that its military actions have a wide demonstration impact, unambiguously signaling its superior capacities, credibility and resolve. Confronted with emerging rivals that surpass its capacity to completely dominate, the hegemonic playbook

² E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1951); William Wohlforth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World', *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 1, Summer 1999; and Stephen D. Brooks and William Wohlforth, *The World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

³ John Mearsheimer: *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).



recommends ‘selective retrenchment and appeasement’, as well as a domestic revival of its power assets. In a nutshell, hegemonic realism, a major variant of realist theory, reinforces a unique hegemonic statecraft that varies in important ways from the practices recommended by balance-of-power realists.⁴ With the emergence of the United States to global significance, the hegemonic versions of realist thinking and policy have tended to thrive within American foreign- and defense-policy spheres. Contrary to balance-of-power realism, the policy audience for hegemonic realism is limited to leading powers. As the United States has come to act hegemon on successively larger scales, the operational-realist mindset has naturally moved toward the practices of hegemonic realism, even in the absence of scholastic support. On the contrary, the balance realists speak and propose policy in directions that are often different with the real policy tendencies of the American national-security state. Regardless of all these fundamental variances, all schools of realist theory share in common recognition that translation from general theory to specific policy is more art than science. Stepping from abstractions obtained from theories of history and political order to concrete decisions of foreign policy is fraught with ambiguities, uncertainties, a potential for misperception and slippages of all kinds. A good theory can lead to catastrophic policies,

⁴Robert Gilpin, *War, and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also G. John Ikenberry, ed., *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

and good policies do not always originate from general theories.⁵

1.3 The Iraq War and Hegemonic Realism

The Iraq War, far from being opposite to realism and the embodiment of liberal agendas, is clearly understood as a hegemonic-realist war. This is true despite the fact that it might have been a poor application of hegemonic realism and was in many critical ways bungled in its execution. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz were all seasoned operatives with vast experience in defense and foreign policy. More significantly, all three had been associated in the decade before the war with efforts to articulate a post-Cold War American grand strategy centered on the upholding of American preeminence and preventing the rise of a peer challenger.⁶ And all three had perceived Saddam Hussein as a threat to American primacy in the crucial region of the Middle East, and particularly the Persian Gulf. Controlling two-thirds of the world's recoverable petroleum reserves, the Gulf had been perceived by US policymakers as crucial to the American hegemonic system – and the United States had made a great endeavor to forge alliances, recruit clients and subsidize friendly regimes in the region.

⁵Daniel Dewdney and G. John Ikenberry (2017, p13-16): Realism, Liberalism, and the Iraq War.

⁶The idea of pursuing a post-Cold War grand strategy of primacy – with a goal to ‘prevent the emergence of a new rival’ – was put forward in a secret five-year Defense Planning Guidance paper in March 1992, written primarily by under-secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz, and serving under-secretary of defense Richard Cheney. See Patrick E. Tyler, ‘U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop’, *New York Times*, 8 March 1992, p. A1. For an account of the ideas and officials behind this strategic guidance, see James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004), pp. 208–15.



American hegemonic grand strategy in the Middle East never placed any importance to political democratization, and the United States had built close relations with various autocratic and feudal monarchical regimes who consistently violated Western and American standards of human rights and political accountability. The oil resources of the Middle East were even more crucial to pivotal American allies in Europe and East Asia than they were to the United States itself.⁷ Moreover; the long American involvement in the region had been of huge benefit to huge and politically influential American oil companies, banks and defense contractors. Because of this, United States “hegemonic security thinkers” did not perceive securing this regional order from competitors as being problematic at all.

For US’ policymakers, there was no uncertainty that Saddam Hussein presented a “revisionist” threat to the US, order in the area. The Saddam’s regime had attacked Kuwait, and it had a dream of pan-Arab national consolidation that aimed at eradicating the ancient régimes of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates. In addition, the Persian Gulf War of 1991, in which Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz had played important roles, was perceived as a great political-military victory, the only clear-cut American military triumph since the end of the Second World War. By the late 1990s, however, this achievement was beginning to unravel. Because of Iraq’s oil resources, it

was just a matter of time until the government would present another major threat to regional order. Given that Iraq was in 2002 greatly enfeebled by sanctions, American policymakers sees it as an opportunity to eradicate an apparent competitor before his power was re-established. Not unexpectedly, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz had openly advocated for the overthrow of the Hussein regime for over a decade prior to the real 2003 invasion.

Also, a decisive removal of the Iraq regime from governance would serve another objective of “the primacists” – the exhibition of United States military–technological preeminence. Of the three key hawks, Rumsfeld was mainly fascinated in displaying the new potency of the cutting-edge conventional weapons that the United States had been acquiring, at great cost, upon the end of the Cold War. The hope was that a rapid and decisive American disposal of the Iraqi regime with cutting-edge technology and low American casualties would send a broad signal of ‘shock and awe’ to other possible revisionist states that might infringe the United States wider interests. The primacists believed that the cautiousness of the Clinton administration in applying the full weight of United States’ military advantages had damaged the credibility of American commitments and propagated doubts about American resolve. A swiftly triumphant war against Iraq would not only eliminate an enduring threat in the vital Persian Gulf region but also shore up the hegemonic repute of America across the board.

⁷ For an early call for an American seizure of the oil fields in response to embargoes, see Robert W. Tucker, ‘Oil: The Issue of American Intervention’, *Commentary*, January 1975.



Democracy advancement was part the numerous publicized justifications for the war presented by the Bush administration. Because of the depreciation post-Iraq invasion situation, the administration more and more emphasized the significance of turning Iraq into a liberal democracy. The academic-realist critics of the invasion regarded this forceful democratization agenda as proof of the “essentially liberal wellsprings” of the war. It is thus reasonable that democracy advancement was a panacea offered by the Bush administration to the concurrent sustenance of public support for the war and provide a framework for post-war Iraqi reconstruction. Democracy was not the principal goal: it appeared both as a means to legitimize the invasion and as a programme for building Iraq as a new mast of the hegemonic American order in the area.⁸

2.1 The Bush Doctrine and the 2003 Iraq War

An examination of the US-Iraq relations that caused the 2003 invasion of Iraq will justify the assertion that the US foreign policy objectives and strategies are a continuation rather than a change because of the lack of changes in its global status as the only hegemonic power and its geographic location. The fundamental goal of the US was to maintain its influence in the region and around the globe by preventing the rise of Iraq as an anti-American major power that would threaten the strategic interests of U.S either directly or indirectly through a third

party.⁹ At the same time, destroying terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda which are state-supported with the aim of diminishing US influence in the region and even beyond is America’s topmost priority. In order to accomplish these objectives, the USA depended on the grand strategy of offshore balancing.

Nonetheless, in contrast to many other cases, the nonexistence of a regional power that was able and willing to contain Iraq left the US with no other alternative but to employ direct balancing and military power to contain the threat emerging from Iraq.

US foreign policy toward Iraq was inspired by many factors, which includes the following. (1) the world order was in a state of anarchy with no world government to control Iraq,(2) Iraq controlled some military capabilities that could inflict catastrophe or destroy US interests, (3) the Bush Administration was skeptical of Iraq’s objectives and there was no assurance that the latter would not attack the interests of the former, (4) survival was of utmost priority for the US, and (5) the U.S acted logically, and its actions were determined by the need to survive and hold on to its regional hegemonic status. These factors are entrenched in the Bush Doctrine. In the first place, the skepticism and fright the U.S had from Iraq’s military capabilities led Washington to depend on preemptive actions. Secondly, the absence of a supranational authority and the anarchic nature of the international system forced the USA to depend on self-help and

⁸Daniel Dewdney and G. John Ikenberry (2017, p16-18):Realism, Liberalism, and the Iraq War.

⁹The White House. 2002, 14–15, 29–30. *The National Security Strategy of the United States*.



unilateral actions.¹⁰ Lastly, the need for survival and the defense of its strategic interests throughout the world compelled the U.S to multiply its relative military might in order to maintain hegemony and prevent the advent of any other potential challenger for regional hegemon.

The factors mentioned above resulted in three main patterns of behavior: fear, self-help, and power maximization. These patterns of behavior are openly manifested in the Bush Doctrine and can be categorized into fear of terrorist attacks and state-sponsored terrorism, self-help through unilateral and preemptive actions, and power maximization with the aim of maintaining US regional hegemony. Putting together, all these elements contributed to an aggressive foreign policy against Iraq. The diagram below illustrates the process how several factors influenced the aggressive conduct of the US against Iraq.

¹⁰Elman, Colin, eds. 2008. "Realism." In *Security Studies: An Introduction*. Paul William. NewYork, NY: Routledge, pp. 15-27.

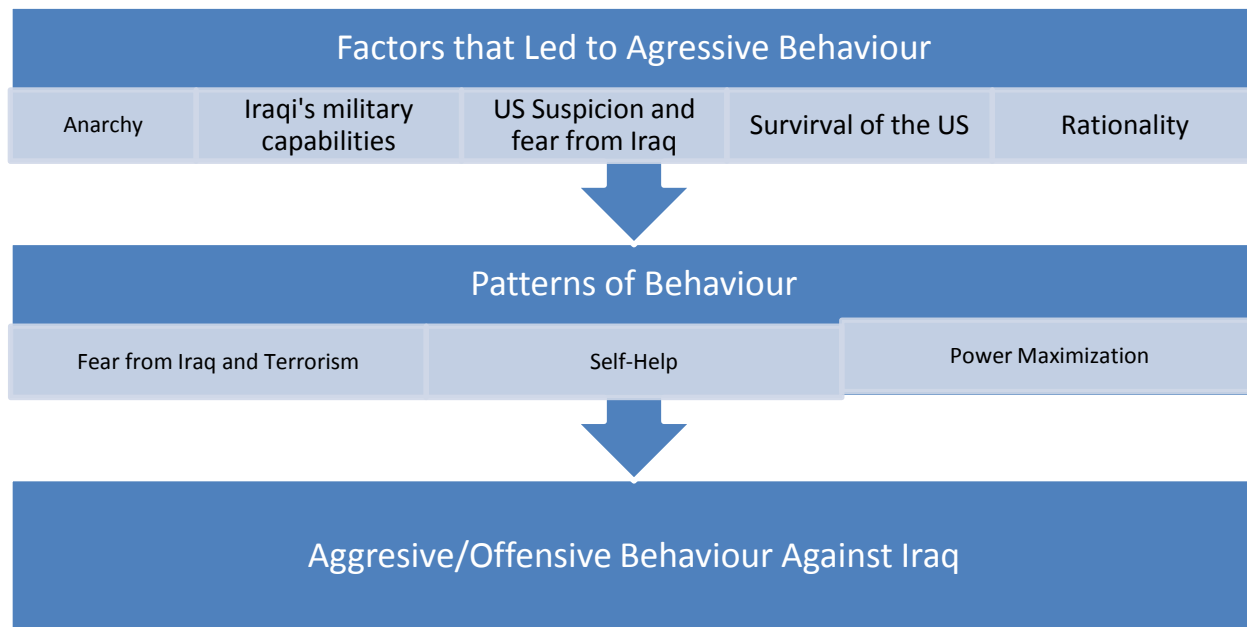


Figure 1 Source: US Foreign Policy in the Middle East (2017) pg.96 Factors that led to aggressive actions against Iraq.

