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Iraq and Conflict Termination:
The Road to Guerrilla War?

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The new commander of USCENTCOM, General John Abizaid, described the "postwar" fighting in Iraq as a guerrilla war for the first time in a briefing on July 16, 2003. In doing so, he recognized a pattern of escalating violence, and that the casualty levels from all causes in the Iraq War had nearly equally the total in the Gulf War. General Abizaid stated that USCENTCOM was,[1]

> picking up a lot of information that indicated that there were significant terrorist groups and activities that we were having to be concerned about, as well; most of this all happening in what we call the Sunni Triangle, that area vaguely described by Tikrit, Ramadi and Baghdad, but often stretching up into Mosul.

> … we're fighting Ba'athist remnants throughout the country. I believe there's mid- level Ba'athist, Iraqi intelligence service people, Special Security Organization people, Special Republican Guard people that have organized at the regional level in cellular structure and are conducting what I would describe as a classical guerrilla-type campaign against us. It's low-intensity conflict, in our doctrinal terms, but it's war, however you describe it.

> … I would think it's very important for everybody to know that we take casualties and we cause casualties to be inflicted upon the enemy because we are at war. And it's very important to know that as many of the casualties inflicted upon us have come at the initiation of military action offensively by the United States as by our troops being attacked by the enemy.

> We're seeing a cellular organization of six to eight people, armed with RPGs, machine guns, et cetera, attacking us at sometimes times and place of their choosing. And other times we attack them at times and places of our choosing. They are receiving financial help from probably regional-level leaders. And I think describing it as guerrilla tactics being employed against us is, you know, a proper thing to describe in strictly military terms.

> …But there are some foreign fighters, some of which may have been stay-behinds. Remember in the early stages of capturing Baghdad, there were an awful lot of foreign fighters, and it's possible that we missed some of them, they stayed there and they've reformed and reorganized. So foreign fighters are present on the battlefield, but I would state without any -- you know, any hesitation that the mid-level Ba'athist threat is the primary threat that we've got to deal with right now.

> …there is some level of regional command and control going on. And when I say regional, probably you look over at the Al Ramadi area, there's probably something going on over there, if you look up in the Tikrit-Baiji area, there's something up there, Mosul. That they are all connected? Not yet. Could they become connected? Sure, they could become connected.

General Abizaid also went on to say, however, that there was as yet no central direction of the attacks on the US, and that such attacks could be defeated,

> war is a struggle of wills. You look at the Arab press; they say, "We drove the Americans out of Beirut, we drove them out of Somalia; you know, we'll drive them out of Baghdad." And that's just not true. They're not driving us out of anywhere.

> … The most important thing in all of this is causing the level of violence to go down so that governance can move forward. And governance has moved forward in a pretty interesting way. And I think that -- you have to understand that there will be an increase in violence as we achieve political success, because the people that have a stake in ensuring the defeat of the coalition realize that time is getting short as the Iraqi face becomes more and more prevalent on the future of Iraq. And that's precisely what's going on now.

If you look at the local level throughout Iraq, in the South and in the North in particular, local government is moving ahead in a pretty spectacular way.

In the areas where we're having difficulties with the remnants of the regime, it's less secure, and people that cooperate with us are at risk. We have to create an environment where those people do not feel at risk. That means we have to take our military activity to the enemy, and we have to defeat these cells.

 In addition, y'all have to understand it's not a matter of boots per square meter. Everybody wants to think that, but that's just not so. If I could do one thing as a commander right now, I would focus my intelligence like a laser on where the problem is, which is mid-level Ba'athist leaders. And we're trying to do that. And I think, as we do that, we'll find that we have more success.

… the level of resistance…is getting more organized, and it is learning. It is adapting. It is adapting to our tactics, techniques and procedures, and we've got to adapt to their tactics, techniques and procedures.

…At the tactical level, they're better coordinated now. They're less amateurish, and their ability to use improvised explosive devices and combine the use of these explosive devices with some sort of tactical activity -- say, for example, attacking the quick-reaction forces -- is more sophisticated. It's not necessarily a problem that we are not -- that we can't handle. We can handle the tactical problems that are presented.

It is far too soon to talk about prolonged guerrilla warfare in Iraq. As General Abizaid points out, the present threat seems to be largely from small Ba'ath and Saddam Loyalist cadres in central Iraq. They seem to be able to operate more because Sunnis still fear the old regime, and resent the US occupation for its initial failures in providing security and nation building, rather than because they have any popular base. The US nation building effort is beginning to gather momentum, and any broadening of the conflict would require the US and its allies to make mistakes that they can still avoid:

Guerilla Warfare: Best, Worst, and Probable Cases

The best case is that the US-led nation building and security efforts get enough resources to steadily gather momentum, the US and its allies begin to work with the Iraqis to set goals for nation building that win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, some form of pluralist federalism is quickly set up to deal with Iraq's ethnic and sectarian divisions, and the US finds a way to resume of oil exports and get enough outside investment support economic reform and development in ways the Iraqi people do not see as an effort to seize their patrimony. None of these goals are impossible, although the rate of progress to date offers no guarantee – or even a high probability – of success.

The most likely case still seems to be mixed success in nation building that puts Iraq on a better political and economic path, but does so in a climate of continuing low-level security threats and serious Iraqi ethnic and sectarian tensions. This would be a case where the US and other nation-builders muddle through to the point where Iraq is making progress, and they can declare victory and leave. Scarcely the "shining city on a hill" that would transform the entire Middle East, but still a kind of victory and better for the Iraqis than Saddam and Company.

The worst case is very different. It would be a combination of some or all of the following problems – all of which can be avoided *if* the US and its allies take the opposite steps, and succeed in salvaging the peacemaking and nation building effort:

- Rather than Iraq for the Iraqis on Iraqi terms – with clear goals in terms of milestones, political and economic action, and a transition to Iraqi rule – the US muddles through in ways that appear increasingly to involve a presence of 5-10 years, rather than one of 12-24 months. Rather than set goals that can attract real Iraqi support, and win hearts and minds, the US appears to be involved an effort to rebuild Iraq in its own image.

- The nation building effort is too slow and too many promises are not kept. Local security falters, the growth in jobs and economic activity is too slow, and well-intended reforms either do not work or payoff too late to develop any real support or gratitude.

- The US and its allies try to find the leaders they want, rather than the leaders the Iraqis want. Rather than screening the Ba'ath and Iraqi military as individuals, large blocs of Iraq's best people are rejected because they went along with Saddam's dictatorship to survive.

- The US and its allies deal with the present guerilla threat by acting more like occupiers than liberators. The US increasingly huddles behind its own security barriers, creating a growing distance from ordinary Iraqis. It creates more physical barriers to the movement of the population and larger no go zones, continuing in its efforts to seal off much of central Baghdad and in its symbolic occupation of Saddam's palaces. The US security effort has its tactical military successes, but alienates a large number of Sunnis in the process -- Sunnis who feel increasingly disenfranchised as the Shi'ites and Kurds gain a fair share of wealth and power.

