

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: FIRST STEPS
ON THE LONG ROAD TOWARD SUCCESSFUL
UNITED STATES STRATEGY IN IRAQ**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The American strategy to achieve democratic reform in the Middle East, and eliminate threats of weapons of mass destruction and effects and the nuclei of global terrorism is daunting but achievable. America has stepped forward to promote and back up, through diplomatic, informational, military, and economic means, the principles for which it stands. In the love-hate relationship that defines American and Arab intercourse, America may be on the verge, through the momentum of its efforts, of positively changing the Middle East forever.

Success in Afghanistan provides hope for America and those in the region who are exhausted by the lifelong corruption and oppression that crushes them. America now senses similar success in Iraq. In the two years since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, America has experienced successes and failures. Most failures have been self-inflicted and delayed progress at significant cost in lives, coalition and Iraqi.

It is necessary to understand the environment, decisions, and consequences thereof as the U.S.-led coalition liberated Iraq and began the arduous and complex process of rebuilding as Iraqi discontent grew insurgencies emerged. Guided by history and experience, America must remain committed by applying resources and capabilities to enhance the survival of democratic Iraq.

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PREFACE

I want to acknowledge the officers and soldiers with whom I have had the honor and privilege to serve. Their strength, courage, and commitment, under the most challenging circumstances, are inspiring. In a region notorious for the absence of peace and security, it is their efforts and sacrifices that will achieve positive change.

This study explores the complex environment that the United States faces in Iraq and the Arab Middle East as it strives to establish conditions that are conducive to democratic reform, and eliminate the threats of weapons of mass destruction and effects and the nuclei of terrorism, which emanate from that vitally important region of the world. Specifically, this study focuses on U.S. and coalition actions and decisions in the first fifteen months of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, describes the current environment resulting from those actions and decisions, and offers recommendations to enhance the long term success of U.S. efforts.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM: FIRST STEPS ON THE LONG ROAD TOWARD SUCCESSFUL UNITED STATES STRATEGY IN IRAQ

Like an earlier generation, America is answering new dangers with firm resolve. No matter how long it takes, no matter how difficult the task, we will fight the enemy, and lift the shadow of fear, and lead free nations to victory.

–U.S. President George W. Bush
8 March 2005

The U.S. strategy to achieve democratic reform in the Middle East, eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction and effects, and eliminate the nuclei of global terrorism is indeed challenging and risky but it is nonetheless achievable. The United States has stepped forward to promote and back up, through diplomatic, informational, military, and economic means, the principles for which it stands. In the love-hate relationship that defines the American and Arab intercourse, America may be on the verge, through the momentum that it is creating, of setting the conditions that will positively change the Middle East forever.

Initial success in Afghanistan holds great promise for the United States as well as those in the Middle East who are exhausted by the lifelong corruption, violence, and oppression that crushes their hopes. The United States is beginning to sense such success in Iraq, though the environment is much more complex than Afghanistan. In the period of more than two years since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the U.S.-led coalition has experienced successes and failures. Many of its failures have been self-inflicted and served only to delay progress at significant cost in lives, coalition and Iraqi.

Undoubtedly, the United States will leave a legacy in Iraq. The legacy it leaves will be governed by its attitude, commitment, ideals, and the end state it strives to achieve there: a stable, peaceful government, mindful of civil rights, that represents the people and builds institutions and checks and balances to guarantee that an individual or group will have an almost impossible task seizing power in a coup d'état or through manipulations over time. To help Iraq secure these goals, therefore, America must remain engaged there for the foreseeable future. A host of reasons, not the least of which are economic benefits to all parties and stability in the greater Arab Middle East, require it.

Though America is a 'lightning rod' in the Middle East, ironically it is the greatest hope for millions there. Despite the oft-stated outrage against America, teahouse and academic discussions and even Arab journalism spoke of hope for reform in the Middle East in the muted euphoria of Saddam's ouster and subsequent capture as well as the success of Afghani and Iraqi national elections. However, much more remains to be done.

This thesis sheds light on the environment, decisions, and consequences thereof as the U.S.-led coalition embarked on Operation IRAQI FREEDOM to liberate Iraq in March 2003, and then began the arduous and complex process of rebuilding in the midst of growing Iraqi discontent and the emergence of numerous insurgencies. With history and current and future environments to guide, this thesis concludes by recommending actions and approaches that will see the new and democratic Iraq from its infancy to maturity.

The international community has a grand and historical opportunity in Iraq. The implications of success or failure cannot be understated. In order to be successful over the long term, the U.S. approach must be multi-faceted and attended by application its resources and people, for the foreseeable future. A well thought out and executed plan in Iraq may actually serve as a centerpiece on which our policies toward that region are built while at the same time inspiring regional reforms.

BACKGROUND

The United States is decisively engaged in Iraq as in Afghanistan and South Korea and until only recently Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. As a nation, Americans have accepted and for the most part supported more than fifty years of engagement in Germany, Japan, and Korea, as well as more than ten years in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It should not be surprising, therefore, that any effort on the scale of that which the nation undertook then, now, or in the future takes time, commitment, and resources to have any chance of success. When the nation's goals include growing an enduring democratic form of government, progress can only be measured in tens of years. Bosnia-Herzegovina serves to emphasize this point. At this time, no one harbors any illusions that the international community could disengage without part or all of the fragile institutions established at considerable cost, immediately collapsing. The foundations are not yet strong enough. For many reasons, present undertakings will be much more difficult in the Arab Middle East.¹

The United States is beginning its third year in Iraq. To be sure, arguments as to the wisdom of the decision to attack Saddam Hussein persist and will continue. Some argue that the United States already finds itself mired or becoming mired in Iraq. Arguments persist that the Bush Administration committed serious errors by not adequately analyzing and planning for post-combat, or what have commonly become known as Phase IV, operations. This indictment has resonated across a broad spectrum of spectators and actors, national and international. In the recent election year it became difficult for the average American to separate fact from fiction, political rhetoric, or posturing. Some still wonder what the United States is doing, what are its

policy and strategy, and what *should* it be doing, if anything, both in Iraq and in the global war on terror. In the meantime, the U.S. military confronts the prospect of mounting casualties, American, Coalition, and Iraqi, and a less willing Coalition. The success of the recent Iraqi elections may reverse these prospects, at least temporarily.

There were, of course, compelling reasons for going into Iraq. There was compelling evidence that Saddam Hussein possessed the infrastructure and raw materials with which to revive his weapons of mass destruction and weapons of mass effects programs. Intelligence estimates from allies and friends, regionally and extra-regionally, confirmed American estimates and beliefs in late 2002 and early 2003.² In the meantime, Saddam made progress in his subversion of the international community, sought new means by which to destabilize the region, and further tightened his death grip on the Iraqi people, especially the Shi'a, Kurds, and Christians. For example, he created new and potentially dangerous forces, such as the Fedayeen Saddam, which looked and acted more like radical Islamic terrorists than conventional law enforcement forces. Moreover, as the United Nations (UN) Oil for Food program investigators are learning everyday, Saddam was manipulating that organization, while stealing millions at the expense of the Iraqi people. Concurrently, he was successfully courting the French, Germans, Russians, and others in an attempt to garner their support to end sanctions or at least render them less effective. Potentially worse, while filling his pockets and building extravagant monuments to himself, the dictator was setting up the next generation of his dynasty, his sons Uday and Qusay, to assume power. From all reports, the two were the epitome of evil.³ One cannot underestimate the threat posed by their ascendancy.