The world system has an ancient history of anarchy, or absence of a supranational authority, beginning with the establishment of the state system through the Westphalia Treaty of 1648. Because sovereignty is the most valued treasure of states, they are inclined to neglect the authority of a world government, especially when their strategic interests are at stake. The nonexistence of a supranational government has resulted in uninterrupted conflicts and wars around the globe as states struggle to pursue their national interests. International organizations like the UN have failed in their promise to bring about global peace through peaceful means of conflict resolution.¹¹ Had a supranational authority

present in the world, it would have contained Iraq's purported development of weapons of mass destruction and/or the manhandling of its citizens, or it would have stopped the USA from invading Iraq in 2003. Therefore, the war itself is a clear justification that the international system is anarchic in nature.

Anarchy, by its very nature, often results in unilateral actions because states (great powers included) are responsible for their own survival, and quite often they act so at the cost of others. They achieve this objective by either acting singularly when the need arises or in alliance with other states similarly situated when more effective or efficient. Great powers may build alliances; nevertheless, those alliances are “temporary marriages of convenience” and fluctuate together with their national

¹¹Mearsheimer, J. J. (1995). The false promise of International Institutions. *International Security*, 19, 5–49.



security interests.¹² Because of this, states should always be ready to take action with other states that share mutual strategic interests, which is what America demonstrated in 2003.¹³

Another factor that inspired US aggressive actions was Iraq's possession of considerable military power that could wreak havoc on U.S interests in the region and abroad. Power, from this point of view, is regarded the possession by a state of specific assets or material resources that can be used to advance strategic interests of a state.¹⁴ External threats to its national security and the need to maximize power vis-à-vis other states have driven Iraq to build outstanding military capabilities. Historically, Iraq, or also referred to as Modern Mesopotamia, was well known as a major political and military power in the Middle East. Its geostrategic position and natural wealth make Iraq a very influential state in the Middle East.¹⁵

As reported by US Energy Information Administration, as of 2010, Iraq has the world's fifth largest confirmed oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Canada, and Iran. Natural wealth has permitted Iraq to establish formidable military capabilities and influence regional politics. Because military capabilities are subject to confidentiality, they differ

depending on the source. Different sources provide different data; however, data differences "fall within a reasonable range." Iraq's military capabilities multiplied considerably during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and before to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and remained considerably strong until the 2003 intervention. Iraq increased its military might considerably during the period between 1972 and 1980. In 1972, Iraq spent approximately 14% of its GDP in advancing and strengthening its military might. In 1980, the spending on weapons multiplied drastically to 21% of the country's GDP because to Iraq's fear of the post-revolutionary Iran and opportunities arising as a result of the US-Iran conflict.¹⁶ By 1984, Iraq's military expenditure skyrocketed to \$14 billion or close to 50% of its GDP. Main weapons suppliers of Iraq were the USA, France, Germany, and Great Britain.¹⁷ At the same time, Iraq had a military manpower of 212, 000 men in the armed forces, of which 28,000 were part of the air forces and 4000 in naval forces. In order to support its military with sufficient expertise, Iraqi government collaborated extensively with

¹²Mearsheimer, 2001, 3. *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

¹³Wolfowitz, P. D. (1994, 37). Clinton's first year. *Foreign Affairs*, 73, 28–43.

¹⁴Mearsheimer, J. M. (2001, 57). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

¹⁵Held, Colbert C., and John Thomas Cummings. 2014. *Middle East Patterns, Places, Peoples, and Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press p412.

¹⁶Geller, Daniel S., and Joel D Singer. 1998. *A nation at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press p147-148.

¹⁷Timmerman, Kenneth R. 1991. *The Death Lobby: How West Armed Iraq*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company. See also *Friedman, Alan. 1993. *Spider's Web: The Secret History of How the White House Illegally Armed Iraq*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

*Phythian, Mark. 1997. *Arming Iraq: How the U.S. and Britain Secretly Built Saddam's War Machine*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.



2000 Soviet advisors and received considerable weaponry assistance.¹⁸

By the end of the Iran-Iraq War and the beginning of the Gulf War, Iraq had transformed itself into a regional superpower. Iraq had succeeded in establishing a military force of about one million soldiers.¹⁹ Its military arsenal was made of seven corps and over 50 divisions, around 5500 main battle tanks, 10,000 other armored vehicles, 3700 major artillery weapons, and 160 armed helicopters. Moreover, Iraq had in its possession around 600 operational combat aircraft, 1800 light, and major surface-to-air missile launchers, up to 6000 anti-aircraft guns, and some modest navy power, such as Italian frigates and anti-ship missile.²⁰ In December 1989, Iraq agreed to have manufactured and tested the satellite launch missile, al-Abid, and the ballistic missile, Tammuz 1, each with a range of about 1200 miles; however, this assertion has not been confirmed.²¹ Added to the conventional arsenal, Iraq developed programs to manufacture weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, which were utilized during the Iran-Iraq War.

While Iraq suffered a severe loss in military assets during the Gulf War, it succeeded to multiply its military capabilities within a short period. As of 2000, the Gross Domestic Product of Iraq was 59 billion, of which 1.3 billion was spent for military purposes. Additionally, it was approximated that Iraq possessed a total of up to 2000 tanks, about 3700 armored vehicles, 300 combat aircraft, 300 helicopters, and an air defense force of about 15,000 men equipped with more than 850 surface-to-air missile launchers and 4000 anti-aircraft guns. A different source states that Iraq had around 2200 battle tanks, 2200 artillery weapons, up to 90 armed helicopters, 360 combat aircraft, around 800 heavy and light surface-to-air missiles, and nearly 3000 anti-aircraft guns. Furthermore, Iraq counted more than 400,000 active servicemen in the army and the same number of reserve troops.²²

Apart from conventional military power, there was a sound conviction among most states and experts that prior to the 2003 US invasion, Iraq also possessed unconventional weapons, such as chemical and biological weapons, and was in the process of building nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, in a report filed into the President of the Security Council on January 27, 2003, by the Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamad ElBaradei, it was disclosed that Iraq was never engaged in any prohibited nuclear activity. Regardless of

¹⁸Geller, Daniel S., and Joel D Singer. 1998. *A nation at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press p147.

¹⁹Otteman, S. (2003, April 24). IRAQ: Iraq's prewar military capabilities. *Council on Foreign Relations*.

²⁰Cordesman, Anthony, H. 2001a. "Iraq's Military Capabilities: Fighting A Wounded, But Dangerous, Poisonous Snake." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*.

²¹Nolan, Janne E. 1991. *Trappings of Power: Ballistic Missiles in the Third World*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

See also; Hoyt, Timothy D. 2007. *Military Industry and Regional Defense Policy: India, Iraq, and Israel*. New York, NY: Routledge.

²² Cordesman, A. H. (2001, 1-5). Iraq's military capabilities: Fighting a wounded, but dangerous, poisonous snake. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved January, 2017, from http://www.iraqwatch.org/perspectives/csis-iraq_milcap-120301.pdf



these findings, the US and its allies stood their grounds that Iraq was actually involved in a prohibited nuclear activity.

Besides the anarchic status of the world system and Iraq's possession of significant military capabilities that could harm US interests, fear from a militarized Iraq induced hostile actions of the US against Iraq. The gravity of fear was determined by three key factors: (1) whether states possessed nuclear weapons of second-strike capability to retaliate, (2) whether they were separated by a large body of water, and (3) whether their military capabilities were shared evenly.²³ The gravity of fear was high because the US feared a nuclear Iraq and the possibility of nuclear weapons were transferred to and utilized by terrorist organizations. And when states fear each other, they have the inclination to guaranty their national security by either multiplying their military capabilities, which become part of the security dilemma or employing preemptive actions against the enemy state. The US employed both. Coming to the realization that a good offense is the best form defense, the Bush administration stressed the significance of the building and upholding unparalleled military forces and bases and stations within and beyond the Rimland region to facilitate power projection when deemed necessary.²⁴

Apart from Iraq's past hostile history and an alleged "sponsor" or terrorist groups, its purported pursuance of the nuclear program

(and continuous defiance of US requests to stop the program) was another main factor that made the U.S feel threatened by Iraq. Iraq was famous for using chemical weapons against the Kurds and the Iranian people during the Iran-Iraq War. Moreover, Iraq involved in a program to develop biological and nuclear weapons. In the mid-1970s, Iraq procured a nuclear reactor from France.²⁵ At the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, Iranian air forces launched an attack on Iraq's nuclear facilities, and in 1981, Israeli air forces conducted another attack against the same target.²⁶ On April 3, 1991, Iraq agreed to honor the UN Security Council Resolution 687 to destroy its chemical weapons but denied having any biological weapons. In August 1991, Iraq admits having biological weapons only for "defense purposes." This admission drove the UN Security Council to approved Resolution 707, demanding that Iraq disclose all its prohibited weapons.²⁷ However, Iraq responded by refusing to cooperate with the UN inspectors. Following Iraq's continuous noncompliance with the UN's authority, in December 1998, the U.S and Great Britain launched a four-

²³Mearsheimer, J. M. (2001, 43-45). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

²⁴The White House. (2002, 6, 29-30). *The National Security Strategy of the United States*.