- Remnants of the Ba'ath and Saddam loyalists mix with new elements of Sunni Islamic extremists to present a continuing threat. Even those Sunnis who do not want Saddam, come to want the US and Britain out. The resulting lack of a political and economic solution means that no military solution is possible.

- The US tries too hard to avoid having religious Shi'ites acquire real power. It increasingly alienates the Shi'ite majority, which has largely tolerated – not supported – the US and Britain. The end result plays into the hands of religious hard-liners and Iran. The same pattern of resistance and violence emerges in the South that already exists in Central Iraq. At the same time, Shi'ites not only oppose US-led nation building t, but all political secularism and any reassertion of Sunni/Ba'ath authority. Growing sectarian divisions complicate the nation building effort.

- The Kurds continue to support the US and Britain, but this does not mean Kurdish unity. Barzani and Talibani drift back towards at least a covert power struggle as

the cash flow from oil for food and smuggling drops. Moreover, ethnic cleansing and Kurdish power struggles with the Arabs and Turcomans complicate the problems the US has with the Arabs and relations with Turkey. The US gets the blame with Sunnis and Turcomans for the assertion of Kurdish power.

- US efforts to try to create a federal structure that can bridge over the ethnic and sectarian differences between Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurd fail to prevent civil tension and violence, and no Iraqi faction is convinced such efforts will give it a fair share of real power.

- Fear of prolonged occupation, and the feeling among most Iraqis that those who go along with the US effort simply do so as appeasers and for their own benefit, undercuts the nation-building effort and adds to the level of anti-nation building/anti US and UK violence.

- The US tries to handle all of these problems on the cheap in a country that had no meaningful exports other than oil and dates before the war, and only earned $12.3 billion in oil exports in 2002. It continues to talk about oil wealth in a country that has already lost some six months of oil export revenues, and whose current export capacity may be down from over two million barrels a day in 2000 to around 800,000 – if there is no further sabotage. The nation builders never really get the money they need to succeed.

- Rather than conduct an open and transparent effort to rehabilitate Iraq's petroleum industry, with Iraq technocratic and political advice, the US acts on its own priorities and perceptions. Ordinary Iraqis come to feel their oil is being stolen, and oil revenues are not used as the "glue" to unit Iraq's divided factions in some form of federalism. Ideas like "securitizing" Iraq's oil revenues to make direct payments to Iraqi citizens deprive the new government the US is trying to create of any real financial power and leverage, and Iraqis with no experience in dealing with such funds become the natural prey of Iraqis who know how to manipulate money and such payments.

- The US fails to confront its allies with the need to forgive Iraqi reparations and debt – claims potentially amounting to over $200 billion – leaving Iraq angry and without a financial future. It continues to leave the contingency contracts Saddam signed with Russia, France, and other oil firms as valid, although these were clearly political efforts to win support to end UN sanctions.

- The US mishandles the rehabilitation and expansion of Iraq's economy, and the search for foreign investment. It improvises solutions in Western market terms, failing to realize that oil expert revenues are the only glue that can hold Iraqi federalism together, and that it is operating in a climate of hostile conspiracy theories where many Iraqis believe the US and Britain are in Iraq to seize its oil revenues, benefit from contracts, and finance an occupation. The US and its allies try do the right thing in economic and technocratic terms, but end in increasing Iraqi distrust and hostility.

- A token 40,000 man Iraqi Army is seen as leaving Iraq defenseless, and as dependent on US and British occupiers. The lack of any clear plan to create a meaningful self-defense capability against Iran and Turkey, the failure to deal with Iranian proliferation, and the lack of any clear concept to share power equitably among Iraq's ethnic and sectarian factions – makes the new force seem like a puppet army. Even those officers who seem to support the US and British secretly become increasingly nationalistic and hostile.

- Each step in this process pushes the US and its allies towards more dependence on outside Iraqi opposition leaders who have little real influence and credibility, and dependence on "Iraqi" Iraqis willing to go along with the "occupying" powers for their own benefit. It also creates a climate that is more and more security, rather than nation building oriented. US and allied forces will spend more and more time in "fortress" casernes and headquarters and in patrolling for self-defense purposes.

It should be stressed that there is nothing inevitable about this "worst" case. In fact, each problem just listed is the mirror image of what the US, Britain, and everyone else in the nation building effort need to do to succeed. The problem in terms of lessons learned is rather that, after a great military victory, the US and its allies were not able to take the right course of action from the start. They were unprepared to win the peace, focused on the wrong objectives, and lacked meaningful coordination and central guidance and direction. Unless this situation changes in Iraq, the US may end up fighting a third Gulf War against the Iraqi people. If it does, this war will be primarily political, economic, ethnic, and sectarian; and this is a kind of asymmetric war that US should never have to fight and cannot win.

A Failed Strategy for Conflict Termination and Asymmetric War

The US needs to do far more, however, than deal with the immediate risk of guerrilla warfare in Iraq. It needs to consider why it has found itself fighting the enemy in both Afghanistan and Iraq after the war was supposedly over, why in had to intervene militarily in the Balkans and why it had so many problems in conflict termination in Kosovo. It needs to remember its problems in conflict termination in the first Gulf War, and the lessons of defeats like Vietnam, Somalia, and Lebanon. The US government and the US military need to make major improvements in the way they approach conflict termination and asymmetric warfare. In fact, this may be the most important single lesson of the Iraq War.

Like all lessons, this need must be kept in perspective. There is nothing new about the fact that it is harder to implement the political dimensions of grand strategy than it is to be successful in implementing strategy and tactics by defeating an enemy army. It is one of the iron laws of military history that armies are far better equipped to win the war than to win the peace, and that strategic objectives in warfighting are far easier to achieve than the grand strategic objectives necessary to shape the peace that has lasting value.

It is also unfair to exaggerate the scale of the problems that emerged during conflict termination, peace making, and the transition to nation building. The war itself did considerably less damage than many feared.

- There was little initial resistance to US and British forces, and Saddam's regime failed to mobilize any significant portion of the Iraqi people to resist the Coalition advance.

- An expected humanitarian crisis did not emerge. Problems rapidly developed in security, in terms of looting, medical services, and in the material aspects of life -- ranging from the availability of utilities like water and power to continuity in trade and employment. In broad terms, however, there were no major life-threatening problems with food or basic services.

- While the US and Britain failed to halt looting, they largely succeeded in preventing Saddam's supporters from destroying Iraq's oil production and export facilities or crippling the economy.

- For all of the postwar chaos and tensions in Iraqi city, the "Battle of Baghdad" was quick and involved minimal collateral damage and most Iraqi cities emerged intact.

- No major crises or clashes emerged in the north between Kurds and Arabs and Turkey did not intervene.

- Iran did not intervene and the Iranian-sponsored outside opposition did not take military action.

- Although attacks on Coalition forces and sabotage began almost immediately, the level of such action was very low for a nation of some 25 million people that had been ruled by Saddam and the Ba'ath Party for nearly 30 years, whose economy had begun to collapse as early as 1982 as a result of the cost of the Iran-Iraq War, and where power had always been given to a small Sunni elite at the expense of a Shi'ite majority and a large Kurdish minority.