There appeared to be no possibility of moderation on the part of Saddam. By all measures the opposite was occurring. Twelve years of sanctions had achieved little to reduce the threats he posed, while the international commitment to stay the course was waning. The expense to those, who supported the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, the maintenance of armed forces in the region, and the enforcing of economic sanctions was growing. For example, Saudi Arabia's leaders, staunch supporters of UN sanctions against Iraq, had allowed the presence of Joint Task Force – Southwest Asia in the Kingdom since 1992, and provided financial aid to that end. Yet, the Saudis were buckling under internal and external pressures to evict foreign forces from the birthplace of Islam. Saddam was playing a shell game with UN weapons inspectors. They achieved little success in the hunt for illegal weapons and programs except under the constant threat of U.S. military action. French, German, and Russian economic interests in Iraq were suffering and their prospects of post-sanctions relations with Iraq, which they saw as close at hand, depended on their ability to chip

away at and eliminate sanctions eventually. Mass media such as al-Jazeera television, based in Qatar, generated growing international sympathies for Iraq, as if Saddam was a victim. Finally, Saddam was communicating with terrorists, including al-Qaeda and Palestinian operatives, who were plotting against the United States. These and other factors played into Saddam's hands. Ironically, they also played into U.S. hands and opened the door for a second war in Iraq and the toppling of the Ba'ath regime.

On paper, the current strategy for Iraq is similar to that for Afghanistan or Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴ A reformed Iraq has great potential to enhance Middle East stability and U.S. security. Yet many fail to understand the nature of this undertaking. Unexplained is a vision, growing or preconceived, that sees Iraq emerging as a key element in a framework for democratic reform in the broader Middle East,⁵ the long term implications of which fit in President Bush's world vision. Iraq, as the "Cradle of Reform" in the Arab Middle East, supported by the West, would by its success pressure existing regimes to change, check Syrian subversion and Iranian threats, enhance regional security, give greater voice and opportunity to indigenous peoples, and set the conditions to eliminate the nuclei of global terrorism. Ironically, Saddam Hussein, for all his torment of the Iraqi people, established some of the foundation blocks that actually support U.S. efforts. He established a secular government, gave significant rights to women in terms of education, suffrage, and inclusion in the work force (although these gains declined considerably after the first Gulf War). Moreover, he allowed a modicum of religious freedom (again, however, subject to his whims).

Nor is the nature of the threat fully understood, although the American people, due to September 11, 2001, appear to have a better grasp than do many among America's allies. The threat the United States confronts from radical elements and rogue states in the Middle East is grave. Of this there can be no doubt. America and the West must not be naïve about the religious radicalism and intent among their enemies, or the extent of their potential reach in their global war on Western ideologies and cultures. Radical Islamic terrorism consists of dimensions, some of which are evolving, which Americans have not even considered.⁶ And this is but one of many complexities in this emerging war.

Even more telling of the complexities the United States faces in Iraq are the diatribes spewed by the terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In his 90-minute audio tape, released in mid-January 2005, he openly condemned, insulted, and taunted the Shi'a. Americans would do well to understand that he is not alone in his belief that the Shi'a are a sub-class and that Shi'ism is not true Islam. There are deep prejudices in the Middle East. While the Sunni fighters in Iraq may appear small in number, they have the moral support of some regional

Arabs states and their populations, most of which are overwhelmingly Sunni.⁷ Regional Arab governments will find it hard to welcome any form of government in Iraq in which the leadership is Shi'a, no matter, if it is a theocracy or a successful democracy. Both would be threatening. Success in a pluralistic system would openly pressure the old regimes to seriously address democratic reform. Moreover, an Iraqi government dominated in any way by Shi'a clerics will find open hostility among neighboring countries, especially Saudi Arabia's Wahhabis.⁸

If America's intent is to facilitate the democratization of the Middle East, beginning with Iraq, the challenge is for these and other reasons formidable, though not insurmountable. The same is true, even if American intent is limited to regional stability and ending the international terrorist threat to the United States. No matter what the vision and intent of the United States, change on this scale will take a long time. In Iraq alone such efforts will take years, and they will be vulnerable to failure, if not attended by a broad engagement to address and correct Arab and Iraqi perceptions and grievances, and a major commitment on the part of the United States, the international community, and regional Arab leaders to stamp out terrorists wherever and whenever identified. The larger issues, however, revolve around hope for stability and reform in the Middle East that appeals to and obliges significant numbers of the disillusioned who see their governments as failed, corrupt dictatorships and the United States as oppressor and guarantor of an Israeli version of "Manifest Destiny".

In Iraq that vision already appeals to the majority, even though a significant Sunni minority either sympathizes with or provides material support to the insurgents. However, the United States has not made such headway in the broader Arab Middle East, where hatred of Israel eclipses only that of America. The loud and profuse cheering in the streets of major Arab cities and towns in reaction to the attacks of September 11th, 2001 made this abundantly clear. Indeed, emotions represented a mixture of joy, sorrow, and anger, but the joy of some at the American catastrophe remains vivid. Americans can rightly curse the women, children, and men for their inhumane celebrations, but they would be wiser to understand why Arabs reacted in such a manner, and what this says about the state of affairs in the contemporary Middle East. Americans should also remember that this was not always the case. In fact, such a reaction among Arabs to September 11th would have been the exception once upon a time. What went wrong and how can Americans redress this situation? Do they and should they care?

Regardless of the view of how or why the United States went into Iraq, the United States is there and will be for the foreseeable future. In the big picture, there is much to gain in Iraq. Though imperative, success will not be easy nor is it guaranteed in this complex environment.⁹

What is required to successfully execute U.S. strategy in Iraq? No matter what the success in Iraq, can any strategy there be successful without a comprehensive strategy for the region, a strategy that realistically addresses Israel-Palestine and other monumental challenges? Is the United States willing to commit to an unsure prospect, the success of which will be measured in tens of years?

America's long-term strategy for Iraq appears, unfortunately, to be evolving out of preconceived notions and poor advice on what a post-combat Iraq would look like. Some advice was discarded. Army Chief of Staff, General Erik K. Shinseki, in answer to congressional inquiry, stated that a troop strength of several hundred thousand would be required to subdue Iraq for years in the aftermath of an invasion. Others, including United States Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator Paul Bremer, would draw belatedly similar conclusions after departing Iraq.¹⁰

The American military also made matters worse for itself on the ground. Initially seen as liberators by all but the core of Saddam's followers and a small number of terrorists, many Iraqis now see Americans as occupiers. Many sit on the fence while U.S. forces confront a growing and increasingly sophisticated insurgency. Moreover, many Iraqis and others in the Middle East and beyond call into question U.S. intentions. If one believes the media and pundits, the United States is mired in Iraq without a strategy to stabilize the country or to exit. In the meantime, the insurgency is evolving in much the same way that Colonel Roger Trinquier, a French expert on terrorism, described insurgencies and terrorism, or what he termed as modern war, some forty years ago.¹¹

What should U.S. forces have done differently once Saddam's regime fell? Did the U.S. government fail to plan for Phase IV operations? What are U.S. options at this stage? Without replaying the entire story as it evolved suffice to say that the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (later the Coalition Provisional Authority), the U.S. military, and other U.S. and international entities made serious mistakes and miscalculations in the planning and then on the ground in the early days following the astounding success of major combat operations.¹² This was in large measure the result of misunderstandings of Iraqi culture and contemporary Iraq.