²⁵Ramberg, B. (1980). *Nuclear power plants as weapons for the enemy: An unrecognized military peril*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. See also *Cordesman, Anthony H. 1999, 605. *Iraq and the War of Sanctions: Conventional Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

²⁶Ramberg, B. (1980xvi-xvii.). *Nuclear power plants as weapons for the enemy: An unrecognized military peril*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. See also; Scott, S. V., Billingsley, A., & Michaelsen, C. (2009, 182). *International law and the use of force: A documentary and reference guide*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC.

²⁷CNN Library. 2013. "Iraq Weapons Inspections Fast Facts." *CNN World*.



day long aerial attack on Iraq in what is known as Operation Desert Fox. Since then, US-Iraq relationship was characterized by deep mistrust and conflict. Major disagreements between the U.S and Iraq were connected to the nuclear program of the latter. In February 2000, Iraq pronounces that it would not allow the UN weapons inspectors to investigate its disarmament program, which had stopped in 1998 following the U.S and Britain's airstrikes on Iraq's nuclear facilities. In 2001, President Bush urged Iraq to allow inspectors back in Iraq. In the same year, US Congress authorized the president to employ military forces to constrain Iraq.²⁸ Following the joint resolution of US Congress, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441, which presented Iraq the final warning to comply with its disarmament obligations. In 2002, British intelligence informed US Department of Defense alleging that Iraq was trying to purchase yellowcake uranium from Nigeria.²⁹ Finally, putting together the abovementioned factors (the anarchic status of the international system, Iraq's possession of considerable capabilities, and the threat U.S's perceived from Iraq), America's aim of maintaining hegemonic power determined its aggressive behavior towards Iraq.

²⁸US Congress. 2002. *Joint resolution: To authorize the use of United States armed forces against Iraq*, 107th Cong. Retrieved February 15, 2015, from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ243/html/PLAW-107publ243.htm>

²⁹Hersh, Seymour M. 2003. "The Stovepipe: How conflicts Between the Bush Administration and the Intelligence Community Marred the Reporting on Iraq's Weapons." *The New Yorker*. October.

President Bush announced the objective to maintain US hegemony at a graduation ceremony of the army cadets at the West Point military base when he declared that America's goal was to build supreme military capabilities and surpass any challenge. This goal was officially mentioned in The 2002 National Security Strategy. As stated in the preamble of the strategy, defending America against its enemies is "the first and fundamental commitment" of the government. In so doing, the U.S would provide security and protection to its allies and friends so as to prevent the adversaries, deter future military competition, deter threats against the U.S and its allies, and defeat any enemy in cases when deterrence would fail. In addition, the strategy stressed the imperative need for the US armed forces to "be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States". Knowing the significance of cooperation to deter threats and the fact that the latter may fail, the strategy provides guidelines to employ unilateral actions when US strategic "interests and unique responsibilities require".³⁰

Being a hegemonic power that had strategic interests in upholding the status quo in the world system and averting any disruption of the balance of power, the U.S depended on the grand strategy of offshore balancing by using either the buck-passing strategy whenever possible or the direct balancing strategy whenever the former strategy would

³⁰The White House. (2002, 29–31). *The National Security Strategy of the United States*.



fail or was expected to fail.³¹ In the language of the 2002 National Security Strategy, those two strategies can be regarded as a deterrence as to buck-passing strategy and preemptive or unilateral actions as to balancing strategy. The dual-containment policy employed during Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and the direct balancing of Iraq during the 1990 Gulf War are just two examples of the offshore balancing strategy applied by the U.S to prevent the advent of a potential regional hegemon.³²

Nevertheless, the buck-passing strategy was not applicable in the case of the 2003 Iraq War because of the absence of a regional great power that was able and willing to balance hostile Iraq. To start with, Iran, as a traditional balancer of Iraq, was scared of the fact that another confrontation with Iraq would have long-term devastation to its geostrategic interests. The memories of the bloody Iran-Iraq War and how the U.S helped to elongate it stopped Iran from directly balancing Iraq. Also, Iran was scared a strong U.S presence adjacent to its borders, but at the same time feared Iraq, its traditional enemy. This caused Iran to be in dilemma as to whether to attack Iraq or not. Additionally, Turkey could not take the position of a balancer for fear that the war would cause instability the Middle East, and a chaotic Iraq would cause Kurds to seek independence to establish their own state; thus, threatening Turkey's sovereignty.

Moreover, even Saudi Arabia could not be used as a balancer for several reasons. First, it did not perceive Iraq as an imminent threat to its geostrategic interests. This stance was publicly declared by Prince Saud Al Faysal, who maintained that Saudi Arabia had no plans to align with the U.S against Iraq because there was no evidence of an imminent threat emerging from Iraq.³³ Moreover, Saudi Arabia feared potential rising of a Shi'a regime that would be aggressive to its regional interests. Lastly, Saudi Arabia feared that when the war ends, the U.S would use it as a scapegoat to install a puppet government in Iraq that would increase American regional influence at the cost of Saudi Arabia.

Because the buck-passing strategy did not work for the reasons mentioned above, the US had to depend on direct balancing. Offshore balancing determined that when regional great powers fail to prevent the ambitions of another great power, then the hegemon from afar would intervene to balance against the emerging power.³⁴ The balancing strategy can be accomplished through three measures. First, the hegemon sends clear diplomatic signals to the aggressor to change its behavior, threatening to apply force without actually applying it. Second, the hegemonic power employs measures to build defensive alliances against the aggressor, thus sharing the cost of

³¹Mearsheimer, J. M. (2001, 139). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

³²Everest, Larry. 2003. "1980-1988, Iran-Iraq: Helping Both Sides to Lose the War." *Press for Conversion*, 51: 30-31.

³³Iraq Watch. 2002. *Interview with Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs*.

³⁴Layne, C. (1997, 113-116). From preponderance to off-shore balancing: America's future grand strategy. *International Security*, 22, 86-124. See also; Mearsheimer 2001, 237. *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.



containing the threat. Third, if the first two measures fail or if additional resources are needed, the hegemon may mobilize its own or additional resources to contain the threat.³⁵

The US utilized all these three measures to contain the Iraqi threat. From the onset, and over a long period, the US sent clear diplomatic threats to Iraq, demanding changes in its foreign policy and acceptance of the UN nuclear weapon inspectors. In his State of the Union Address in January 2002, President Bush threatened Iraq by regarding it a part of the axis of evil and a target of the war on terror. These threats continued in September 2002, with the President Bush's address to the UN General Assembly in which he demanded the application of force against Iraq. Moreover, in October 2002, the US Congress voted in a bipartisan fashion to pass the Authorization for utilizing Military Force against Iraq Resolution, which aimed to "defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq".³⁶

About a month later, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1441 as the last opportunity for Iraq to adhere to the disarmament obligations set forth in previous resolutions, which included not only weapons of mass destruction but also prohibited missiles and armaments and payment of reparations to Kuwait caused by actions of Iraq during the Gulf War. Around

the same time, President Bush proclaimed that the US would not seek a regime change if Iraq adheres to the UN Security Council resolutions related especially to weapons of mass destruction and prohibited missiles and armament (Kemper 2002).³⁷ In January 2003, President Bush repeated the demand for Iraq's disarmament, stating "...Resolution 1441 gives us the authority to move without any second resolution. And Saddam Hussein must understand that if he does not disarm, for the sake of peace, we, along with others, will go disarm Saddam Hussein".³⁸

While continuing its diplomatic threats against Iraq, the U.S was busy creating a military alliance against Iraq. In November 2002, President Bush stated clearly his plans to create a "coalition of the willing" which constituted countries that were willing to join the U.S in a war to disarm Iraq.³⁹ According to the Bush Administration, coalition member states would render various contributions, such as logistical and intelligence support, military support, humanitarian and reconstruction aid, and political support. While the coalition was built prior to the military invasion on Iraq, the U.S announced it a few weeks later, claiming the membership of about 49 states

³⁵Mearsheimer, J. M. (2001, 156-157). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

³⁶US Congress Joint Session Resolution 2002.

³⁷Kemper, Bob. 2002, October 23. "Saddam can keep rule if he complies: Bush." *Daily Times*. October 23. <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/foreign/23-Oct-2002/saddam-can-keeprule-if-he-complies-bush> (August 10, 2014).

³⁸CNN. 2003. "Bush, Blair: Time running out for Saddam." *CNN.com/US*. January 31.

³⁹King, J. (2002, November 20). Bush joins 'coalition of willing'. *CNN*.



that had already joined in the war on terror.⁴⁰

On March 16, 2003, President Bush released the last threat toward Iraq when he declared that Saddam Hussein had to leave Iraq within 48 hours or face the US military invasion.⁴¹ On March 19, the US armed forces began what is called in the military terms as the Operation Iraqi Freedom. Within a week, Iraq capitulated and a long period of asymmetrical warfare was about to start. Nevertheless, what followed the capitulation of Iraq temporarily complicated the geostrategic significance of destroying Iraq as an anti-American center of power in the region. It is reasonable that applying rational foreign policy strategies is not a guarantee for success because a human error or other factors beyond human control may severely impact the outcomes.