Many of the problems that occurred during conflict termination and early in the nation-building phase were all beyond US and coalition control. They were the result of some thirty years of mismanagement by an Iraqi tyranny that stifled initiative and prevented market forces from working, and of the fact that Iraq's economy was crippled from 1982 onwards by the costs of the Iran-Iraq War, and then never recovered from the costs of the Gulf War and Iraq's refusal to meet the terms of UN Security Council Resolutions and put an end to sanctions.

The fact remains, however, that many of the problems the US encountered were caused by the failure of the US and its allies to provide adequate security, prevent looting, and take immediate action to ensure continuity of government. The Coalition's success in joint warfare was not matched by its success in conflict termination, peacemaking, and in transitioning to nation building. This was partly a matter of force ratios: The same strategy designed to deliver a carefully focused attack on the regime did not provide enough manpower to simultaneously occupy and secure the areas that the Coalition liberated and fell short of the manpower necessary to occupy the country.

The Impact of Limited Military Resources

Virtually all wars involve a chaotic transition from war to peace. The U.S. and British governments had ample warning from their intelligence services, diplomats, and area experts that this might be the case in Iraq. Yet, neither the governments nor their military forces were properly prepared to secure the areas they liberated and deal with the wide range of local, regional, ethnic and religious divisions they encountered. Key objectives were not secured against looting, the flow of aid was slow, and there was little preparation to deal with long-standing historical tensions.

Once again, there are mitigating factors. The problems during and immediately after the fighting were partly a result of the sheer speed of the regime's collapse at the end of the war and Iraqi tactics that made it impossible to enter cities without diverting forces to secondary missions. Not having a second front from Turkey and anything like the force totals originally planned also created problems.

The statements of senior U.S. military officers also emphasize the need for rapid military action and giving priority to the battle against Iraqi military forces. General Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, described the problem as follows in the Department of Defense daily briefing on April 15, 2003:

> [S]ome have suggested, "Well, gee, you should have delayed combat operations to protect against looting, or you should have had more forces, should have waited till more forces arrived." To that I would say this: The best way to ensure fewer casualties on [the] coalition side and fewer civilian casualties is to have combat operations proceed as quickly as possible and not prolong them. And so it gets back to…a matter of priorities. And we're dealing with some of those issues that you just brought up…the first thing you have to deal with is loss of life, and that's what we dealt with. And if you remember, when some of that looting was going on, people were being killed, people were being wounded.

Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan, the commander of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command, described the military reasons as follows:[2]

> [W]e had to fight our way into Baghdad. Now, that fight was characterized by decisive armor and infantry actions into Baghdad before he could set an urban defense of Baghdad. And the speed of our campaign allowed us really to seize the initiative and to exploit success, but even with that, we had to fight our way into Baghdad. So I can tell you from being here that those lead formations, both Marine and Army that maneuvered into Baghdad first of all, were killing bad guys, and secondly, were protecting Iraqi people. And so if some of the facilities became subject to looting over that period of time by Iraqis, I will tell you that our priority was to fight the enemy and to protect Iraqi people.

> …I am satisfied that the forces are here (now) and are continuing to flow here that will allow me to execute what are my phase four missions, and that is to provide a degree, a certain degree of stability and security in Iraq as we transition back to Iraqis in control of their own country. I would caveat that, though, by reminding everyone that there aren't enough soldiers or Marines to guard every street corner and every facility in Iraq, so there's some risk-taking in some areas. And we try to focus our forces where our intelligence and mission sets drive us to focus those forces. But I am satisfied that I have had enough forces on the ground to execute the campaign very decisively to this point. And we have the additional forces we need for phase four flowing in now.

Lt. General William Wallace defended V Corps problems in dealing with looting and civil unrest in much the same way:[3]

> We train for war fighting, but peacekeeping is something that we do. If you look across our formation, I would bet that 30 percent or more of our soldiers have had some real-world peacekeeping experience in the Balkans. So we have a lot of experience in how to deal with civil affairs, with civilian populations, with establishing institutions to get civilian populations involved in their own destiny. There is just a lot of experience in our forces with this civil-military dynamic, largely as a result of our operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.

> …One day our troops are kicking down doors, and the next they're passing out Band-Aids. And in some cases, they're kicking down doors without really knowing if they are going to have to pull a trigger or pass out a Band-Aid on the other side. And it's really a remarkable tribute to the mental acuity of our soldiers that they are able to do that.

The Coalition might have been better prepared if, as had originally been planned, it had been able to internationalize some aspects of conflict termination and nation-building by gaining the support of a second UN Security Council resolution. Similarly, preparations might have been better if it [words added here to break sentence into two had been able to draw upon the support of a wide range of other nations immediately after the end of the war. This is questionable, however. It is easy to task the UN and "international community," but they have no resources other than those contributed by individual states. Moreover, only a limited number of countries have forces trained and equipped for actual "peacemaking" under conditions that involve actual combat.

Most foreign forces are not capable of dealing with local military and security threats in actual combat and would have had little value. They would have presented a host of interoperability problems, from language differences to a lack of self-protection skills. Moreover, other nations have a very finite supply of either "peacemakers" or "peacekeepers." Most of these resources were already deployed in other contingencies and crises. International forces also would have had to rely on the United States for lift and sustainment at a time when the United States had limited capacity and Iraq did not have functioning ports and airports.

Avoidable Problems

The fact remains that many of the problems and limitations in military resources the coalition faced during and after the war, and certainly its lack of a coordinated military-civilian effort, were the result of U.S. failures before the war to plan properly for conflict termination and to then provide the proper resources.

In retrospect, the United States—the leader of the Coalition and the only power with the necessary resources to act—failed to effectively terminate the conflict for three principal sets of reasons: problems in international coordination; failures in u.s. policymaking and leadership; and failures at the field and tactical levels.

Problems in International Coordination

- It may have been impossible to shape an international consensus on how to deal with the problems involved, but the United States and UK did not seem to have a clear plan to seek such a consensus within the UN, or a clear back-up plan if that effort failed.

- The Coalition drew on many Arab allies for bases and support in war fighting but failed to get the level of regional support for peacemaking and nation-building it needed after the fighting.

Failures in U.S. Policymaking and Leadership
- The Bush administration had received advice from a number of sources that U.S. experience in Panama, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo had showed that it was critical to introduce a trained constabulary or military police force into urban areas immediately after the fall of local and national authority to prevent looting, civil unrest, and acts of revenge. U.S. military forces do not have training for these missions, however, and the countries that do did not participate in the Coalition. As a result, there were no personnel on the ground with the dedicated mission of maintaining order and with the training and skills to do so.

- The Coalition conducted a psychological warfare campaign, but failed to conduct a meaningful campaign to tell the Iraqi people how it planned to allow them to shape the peace and what the Coalition would do to make that possible. Iraqis had no clear idea of what to expect when the Coalition arrived, and many saw its goals and motives as part of a conspiracy to take over the country and its resources..

