# DEMOCRATISING IRAQ:

# CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

*Dissertation Submitted to*
*Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)*
*in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for*
*the Award of the Degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**Date: 30th July 2007**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**DEMOCRATISING IRAQ: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**", submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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**Dedicated to**

*My Revered Parents*

*&*

*Little Sister*
*Sasmita*

# ACKONOWLEGEMENT

*Behind the successful completion of this work, the incessant efforts of my revered and most admired Supervisor, Dr. Ashwini K. Mohapatra has been very crucial. He not merely introduced me to the world of academic research, but also guided me through the entire process of this study. Both the work and this author immensely benefited from Dr Mohapatra's paternal involvement and intellectual inputs which inspired me to keep improving the data-base and analysis in this work. Besides keeping my academic orientation in tact, he also showered me with unconditional love and care through thick and thin of my tryst with this Campus. No words of gratitude would suffice for his tireless efforts to inculcate a broader outlook and a sense of discipline in me. Needless to say, I will be seeking his blessings and guidance all-through my life.*

*I take this opportunity to tender my sincere thanks to all my dear teachers at the Centre for West Asian and African Studies, whose help and encouragement on countless occasions kept me walking on this path. I am thankful to the support staff of my Centre, JNU Central Library and Institute of Defence and Strategic Analysis, which has always been willing to assist me in tracking down the required study materials.*

*I am indebted to my parents, without whose support, this higher study could not have been imaginable for me. They have never said 'no' to whatever I have asked for, notwithstanding the family situation. Today, I recall the love and affection of my little sister, Sasmita, which is the buttress of my existence. My Grandpa, Mr. Nityananda Meher, a truly noble person, Granny, Smt. Bimala, Dada, Bhaja Meher and uncle, Tikeswar have made no less contribution to my life. I am extremely grateful to my Eldest Uncle, Mr. Rameswar Meher, Tika Dada, Dina Dada and all family members, who always inspired me to go ahead and fulfill my dreams in spite of any odds. I can*

*not simply ignore the love and affection of two of my favorite younger brothers Thabira and Naren.*

*Mr. Suneel Panda, one of the finest teachers I have ever seen in my life, has been a real source of inspiration in every step of my career journey. He deserves special thanks. I cannot forget the encouragement and motivation induced inside me by some of my favorite teachers like Mr. Sontosh Meher and Mrs. Priyambada Hota .*

*I remember my childhood friend, Narendra, life without him is so unthinkable. He is the one, who never thought twice while taking my side even if I am not right. Yogesh Kaka, whom I consider as one of the ideals, who is the intellectual founder of my mind, deserves a special mention here. The debates discussions on various national and international issues with him have enriched and enlightened me. His endless motivations, incomparable encouragement and the 'never accept defeat' approach has always shown me the path of light in all darkness. I accept, with utmost humility, his permanent impact on me.*

*I express my heartiest love and gratitude for two of my close friends I came across in my life - Girish and Omprakash Dada, who have been with me all through the sunny and stormy days, without putting any condition or question. The intellectual input and moral support provided by them are unparallel and second to none.*

*I express my thankfulness with all appreciations to Madhu, Sarah, Sasmita and Priyadarshini for their kind cooperation and constant encouragement during my study. I admire the support and suggestions given by Pankaj Dada, Basant and Tapan for making this a good one.*

*Last but not the least, I extend my sincere thank to Bimal, Purbodaya, Niranjan and all my well wishers. I owe so much to them.*

*For all the errors and omissions in this work, I am solely to be held responsible.*