That notwithstanding, while not all rational strategies may lead to success, all successes come from pursuing rational strategies. The US foreign policy that led to the 2003 Iraq War can be perceived as being strategically successful for two main reasons. First, it destroyed a regional center of power which served as a direct threat to US regional interests. Second, it serves and will continue to serve as a precedent for all regional states

to comprehend and be aware of what may be the consequence if they decide to challenge US influence. What happened to Saddam Hussein and Iraq will make them understand that to bandwagon with the US is more beneficial than challenging it. Despite its temporary losses due to mismanagement, the Iraq War paved the way for a new American century in the Middle East.⁴²

3.1 FAILURES OF THE POLICY OF REGIME CHANGE

Failure to Consider the Morality of Going to War

“The first grave U.S. failure was to ignore how complex, demanding and enduring its responsibility to Iraq would be after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and to plan accordingly”. Regardless of forewarnings, higher-ranking U.S. officials failed to honor their moral responsibility to prepare as much as possible, for a successful occupation. The church was at the center stage among advisory voices. Archbishop Wilton Gregory, then president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, In September 2002 wrote President George W. Bush:

The use of force must have "serious prospects for success" and "must not produce evils and disorders greater than the evil to be eliminated" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2309). War against Iraq could

⁴⁰The White House. (2003, March 27). *Who are the current coalition members?*

Retrieved January 19, 2017, from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/news/20030327-10.html>

⁴¹CNN. (2003, January 31). Bush, Blair: Time running out for Saddam. *CNN.com*. Retrieved January 19, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/31/sprj.iq.bush.blair.topics/>

⁴²Prifti, B. 2017 p107, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45327-9_2 US Foreign Policy US Foreign Policy in the Middle East.



have unpredictable consequences not only for Iraq but for peace and stability elsewhere in the Middle East. Would preventive or preemptive force succeed in thwarting serious threats or, instead, provoke the very kind of attacks that it is intended to prevent? How would another war in Iraq impact the civilian population, in the short- and long-term? How many more innocent people would suffer and die, or be left without homes, without basic necessities, without work? Would the United States and the international community commit to the arduous, long-term task of ensuring a just peace or would a post-Saddam Iraq continue to be plagued by civil conflict and repression, and continue to serve as a destabilizing force in the region?

Apart from overthrowing Saddam Hussein, the government of the United States gave little thought to genuine and enduring success in Iraq. In February 2003, during the run-up to the war, the worries of the bishops were repeatedly emphasized by Archbishop Gregory who unequivocally outlined the prerequisites for a morally legitimate policy: "A post-war Iraq would require a long-term commitment to reconstruction, humanitarian and refugee assistance, and establishment of a stable, democratic government at a time when the U.S. federal budget is overwhelmed by increased defense spending and the costs of war."

Regardless of the fact that the U.S. succeeded in occupying Iraq, there had

already been failures linked to some principles of the just war tradition:

Right Intention/Last Resort: Even though genuine concern regarding the threat Saddam Hussein posed (because of his past records according to my own view) existed, Iraq, after the war with Kuwait neither posed a "*specific and imminent*" threat nor had the ability to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against the U.S. or other countries. Thus, it raised concerns about the imperative "pursuit of war". However, invading Iraq was evidently not a condition of "last resort."

Just Cause: The U.S. put forward a long-term self-defense justification, with the assertion that Iraq's WMD posed a threat to the U.S. principal interests. Moreover, even if there was no looming threat, the nature of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) makes "a new standard—preventive war—justifiable. This pursuit cast off by the church pointing to the just war tradition. As explicitly put by Archbishop Gregory in February 2003: "To permit preemptive or preventive uses of military force to overthrow threatening or hostile regimes would create deeply troubling moral and legal precedents."

Right Authority: States may employ the unilateral application of force in self-defense from an attack. When an attack is absent, a pre-emptive strike in response to imminent attack becomes illegal. However, states are under the obligation of Chapter I, Article 2 of the U.N. Charter and to apply the provisions and procedures of Chapter VII of



the Charter. In his letter to President Bush in September 2002, Archbishop Gregory wrote: "... in our judgment, decisions of such gravity require ... some form of international sanction, preferably by the UN Security Council."

Proportionality: Proportionality principle entails that "the use of arms must not produce evils graver than the evil to be eliminated (*Catechism*, no. 2309)." This does not only apply to injury, death, and material damage, but includes moral, social, and political damage unavoidably caused by war. The various statements made and letters were written by the U.S. bishops that constantly raised concerns of proportionality.

All these considerations put together, Archbishop Gregory's September 2002 letter concluded:

We conclude, based on the facts that are known to us, that a pre-emptive, unilateral use of force is difficult to justify at this time. We fear that resort to force, under these circumstances, would not meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching for overriding the strong presumption against the use of military force. Of particular concern are the traditional just war criteria of just cause, right authority, the probability of success, proportionality and non-combatant immunity.

"Regime change was too facile a goal and did not take accounts of the unintended

consequences and grave moral responsibilities of invasion and occupation."

Failure to Consider the Morality of Occupation

In the wake of the U.S.-led invasion, as the magnitude of the needs of Iraqi's became incontestable, the United States leaders made another moral blunder by failing to take action responsibly. The absence of a direct U.S. police role, the dissolution of Iraqi military and police and the De-Baathification of the Iraqi administration created a vacuum of governance and allowed disorder to go unrestrained. This rubbed the United States and its allies Iraqi's trust and confidence and estranged lots of the country's Sunnis.

The then Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace, Archbishop Thomas Wenski, in January 2002 released "Toward a Responsible Transition in Iraq," a statement putting forth the moral agenda and definite requirements for the occupation:

The intervention in Iraq has brought with it a new set of moral responsibilities to help Iraqis secure and rebuild their country and to address the consequences of the war for the region and the world. The central moral question is not just the timing of the U.S. withdrawal, but rather the nature and extent of U.S. and international engagement that allows for a responsible transition to security and stability for the Iraqi people.



The standards for a responsible transition were premised on ancient teachings of the church on what obtained for “true peace and justice”. Peace surpasses the nonexistence of war. The *Catechism* teaches thus: “Finally, the common good requires *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the *security* of society and its members” (no 1099).

Archbishop Wenski joined by Bishop William Skylstad, then president of the U.S.C.C.B. outlined the rudiments of a “responsible transition.” On behalf of the bishops’ conference, as follows:

Failure to Provide Adequate Security

The occupation of Iraq was followed by huge looting. At the initial stages, the U.S forces failed to intervene to institute order and re-establish fundamental security, save 2007 “surge”. The consequences of this soon became obvious. The death rate of civilian increased rapidly from approximately 610 per month in the first six months after May 2003 when major combat operations ended to over 1,200 per month by mid-2005 and exceeding 3,000 per month prior to the surge (Iraq Body Count). Material damage increased at similar pace. Critically, the hostility and lack of efficient occupation and poor governmental response pushed Iraqis to older sources of security, namely; tribal and sectarian militias. To this date, the security of Iraq remains indefinable. However, in the Kurdish region where society is identified with a homogenous ethnic makeup, access to resources has permitted a different path of recovery.

Establishing the Rule of Law

“Justice, a founding principle and primary social good in Islam as in Christianity, should have been a core policy goal”. If justice was to be secured, it was necessary to justly deal with wartime offenders, creating an operational police and judicial system and building a just society for all. The first of these was achieved, although poorly, as Iraqi authorities were in haste of assigning responsibility individually and take punitive measures against wrongdoers consequently. However, because of the lack of required security and social trust needed to create essential institutions other justice-related goals were only partly addressed.

Failure to Promote Economic Reconstruction and the Development of Just and Democratic Political Structures

The United States and other states contributed huge sums and provided technical resources to rebuild the economy. Also, Iraqi funds from oil exports were more and more supplemented with Aid funds for economic reconstruction. However, the lack of skills, corruption and, principally, persistent violence undermined the significant improvement made in the provision of fundamental services. Consequently, the economy of Iraq continues to be overwhelmed with lack of investment, massive unemployment, corruption and “the effects of crony capitalism” and political meddling.

Surmounting numerous social differences and building a civic culture and political structure that promotes the general good was



and continues to be, the most "intractable problem" Iraq faces. Despite huge efforts made by the U.S. and donors to realize this goal, political and social tensions were aggravated by inadequate security. "Unless the occupation forces and the transitional government could enjoy something close to a monopoly of force and ensure individual security, it was doubtful that meaningful social reconciliation, economic reconstruction or political development could be realized".⁴³

Failures in Preparation for invasion

The United States made a lot of shocking mistakes in its run-up to Iraq war. Most of the time, however, emphases have been placed on mistakes made at the beginning of the occupation while ignoring blunders during preparation that led to a catastrophic agenda for occupation. These two elements significantly deepened the structural challenges that confronted the U.S and partners upon entering Iraq.

The United States made a number of mistakes that in retrospect were broadly disapproved of as being contributing factors to the ensuing failures in Iraq. These are as follow (1) the absence of planning for the postwar Iraq; (2) an inadequate number of troops; (3) an ill-informed military on occupation and counterinsurgency; and (4) weak diplomacy.

⁴³[Richard E. Pates](#) June 16, 2014. Iraq: Unintended Consequences and Lessons for U.S. Policy. **The Most Reverend Richard E. Pates** is Bishop of Des Moines and Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Lack of Postwar Planning: A comprehensive plan for post-war Iraq was never created by the U.S' military and civilian leadership. Various draft plans and predictions did emerge from the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Army, and the Marines, but they were not incorporated into a holistic U.S. government plan that turned out to become an official policy.⁴⁴ The National Security Council did not put forward a plan for eventualities or present strategic guidance to key agencies and task forces.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the different plans were not advanced at a detail level to have enabled them to be speedily operationalized.

The problem of planning was very severe in regard to the military and defense community, which played the leading role in the occupation. Rumsfeld and Franks never presented a planning guide for the postwar phase. Joint Task Force IV, a planning unit approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was charged with preparing a postwar plan which they never produced.⁴⁶ A senior officer of the planning unit noted, "I can't judge the quality of Phase 4 [post-

⁴⁴⁷⁷ As a RAND study found, "It is not the case that no one planned for a post-Saddam Iraq. On the contrary, many agencies and organizations within the U.S. government identified a range of postwar challenges in 2002 and early 2003, before major combat operations commenced, and suggested strategies for addressing them . . . Yet very few if any made it into the serious planning process for OIF." Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), xvii. See also James Fallow, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2004, 54.