- At least some senior U.S. political leaders ignored warnings from intelligence, military, and regional experts that the Coalition forces would not be greeted as liberators, and that the Coalition should expert to deal with a mixture of anti-Western/anti-colonial sentiment and deep ethnic and religious tensions and divisions. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz admitted in July 2003 that the U.S. Defense Department officials leading the planning estimate had (1) underestimated the risk that the Ba'ath party and other irredentist hardliners would present a continuing security threat after Saddam Hussein fell from power; (2) counted on large numbers of Iraq military police to quickly join the United States and its allies in the nation-building effort; and (3) overestimated Iraqi popular support for the war. Other sources indicate that U.S. intelligence sources warned repeatedly from April 2002 on that Hussein loyalists would attempt to sabotage the reconstruction effort and that these warnings were ignored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Vice President, and the White House.[4]

- The National Security Council failed to perform its mission. It acted largely in an advisory role and did not force effective interagency coordination. Several former staff members of the NSC and senior officials in the State Department feel that this was a critical failure leading to the lack of any effective planning and execution of a conflict termination and nation building plan during and immediately after the war.

- The United States failed to develop a coordinated interagency approach to planning and executing peacemaking and nation-building before and during the war. A State Department-led effort called the Future of Iraq Project began in April 2002 and produced many of the needed elements of a plan.Much of the results of the State Department's planning efforts for nation-building were lost or made ineffective, however, because of the deep divisions between the State Department and Department of Defense over how to plan for peacemaking and nation building. When President Bush issued National Security Directive 24(NSD-24) on January 20, 2003. he put the Office of the Secretary of Defense in charge of the nation building effort, evidently because the problem of establishing security was given primacy. The result, however, was that the State Department and other interagency conflict termination and nation building efforts were dropped, ignored, or given low priority

- The Office of the Secretary of Defense staffed its nation building effort as a largely closed group composed of members who had strong ideological beliefs but limited practical experience and serious area expertise. Senior defense officials like Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Undersecretary Douglas J. Feith believed that the coalition would have strong popular support from the Iraqis, that other agencies were exaggerating the risks, that the task of nation-building could be quickly transferred to the equivalent of a government in exile, and that the US and its allies would be able to withdraw quickly. As a result, the nation building effort focused on humanitarian problems that failed to materialize, and the coalition partners were unprepared to deal with the political, economic, and security problems that did.

- Although the full details are not clear, at least some senior members of the team in the Office of the Secretary of Defense dealing with nation building believed that the Iraqi National Congress, led by Ahmed Chalabi, should form a government in exile and take over much of the nation building effort once the war began. The idea was rejected because of State Department and other warnings that Chalabi, who had left Iraq in 1958, had little credibility in leading a government in exile. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, however, continued to treat Chalabi as a potential leader and did not prepare for the inevitable internal struggles for power in Iraq once Saddam Hussein's regime fell. In April, while the war was under way, the Department had Chalabi and 700 of his followers flown to Iraq.

- The result was that the United States saw its mission in terms of defeating Iraqi military forces in main battles, rather than ending all armed opposition. It may have understood that the enemy had to be fully defeated, the remnants of the regime had to be purged, and order had to be established to allow effective nation-building to be established. The U.S. military did not, however, properly size and train its forces for these missions. It did not properly train

forward and combat units for dealing with activities like looting and the problems in distinguishing between hostile and nonviolent civilians and irregular forces and enemies. In many ways, troops were trained to fight asymmetric warfare up to the point of dealing with the consequences of victory.

- The mistakes of senior U.S. civilian policymakers were compounded by a U.S. military approach to the doctrine and planning for asymmetric warfare that in practice reflected the strong desire of U.S. military commanders to avoid deep involvement in the complex political issues of nation-building and to avoid prolonged military commitment to missions other than direct warfighting.

Failures at the Field and Tactical Levels

- The direction of the nation building effort initially lacked the kind of driving leadership needed for success, and few involved had real area expertise or experience with peacemaking and nation building. This led to an embarrassing change in the midst of conflict termination and the start of nation building from the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), directed by Lt. Gen. Jay M. Garner, to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) directed by Ambassador L. Paul Bremmer III.

- The United States failed to create an effective structure for managing the peacemaking and nation-building effort in the field; to clearly subordinate the military to General Garner and Ambassador Bremer on a timely and effective basis; and to task the military accordingly. The problem of establishing an actual interim authority was addressed by creating a semi-civilian body that was unprepared to enter and operate a still-hostile country at the earliest possible period.

- The National Security Council failed to organize effective interagency cooperation in Washington. It did not have a full time coordinator or representative in the field to. oversee the conflict termination and nation-building efforts and ensure suitable coordination between Washington, ORHA, and the US military.

- The lack of civil-military coordination greatly complicated the practical problems in actually providing aid and keeping promises. It also interacted with a lack of practical U.S. military planning for continued violence and "guerrilla warfare" during a prolonged period of conflict termination. The military gave priority to security and only limited support to nation-building. The nation builders had no real security capability or safe transportation of their own.

- From the start, a major gap existed among the State Department personnel serving in the field, the civilian team sent to Kuwait and then Iraq under General Garner, and the U.S. military in the Gulf and the field. State Department personnel were largely excluded. General Garner and his team refused an invitation from the land forces commander, Lt. General David McKiernan, to collocate with the U.S. military forces that would advance into Baghdad, and instead stayed in the Hilton Hotel in Kuwait, out of touch with conditions in the field and waiting for a humanitarian crisis that never came.

- Until mid-July 2003, the nation-building team had little meaningful guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Defense or the National Security Council, and was not coordinating effectively with the State Department. It was not organized or equipped to move forward with U.S. combat forces and act immediately in rear areas; it took far too long to move to Iraq; and it then chose a location isolated from the U.S. military forces that were its only practical source of logistic support and security.

- When the team under General Garner finally did relocate to Iraq, it made a classic U.S. mistake in choosing its headquarters. It located in a highly visible site in downtown Baghdad, in the Al Rashid Hotel, and in the former palaces of Saddam Hussein. Although the real-world conditions were scarcely luxurious, the image this created and sustained was one of luxury and an occupying proconsul with a filled swimming pool at a time when many Iraqis had no

water. The situation was made worse by the fact that this physically isolated the nation-building team from the U.S. military and created unnecessary security and transportation problems.

- Quite aside from these problems in leadership and focus, the nation-building team often had to rely on experts in U.S. activities relating to nation-building who had little meaningful expertise in working in developing countries. Its experts on the Middle East often had little or no prior experience in working in Iraq and/or little experience in the activities involved in conflict termination and nation-building.

- These problems were compounded by the failure to ensure that members of the team were committed to full-time, long-service support of the effort. Far too many team members were short-termers or part-timers.

- This was done despite the fact that past efforts that had created a "downtown palace" had caused tension in many friendly countries like South Korea. In Iraq it reinforced the gap between the nation-building team and the military at a time when the military was giving priority to security, and it helped ensure that the military gave less support to nation-building. It also cut the nation builders off from the military communication and support infrastructure and added to the team's security and transportation problems. MOVE UP?

- The "downtown palace" approach also forced the U.S. military to create a major security or "no-go zone" in the middle of Baghdad, draining troops and creating problems for the Iraqis who had to drive around an "occupier" in the center of their own city.