Rukmana Meher

*Dt: 30th July 2007*

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# INTRODUCTION

Before making any attempt to understand the term 'democratisation', it is pertinent to know what the term 'democracy' means. 'Democracy' may be defined by its inherent nature and by its empirical conditions. As to its nature, Aristotle defined democracy as 'rule by the people' (Greek demokratia: demos, people + -kratia, -cracy), and this idea that in some way, the people govern themselves is still the core meaning of democracy. But around this idea, several related themes have developed that are now thought integral to what democracy is. One is that the people govern themselves by regular elections through which their leaders are periodically elected (representative democracy) or policies governing them are chosen (direct democracy).[1] It is a system that makes it possible to get rid of a government without spilling blood.[2] For Kamel Abu Jaber, universal suffrage and free elections are only rudimentary components of a democracy. These must be enhanced by constitutional limitations on the government, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights A minimalist definition of democracy, based on popular power and popular sovereignty, must be the beginning, not the end, of a democratization process. Only when supplemented with constitutionally enshrined separation of powers, political pluralism, and individual rights and freedoms can a minimalist concept serve as the basis for the development of a liberal, pluralist, tolerant, and stable society.[3]

**What is Democratisation?**

Democratisation can be defined as a process, whereby people engage in constructing a State for their own benefit with social equality as its core principle, working though an elected government operating under the rule of law, supported by functioning institutions subject to a Constitutional framework incorporating international norms and standards as set in the United Nations' Human Rights Treaties and Covenants.

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[1] R. J. Rummel, "Democratisation", 2005, at <www.hawaii.edu>

[2] Ralf Dahrendorf, "A Definition of Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.14, No.4, (2003), p. 103.

[3] Etel Solingen uses Robert Dahl's more inclusive concept of 'poly-archy', with the following seven pillars: elected officials; free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative information protected by law; and associational autonomy. This definition is still very limited and focuses mainly on structures. Moreover, these requirements are relatively easy to meet, even without significant loss of power for political leaders, and they also do not extend democracy to the economic, social, and cultural aspects of political life.

In short, it can be defined as the process through which a political system becomes democratic. Democratisation is one of the most important concepts and trends in modern political science. At one level, it is a relatively simple idea, since democratisation is simply the establishment of a democratic political regime. Democratisation, with the concrete goal of democracy at the end of the process, presents a clear political aim and a manifesto for change. [4]

Democracy, as we know it today, is a relatively recent phenomenon. While some of the Greek City-States and medieval Poland had regimes that had democratic aspects, modern democracy only dates from the late 18th Century. To be considered democratic, a country must choose its leaders through fair and competitive elections, ensure basic civil liberties, and respect the rule of law. Some observers also claim that a democracy has to have a Capitalist economy and a strong civil-society and civic culture, although not all political scientists would include these two criteria.[5]

Democratisation is the process, whereby a country adopts such a regime. There is less agreement among political scientists about how that process occurs, including the criteria to use in determining if democratisation has, in fact, taken place. Many countries have adopted democratic regimes only to see them collapse in a military coup or relapse into authoritarian rule instead. Another criterion raised by many experts is the peaceful transfer of power from one political party or coalition to the former Opposition. Such a transition is critical because it indicates that the major political forces in a country are prepared to settle their disputes without violence and to accept that they will all spend periods of time out of office.

As the definition[6] of the term suggests, the importance of democratisation is easy to see at first glance, but it is much more complicated in practice. Democratisation is important because of one of the most widely (but not universally) accepted trends in

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[4] Tim Niblock, "Democratisation: A Theoritical and Practical Debate", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1998), p. 230.

[5] Moor Barrington Jr., *Social origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Beacon Press, 1966); D. Rueschemeyer, E. H. Stephens, and J. D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 60-70.

[6] Majid Tehranian describes democratization as a journey, a journey toward, as Lincoln put it, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people", at <www.un.org>

international relations, known as the 'democratic peace'. Put simply, democracies do not have wars with other democracies.[7]

**Elements of Democratisation**

First, democratisation is a process that people enter into to create a State for their own benefit. An important requirement for this is genuine sovereignty. Sovereignty implies the capacity to use natural resources and other sources of wealth primarily for the nation's own benefit. Thus, it is contradictory to suggest that a colonial power can 'create democracy'.[8] Colonisers rule over countries for their own selfish interests, and the kind of 'democracy' is mainly guided by such motives.