⁴⁵Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam*, xix.

⁴⁶Ricks, *Fiasco*, 81; and Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam*, 41–52.



conventional hostilities] plan because I never really saw any."⁴⁷ In retrospect, the absence of planning is striking in view of the military's long record of cautious (and, some would say endless), emergency planning. From the onset, Central Command (CENTCOM) saw training of Iraqis, which appeared to be the fulcrum of successful counterinsurgency as a waste. Possibly more than any of the other challenges the United States encountered in Iraq, the lack of planning on the side of the military is startling, as the military institutionally has an extraordinarily strong planning competence and has an institutional tradition that strongly emphasizes contingency planning.

The absence of planning at the political stage was also notable. Top policymakers made hopeful suppositions regarding a post-Saddam Iraq that holdback planning for more negative contingencies.⁴⁸ From the very beginning; it was indeterminate on how the United States intended to govern Iraq. In order to partially fill this gap, the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) was later established. However, ORPHA was amended only in January 2003; several months after the probability of war became severe. Planning for conventional operations had therefore moved on for more than a year, while sober preparation for the postwar phase was a matter of weeks. ORHA was confronted with limited resources, lack of central

direction, and the absence of a mandate to harmonize with additional government agencies.⁴⁹

Possibly most significantly, the fundamental decision regarding Iraq's political future other than an unclear desire to see Iraq become a democracy was never made by the United States. Therefore, the United States never involve in an effort parallel to the "Bonn process," which prepared the stage for the future government of Afghanistan prior to the fall of the Taliban and helped ease infighting there when U.S.- backed forces emerged victoriously.

Other than individual incompetence and unjustifiably hopeful assumptions regarding postwar Iraq, three factors were responsible the lack of planning. Firstly, planning makes room for political challenges. Important allies such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia might disapprove efforts to empower Iraq's Shia population through democratic elections. Back home, critics of the war might draw attention to emergency plans for extra troop deployments, huge expenditure on reconstruction, and other expensive possibilities as evidence that the war would be too expensive or could even lead to catastrophe. Even though in principle planning could be classified, a broad planning effort that involved lots of individuals throughout the U.S. military and administration could have leaked to the media.⁵⁰ Second, some civilian defense officials supposed that the absence of

⁴⁷Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2003), 2.

⁴⁸Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam*, xviii.

⁴⁹⁸²Chandrasekara, *Imperial Life* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 37–42.

⁵⁰See the discussion in Gregory Hooker, *Shaping the Plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2005), 9–12.



planning would mean that the better-structured exile community would be advantageous over prospective rivals.⁵¹ Lastly, officials in the U.S. government were divided on what should be done with postwar Iraq. Senior officials mostly approved of the need to purge Saddam's regime, but there was a divergence on the regime type that comes next and the role of the United States in effecting any changes.⁵² The structural challenges of fragile institutions, nationalism, and a failed state was aggravated by the lack of planning. Shifting from Saddam's Iraq to any alternative was intrinsically complex, but ORHA and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) were willing to take the responsibility of ensuring basic services and create a plan of governance. Politically, the United States nurtured the most horrible of all expectations, creating a feeling that it would initially transfer power and then annoying "elites and the populace alike" by prolonging the occupation with no comprehensible plan for Iraqi involvement. If the decision to procrastinate the handing over of power to the Iraqis was done prior to the war, rather than after Iraqis had come to expect an instantaneous "return of sovereignty", their expectations would not have grown so high without being corrected. Furthermore, it would not have cultivated immediate inter and intergroup leadership struggles, as these would have been determined prior to the war, in conditions

⁵¹Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 52.

⁵²Edward Luce, "Lunch with the FT: John Bolton," *Financial Times*, 19 October 2007.

that were far more manageable and less" susceptible to outbidding and chauvinism." On the contrary, more positive 'structural conditions' would have presented the United States with a conducive environment to develop plans for the occupation stated.⁵³

Weak Civilian Capacity/ Inadequate Staffing

The Bush administration was faced with high criticism for inadequate staffing policies in crucial agencies connected to the Iraq occupation. The U.S. civilian agencies lacked the required capacity toward nation-building in many crucial areas.

Even though there was an extensive "post hoc" condemnation against the Department of Defense been in charge of the occupation, the State Department in 2003 had inadequate capacity for planning and administration.⁵⁴ The State Department was faced with a lot of difficulties in this regard. Most significant is that it was and still remains a tiny organization. The U.S. military has 217 times more personnel as compared to the U.S. Foreign Service, and the latter has universal staffing responsibilities. It was recorded that in 2007, Foreign Service officers in all of Iraq were less than three hundred.⁵⁵ Likewise; USAID is believed to have approximately one thousand career professionals as at during the invasion.⁵⁶

⁵³Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.

⁵⁴Diamond, for example, criticizes the choice of the Pentagon as the lead agency for Iraq. Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 281.

⁵⁵"AFSA net: Telling Our Story," 17 October 2007. Email version.

⁵⁶Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 309.



The skills of these staffs were also not commensurate to what was required of occupying Iraq. Those who can speak Arabic were few, and the required numbers dwarfed those needed for traditional diplomatic assignments.⁵⁷ The State Department had a poor police-training program, as the military had. Moreover, program management as a career path was given emphases by the State Department. Consequently, administering huge staffs and numbers of contractors is uncommon to most senior State Department officials.

Part of the account for the lots of unfortunate decisions and weak implementation was that the civilian institutions created to administer Iraq were patched up with a blurred mandate and poor staffing. Most of the staff did not have any area specialty or practical expertise, and not many were ready to stay in Iraq beyond a short trip. However, the CPA failed to tap on much of the expertise needed even with the inadequate lead-up time. The majority of the CPA staff had never worked overseas.⁵⁸ One 24 years old was charged with the responsibility of reinstating Baghdad's stock exchange.⁵⁹ Possibly, the most disturbing thing was that competence in staffing decisions seems to be undermined by loyalty to the Republican Party. During the interview, applicants were even asked for their opinions on abortion.⁶⁰ The preliminary staffing was also insufficient. The United

States had only three officials working towards privatizing factories in Iraq, contrary to that of Germany that had eight thousand employees working on the similar situation during unification.⁶¹

From the onset of the occupation, the United States was confronted with intelligence problems in relation to staffing. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) mission was a tiny one, with speedy turnover and limited officers that understand Arabic.⁶² Although the effort of the CIA developed to its largest globally, the CIA was unable to effectively infiltrate the insurgency.⁶³ Also, the United States was unable to distinguish among the diverse anti- U.S. voices. Ahmad Kubeisi, a Sunni nationalistic leader who was virtually connected to different insurgent organizations, had since campaigned against anti-U.S. aggression was proclaimed persona non grata by authorities of the U.S. while he was out of the country.⁶⁴

Inadequate Troops: One of the toughest criticisms faced by the Bush administration was the decision to use an attacking force whose total size in Iraq was less than one hundred eighty-five thousand troops in May and quickly dropped by approximately thirty thousand in the months after.⁶⁵ Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld narrows the size of the

⁵⁷“AFSA net: Telling Our Story,” 17 October 2007. Email version

⁵⁸Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 16.

⁵⁹Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 102; and Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 289.

⁶⁰Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 91.

⁶¹Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studies*, 17(0963-6412),

⁶²Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 179.

⁶³¹⁵⁴ Bruce Hoffman, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 110.

⁶⁴Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird*, 67.

⁶⁵Brookings Institution, “Iraq Index,” 17 November 2003, accessed at <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index20031117.pdf>.



force for a number of reasons. First, he was sure, that a comparatively tiny force could effortlessly overpower Saddam's forces. Second, he never thought that anarchy would erupt and that the United States would have to shoulder responsibility for maintaining public order. Specifically, there was the belief among civilian defense officials that the Iraqis would perceive themselves as been liberated, thus making resistance to occupation very unlikely.⁶⁶ Vice President Dick Cheney even affirmed publicly that "we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators."⁶⁷ Rumsfeld micromanaged the force structure and his opposition to calls to increase the size of forces were notorious. Regardless of some level of distress in the army, CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks never agreed to revisions of the plans to include more troops.⁶⁸ I, when Baghdad came under the control of the U.S. forces, General Franks stopped the stream of additional forces to the war front.

The total number of troops needed for the Iraq operation base on assessment was estimated to be about half a million troops, contrary to the two hundred thousand U.S. soldiers who in reality invaded Iraq, although these were focused on the post-hostilities period. For instance, a RAND nation-building study and a number of scholastic works reference a typical requisite of "one security official per five hundred

people in the population: for Iraq, a figure that would be around five hundred thousand".⁶⁹ Prior to the invasion, General Shinseki noticed the need for a much larger number of troops to occupy Iraq, stating a number of several hundred thousand, which was the original army recommendation.⁷⁰ Inadequate forces can contribute to occupation challenges analogous to what the United States was confronted with in Iraq. Specifically, inadequate troops aggravated the issues of failed state and made it quite difficult to respond to early waves of violent nationalism. Protecting civilian officials and aid personnel, not to talk of ordinary Iraqis risked overstretching the inadequate forces. In addition, it created a platform that enabled insurgents to organize. Moreover, the United States could not protect the Iraqis who worked alongside coalition, making them exposed to insurgent retaliation.⁷¹

Military Not Oriented Toward Counterinsurgency: On top of not deploying sufficient troops, the U.S. military in 2003 was mainly, perhaps tremendously, trained on defeating enemy forces in conventional warfare. When it comes to this it, was extremely successful. The overwhelming victory over Saddam's

⁶⁶ Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 285; Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," 65; and Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (Pantheon, 2006).

⁶⁷ Vice President Richard Cheney, *Meet the Press*, 16 March 2003.

⁶⁸ Ricks, *Fiasco*, 40.

⁶⁹ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, and Beth Cole DeGrasse, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), xxvi.

⁷⁰ Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 284; and Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," 64. In the 1990s, CENTCOM had done an exercise, dubbed "Desert Crossing," which offered some guidance on troop numbers and suggested that extremely large numbers were necessary.