- Looting and criminal activity were not seen as major problems during the war or in preparing for conflict termination despite several thousand years of warning that this could be the case. It was clear that Iraq 's prewar economy was driven by nepotism and influence and that much of Iraq's population had reason to feel justified in acting against the regime and strong reasons to do so.

- Humanitarian efforts and expertise were sometimes confused with the very different missions of nation-building and conflict termination. Critical weeks were wasted making the transition from planning for a non-existent humanitarian crisis to dealing with the very real and immediate problems in peacemaking and nation-building. Key issues like jobs and economic security were addressed much later than should have been the case.

- Military commanders do not seem to have fully understood the importance of the peacemaking and nation-building missions. They often did not provide the proper support or did so with extensive delays and little real commitment.

- The "jointness" that helped the United States win the war was almost totally lacking during the conflict termination and peacemaking stage. No U.S. commander seemed to have responsibility. Even within the Army, major differences emerged in how given units performed their tasks. (The 3rd Infantry Division favored reacting to incidents; the 4th Division aggressively patrolled.) There was no cohesion to the military effort.

- Even where military resources were clearly available, too little emphasis was placed on immediately securing key urban areas and centers of government.

- The two U.S. Army divisions, the U.S. Marine forces, and the British forces all took different and inconsistent approaches to enforcing security. These problems were compounded in the case of the U.S. Army by a lack of consistency in supporting the nation-building effort in the field as well as in the treatment of Iraqis in carrying out the security mission. In many cases, the emphasis on force protection ignored the political impact on the Iraqi **population**and the fact that it might prove more provocative than helpful in enforcing security.

- In urban areas, the initial security efforts were generally reactive rather than part of a cohesive effort to provide security for the entire area. This left constant gaps in coverage and allowed looting, firefights, and ambushes to occur before an effort was made to act.

- U.S. forces lacked enough people with the necessary language and area skills, and the limited numbers of such experts that were available were dedicated to war-fighting tasks.

- The effort to create an effective Iraqi police force and to provide local security using Iraqis, rather than relying on occupying troops, came too late and had too little initial resources and support. The analysis of the Iraq police force before the war was misleading and led U.S. planners to assume it had far more capability than it did. Once the truth became apparent, U.S. planners were slow to react; they did not rush to put together an advisory team with the necessary mix of police and area expertise or to provide the necessary resources.

- The United States and its allies failed to assess the motives and competence of the outside Iraqi opposition. Members of the Iraqi opposition had their own goals and ambitions and often proved to be unreliable. Some U.S. policymakers planned to rely on the secular, pro-United States opposition to act as a de facto government in exile when it lacked the unity, competence, and popular support in Iraq to do so.

- At least initially, the United States tried to select leaders and representatives from within Iraq on the basis of its views of what Iraq should be, rather than letting such leaders emerge from within key Iraqi ethnic and sectarian groups.

- The "de-Ba'athifcation" effort was handled in too rigid a way for a country that had been under the same dictatorship for nearly three decades. Senior officials and officers were excluded from the nation-building effort simply because of rank and Ba'ath membership, rather than screening on a person-by-person basis. The end result was to compound the power vacuum created by the systematic murder and purging of secular opposition from 1979 onward.

- Many aspects of the U.S. operation initially were overcentralized in Baghdad and in General Garner's and Ambassador Bremmer's offices. Teams were needed to work with the local governments of each of Iraq's governates and in its major cities. The United States was particularly slow to see the need to establish a large number of liaison offices to deal with the divided Shi'ite majority in the south and the Kurds in the north, even though the offices that were established quickly demonstrated their value.

- The United States and its allies lacked an accurate picture of the problems in Iraq's infrastructure and an understanding of the problems a dictatorial command economy would face once the regime fell, despite considerable warnings from area experts and some intelligence experts. The Iraqis as a whole were unprepared to take the initiative in any major ministry or area of economic activity without guidance and direction. A long history of nepotism and of seizing any opportunity to gain wealth or power also created large numbers of Iraqis who were far more ready to loot than participate in nation-building.

- As with security and the prevention of looting, neither the U.S. nation builders nor the U.S. military were ready for the attacks on nation builders and advisory teams or for acts of sabotage. They had to be reactive when they should have focused on prevention and deterrence.

- The problems in the U.S. effort greatly complicated the problems for NGOs, international organizations, and other countries in the nation-building effort. Humanitarian and nongovernmental organizations do not operate in hostile military environments, but require high levels of protection to perform humanitarian missions with short-term goals that ignore the need to fully secure areas and create the political basis for nation-building. In contrast, military organization have not yet adapted to the need to provide suitable protection for humanitarian organizations and NGOs. Both sides need to change their present procedures.

These failures did much to create a climate of continuing violence after May 1 and to create the threat of low-intensity and asymmetric warfare. To an important degree, they contributed to the killing or wounding of every U.S. solider, British solider, and Iraqi civilian that became a casualty in the months following the "end" of the war.

A Failure of U.S. Leadership and Organization

The full history behind the previous list of problems has yet to surface. It is clear, however, that two problems on this list have a special importance in terms of lessons learned. One is the failure at the highest policy levels to give conflict termination the proper priority. The second is the failure by the U.S. military to properly recognize the importance of making conflict termination and the transition to nation-building a critical part of its doctrine and planning for asymmetric warfare.

At the policy level, the failure to understand the scale of the problems in conflict termination and nation-building was compounded by major organizational problems within the U.S. government. These problems included deep divisions between the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the State Department, and other agencies. The State Department had attempted to coordinate systematic planning for nation-building during the course of 2002. This effort took the form of interagency consulting bodies that never had clear authority or unified Cabinet-level policy support. These bodies also were largely civilian and not capable of handling the security problems that arise in liberated areas during combat, as well as the problems in securing a nation after the most intense phases of combat ended.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense was formally given the lead for conflict termination and the early phases of nation-building in January 2003. President Bush seems to have made this decision because U.S. military forces were the only instrument that could perform the security mission during and immediately after combat. In assuming this mission, however, the Office of the Secretary of Defense ignored most of the previous interagency process or left it hanging in limbo, and it took a heavily ideological approach that assumed the Coalition would have far more popular support in Iraq, particularly in the south, than it actually did.[5]

The Office of the Secretary of Defense assumed that Saddam Hussein's regime would fall in ways that left much of the Iraqi government and economy functioning—an assessment that ignored both the acute limits to the process of government under Saddam and the ewually acute limits to the efficiency of the Iraq economy and the ability of Iraq officials to act without direct orders from above. The department also ignored case after case in which earlier collapses of authoritarian regimes ended in looting and sectarian or ethnic divisions and violence.

Put differently, the Office of the Secretary of Defense had large numbers of policymakers who earlier had viewed the Clinton administration's focus on nation-building as a waste of U.S. resources. They shared a strong ideological belief that the war would free popular support for democracy that would transform Iraq and the Middle East, and they had little or no practical experience with either Iraq as a nation or the problems in nation building. They concentrated instead on warfighting and assumed that conflict termination would be a more limited priority.