There are numerous examples. The Coalition Provisional Authority, through coalition forces, could have ordered soldiers of the Iraqi armed forces to report to their bases, with certain guarantees, under command of their officers. From that point, coalition forces could have identified and removed the officers in the highest tiers of the Ba'ath Party and those charged with crimes. Coalition forces could then have vetted each level of the armed forces, all

the while paying salaries. Those found acceptable in the new Iraqi armed forces would have remained and retrained. Others could have secured pensions. Coalition forces could have done the same with other Iraqi security forces, including the police and border control, as well as civilian bureaucracies. There were certain organizations such as the Ba'ath Party and the Iraqi Intelligence Service that U.S. authorities would have excluded altogether, but the risks of their exclusion would have been small. Coalition forces could have declared martial law and implemented shoot-to-kill rules against looters; they could have utilized the existing communications infrastructure to communicate with the people to assure them of U.S. intentions and expectations and inform them of their responsibilities; they could have implemented (a better word is imposed) Phase IV rules of engagement (ROE); and they could have done more to understand the complexities of Iraqi life including the practical 'necessity' of being a Ba'athist in Iraq under Saddam.¹³ Finally, the Coalition Provisional Authority could have encouraged Iraqi reconciliation. Two years later deep traumas suffered by a number of groups have gone unpunished.

The fact that the Coalition Provisional Authority did none of the above exacerbated an already tense and vulnerable situation. Because the United States depended on the advice of Iraqi expatriates, some with suspect agendas, in developing and implementing U.S. occupation plans and policies, they alienated large segments of the population who had suffered directly at Saddam's hands. Because Americans did not stop the looting they appeared soft on crime; Arab society demands order and deals harshly with civil crimes.

Disbanding the Iraqi armed forces was a total humiliation for many Iraqis. Ambassador Bremer, on poor advice, dumped the baby out with the bathwater.¹⁴ He failed to account for the large numbers soldiers who had served honorably. Because American policy disbanded the Iraqi armed forces and never made any attempt to recognize a revered Iraqi institution, it created a large number of unemployed, armed young men who confronted a very bleak future, a cadre of disaffected military leaders, and a population that reflected favorably on the pre-Saddam era armed forces. In another sense, failure to obtain surrender convinced many Sunnis that Iraq was as yet undefeated.

When the national police force literally collapsed, the Americans did little to bring them back. The solution to the lawlessness that reigned in June 2003 was to authorize an AK-47 assault rifle in every home. In effect, the United States disarmed Iraq's security forces and law enforcement apparatus and armed everyone. The tragedies that accrued to coalition and Iraqi forces and civilians as a result of this decision are too numerous to recount. Because the

occupation leaders failed to communicate expectations and intent to the population, the Iraqis remained in a state of fear and uncertainty, one that persists today.

U.S. forces continued to operate under Phase III ROE, which often led soldiers to resort to the hammer as the tool of first choice, precisely the same option employed by Saddam's thugs. In some instances U.S. forces harassed and attacked the innocent and humiliated them in various ways that called for revenge.¹⁵ And because coalition policy makers did not understand that not all Ba'athists were bad, they alienated entire professional classes of Iraqi society: the military, the bureaucrats and technocrats, teachers, and others.

In fairness, there are tremendous American and coalition successes to recognize, as well. Deposing the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein was morally and legally the right course of action both from the standpoint of stabilizing the Middle East and enhancing the security of the United States and the West. While U.S. authorities were criticized for not punishing the criminals of Saddam's regime, Saddam and many of his criminal elite are in custody and will face Iraqi justice, which will help the reconciliation process. Saddam's maniacal sons are dead and their threat to future generations is no more. Much of the Iraqi population lives in relative security, though television often depicts a different picture. A greater percentage of the population enjoys acceptable and improving basic services, although Baghdadis, who are underwriting improvements countrywide, would not agree. U.S. efforts in the field of infrastructure, including electricity, water, irrigation, transportation, communications, and distribution systems will result in modern systems available to all segments of society in the next five to ten years.

The United States has drawn terrorists to the battlefield of its choosing and is dealing continued mortal blows to known organizations. Moreover, the United States is discovering heretofore unknown linkages in terror networks that will allow interdiction on its terms now and in the future. America is in a strong position in the heart of the Arab Middle East to influence direction and certain states for the foreseeable future while at the same time protecting its homeland. The United States can help maintain that position upon its departure by staying the course in Iraq, and encouraging and supporting moderation and reform in the region. Finally, no one can argue the success of recent elections or the hope they portend for the future of not only Iraq but the greater Arab Middle East, as well.

THE WAY FORWARD

What can America do now that it is decisively engaged in Iraq and recognizes in hindsight some serious errors over the past two years? Should it press on with the same strategy? What

are its chances for long-term success in Iraq? Have American leaders recognized the errors and are they addressing them? Or are they creating the environment that will breed new generations of recruits to fight America as is the case of Israel vis-à-vis Palestine?

There are a number of choices but really only two options. The United States can accelerate or eliminate major programs in order to expediently extract itself, hoping and rationalizing that everything will turn out as it envisioned in the beginning and believing that the Iraqis must now fix themselves. Or, America can stay the course with minor and perhaps even major adjustments. In either case, ironically, America runs the risk of watering down its goals to a point where they scarcely resemble the original goals. Staying the course is a long and expensive proposition, but the same can be said of significantly altering or prematurely concluding the campaign at this crucial time. A significant alteration of U.S. goals runs the risk that embryonic institutions will not mature. A premature exit leaves open the real prospect that future generations of Americans will fight again in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East.

America has embarked on a campaign, which will only be successful by convincing the Iraqi people to remain patient, an approach that is currently succeeding; understanding and helping Iraqis achieve their goals of security, stability, and representative government; demonstrating tangible progress, which the average Iraqi measures in terms of security and quality of life; and minimizing or eliminating the momentum opponents now enjoy in what is literally a race against time to win the hearts and minds of Iraq.

Though America is a 'lightning rod' in the Middle East, ironically it is the greatest hope for millions there. Despite the oft-stated outrage against the United States, teahouse and academic discussions and even Arab journalists spoke of hope for reform in the Middle East in the muted euphoria of Saddam's ouster and subsequent capture.¹⁶ The same is true in the aftermath of successful national elections in January 2005. There is a foundation on which to build.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To be successful in Iraq the United States must be present. The stakes are too high for anything but complete success. The United States may have to alter the ways and means to execute the strategy or even the *ideal* end state it envisions, but it must remain focused on the goal: a functional and growing form of representative government in the heart of the Arab Middle East. To do otherwise would be to hand radical Islamic terrorists a clear victory, add momentum to their goals in the region and world, and create greater threats to U.S. national security.

However, American presence cannot be one of overbearing arrogance that says in part that it is there to help Iraq 'get it right'. Nor can it be one of token presence to 'show that America cares'. Rather, U.S. presence must be ubiquitous and at the same time inconspicuous and its best and brightest must execute the strategy. Some believe that fewer troops on the ground would help, but any reductions in troop strength before the next elections would create untenable vulnerabilities. Currently and for the foreseeable future, Iraqi security forces are not prepared to single-handedly assume their full security roles. They would revert to the roles and methods of Saddam's regime, with which they are all too familiar.