⁷¹ Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 289.



conventional forces in 2003 was, certainly, a “cakewalk” as forecasted by some experts.⁷² However, even though U.S. forces stood out in conventional operations, they demonstrated weak counterinsurgency capabilities. U.S. policy on counterinsurgency was immature, as not been upgraded for nearly two (2) decades before the war began.⁷³ In the U.S military, training and instruction programs on counterinsurgency were more or less weak.⁷⁴

However, it was no surprise that U.S. Army forces deployed in Iraq were tough on ‘armored and mechanized forces’ but rather weak on ‘civil affairs and human intelligence’. The consequence, as stated by a U.S. officer in a sweltering post-invasion critique, was that “America’s generals have failed to prepare our armed forces for war and advise civilian authorities on the application of force to achieve the aims of policy.”⁷⁵ Foreign military training programs, a quintessential element of counterinsurgency, were, to say the least very weak.

None of these failures were unavoidable. Contrary to weak civilian capacity, the numeric strength and budgets of the military were substantial, and it was possible, though challenging, to reorient the military on counterinsurgency. Certainly, in 2005–2007 the United States essentially shifted its

approach in Iraq to incorporate most of the doctrine of counterinsurgency.⁷⁶ ‘Education, training, and doctrine all caught up to the need for this capability’. Such a change, however, happened only after the insurgency was heightened and the inefficiency of the existing approach was clear. Moreover, training programs, mainly for police, remained feeble.⁷⁷ Yet the military not being trained and educated on counterinsurgency is a vital forewarning toward the more general criticism that insufficient troops were deployed. Bringing to the theater an extra two hundred thousand troops who lacked counterinsurgency training would only have proved a bit useful.

Weak Diplomacy

A lot of critics of the war have emphasized on the Bush administration’s failure to win a UN Security Council resolution particularly authorizing the war. In so doing, the argument goes; the United States disadvantaged itself of the forces and expertise of its allies plus extra finances for reconstructions. Moreover, an international coalition could have dismissed worries of an occupation by increasing the legitimacy of the coalition command.⁷⁸

Also, after the occupation started, the United States deliberately refused to hand over political authority to the United Nations.

⁷²See Ken Adelman, “Cakewalk in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 13 February 2002, A27.

⁷³Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*; and Colin Kahl, “COIN of the Realm,” *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007).

⁷⁴Aylwin-Foster, “Changing the Army,” 9.

⁷⁵Paul Yingling, “A Failure in Generalship,” *Armed Forces Journal*, accessed at <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/05/2635198>.

⁷⁶Kahl, “COIN of the Realm.”

⁷⁷For work on policing in general as a counterinsurgency instrument, see William Rosenau, “Little Soldiers:” Police, Policing, and Counterinsurgency,” (unpublished paper, 2007). For specifics on Iraq, see Bruce Hoffman, “Testimony Before the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives, 11 September 2006.

⁷⁸Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards,” 72.

Thus, the United States denied itself of potential expertise and also amplified the consciousness that the United States was an occupier.⁷⁹ Consequently, it is believed that a number of the early insurgent strength focused more on bringing the U.S. occupation to an end, rather than been directed into politics of Iraq.⁸⁰

Besides international dimension, neighbors have a vital role to play in military occupations in relation to the probability of conflict. As discovered by a RAND study, "It is, therefore, practically impossible to put a broken state back together if its neighbors are committed to frustrating that effort."⁸¹ Even though Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait gave the United States their open or genuine backings, never did Syria and Iran give their support. In various forms, Syria and Iran contributed to U.S. failures. According to the Iraq Study Group, Iran actively intruded in Iraq crisis, by supporting, arming and organizing insurgents. Syria was intentionally passive in relation to smuggling, gunrunning, terrorist enlistment, and other difficulties originating from within its territory.⁸² Both states exacerbated the problem of fragile authority in Iraq by supporting local groups with arms or aiding them to get arms.

Turkey also did not give any support to the U.S. Prior to the invasion; part of the U.S.

military plan had been to use Turkey's territory to launch part of the military assault. Also, having Turkey as part of the coalition would have been politically beneficial, bringing in a huge and powerful Muslim (though secular) nation. The failure to win the support of Turkey into the coalition compelled the United States to redirect its forces and, in the end, to deploy smaller number of troops as part of the first invasion force, and the Fourth Infantry Division, that was supposed to enter Iraq via Turkey, instead entered Iraq from the south to man part of the north.

3.1 Failures of Occupation

In addition to improperly laying the foundation for a successful occupation prior to the war, having control power in Iraq the United States made several policy choices that in retrospection many disapproved of as encouraging an uprising. These include: (1) disbanding the Iraqi army; (2) de-Baathification of the government of Iraq; (3) failing to prevent the initial looting; (4) vacillating on Iraq's political status; (5) pushing for speedy democratization and economic transformation; (6) moving slowly on reconstruction; and (7) hiring inexperienced or highly ideological staff.

Disbanding the Iraqi Army

One of the greatest criticisms faced by the U.S. was the decisions to disband both the Iraqi Army and intelligence services. For Paul Bremer, disbanding the army was a signal to Iraqis, most especially the Shiites

⁷⁹Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 291; and Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, xxxv.

⁸⁰Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 303.

⁸¹Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, xiii.

⁸²Baker and Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, 28–29.



and Kurds, that Saddam's regime has gone.⁸³

Dissolving the army led to numerous problems. One of the greatest was basically discharging discontented officers who could provide leadership for an emerging uprising as well as a bulky number of 'armed young men who could fill the ranks'. In black and white at least, the primary dissolution decision was concerned about four hundred thousand people directly and indirectly and well over a million because most soldiers helped support huge families. These soldiers were well trained and knew where huge numbers of reserved weapons were situated. In fact, the CIA even cautioned Bremer that "You're going to drive fifty thousand Baathist underground before nightfall."⁸⁴ In Fallujah city, which was one of the first places where resistance started, countless insurgent recruits were "unemployed, most often former military or security servicemen."⁸⁵ The knock was mainly severe among lots of Sunni elites who were in positions of authority in the army and security services.⁸⁶ According to a reporter, professional military officers became the "backbone" of the insurgency.⁸⁷

There was also a substantial psychological effect. According to Allawi, "The Iraqi army

had played an almost mystical role in the narrative of modern Iraqi history."⁸⁸ The army was regarded as a national symbol and was extensively respected in Iraq. Dissolving such army was viewed as a blow to national pride.

If the regular army had been in position, it would have been utilized to provide local security or employed in public services. The army would have also been helpful for neutralizing insurgents from the security apparatus, Republican Guards, or other loyalists to Saddam, by providing substantial intelligence to coalition forces. Perhaps most significant is, maintaining the army would have signaled to the Sunnis that their influence would remain considerable especially in a vital institution as the military.

De-Baathification

The Baath Party has been the hub of Saddam Hussein's machinery for ruling Iraq, and its high profile leadership was drawn in Saddam's many crimes. Even though the cream of the leadership would certainly be removed, U.S. administration banned the Baath Party in entirety estimated thirty thousand members lost their jobs in the government of Iraq.⁸⁹ De-Baathification was introduced by Bremer regardless of concerns brought up by the CIA as well as his predecessor, General Garner that this would

⁸³ Interview with L. Paul Bremer III, PBS Frontline, accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/interviews/bremer.html>.

⁸⁴ Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 71.

⁸⁵ Rosen, *In the Belly of the Green Bird*, 142.

⁸⁶ Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 155–58.

⁸⁷ Interview with Michael Ware, PBS Frontline, accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/insurgency/interviews/ware.html>.

⁸⁸ ¹¹⁰ Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 155. For a similar argument, see Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 181. For a review of the Iraqi army during Saddam's regime, see Andrew Parasiliti and Sinan Antoon. "Friends in Need, Foes to Heed: The Iraqi Military in Politics," *Middle East Policy* 7, no. 4 (October 2000): 130–40.

⁸⁹ Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 146–50.



energize the insurrection.⁹⁰ The same as with the dissolution of the army, part of the objective of de-Baathification was a warning sign to the people of Iraq that the old order has ended.

The growing support for an insurrection amongst elites and intensifying the failed state problems became profound consequences of de-baathification especially in Sunni dominated communities. Many high-flying Sunnis were as well prominent Baathist: by dismissal higher-ranking Baathist, lots of prominent voices in the Sunni community were also ostracized from legitimate political power.⁹¹ Moreover, they began being anxious that they would be the object of retaliation by the fresh, U.S-backed government. De-Baathification also had an instantaneous consequence on reconstruction efforts. Most leading Iraqi technocrats were also members of the Baath Party, and their elimination paralyzed many government services.⁹²

Failure to Stop Looting and Recognize the Incipient Insurgency

After the defeat of Saddam's army by U.S. forces, efforts to end the looting that ensued was insufficient. According to Anthony Cordesman, "We neither anticipated the mission nor had the troops."⁹³ The entire

occupation brought an overwhelming disorder, seriously hindering reconstruction and efforts to govern Iraq. Most of Iraq's infrastructure; building materials, computers, and other household goods were easily looted and flogged on the black market.⁹⁴

The United States should have anticipated anarchy to ensue following the overthrow of a regime. An official of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) noted, "Anyone who has witnessed the fall of a regime while another force is coming in on a temporary basis knows that looting is standard procedure."⁹⁵ Certainly, some significant U.S. government-linked prewar studies, mainly the Future of Iraq Project and a CIA projection, cautioned about the risk of civil chaos, so also 'expert testimony from Iraq experts, NGO officials, and reports from various think tanks'.

Other than impeding reconstruction, the looting also energized local militias. At the collapse of the regime, an estimated two hundred and fifty thousand tons of weapons got missing, which consequently helped transforming Iraq into an extraordinarily armed to the tooth community.⁹⁶

The failure to prevent the looting was in part challenging due to a failure to right size the troops—a comparatively minute number of coalition forces could not take the responsibility of local police devoid of being

⁹⁰ Interview with General Jay Garner, PBS Frontline, accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/interviews/garner.html>.

⁹¹ Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency," 372.