They also did so in the face of advice to the contrary from many area experts within the U.S. government, U.S. officials with experience in peacemaking and nation-building, experts within the intelligence community, and the wide assortment of outside experts that had been brought in to advise the interagency planning groups. There certainly was no consensus among these groups as to how the security and nation-building problems

should be dealt with. There was, however, a consensus that the problems would probably be far more serious and immediate than the Office of the Secretary of Defense was planning for.

These organizational failures were compounded by the failure of the National Security Council to act as a forceful body that could make the interagency process work. This was partly a matter of personalities and partly a lack of clear lines of responsibility and administrative capability within the NSC. But it also reflected a deliberate decision by the president to treat the NSC more as an advisory body than as an active manager.

There may be good intellectual and theoretical arguments for having the NSC stay in an advisory capacity and for relying on a government based on lines of responsibility that pass through Cabinet-level officials.[The problem is that such an approach simply does not work in practice when demanding interagency coordination must take place and action must be taken. The stronger the Cabinet members are, the stronger the role of the NSC must be. The tensions and competition between the leadership of Vice President Cheney, Secretary Powell, and Secretary Rumsfeld have led to stronger interagency rivalries under President George W. Bush than at any time in recent memory.

The need for "jointness" does not apply simply to the U.S. military; it must apply to the entire U.S. government. It seems far easier for civilians to press the military for "jointness" than to recognize the need for it in their own operations. A weak and ineffectively led NSC is not capable of dealing with problems like conflict termination.

The Inability of the U.S. Military to Properly Conceptualize and Understand Grand Strategy

The failure of the U.S. military to prepare and implement effective plans for conflict termination also merits additional attention. Western military forces are not political forces, and professional warfighters like the U.S. and British military tend to see peacemaking and nation-building as a diversion from their main mission. It seems fair to argue that conflict termination and the role of force in ensuring stable peacetime outcomes have always been weaknesses in modern military thinking. Tactics and strategy, and military victory, have always taken priority over grand strategy and winning the peace.

The U.S. military culture has failed to look beyond war fighting in defining the role and responsibility of the U.S. military. The subordination of the military to civilian control in the United States leads to a natural reluctance by the military to become involved in planning for "political" activities like conflict termination, peacemaking, and nation-building or to challenge civilian policymakers in these areas. Soldiers naturally focus on war rather than conflict termination.

U.S. military staff colleges have begun to explore these issues, but force transformation and the tactics and strategy of dealing with new threats like terrorism, proliferation, and asymmetric warfare have had priority. As a result, U.S. military thinking tends to focus on winning the war rather than winning the peace, although defeat of the enemy in battle is pointless unless it results in a successful grand strategic outcome.

Resource limitations reinforce the military's traditional focus.   Global deployments encourage military planners to try to avoid committing high-technology soldiers to

largely low-technology missions. There is a natural desire to avoid tying troops down in open-ended security, peacemaking, and nation-building efforts. Moreover, dedicated forces for such missions need area expertise and language skills, as well as specialized training and equipment for activities such as security and paramilitary police functions, humanitarian assistance., and nation-building. The creation of such forces comes at the direct expense of warfighting capabilities. Quite naturally, U.S. military planners and commanders see such activities as a diversion from their main mission, as a further stress on an overdeployed force structure, and as missions that should be performed by less capable allied forces.

What military planners and commanders want, however, is not necessarily what they should get or be ordered to do. Even in World War II, the failure to plan for conflict termination helped create many of the problems that led to the Cold War, and successful nation-building in Germany and Japan occurred more because these were already strong, cohesive nations than because of "nation-building" efforts per se.

The challenges involved have also grown far more urgent since the end of the Cold War. Most of the wars of the twenty-first century are likely to be fought in developing countries and nations that lack an effective political structure and government and have serious ethnic and sectarian divisions. In many cases, the United States and its allies will be fighting nations or terrorist/extremist movements with hostile ideologies, different cultural values, and societies operating on the margin of poverty with limited practical ability to function as modern economies. Basic functions of the state, such as the effective rule of law, will be missing or so flawed that they must be rebuilt from the ground up. The defeated country may be generally hostile to many aspects of Western and secular culture, and it may have no meaningful political parties or political processes. Iraq is scarcely likely to be the last conflict in which the United States and its allies must fight without cohesive international support. Even when the United States has that support, there are no large pools of trained peacemakers to draw upon. Many nations that claim to structure their forces for peacekeeping missions cannot project or support them for sustained missions, and many are unwilling to use them in situations where they must actually fight to create and maintain a peace. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are organized primarily for humanitarian missions in a peaceful, or at least permissive, environment and can provide only limited support. NGOs will always be a critical source of help, but they will never be a substitute for military operations.

The result is that the U.S. military needs to fully accept that conflict termination, peacemaking, and nation-building are as much a part of their mission as warfighting. These must have the same priority as combat if terrorists and unstable countries are not to mutate, change tactics, and reemerge in a different form. No strategy for asymmetric warfare can be adequate that does not address these tasks as being as critical as the defeat of most enemy forces in battle.

The U.S. military did not learn this lesson from the first Gulf War, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. In the case of Afghanistan, it was not really ready to act on even the most basic lessons of conflict termination, such as the critical need to secure the country during the period between the fall of a regime and the moment self-appointed leaders try to seize local power. The scale of these problems has been much more serious in Iraq, and it should not take another conflict to realize that the need to see conflict termination and the

transition to nation-building as a critical military mission is one of the most important single lessons of modern warfare.

There is No "New Way of War" without Successful Conflict Termination, Peacemaking, and Nation-building

The United States and its allies must also make this lesson a basic part of force transformation. This is a dangerous time to talk about a new way of war without talking about a new way of peace. In the twenty-first century, planning and training for conflict termination, peacemaking, and nation-building have to be given the same priority as planning for peace. Like it or not, most limited wars will only be won by success in these efforts—and the morality and ethics of the use of force can only be justified in these terms.

As a result, jointness must be restructured on a civil-military and interagency basis to provide more capability in these missions if U.S., British, and other Western power-projection forces are to get the domestic, allied, and other foreign support they need to act. Stable war-fighting outcomes can be achieved only if the country defeated or fought over becomes stable after the war. Put differently, even the best military victory cannot, by itself, win the peace.

This requires that both political decisionmakers and military planners and commanders accept the lesson and make the same commitment to winning the peace they make to military victory. The only justification for war is the pragmatic result. Defeating today's enemy without creating the conditions for future stability is a near-certain recipe for future conflict. As a result, peacekeeping and nation-building are even more essential aspects of grand strategic planning by political leaders as for the military.

Such planning requires the proper organization of civil as well as military activity, the creation of staffs with the skills necessary to carry out the mission, and, above all, the understanding that there has to be a political commitment to take the necessary time and spend the necessary resources. Military leaders can be forgiven for concentrating on winning wars; political leaders cannot be forgiven for failing to win the peace.

Any effort to act on this lesson of the Iraq War must also recognize that peacemaking and nation-building are still experimental activities. No one yet has a clear history of success in these undertakings. There are no rules and procedures that guarantee what will or will not work, and most case studies fail to apply clearly to the next case. Priorities often become apparent only once activity begins. It is also virtually impossible for an effort that is intended to create a more democratic government in a nondemocratic state to avoid some tension and violence between suppressed factions and groups.