Because of the complexity of the Iraq environment the United States does not have the luxury of accelerating or eliminating major programs. Believing that the United States can accelerate training of the new Iraqi armed forces, police, and border security and presto, they are ready to serve is naïve at best and disingenuous at worst. Such thinking equates to political expediency that America will later regret. U.S. prestige and blood are on the line as is its credibility, which already suffers because of the intervention and poor handling of Phase IV early on. U.S. credibility would be irreparably damaged if it walked away before verifiably achieving its goals. Further, slogans that lay out exit timelines are dangerous but, as evidenced in the 2004 U.S. presidential race, provide attractive bait for public consumption.¹⁷

The United States will have to carefully weigh any decisions to accelerate Iraqi security forces development and training programs. Where they are unavoidable, the United States must employ its leverage to mitigate risk. Though the Iraqi workforce is relatively well educated in the principles of its professions and vocations, which may be a surprise to some, the government sectors will require sustained U.S. support over the long term. The basic training and modernization of armed forces and bureaucracies is a fairly easy task but it is only the first step toward the total requirements that will lead to success. The subsequent steps provide the greatest challenge and take the longest time to successfully implement. These steps include inspiring professional cultures and ethics of service for the greater public good, and adhering to the primacy of the rule of law and civil rights. Their broad acceptance will take time, patience, commitment, and example.

Whether by design or coincidence the United States is making progress in developing government structures at a faster pace than the armed and other security forces. It should and must be this way. While the government stands up, builds infrastructures, gains confidence, and begins making decisions that positively affect the Iraqi people, the security apparatus is growing much slower. Again, this is as it should and must be. The security forces must mature over time into professional, ethical, and responsive entities answerable to the people and

willingly subservient to duly elected and equally responsive civilian leaders. This appears simplistic, but it is the foundation upon which all else builds and depends. Otherwise, it is too easy for the people part of this equation to revert, either by choice, coercion, or cooption to the corruption and violence that they understood all too well in Saddam's regime.

The people of Iraq, as is the case anywhere, want certain guarantees from their government in order to trust and support it. Their demands are neither excessive nor unreasonable. They demand a sense of security, internal and external. They demand to be able to trust that the state security apparatus is fair, responsive to their needs, and not abusive of its powers. They demand a guarantee of their civil rights though they will accept a guarantee that their children can walk to and from school unmolested for now. Since most Iraqis lived in a cradle-to-grave welfare system, they demand a social safety net that provides for their needs during this period of unprecedented change in their lives. They want to know that basic services and support are available and equitable: electricity, consumable fuels, communications, food, and water. They demand a guarantee of access to all levels of education, quality health care, and opportunity. Their families should not have to resort to bailing putrid water from polluted canals for cooking and bathing. They demand to be assured that Iraqis will not squander or pocket their natural resources and that the West will not manipulate them. They demand to know that their government will represent them and respond to their needs. In this respect the United States is enjoying a certain amount of success. Recent elections bear this out. Yet, the average Iraqi would give up basic rights that the West takes for granted, at least temporarily, to achieve genuine security and stability.

In the process, America cannot lose sight of the fact that Iraqis, those who have taken a public stand to lead or support change in Iraq, are in grave danger. Many of them believe they and their families are marked for death, now or in the indeterminate future. Yet they have stepped forward. Unlike most of their coalition partners, their decisions to support U.S. designs are literally a matter of life and death. And memories are long in the Middle East.

INSTITUTIONALIZING SECURITY STRUCTURES

Security, above all else, preys on the minds of the average Iraqi. If the United States cannot provide security, it fails. If the United States does not develop professional Iraqi security forces that are trusted by the people, it fails. The Anglo-American coalition is responsible for security and progress and therefore Iraq's success, at least initially. Behind the Iraqis who have individually stepped forward to build a better future for Iraq, it is the West that has the most to lose if Iraq fails.

One of the cornerstones of successful democratic reform in Iraq is a security apparatus that is not threatening to the public. Such a foundation does not exist in Iraq. A dream of that apparatus ended when Saddam came to power. The security forces familiar to most Iraqis are largely associated with violence against the people they should protect, and rampant corruption.

Pressure is mounting to accelerate the formation and training of security forces. Any such acceleration undoubtedly creates a trade-off that must be accounted for. One of the major trade-offs will be the diminished quality of entry level training to meet the accelerated formation timeliness for all forces. To mitigate the risk posed by any such acceleration, the United States must take prudent measures over time. Yet these are by no means a guarantee of success.

First, develop robust and focused intermediate, periodic, and remedial training programs. This is essential to make up for the accelerations. Intermediate pertains to professional development and leadership schools that strengthen nascent security forces institutions. Periodic and remedial training reinforce training basics and discipline the system.

Second, develop a program by which US or coalition mobile training teams live and train with Iraqi security forces of all types.¹⁸

Third, to add rigor to development and to insure discipline the United States must, in cooperation with Iraqi military leaders, develop and implement a uniform code of military justice, a code of ethics, and set of values that are ruthlessly enforced. For discipline problems, remedial and corrective training should be the focus rather than eliminating offenders.

Fourth, develop disciplined and independent Inspector General and Staff Judge Advocate structures. The US models are very good, if employed frequently and honestly as assessment and corrective tools.

Fifth, establish exchange and International Military Education and Training programs in the United States and other coalition countries. It will never be too early to implement this program, which should focus on the noncommissioned officer corps, as well. Immersion training over extended periods is a proven method.

Sixth, equip the security forces with quality tools that will enhance their confidence, capabilities, morale, and pride. The one major complaint of the Iraqi soldiers and law enforcement organizations is that they are rendered ineffective to accomplish their missions because of substandard equipment, much of which the Coalition Provisional Authority and interim government procured from Middle Eastern states and which under-performs materiel previously produced by Iraq's state-owned military-industrial complex. Iraqi security forces want American equipment but will settle for European, western or eastern, with which they are familiar and which is less costly.

Seventh, execute an information campaign that continuously publicizes the benefits, progress, and sacrifices of the Iraqi security forces and emphasizes their commitment to serve and protect all Iraqis, their rights, and their homeland.

Obviously, each Iraqi security service will require programs tailored to its missions and relation to the public. Progress will be directly proportional to Western commitments to partner with Iraq for years to come. However, a cautionary note is appropriate at this point. In dealing with Iraqi security forces America will try to instill the ideals and discipline that makes its armed forces so great. And it must be disciplined in its approach. In a society that knows only the stick as the first choice for problem solving, America must consistently show that its way works better by its example. If the United States fails to do this, and fails to change the security forces' mentality to one of service to the public, then the United States fails in the long run.

As Americans become familiar with the new security forces and learn more about them, they may find that they do not trust the Iraqis, do not approve of their work ethic, or remain segregated and grow distant from them, interacting only as required. Iraqis may well feel the same about Americans. In a worst case, Americans treat them badly or in their perception disrespectfully. Commanders at all levels whose soldiers associate with Iraqi security forces must reinforce professional interaction that recognizes Iraqis as the largest and most important coalition partner. This is especially important now and as America looks to the future and begins to meaningfully reduce its numbers deployed in the theater.

BASIC SERVICES

Progress in the building, renovating, and modernizing Iraq's infrastructure is slow, but it is gaining momentum. In a state where the people depended on the government for all services and even subsistence from cradle-to-grave, the challenge is daunting. In the first year and a half in Iraq the United States scarcely achieved the levels of service provided by Saddam's regime. The average Iraqi could not understand or believe that the mighty United States was incapable of immediately providing the same levels of service that Americans enjoyed at home. They often concluded that the coalition was manipulating them to steal their resources, punishing them for Saddam's crimes, or a combination.