⁹² Baker and Hamilton, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, 21

⁹³ Interview with Anthony Cordesman, PBS Frontline, accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/interviews/cordesman.html>.

⁹⁴ Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 116.

⁹⁵ As quoted in Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," 63.

⁹⁶ Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 140. The figure may be much harder, with the figure possibly being more than twice that high. As one official noted, "Fundamentally, the entire country was one big ammo dump." Adam Schreck, "Looted Weapons Stockpiles," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 2007, A4.



'stretched extremely thin'. However, even in regions with a strong presence of coalition forces, they did not see police work as part of their mandate. As one officer stated, "I can remember quite clearly, I was on a street corner in Baghdad, smoking a cigar, watching some guys carry a sofa by—and it never occurred to me that I was going to be the guy to go get that sofa back."⁹⁷

Most of the early tactics employed by the military to fight the insurgents proved ineffective and were later seen as going contrary to conventional counterinsurgency ethics of reducing the application of force and trying to persuade the population. Some U.S. troops depended on firepower and the profound application of force to resolve problems, not realizing that this often rebounds when combating insurgents as it isolates the wider population.⁹⁸ Most Iraqis were of the perception that they were under collective punishment from the Americans, and the arrests of elderly Iraqis amplified a sense of embarrassment. A Colonel in the U.S. Army thus made this comment in 2004, "If I were treated like this, I'd be a terrorist!"⁹⁹ As it used to be, the nascent insurgency became more pervasive when the hostile response exasperated most locals and turned them against the Americans and their Iraqi sympathizers.¹⁰⁰

Vacillation on Political Strategy

The United States made its problems complex with advance planning by changing its approach on Iraqi sovereignty and other vital issues in a "bewildering and seemingly whimsical manner". Without a doubt, this vacillation contributed to most of the aforementioned problems.

The original plan of ORHA was the rapid transfer of sovereignty to various Iraqi leaders that it believed represented vital components of Iraqi society.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the planning of CPA never went with its ambitions. One CPA official referred to the CPA as "pasting feathers together, hoping for a duck."¹⁰² The choice to occupy Iraq, hold up the transfer of sovereignty, and failure to hold elections infuriated a number of significant personalities and diminished the integrity of U.S. promises that it would transfer sovereignty to Iraq finally and end the occupation.¹⁰³

As a whole, the United States took a shift on how much power the Iraqis should be given, and advice-giving groups were formed but then overlooked. The May 22 announcement of the CPA was an indication that the United States was changing course and officially in quest of occupying and running Iraq. As Diamond argues, "We never listened carefully to the Iraqi people, or to the figures in the country that they respected."¹⁰⁴ Again,

⁹⁷Ricks, *Fiasco*, 152.

⁹⁸ Kahl, "COIN of the Realm."

⁹⁹ As quoted in Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* (November-December 2005): 3.

¹⁰⁰ Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 264–73; and Ricks, *Fiasco*, 185.

¹⁰¹ Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 186.

¹⁰² As quoted in Ricks, *Fiasco*, 204.

¹⁰³ Edelstein finds that "Credible guarantees of independent, indigenous rule reduce the likelihood of costly resistance from the occupied population and may minimize domestic opposition to the occupation, and thereby make a long and successful occupation possible." Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards," 65.

¹⁰⁴ Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 291.



the United States raised hopes only to shatter them.¹⁰⁵

Also, the U.S. officials failed to dialogue with Sunni leaders. Consequently, the United States turned out to face the worst of all worlds. This brought humiliation to those who teamed up with the United States and fueled nationalism yet unable not put in place a mechanism that would establish lasting institutions. A U.S. general thus contended that the “greatest asset” of the insurgency was the CPA itself.¹⁰⁶

Pushing Too Hard on Political and Economic Transformation

Paradoxically, even though there had been no planning into the creation and actions of the CPA, it had extraordinarily ambitious goals: the establishment of peace and stability, installing a market economy, and creating a democracy in Iraq.¹⁰⁷ Politically, the United States was determined for Iraq to get away from decades of oppression under Saddam and other, less atrocious, despots and transcends to a full-fledged democracy. Economically, the United States was determined for Iraq to shed the centralized economy of Baathist Iraq and institute a market democracy.

As plans for democratic elections unfold, an unsurprising set of dynamics connected to

“voting to violence” ensued.¹⁰⁸ Various Iraqi leaders specifically resorted to ethnic and sectarian themes, blowing the flames of anger as part of their endeavor to ‘position themselves to gain power’. Sunni and Shia leaders of all kinds—former Baathist, members of the *hawza*, tribal head, populists, and the likes—all took advantage of their sudden right to assemble and express themselves, often against the CPA. The CPA and its Iraqi employees were straight away disapproved of by these leaders, thus, delegitimizing the new government. The problem emanated with the CPA’s denial to cooperate with a number of nondemocratic, but yet major, power brokers in Iraqi society. For instance, the CPA refused to pay off supportive tribal authorities or recognize the efforts of military officials to win over their support. A former intelligence officer states that “The standard answer we got from Bremer’s people was that the tribes are a vestige of the past, that they have no place in the new democratic Iraq.”¹⁰⁹

Efforts to endorse economic transformation were also accompanied with adverse consequences. The Iraq-Iran war, more than a decade of sanctions, and then the destruction of the second war all had wrecked grave havocs to the economy of Iraq. Countless Iraqis relied on the regime for jobs and assistance, be it directly or indirectly. The shift to Privatization made it very difficult to reinstate stability.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, 300. This switch from a rapid transfer to delaying elections was not the end of U.S. vacillation. Because the interim governments were seen as unrepresentative and weak, demands for democracy grew quickly, leading to criticism and pressure from the White House to speed up the effort. In the end, the CPA rushed elections.

¹⁰⁶ Ricks, *Fiasco*, 210.

¹⁰⁷ See Coalition Provisional Authority, *Vision for Iraq*, 11 July 2003.

¹⁰⁸ For an analysis of such problems, see Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*.

¹⁰⁹ Joe Klein, “Saddam’s Revenge,” *Time*, 18 September 2005.

¹¹⁰ Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 110–16.



Economic transformation was hindered partly because the political state of affairs was unsettled. Most immediately, the absence of law and order led to notorious robbery and absence of property rights, making it unfeasible for the private sector to become a vehicle for growth. Privatization moves instantly turned into sovereignty concerns. "How much should be privatized and at what pace—did Iraqis get to decide this, or did Americans"?¹¹¹ Doubts regarding privatization led to a major slowdown and foreign investors were as expected hesitant to progress without this vital concern being addressed.

Moving Too Slowly on Reconstruction

This absence of political planning was compounded by inadequate preparation for the reconstruction of Iraq. Although the United States had big dreams for the economic future of Iraq, yet the efforts on rebuilding the war and sanctions-devastated state were very slow. The United States miscalculated how much reconstruction of Iraq would cost and presupposed Iraq's oil revenues would pay the bulk of the reconstruction cost.¹¹² Even though the degree of the destruction was apparent, officials failed to involve in a substantial rebuilding effort.

A flourishing reconstruction effort would have been achieved years back, but many Iraqis were confused and infuriated by the absence of a speedy reconstruction process.

¹¹¹Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life*, 105.

¹¹²For example, Andrew Natsios, the head of USAID, suggested in April 2003 that the total cost of reconstruction for the U.S. taxpayer would only be \$1.7 billion. ABC News Nightline, "Project Iraq," 23 April 2003. The text of interview accessed at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/temp/natsios042303.html>

Anthony Shadid, a reporter, references an Iraqi woman asking "how a country as powerful as America could not distribute gas or electricity, or provide security or work."¹¹³ Paradoxically, a similar view was held by Iraqis as U.S. officials—that the reconstruction process would be effortless and cheap—but when reconstruction failed to become visible, they were exasperated at their assumptions.

CONCLUSION

The Iraq war taught that there is less possibility for a positive outcome when military force is employed in the settlement of a conflict in fractured societies. Just Peace is not all about regime change, but also involves the provision of security and the institution of to some extent just national life. Challenges and risks are inevitable to these tasks, as well as providing the necessary resources and maintaining the political willingness and support required through the period to realize them. However, before any military action is taking, leaders must give more consideration to these moral obligations than was the case in Iraq invasion.

The war revealed that provision of adequate security is an indispensable goal to ensure a perfect peace as an outcome of a war. In the absence of security, "individuals and groups" will employ means not sanctioned by law to seek for security. This can swiftly cause

¹¹³Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 177.



civil and/or tribal war in a fissured state like Iraq. In the absence of security, realizing the plethora of “other goods intrinsic to a just post-war settlement” to say the least, is unlikely and maybe not possible.

The church’s moral teaching on war and peace, which serves as the foundation for international law, stipulates a “compelling and coherent” guide for states to pursue in situations of conflict. It leads to great danger and unintended outcome when states choose to ignore these guiding principles in their dealings in international affairs. As states consider their future dealings in international affairs, it is a must to adhere to the “moral principles of a just use of force and of the establishment of a just peace” to control the urge to employ coercive means to right wrongs¹¹⁴

Also, a very important sequence of policy blunders was made in advance to the run-up to war. Some serious concerns involve civilian capacity and the military's orientation toward counterinsurgency and other responsibilities that are occupation-related. "These are true variables"—considering the fact that U.S. government was very good at these things. Before now, the United States was renowned for its outstanding civilian capacity for nation-building, but it takes years and huge resources to develop. It is very important to have well-trained intelligence personnel, administrators, and aid workers that can be deployed for international missions like the case of Iraq, and the U.S must prepare to train and maintain huge numbers of them for

any such mission. However, the U.S military has undertaken peace missions in Somalia and the Balkans during the 1990s, from which they have learned many lessons in the process. Furthermore, in 2006, the U.S. military had undertaken a real counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq —had such been introduced in 2003, the world might have been a different place.