Intelligence on Conflict Termination and Nation-Building[6]

There is another critical set of problems that must be addressed. Intelligence did provide analyses and warnings of many of the problems to come. It seems clear that intelligence warned of many of the security problems U.S. forces encountered on entering Iraq and in the immediate aftermath of their advance toward Baghdad. Intelligence also warned that there was a serious risk of pro-Ba'ath and pro-Saddam sabotage, terrorism, and low-level conflict after the regime fell. Some members of the Army staff indicate that these

warnings were serious enough that they recommended that significant security forces be provided to bring order to the areas occupied as the United States advanced.[7]

Intelligence does not, however, seem to have produced an accurate overall assessment of key problems in conflict termination and nation building, and it certainly did not effectively communicate such an assessment to senior policymakers. These problems are discussed in the following chapter and include such issues as the true nature of the Iraqi opposition, the attitudes of the Iraqi people, and the impact of the divisions within Iraq as a nation. All have proved to be of critical importance during conflict termination and the initial phases of nation building.

Adequate intelligence cannot focus simply on "enemies." It must also assess the strengths and weaknesses of potential "friends," and it must do so objectively and without policy-level interference. The United States in particularseems to have failed to accurately assess information from exiles and defectors, many of whom lied or exaggerated their own importance. At least some elements of the U.S. government exaggerated the value and capabilities of outside Iraqi opposition movements like the Iraqi National Congress. In at least some cases, they also failed to objectively assess information from defectors, using information more because it supported policy than because the source had real credibility.

These problems in intelligence did not apply simply to the outside opposition. They applied to the assessment of key parts of the Iraqi population like the Shi'ite south, where the United States and Britain seem to have expected far more support than was forthcoming. It is unclear that a full risk analysis was performed of the probable impact of the U.S. and British advance, and it is unclear that the intelligence effort had a good picture of the power structure within the Shi'ite south and the divisions within it. It seems virtually certain that intelligence underestimated the problems caused by the lack of any secular political structure within the Shi'ites, the importance of Shi'ite religious leaders and their search for political influence and power, and the relative strength of Iranian-backed Shi'ite resistance movements versus other opposition movements.

Similar problems occurred in assessing the nature of the mixed areas near Baghdad and the Sunni areas in central Iraq. The intelligence effort was not capable of distinguishing which towns and areas were likely to be sources of continuing Ba'athist resistance and support. The intelligence community exaggerated the risk of a cohesive Ba'ath resistance in Baghdad, the Sunni triangle, and Tikrit during the war, and was not prepared to deal with the rise of a much more scattered and marginal resistance in these same areas by Ba'ath and Saddam Hussein loyalists after the war.

It is less clear that intelligence failed to assess the problems likely to occur within the Kurdish areas of Iraq, the deep divisions between the Talibani and Barzani factions, and the potential divisions between Kurd, Arab, and Turcoman. Nevertheless, the United States and its allies still seem to have been unprepared for these problems.

Many of the problems in analytic and collection capability were almost certainly in part the failure of U.S. policymakers, who failed to provide proper tasking—and who may sometimes have discouraged such analysis. At the same time, the CIA at least was very slow to address the issues involved and began to do so only in late 2002, months after an interagency effort and State Department task force had highlighted the importance of

such work. Once the work did begin, it was weakly staffed, demonstrated a serious lack of analytic depth and area expertise, and had a high degree of theoretical content.

Again, these intelligence failures during the Iraq War reflect a broader policy-level failure to come to grips with the problem of conflict termination and nation building before, during, and at the end of modern wars. U.S. strategy seems to have correctly identified the fact that threats are becoming more and more asymmetric and have a steadily greater ideological and regional content. U.S. practice has failed to come to grips with the fact that military forces can defeat the main elements of such threats—whether they are military forces as in the case of Iraq or guerilla and terrorist forces as in the case of Al Qaida and the Taliban—but that only a successful nation building effort can prevent such threats from mutating or new threats from emerging. In any case, a major change is needed in the mindset, focus, and analytic/collection capabilities of the intelligence community to deal with conflict termination and nation building.

Lessons Relating to Political, Diplomatic, and Psychological Warfare

Finally, the United States and Britain need to learn painful lessons about the political, diplomatic, and psychological dimensions of the war. Their tactical efforts in psychological warfare seem to have had significant successes. One key lesson of the war, however, is that the United States and Britain failed to conduct a successful political, diplomatic, and psychological campaign at the strategic, and grand strategic level.

Limited Success in Psychological Warfare

The United States and Britain had considerable success in those aspects of psychological warfare that helped cause Iraqi military inaction and expedite surrenders, such as dropping leaflets. The psyops effort involved some 58 EC-130E Commando Solo sorties, 306 broadcast hours of radio, and 304 hours of television. Compass Call flew another 125 EC-130H sorties, and many made an effort to jam Iraqi communications. The psyops team prepared some 108 radio messages and 81 different leaflets. The Coalition flew 158 leaflet missions and ultimately dropped nearly 32 million leaflets over both civilian and military areas. Interestingly, the missions included 32 A-10 and 68 F-16CJ HARM sorties—a strong indication that leaflet drops were timed to go to Iraqi combat troops at the most critical moment. The evidence to date indicates that these missions helped considerably to persuade Iraqi forces either not to fight or to defect, desert, or surrender.

The Coalition failed to silence Iraqi radio and TV, however, even though at least 10 major media targets were included among its total of 116 C^4I targets. The daily televised briefings of Iraq's minister of information took on the character of a popular farce in the West, but they had considerable impact in Iraq and the Arab world. The continuing presence of the media in Iraq also allowed Iraq to exploit both Arab and Western media and to have a major voice in the world up to the day the regime abandoned its effort to defend Baghdad.

More generally, the psychological warfare effort failed to lay the groundwork for conflict termination and nation-building. This was partly the result of the intelligence failure to accurately assess Iraqi attitudes and public opinion; the Coalition clearly misread the level of popular support it had among Iraqis at the time it attacked. The United States, in particular, missed the cumulative impact of (1) its failure to support the opposition

uprising in Iraq in 1991; (2) its failure to conduct a meaningful public diplomacy campaign to explain that it was not responsible for the suffering of the Iraqi people under UN sanctions; (3) Iraqi and Arab hostility to the United States because of its support of Israel and the Arab portrayal of the Second Intifada; and (4) the Coalition's failure to convincingly rebut various regional conspiracy theories, such as an assumption that its goals were "neoimperialist" or that it was fighting to seize Iraqi oil.

As a result, far too little effort was made before, during, and immediately after the Iraq War to persuade key factions within Iraq—and the Iraqi people as a whole—that the Coalition was not seeking to oust Saddam Hussein for its own benefit and that it was not fighting the war to take control of Iraqi oil, or use Iraq as a military base, or serve Israel's interests. The tactical psychological and political warfare effort failed to address conspiracy theories in a country and region where such theories usually have far more impact than vague promises about liberation and democracy, and whose history gives it little reason to trust the West.