The average Baghdadi might have had a plausible argument that the coalition was manipulating Iraqi resources. Immediately following major combat operations, everything from water to cooking gas to electricity was unavailable. Iraqis failed to realize the impact of looting and the fact that in order for cities like Baghdad to enjoy regular services during Saddam's rule, the rest of the country did without. Additionally, the infrastructure had gone without regular

maintenance and repairs for years and was in reality held together by the ingenuity of Iraqi engineers, station managers, and technicians.

Not understanding the poor state of the infrastructure, the Coalition Provisional Authority used international donations to award mega-contracts for rebuilding the national level infrastructure to capable international firms such as Bechtel. Thousands of contractors were invading the country. Average Iraqis believed that oil revenues were paying the foreigners. Concurrently, contractors and military engineers began countrywide infrastructure assessments, which quickly exposed the enormity of problems, local to national. The breadth and depth of the challenge overwhelmed an uninformed, unprepared, and undermanned Coalition Provisional Authority. To make matters worse, the deteriorating security situation slowed all infrastructure efforts to a near standstill. Iraqi businessmen and tribal leaders saw no benefits from the promised employment boom, save that which division commanders provided through the Commander's Emergency Relief Program funds to fix schools, water distribution systems, electrical grids, and communications, and basically kick start local economies.

If nothing else, Iraqis knew their rights and their benefits. The lack services and jobs, exacerbated by increasing violence, sabotage, and summer heat, created extremely unstable conditions. To their credit, most Iraqis waited patiently. The coalition was able to struggle through the summer of 2003 and provide the minimum needs in major cities. Few areas outside the major cities saw any improvements at all. Almost two years later, the majority of Iraqis in much of the country are slowly seeing improvements in almost every category. Baghdadis are quick to point out that they are not still receiving the same levels of services as pre-war.

Though the coalition is making significant progress across the full spectrum of services, much remains to be done. American and international agencies and contractors are pressing on with national level projects including transportation and distribution systems, oil and agricultural production, and water, electrical, and communications infrastructures. The tangible benefits of these enormous undertakings are not and will not be evident for some time to come. And the overhead costs for security remain unacceptably high.¹⁹

The planning and execution of projects to modernize Iraqi infrastructures continues and the end state will be equitable quality of life improvements countrywide. However, the United States inevitably fails to get out the good news of its plans and progress and therefore fails to receive due credit. In the love-hate relationship that defines the American and Arab intercourse, America needs to receive credit in the region when and where credit is due.

America is still learning difficult lessons at the sub-national level, however. America undermines its efforts by not clearly explaining the benefits of long-term plans and programs

and by an inability to then show that business will trickle down to local masons, factory workers, and vendors of every sort in the short term. Unemployed Iraqi craftsmen and professionals sit idly by and watch as foreign labor, contractors, and militaries build everything from two-room schools to national power grids. When they are hired it is often for mundane jobs and low pay.

America complicates its efforts by not understanding the hierarchies of Iraqi society, which include religious, tribal, familial, and municipal aspects, all of which are intertwined to some degree. In the rush to provide basic services early on, the United States often undermined traditional and municipal leaders' authorities because it did not appreciate that these leaders could not fulfill the duties of their positions to provide for their constituents' needs and expectations. And, as is often the case, Westerners believe that they have the correct answers and those they are appointed to help do not. On the personal level, which is always essential to success, Iraqis are willing to partner.

To be successful, the United States must address these and other cultural issues. Local through national level leaders must increasingly assume the decision making role in a sovereign Iraq. In effect, the United States must assume the role of junior partner and follow through on decisions in support of the Iraqi government. These steps may not fit into American goals and objectives, but they are a crucial means of establishing sense of participation, ownership, and commitment.

The United States must constantly advertise international contributions, now in the tens of billions of dollars, at press conferences, in newspapers, and on television and radio. It must also highlight the Iraqi partnership. But the United States cannot just say that fifty or a hundred billion dollars are allocated for Iraq. It must explain that these funds are contributions and not loans; they are grants by a supportive international community led by the United States. Further, the United States must categorize expenditures that are already planned, by province, and lay out start dates for major projects and the types of contractors and labor required. Iraqis are entrepreneurs and if they believe they can do business supplying or otherwise participating in these projects and programs, they will.

INSURGENTS AND TERRORISTS

The coalition was slow to realize the emergence of a number of distinct insurgencies in the fall of 2003. At times the United States denied the obvious, preferring to believe that the violence was the work of very small, independent cells and criminals. Yet the evidence was undeniable.

One significant insurgency grew, by and large, from poor decisions the Coalition Provisional Authority made with regard to the Iraqi armed forces in the summer of 2003. Faced with humiliation, unemployment, and bleak futures, former officers established cells that grew slowly but steadily. Not only this but tacit, if not material, support among Iraqi civilians grew, as well, because of coalition abuses, the popular belief that America was subjugating the Iraqi nation, and the absence of security and jobs. U.S. blunders in the form of Phase III rules of engagement disillusioned much of the Sunni population. Early on the United States preferred to label the insurgency as foreign led and operated.

Indeed, a second major insurgency, consisting of radical Islamists, grew, as well. In addition to a number of homegrown groups, jihadists were infiltrating Iraq but in small numbers. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi became the headliner and inspirational leader of many of the radicals.²⁰ While he and his followers operated independently they found refuge and support from the homegrown groups such as Ansar al-Islam, sometimes referred to as Ansar al-Sunna, and even former regime cells, most of which are Sunni. Their collusion with Iraqi insurgents, however, is a matter of convenience and common objectives vis-à-vis U.S. occupation forces, and not loyalty or brotherhood. Though the analysts attribute the most horrific acts against Westerners and Iraqis to the terrorists, criminal gangs and Sunni insurgents are capable of the same acts.

How does the United States fight an enemy that it continuously misunderstands and misidentifies? This is a tough question. U.S. forces now carry a burden that they have partially created, or at least exacerbated and which risks creating an environment that enhances insurgent recruiting. Yet the United States does not have the option of inaction against insurgent targets and hot spots. Coalition forces must take down identified targets, but at the same time shift the focus of their presence increasingly toward training and equipping Iraqi security forces, including the police.

Iraqi culture respects strength. While the United States trains and mentors Iraqi security forces, it will have to allow operational Iraqi forces the latitude to deal in their way with those who are terrorizing the Iraqi population now. The family whose immediate priority is security demands as much. This will be brutal in the short term, but given the tools and freedom of action to seek and destroy those who are committing terrorist acts against Iraqis, Iraqi methods will be successful in the long term. The ability to balance the necessity of extreme measures with the long term development of security forces that do not threaten the law abiding public is crucial to the growth of democracy in Iraq. But it is a price that Americans will eventually figure out is worth paying.