The lack of counterinsurgency orientation of the military, failure to establish a political settlement prior to the invasion, failure to exhaust available measures to prevent war, and other rational policy preferences prior to the war resulted to the massive challenges during the occupation period. Therefore, by the time of the invasion, these policy preferences turned out to be structural limitations and the failures produced a “snowballing effect”. As a result, policy corrections during the initial stages of the occupation became extremely complex. However, it is apparent that, basically, the Bush administration disregarded the maxim of Sun Tzu’s which reads; “Know thy self, know thy enemy.” The U.S violated this in failure to comprehend the nature of Iraqi society and its probable response to occupation. Perhaps more alarming is that, the U.S. government failed to know itself, to comprehend the limits of the U.S’s ability to totally occupy Iraq.¹¹⁵

Added to these policy lessons is the fact that, Iraq reveals the relationship between structural constraints and policy preferences.

¹¹⁴[Richard E. Pates](#), (2014). Iraq: Unintended Consequences and Lessons for U.S. Policy

¹¹⁵[Richard E. Pates](#), (2014). Iraq: Unintended Consequences and Lessons for U.S. Policy
See also; Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.



When ORHA, CPA, and CENTCOM officials established their offices in Baghdad, most of their policy preferences were seriously constrained. Iraq was a fractured and disorderly society, and the U.S. also had minimal intelligence on local affairs. However, the overall pre-war policy preferences were a big blunder. Worse still, the total size of the military forces was set and it was very difficult to be promptly right-sized.

Democracy appeared to be very attractive to many Iraqi's who were against Saddam's dictatorship, but there was no reason for the U.S to ascertain that war would have led to the establishment of a flourishing democracy in Iraq. This is because the people of Iraq were not prepared for the massive social transformation democracy demands: the guarantees of individual rights, protection, and freedom of speech.

Building a modern democracy in an Arab state governed under dictatorship for decades would damage the prospect of a successful occupation. The history of U.S invasion of foreign countries for a change of regime reveals that America lacks "great staying power". In fact, the U.S has in most cases left those states in the worst situation than they were prior to regime change. In addition, Changing of regimes has also left America in a worse off situation both internally and externally.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶Ryan, H.B. (2002, Oct 21, 2002). Regime Change: New Name, Dangerous Old Policy. [Weblog]. Retrieved 2017, from <https://origins.osu.edu/history-news/regime-change-new-name-dangerous-old-policy>

The Iraq experience implies that the level of the U.S. democratization ambitions heightened the military and political constraints for the U.S administration in other areas. "The war offered a universalizing narrative of resistance to occupation that has proven attractive to potential jihadist recruits."

Apparently, the establishment of a stable democracy in Iraq was not unattainable but it was definitely an uphill task. Total de-Baathification, and dissolution of the military made it a much more difficult task. However, it would be naive, and perhaps a mistake, to ascertain that a single policy adjustment would have led a huge difference in the outcome in Iraq. Adopting policies other than the ones used would have resulted in different problems (perhaps lesser ones). At the same time, some policies would have led to a significant "political costs", possibly outside what American political leaders were prepared to pay.

Insecurity regarding the "intentions and capabilities" of the U.S in the region has heightened Arab states' openness to support from China and Russia. Post-invasion disorder in the Arab world was followed by a loss of trust and a shift in public views of American credibility as a security guarantor. This originates from the perception of U.S. imbroglio in Iraq, which some perceived as a hindrance in both the capabilities and willingness of the U.S. to intervene elsewhere. The overall outcome has been the amplified willingness of traditional U.S. Arab allies to seek patronage from



nontraditional extra-regional powers—particularly Russia and China.¹¹⁷

The swift military destruction of what the Pentagon knew was an effectively weak state would communicate to all potential rivals, such as the European powers and China, of the penalty of testing US hegemony.¹¹⁸

Also important to mention is that, the manipulation of international resolution texts in order to explain them politically what cannot be explained legally, reveals another scheme to get around the prohibition on the use of force as entrenched in the UN Charter. This indicates that the unilateral application of force to realize the enforcement of resolutions or other goals, for instance changing another country's regime, has the potential of destroying the fragile but essential system of collective security.¹¹⁹

The aftermath of the Iraq war could be traced to errors of planning made at the very initial stages of the invasion framework and the execution of the invasion plans.

The U.S' failure to secure a strong “international coalition and the United

Nations authorization plays a significant role to undermine the legitimacy of the invasion and exposed America's reliance on unilateralism due to its unmatched military capability. According to Byman, “A closer look, however, suggests that this issue was of marginal importance in the growth of the insurgencies”. I defer from Byman's claim with a strong conviction that, a robust presence of an international coalition under the banner of the United Nations would have provided the security manpower and resources required to have policed the entire Iraq in a way that the possibility of an uprising would have been unlikely. Even if an uprising occurred, it would have been short-lived. Besides, the invasion would have been done under the guiding principles of the U.N.¹²⁰

Previous U.S Doctrines and their policy objectives, (i.e. the Truman Doctrine, the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Nixon Doctrine, the Carter Doctrine, and the Reagan Doctrine) show that US foreign policy in the Middle East during the Cold War was “characterized by continuity rather than change”. The permanence in foreign policy was due to the unaltered position of the U.S as sole regional hegemon in the world and its enduring geostrategic interests to prevent the rise of another regional hegemon, and maintain its dominance over the oil-rich region. However, like his predecessors, President Bush's foreign policy toward Iraq signifies continuity in US foreign policy. A critical look into the US-Iraq relationship

¹¹⁷ Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.

¹¹⁸ Cogan, J. (2006, 3 March 2006). The consequences of the US-led war against Iraq. <http://intsse.com/wswspdf/en/articles/2006/03/jcre-m03.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Nico Schrijver, (2003): The Use of Force under the UN Charter: Restrictions and Loopholes.

¹²⁰ Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.



that led to the 2003 invasion of Iraq makes it clear that the US foreign policy objectives and strategies stay unaltered due to the lack of changes in its international status as the sole hegemonic power and its geostrategic location. The main objective of the U.S was to maintain its influence in the region by stopping the rise of Iraq as an anti-America major power that would threaten America's core interests directly or indirectly using a third party.

Also, the U.S determined to destroy state-sponsored terrorist groups like al-Qaeda that wanted to undermine US influence in the region and beyond (this is the only element in the Bush Doctrine that was different from his predecessors). To bring these objectives to fruition, the US depended on the offshore balancing grand strategy. Because of the lack of a regional power that is able and prepared to contain Iraq, the US was left with no other alternative but to employ direct balancing and military force to contain the threat emerging from Iraq.

American foreign policy toward Baghdad was inspired by the following factors: (1) the anarchic state of the international system with no world government to control Iraq, (2) Iraq allegedly possessed some military capabilities that could cause damage or destroy US interests, (3) the US was suspicious of Iraq's intentions and there was no assurance that the latter would not attack the interests of the former, (4) survival was the U.S top most priority and (5) the US acted on its own rationality, and its actions were stimulated by its desire to survive and retain regional hegemonic position. These

elements are also entrenched in the Bush Doctrine.

The buck-passing strategy failed in Iraq's case because there was no regional power or a coalition of states able and willing to balance its power.¹²¹

The 2003 invasion of Iraq faced severe mismanagement at the operational and strategic levels. As a result, the U.S encountered severe military and economic losses which reinforced the awareness that US foreign policy toward Iraq was "an aggressive, irrational one".

The collapse of the Ba'ath regime created an environment that further altered the regional balance of power in a manner that led to the emergence of several small centers of power. Consequently, this made it easier to stop the appearance of a prospective aggressor in the near future. However, this alteration in the balance of power gave rise to a further controversial outcome—The Islamic States of Iran became emboldened. Iran's supports to anti-American terrorist organizations during the Iraq invasion and its incessant threat towards the U.S have caused many to believe that the decision to invade Iraq was a strategic error and a break in US foreign policy. This development raised serious concern because it was the second time within a couple of years (the first was the Afghanistan War) that US actions in the region had led to the empowerment of the most ferocious enemy—Iran. The burden to

¹²¹B. Prifti (2017) US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45327-9_4



tackle an empowered Iran, a new power arrangement in the region, and also the appearance of the ISIL was inherited by the Obama administration.¹²²

De-baathification and the disbanding of the military were grave blunders made by the occupation power (s). The act of dissolving the army was openly criticized by Garner. Also, the then Director of C.I.A. in Iraq warned against such. Maintaining the army was a wish for the U.S military, and the State Department's "Future of Iraq" group asserted it was essential for public peace.¹²³

Even though some portion of the military voluntarily disbanded itself, calling them back to barracks would have been psychologically positive and partly, reducing the number of unemployed young men from the street. Moreover, this would have bolstered the essential policing and reconstruction efforts. Partly for these reasons, ORHA thought of reincorporating the Iraqi military. However, instead of disbanding the whole military, at least the top ranking officers would have been decapitated to avoid any near future coup plot.¹²⁴

Another issue worth noting was the lack of good design for governance. The U.S'

vacillation on the transfer of sovereignty and conducting elections exacerbated resistance. As seen in Iraq, procrastination of the transfer of power, and authority triggered heightened nationalist backlash. This clearly indicates Washington's intent of denying Iraqis the right to self-determination. Possibly, if the transfer of sovereign was further procrastinated, the tension might have spread wider to the Shia people. Leaders of the Shia population like Ayatollah Sistani responded swiftly to decision to postpone elections. Sistani's push for democratization was based on the understanding that majority rule means Shia dominant in Iraq.

Politically, the effort of the occupation power (s) to balance Iraq's ethnic and sectarian groups widened the existing fracture within Iraq and resulted in the war over the "perceived spoils".¹²⁵ It takes a miracle to settle the situation in Iraq. According to Allawi, "Whatever the policies were that the Coalition chose to pursue would have been met with the same degree of suspicion and hostility by the Sunni Arabs—short of a return to the status quo ante."¹²⁶

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¹²²Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.

¹²³Ricks, *Fiasco*, 159–64. , See also Byman, 2008.

¹²⁴James T. Quinlivan argues that coup-proofing depends in part on countering organization and dissatisfaction at the most senior ranks. See "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the MiddleEast," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 131–65. See also Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.

¹²⁵Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*. See also Byman, D. (2008). An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far. *Security Studie*, 17(0963-6412), 599–643.

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