Perhaps because the United States and Britain put too much faith in the reassurances of the outside opposition, the psychological and political warfare campaign made little effort to reassure Iraq's Shi'ites and failed to understand the importance of dealing with their religious leaders—the only meaningful opposition to the regime inside Iraq after Saddam's political purges of 1979. Similar problems occurred with the Kurds and the need to avoid Kurdish versus Arab and Turcoman confrontations in the north. The United States also made attempts to bribe and subvert Iraqi Sunni officials and commanders, but failed to provide any clear picture of their fate after the liberation.

One of the most inexplicable failures was the lack of a coherent effort to use radio and television to reach the Iraqi people before, during, and after the war. This failure was particularly striking after the war. Even in July 2003, the United States and Britain still did not have an effective radio broadcast effort to reach the Iraqi people. The programming that was provided had very limited news content, and the timing of the news broadcasts ignored the fact that many Iraqis spent most of the afternoon in their homes and left them in the evening when the news was broadcast.

More generally, the United States and Britain failed before, during, and after the war to set clear goals for their nation-building effort and make them a key element in psychological and political warfare. They failed to assure both the Iraqi people as a whole and key elements within Iraq that the Coalition had workable plans for nation-building— plans that would meet immediate and urgent needs and also produce the kind of "Iraq for the Iraqis" that would give people a strong incentive to cooperate with the Coalition. No psychological and political warfare effort is competent that focuses only on defeating the enemy and fails to deal with conflict termination and nation-building. The failure to carry out effective programs in this area was a serious defect in the U.S. and British efforts.

Long-Standing Failures in Public Diplomacy

The Coalition failed in the strategic aspects of psychological and political warfare for a number of reasons. Part of the problem lay in the fact that the Clinton administration never developed a meaningful or effective public diplomacy for dealing with Iraq and the Iraqi people. Instead, it relied largely on the impact of the victory in the Gulf War and the Arab-Israeli peace process. It did not attempt to explain the reasons for the United

Nations' sanctions against Iraq and the nature of the UN oil-for-food program, or to deal with aggressive Iraqi efforts to persuade the Iraqi people and many others that the United States and the United Kingdom were responsible for their suffering. It also failed to conduct any meaningful public diplomacy in the Gulf and Arab world to explain and justify its military presence.

The Clinton administration also never rebutted the exaggerated charges that the United States had strongly encouraged public uprisings in Iraq in 1990–1991, when a limited U.S. campaign focused largely on persuading the Iraqi military to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The administration allowed the myth to be disseminated that it was somehow responsible for Saddam Hussein's ability to put down the uprisings because the ceasefire agreement did not prevent Iraqi use of combat helicopters. It failed to explain why the United States had not actively sought to overthrow Saddam Hussein immediately after the Gulf War, and it allowed the Iraqi National Congress to claim that it could somehow have threatened Saddam Hussein militarily if only it had had more active U.S. backing.

The Clinton administration attempted to make a case against Iraqi proliferation without seeming to understand that much of the region, although it feared Saddam Hussein, saw proliferation as a legitimate reaction to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and the conventional strength of the United States.

Problems Stemming from the Bush Administration

The Bush administration inherited these failures and the backlash from the breakdown of the Arab-Israeli peace process. It does not seem to have understood, however, just how angry Arab public opinion had become over the Second Intifada and U.S. ties to Israel, as a result of the way these subjects were portrayed by much of the Arab media, hostile Arab governments, and Arab and Islamic extremist movements.

The Bush administration also dealt with the aftermath of the 9/11 attack on the United States by allowing a climate to develop in which much of the Arab world perceived it as anti-Arab and anti-Islamic. That this was untrue simply magnified the U.S. failure in failing to conduct the kind of broader political and psychological warfare that is vital to winning the war on terrorism and to lay the political groundwork for war against Iraq. This was compounded by the administration's failure to explain its support for democracy in terms that did not appear to threaten its Arab allies or, sometimes, appear to be an attack on—if not contemptuous of—Arab societies.

As has been touched on earlier, both the United States and Britain left their efforts to explain the threat posed by Iraqi weapons of mass destruction until the last moment, when their propaganda-like statements and briefings seemed to be more a rationale for war than a legitimate warning. They made only belated cases for regime change and then failed to clearly define their goals for Iraqi nation-building in ways that defused the host of fears, Arab resentments, and conspiracy theories that were the almost inevitable byproduct of the decision to go to war. The United States also badly miscalculated the support it could gain in the UN, as well as its problems with its traditional allies in Europe and and with key bilateral partners such as Turkey.

Finally, and most critically, the United States assumed that it had largely already won the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and that it did not need a massive political and

psychological warfare effort to win their hearts and minds during conflict termination and the transition to nation-building.

The Strategic and Grand Strategic Aspects of Psychological and Political Warfare

The key lesson for the future should be that the strategic and grand strategic dimensions of psychological and political warfare are at least as important as the tactical dimensions of such warfare, and that effective operations must focus on conflict termination and nation-building long before any actual fighting begins.

The Overall Importance of Conflict Termination as a Critical Part of Warfighting

The United States was unprepared for effective conflict termination in the Gulf War, and it sought to avoid the security and nation-building missions in the Afghan conflict. Going back further, it had encountered serious problems in dealing with conflict termination and the aftermath of war in the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Virtually all of history's major military victors, in fact, have failed to capitalize on their victories in grand strategic terms in at least some important respects.

Conflict termination has generally been treated as a secondary priority, and the end of war has often been assumed to lead to a smooth transition to peace or been dealt with in terms of vague plans and ideological hopes. The United States and its allies are now paying for this failure to look beyond immediate victory on the battlefield. Much more could have been done before, during and immediately after the war *if* the Coalition, and especially the United States, had not seen conflict termination, peacemaking, and nation-building as secondary missions, and *if* a number of senior U.S. policymakers had not assumed the best case in terms of Iraqi postwar reactions to the Coalition attack. The United States was the only country in the world that could have provided the necessary resources to ensure a successful transition from conflict to nation-building, and it failed to do so.

This should be the last war in which there is a policy-level, military, and intelligence failure to come to grips with conflict termination and the transition to nation-building. The United States and its allies should address the issues involved before, during, and after the conflict. They should be prepared to commit the proper resources, and they should see political and psychological warfare in grand strategic terms. A was is over only when violence is ended, military forces are no longer needed to provide security, and nation-building can safely take place without military protection. It does not end with the defeat of the main forces of the enemy on the battlefield.

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[1] DoD news briefing. Participating were Lawrence Di Rita, acting assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, and Gen. John Abizaid, commander, U.S. Central Command. July 16, 2003. Department of Defense transcript, http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030716-0401.html.

[2] Department of Defense briefing on April 23, 2003, http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030423-0122.html.

[3] Interview with James Kitfield, "Attack Always," in *National Journal*, April 25, 2003.

[4] Peter Slevin and Dana Priest, "Wolfowitz Concedes Errors on Iraq," *Washington Post*, July 24, 2003.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] The reader should be aware that this analysis is based on unclassified interviews and discussion and not on a review of any of the classified documents involved.

[7] Interviews.