Many Iraqis have seen atrocities that the West can hardly imagine. They will only gain confidence in their government and security forces if those forces can provide security and stability. In Mosul in February 2005, the Iraqi police captured an Iraqi insurgent who they confirmed had beheaded a hostage. They obviously sent a clear message to him, and they used insurgent tactics to emphasize their intent to eradicate similar actions in that area. The police filmed him begging for his life and the film was televised in Iraq. The message was clear: terrorists will be hunted down and brought to justice. The more important and lasting messages were: the terrorists were not as tough as they appear and the Iraqi security forces were making headway against this scourge of violence.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

One of the clearest opportunities to positively influence the future of Iraq lies in influencing its young population. By and large, the youth of Iraq is malleable. Despite the U.S. occupation and some unfortunate situations, such as Abu Ghraib, they remain infatuated with the United States soldier and they respect him, perhaps through a prism of both fear and hope. America's continuing efforts to influence the young and show a softer side to the young will pay dividends in the future.

The United States should go numerous steps further, however. As the United States builds schools and assists in the modernization of educational institutions, it can implant programs such as the study of the English language from elementary school through post-secondary levels. Every Iraqi understands that fluency in the English language is an important rung in the ladder of upward mobility. Today, satellite dishes are seen on millions of rooftops in Iraq and al-Jazeera is very popular. The same tools should become standard in Iraqi schools, as well, to educate and inform this younger generation.

The education of the young is paramount to success of a democratic Iraq. While programs of this nature formally lie outside the purview of the military, for all intents and purposes, it is the military that is influencing education at this time. Soldiers are building and renovating schools, donating school supplies, interacting with teachers and students daily, and providing medical services and other support. This aspect of the U.S. contribution to Iraq is too critical to leave unattended while experts and agencies await a secure and stable environment.

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN)

The UN must play an increasingly active role in Iraq. To continue to sit on the sidelines, as it has done for years, is unacceptable anymore. Iraq is on its way to success and though the fruits of the Coalition's hard labor will not be clearly visible for some time to come, those fruits

will nevertheless ripen as time goes by. The UN must begin to prepare for that eventuality so that at the defining moment it will be able to stand on the stage as having contributed to the liberation of yet another oppressed people. To do otherwise will be to further undermine the organization's already poor and declining reputation while running the risk of exclusion from broader endeavors in the region.

Granted, the UN was and is on the ground but its presence has not amounted to much. In the years immediately following Operation DESERT STORM the UN exercised its authority in Iraq. More than anything else, it provided cover for certain states to help enforce sanctions without serious concern about being labeled a puppet of the United States. The no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq achieved some successes. However, focus and commitment waned over the years. In the period leading up to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, any success in enforcing sanctions succeeded only through the barrel of an American or British gun. Major states disregarded the sanctions and the UN sanctions became ineffectual. Among the UN's more flagrant failures was the Oil for Food program, which becomes more damning with each passing week. In the post-invasion period of 2003, the efforts of the UN Special Representative for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, amounted to little more than showing the flag, which in reality suited U.S. needs at the time. But UN internal security failures led to the suicide bombing of its headquarters in Baghdad in August 2004 in which he died. With that attack as a pretext, the UN packed up and departed, handing the terrorists and anti-Iraqi forces a clear victory.

The recently successful elections in Iraq should be the pretext by which the UN reengages in Iraq. The timing and opportunity will never be better. Iraq's leaders will warmly receive the UN, though threats to UN missions would persist. UN reentry would bolster the rebuilding process and add legitimacy to the elected government and perhaps prod regional governments to be more helpful. UN programs, so necessary to nation building, would add efficiencies that America alone can only inefficiently achieve now and in the future.

THE REGION

The United States must approach the regional aspects of its Iraq endeavors with extreme care. In addition to kinetic options, the United States must revisit some initiatives and create movement that contributes to regional security. The United States must: reengage in the Israel-Palestine crisis, seek to moderate Iran and eliminate its programs to acquire weapons of mass destruction or effects, influence Syria, and reassess the positioning of US forces in the region.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Israel-Palestine question will not go away. Though recent developments are encouraging, interested parties have seen them before. It is all too easy, at the slightest provocation, for both sides to resort to their traditionally intractable positions, which serve only the radical factions on both sides and promise a continued spiral of violence and hatred. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. The United States has at its disposal a number of effective tools with which to hold their attention: withholding lucrative aid packages to both sides, pending progress toward a workable coexistence; revisiting *carte blanche* support of Israel in the UN; reviving regional proposals, including the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah proposal for a Palestinian / Arab peace with Israel, which was shelved without comment by Israel the day it was released.²¹ In the face of tangible progress and an evenhanded U.S. approach, Hamas' influence might be muted.

Yasser Arafat's timely demise was a blessing that the international community must take to heart and take advantage of.²² Successful Palestinian elections in January 2005 in which President Mahmoud Abbas emerged as the legitimate leader of the Palestinians offers opportunity. Though Israel wants immediate guarantees and action, Abbas must be given an opportunity to develop and present his agenda and vision, and take steps to reduce the violence emanating from Palestinian territory. His initial steps are strong indicators that he is serious about reducing the violence. America must welcome, if not embrace, Abbas. The Bush administration's recent movement in this direction is promising, but if it stumbles or halts at the first obstacle in the path, as has been the U.S. history thus far, it will lose the momentum it now enjoys in the aftermath of Arafat's death and election successes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine.

Furthermore, the United States can not allow Israeli infighting or reactions to future obstacles and setbacks, such as the real possibility of renewed attacks by Hamas, to derail progress in the region. Both sides must be willing to negotiate all issues, including the direct threats to Israel, the status of Jerusalem, water rights, property claims, and the Palestinian Diaspora. Israel and the international community can no longer delay these issues until some future date. The window of opportunity will close as quickly as it opened and the cycle of violence will resume.

Neighboring states and the Arab League must be equally involved in the Palestine-Israel issue. Otherwise, it will fail. The Arabs and Israelis alike have used the Palestinians for their own purposes since 1949. Arab leaders have used Palestine as an excuse and a rallying point to draw the attention of their subjects away from their own failures and abuses. Crown Prince

Abdullah's proposal deserves consideration not only because it provides a thoughtful way forward but more importantly, it pushes other Arab leaders to the table and commits them to the peace process. However, we must be mindful that once Palestine's symbolism as a rallying point for Arab masses fades, Arab leaders will raise other grievances and accusations against the West and Israel. Therefore, one cannot overestimate the value of a Palestine-Israel peace.

IRAN

Iran is another case in point. The United States has labeled Iran a member of the Axis of Evil, which is perhaps appropriate, considering its current leadership and record over the past twenty-five years. But the label misses the point on Iran or too narrowly defines it. Though Iran's leadership supports terrorism and proceeds with plans to develop nuclear weapons, the regime is essentially weak and declining in power, based in part on the weight of its internal policies.²³ Dissention, though muted, is ever-present. Most Iranians do not support the repressive theocratic government. Theocracy has silenced the once influential and West-leaning Iranian middle class since 1979. Given a real opportunity to participate in the political process the middle class would unseat the clerics soundly. The United States must take steps to harness that discontent and compel the Iranian mullahs to moderate. Though the United States is making progress through allies such as Great Britain, it may achieve greater moderation in the regime in the long-term through direct engagement now. At a minimum, direct U.S. involvement would serve to buoy and perhaps encourage the muzzled majority.

From their perspective, the Iranian leadership understands that U.S. success in Iraq will lead to direct pressures and the real perception that America will conduct military operations against them at a time of its choosing. Their meddling in Iraqi Shi'a affairs and their tacit support of al-Qaeda operatives transiting or temporarily residing in Iran attest to their fears and reactions against the West and the United States in particular. They have no assurances by which to draw any other conclusions. The Bush administration's stern public statements against them in the wake of the Iraqi elections can only reinforce their perception. Currently, Iran has no incentive to moderate its policies or programs. In fact, the current situation elicits the opposite reaction. Tehran's rhetoric since the Iraqi elections indicates a clear intent to accelerate its nuclear programs.

Though Iraqi Shi'a relations with Iran are cordial to friendly, the Iraqis must be cautious in their approach to Iran. Neighboring Arab states, all of which are Sunni dominated, are concerned about the spread of Shi'ism, under any banner. Approaches that link the two in any manner other than perhaps economic trade will cause reactions of their neighbors that could

seriously destabilize the Gulf region. Certainly the Sunnis and possibly the Kurds of Iraq would not stand for it, which could threaten Iraq's status as a state.

CONCLUSION

The United States is in a race against time. Its 'permit' to occupy Iraq will expire sooner than later. In order to extend that permit and at the same time enhance the chances of long term stability in Iraq and the Arab Middle East, sustained diplomatic initiatives across a broad spectrum are necessary now and for the foreseeable future. If America arrives at the point where it significantly reduces its presence in Iraq without having achieved tangible progress there, it will have squandered an opportunity that may not present again without a price in American blood. Moreover, The United States must compliment its efforts in Iraq with focused and complimentary efforts in the region: Israel-Palestine, Iran, Syria, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and effects, and democratic reform.

Recent U.S. progress in Iraq is welcome and long overdue. The United States is organizing, training, and equipping the Iraqi security forces; it is executing infrastructure construction projects utilizing Iraqi and international expertise and more importantly, employing a willing Iraqi labor force; it is setting the conditions for the development of an Iraqi Constitution and January 2006 elections, a daunting task; it is conducting a rolling offensive against insurgent and terrorist havens, a campaign in which Iraqis are increasingly taking the lead; and America is setting conditions for the economy to begin to grow.

This success is not an end; it is a beginning. As security and stability improve, the international community in partnership with the Iraqi people must roll up its sleeves and continue the hard work of creating a stabilizing entity that acts as a catalyst for reform in the region, which in the long term lends stability to one more region of the world and reduces the major terrorist threats to the United States and the West.

The coalition, which now includes a vested Iraqi leadership, is succeeding in Iraq. The list of successes is impressive: deposing and capturing Saddam, rebuilding an infrastructure he left in shambles, providing Iraqis with hope for a better future, and establishing systems that will lead to a representative government of and for the people and that do not threaten any segment of the population or region. As successes grow and confidence among Iraqis improves, most recently bolstered by successful elections, the elected government of Iraq will set its course and return as a contributing member of the international community. To be sure, many challenges lie ahead. The United States cannot let down its guard and it must accept that combat operations will continue for some time.

Moreover, the United States must accept that it cannot achieve instant change or success in Iraq. Success requires presence, commitment, engagement, even idealism, and the willingness of the Iraqi people to take the lead for change at home and, by their example, in the region. As the United States helps establish governmental structures, especially in the security line, it must remain thoroughly engaged in order to nurture this growth and institutionalize the foundations that make for successful representative government.

In the rush to turn over responsibility and authority to the Iraqis the United States must take a hard look at what defines success. What conditions besides infrastructure, service-minded leaders and government workforce, institutionalized governmental systems, and sound economic practices must be set in order to give the new government a reasonable chance to survive, especially in the initial stages of self governance, which would be represented in part by the seamless transfer of authority through several consecutive elections? In this context, how will the United States be remembered once the responsibilities are completely turned over?

After 35-plus years of Stalinist-style rule, there is not much on which to build. Anything written on paper is vulnerable because the people know only force, distrust, manipulation, and fear. However, as the recent elections showed, most Iraqis are willing to take a chance with democracy if they have a guide and confidence that it is a system that listens to and represents them and provides hope for their families and future. The United States is pushing against a partially open door. How it opens the door and what it does once the door is open will influence Iraqis to either close it on America once it passes all authorities or emulate and modify U.S. systems and institutions to fit their cultural and religious norms and traditions.

Undoubtedly, the United States will leave a legacy. The legacy it leaves is governed by its attitude, commitment, ideals, and the end state it strives to achieve: a stable, peaceful government, mindful of civil rights, that represents the people and builds the institutions and checks and balances to guarantee that an individual or group will have an almost impossible task seizing power in a coup d'état or by usurping powers over time.

America must, therefore, remain engaged in Iraq for the foreseeable future. A host of reasons, not the least of which are economic benefits to all parties and stability in the greater Arab Middle East, require it. If Americans stay the course with their Iraqi hosts, they will not forget. And, yes, Americans must learn from Iraqis, as well. Developing personal, professional, and official relationships based on mutual respect and a common vision of a better future for Iraq provide an opportunity to possibly achieve the broader change in the Middle East that the President envisions. However, if the United States proceeds too fast, opting for quick fixes, and fails to look beyond the short term, then it should come as no surprise that it fails in the long

term. In the end America will have created a system that is as fragile to normal use as the Iraqi infrastructure it is struggling to rebuild now. American impatience will not work here. The United States and Iraq must remain committed until our mutual goals are verifiably achieved.

A common vision is especially important in the security structures. No other governmental structure touches the people so intimately. Therefore, the quality of effort and commitment must reflect its importance. Most Iraqis are willing to learn and give U.S. institutions a chance, especially if they perceive Americans as committed partners and not as would-be masters. Americans must balance their approach so that this partnership focuses on solving problems and learning together what works best in Iraqi culture. Again, setting the conditions for success requires presence, commitment, engagement, and idealism and a willing Iraqi partner.

First and foremost, Iraqis must see that their government acts in the best interest of Iraqis in both its domestic and international policies. And security forces must be seen as strong and successful in restoring order. To shed its label as occupier, the coalition must be able to convince the Iraqis of the benefits of a longer-term relationship of cooperation and friendship.

Regionally, the United States can set into motion a number of initiatives that will bear fruit in time. First, America must exercise its influence over Israel and the Palestinians to achieve an acceptable peace. The Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah proposal, issued under the auspices of the Arab League, deserves serious consideration with regard to broader Arab co-existence and cooperation with Israel. Second, though the United States has labeled Iran as a member of the Axis of Evil, there is merit to engaging the regime. The United States must reinforce the ongoing efforts of Great Britain, France, and Germany to achieve moderation in Iran while assuring and encouraging the Iranian people. If the interlocutors' efforts fail, the United States must be prepared to apply direct pressures. Third, since the first Gulf War, exclusive of troop levels required for current Iraq operations, the United States has maintained an average of 20,000 uniformed personnel in the Gulf region. Iraq aside, the United States should re-look where and how it positions forces. If significantly reducing presence in places like Saudi Arabia deprives terrorists of recruiting propaganda, then such adjustments merit serious consideration. On-the-horizon or over-the-horizon presence in the region may be just as effective as physical presence and perhaps more so.

The full weight of American prestige, leadership, and blood are committed to Iraq, the war on terror at its sources, and democratic reforms in the Middle East but the job is far from complete. Persistence, initiative, and ingenuity in cooperation with allies, friends, and coalition

partners, and an evenhanded approach in dealings with all states in the region are essential to strategic and long-term success. Decisions that were made in the aftermath of 11 September demand nothing less.

WORD COUNT=10,527

ENDNOTES

¹ Historically defined, the Middle East includes the entire United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) less East Africa and a portion of the United States European Command (USEUCOM) AOR. In the context of this paper the Middle East is narrowly defined as the modern Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which consists of the members of the Arab League.

² Consultations with European, Asian, and Middle Eastern governments including Great Britain, Russia, Pakistan, Israel, and Egypt, as well as Iraqi defectors, all supported the US contention that Saddam possessed WMD and WME. The weapons inspectors working in Iraq under the auspices of the UN, failed to find such weapons but neither could they unequivocally deny their existence, though they did find WME missiles that exceeded the ranges allowed by the UN. After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) uncovered numerous violations of UN sanctions during investigations from 2003 – 2004 but no WMD.

³ Con Coughlin, *Saddam: King of Terror* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002). 283-85, 299-304. Coughlin's work provides a glimpse of Saddam Hussein's development and control of his sons, Uday and Qusay, as well as their brutality and greed.

⁴ Elizabeth Cousens and Charles Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Peace Accords* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001). 33-49, 151-153.

⁵ Brian Loveman, *Strategy for Empire: US Regional Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era*. (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2003), 118.

⁶ Many of the radical Islamists that we conveniently, and perhaps incorrectly, lump under the umbrella of al-Qaeda see their jihad against the United States and the West as a holy war in which their eventual victory is assured. Not only this but theirs is a total war that does not recognize physical, political, or any other boundaries, does not distinguish between combatants and noncombatants, and seeks to achieve its ends by any and all ways and means available, including the widespread use of WMD and WME. They believe that their cause will gain traction among the world's more than one billion Muslims and their sheer numbers and belief that they are truly the chosen ones will carry them to victory over corrupt and decadent non-Muslims over a period that must be measured in generations.

⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2004* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004). There are two exceptions in the Gulf region where Shi'a populations are large: Bahrain in which the Shi'a are seventy percent of the population and Iran, which is not Arab, but whose population is eighty-nine percent Shi'a.

⁸ Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 10, 50, and 354-57. Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud established the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1902 with the help his traditional fundamentalist allies, the Wahhabis. The Wahhabis, in alliance with the al-Saud, have targeted the Shi'a in the Arabian Peninsula since the eighth century. The modern Saudi government has looked with suspicion at the Saudi Shi'a and in times of crisis, such as the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, has been quick to isolate the Shi'a, who are concentrated in al-Hasa and Qatif.

⁹ L. Carl. Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 78, 140. Complexities run the gamut in the

Middle East including the common perceptions that: the Middle East has been victimized by the West to exploit its resources; the United States practices double standards to prop up its client state, Israel; the European colonial powers divided up the Middle East to insure constant strife among the Arabs; and the West is attempting to corrupt the purity of Islam. Since before the fall of the Ottoman Empire, would-be leaders of the Arab world have tried to spark an Arab revival – pan-Arabism, Socialism, Palestine, and economic blocks have not had that effect. Over the past twenty-plus years Islam has had a unifying effect on many Muslims and some see it as the one way to fend off the Western threat.

¹⁰ In a speech at Michigan State University on 4 October 2004 former US Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator Paul Bremer noted that from the beginning the United States did not have the number of forces necessary to execute the post-major combat operations mission in Iraq. In an Op-Ed piece in the New York Times on 8 October 2004, Ambassador Bremer tried to undo the damage to President Bush by defending the Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq.

¹¹ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964). Trinquier described the phases of insurgency and terrorism, or modern warfare as he termed it, based on his experiences against the Viet Minh in Viet Nam and Algerian terrorists (FLN) in the 1950's.

¹² Though the U.S. Department of Defense carried most of the blame, all the major departments of the U.S. Government participated in planning Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, including the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other entities, American and international.

¹³ Ba'ath Party membership in Iraq was similar to Communist Party membership in the Soviet Union. Membership was a prerequisite for upward mobility in any number of bureaucracies and professions. Membership alone was not the sole criteria for judging individuals or groups in post-Communist Russia, nor should it have been in post-Saddam Iraq.

¹⁴ There is debate on who actually gave the order to formally disband the Iraqi armed forces. Ambassador Bremer was given broad authorities upon his arrival in Iraq and he made the decision, based on the advice of his coalition and American staff and Iraqi expatriates, and his current understanding of the status of those forces. The ambassador has not commented officially except to say that he was left with no other choice when the Iraqi armed forces disintegrated.

¹⁵ Abu Ghraib stands out as the most grievous of humiliations but in other cases the coalition was duped by individuals or groups who used their access to coalition forces, especially Americans, to torment their own enemies.

¹⁶ Ralph Peters, *Beyond Baghdad: Postmodern War and Peace* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), 326.

¹⁷ The slogans aired during the 2004 presidential campaign and since are dangerous to Iraqis who are in the trenches with America, U.S. and coalition soldiers, and overall success. These slogans can become the self-inflicted wound from which there is no recovery. But they resonate with elements of U.S. society and once stated, the expectation is that the promise will be kept. Finally, rather than steeling the determination of Iraqis to assume the fight against the

insurgents, such pronouncements have the opposite affect in which the insurgents wait us out and surge as we depart. The Sunni insurgents believe that once the coalition departs they will win any fights with Kurds or Shi'as, whom they view as inferior. They would drag the country into civil war in the belief that they will resume their rule in the end.

¹⁸ The British model used in Oman is instructive. In Oman, the British seconded NCOs and officers at the company level and the result was probably the best-trained 'leg' infantrymen in the Gulf at the time. Though the British program ended in the early 1970s, it founded a professional institution that proved itself in the mid-1970s when the Omani government successfully put down an armed insurrection. The British model is worthy of emulation in Iraq. U.S. Special Forces provide equally useful examples.

¹⁹ The costs to the reconstruction efforts in terms of danger zone bonuses, insurance, transportation, and physical security are variously reported in the range of thirty to fifty percent of each contract. Such costs are prohibitive and cannot be sustained without unacceptable reductions in the scope of reconstruction or the infusion of additional billions of dollars.

²⁰ Anthony Cordesman, *The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 11, 15.

²¹ At the League of Arab States summit in Beirut, Lebanon, in March 2002, Crown Prince Abdullah announced a wide ranging plan for Arab peace with Israel. In it, he proposed an Israeli withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 borders, in accordance with UN Resolution 242 and the establishment of a Palestinian state, in exchange for full Arab recognition of Israel and normalization of relations, including diplomatic, economic, and security. As the Crown Prince made his speech, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon launched an all out military assault on Palestinian refugee camps, which, in effect, killed the proposal.

²² Fouad Ajami in *The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 272, 284. Yasser Arafat was not a visionary leader. His great success was the fact that he had carried Palestinians from that "country of words" to some real political gains. When he landed in Palestine in 1994, Arafat returned to his homeland as a conquering hero. His great failure was in not handing over the reins to the cadre of educated and savvy Palestinians who were ready to take Arafat's success to its logical conclusion, a state. Instead, Arafat created an unwieldy, unimaginative, and corrupt autocracy that curbed more rights and muzzled dissent. Had he knelt down and kissed the ground of his homeland upon his return, convened a national convention to achieve a consensus and vision for Palestine, and then bowed out to assume a position of prominence as an elder statesman, his legacy would have been one of truly great accomplishment and the Palestinian people would have been the beneficiaries.

²³ Shahram Chubin, *Iran's National Security Policy: Capabilities, Intentions, and Impact* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment Book, 1994), 87.

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