Secondly, definition of democratisation[9] goes beyond a shift towards mere formal democracy. The presence of formal democracy is often mistaken for genuine change. By formal democracy, it may be said that the holding of elections whereby regimes are endorsed through the ballot box. This kind of 'democracy' legitimizes the ruling elite, but does hold the elite accountable through an effective system of law enforcement. It, in fact, offers people few opportunities to participate in political life, other than the periodic ratification of the *status quo*. It also denies people the opportunities to intervene in order to stem abuses of power and rampant corruption. At the worst, the entire elections may become farcical. Under such circumstances, the 'rule of law' is nothing more than the rules of the rulers designed to safeguard and perpetuate their power at the expense of popular freedoms.

In many countries in the Asian region, formal democracy was introduced by the colonial powers. Decades after the demise of colonial regimes, peoples throughout Asia are struggling to expand and develop rudimentary democratic structures. In fact, elite

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[7] Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs" in E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *In Debating the Democratic Peace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[8] Robert J Barro, "Determinants of Democracy," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol.107, No. 6 (1999), p. 158; See also Laurence Whitehead, "The Drama of Democratization" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.10, No. 4 (1999), pp. 84-98.

[9] Democratization is described as a movement from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to freer and fairer competitive elections; from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, and from weak (or non-existent) autonomous associations in civil society to more autonomous and more numerous associations. See Doh C. Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research," *World Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (October 1994), pp. 135-145.

groups, who have happily manipulated and benefited from what was left by colonial powers, strongly resist attempts towards more substantive democracy. Such resistance again results in many conflicts.

Thirdly, people, who are democratizing, are simultaneously constructing their State. A common misconception is that States are conceived via Constitutions, born at independence or some other important occasions, and are, then, ready to serve their peoples' interests. Yet, often Constitutions establish ideal visions of State and social institutions, which do not even exist at the time of independence. Although usually interrelated, the making of a Constitution and the making of a State are two entirely different things. There may be a huge gap between the principles of Statehood, outlined in a Constitution, and the realities of Statehood that the citizens know from their day-to-day lives. It follows that democratisation necessitates tireless efforts to build a State that is capable of enforcing its principles.

Fourthly, social equality is at the heart of genuine democratisation. This may seem obvious to people brought up in the West, where social and political revolutions displaced earlier feudal models of Statehood, premised on social inequality. In Asia, however, feudal models and mentalities remain deeply entrenched.

Fifthly, democratisation[10] involves everybody. It is an engagement that brings together all social groups. It is the flow of ideas between all sections of society that gives sustenance to substantive democracy.

Sixthly, Democratisation mandates the constant soliciting of, and respect for, the views of all people in the society at the political level. The presence of effectively functioning institutions to ensure the rule of law is a critical element in democratisation.

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[10] Democratization is defines as a progressive evolution of the components (accountability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of, and conditioned by, state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and international engagements.. For details, see Juan J. Linz and Alfred C. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1996), p. 5; also see Andreas Schedler, "Taking Uncertainty Seriously: The Blurred Boundaries of Democratic Transition and Consolidation", *Democratisation*, Vol. 8 No. 4 (Winter 2001), pp. 1-22.

The mere existence of a certain institutions does not mean that it is functioning to uphold the rule of law.[11]

Seventhly, democratisation requires that State institutions be held responsible through a Constitutional framework that incorporates international norms and standards as set out by the United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Covenants. This is the most important condition, as invariably laws are used not to enhance freedoms, rather to restrict them. Forced expropriation of crops, eviction of people from their lands, massive deforestation, arbitrary detention, widespread disappearances and many other human rights violations have been undertaken with legal sanction. The requirement that a State must conform to some basic norms and standards arises from the need for working criteria to eradicate unjust laws and undemocratic practices. These standards, expressed in the body of international law developed over many years, are intended to nullify arbitrary practices that may have the appearance of law, and a State that is serious about democratisation is obliged to incorporate them into its domestic structure.

A better way of assessing a shift towards democracy may be to study the creation and maintenance of institutions of justice. These are the organs that make a crucial difference between a formal democracy and a truly functional democracy. A citizen can participate in the political life and day-to-day affairs of a country only when he or she can challenge obstructions to participation. Doing this requires truly independent judicial institutions with powers to provide effective remedies and the necessary resources to ensure their mandate. Additionally, the judiciary cannot work effectively unless there are similarly equipped and functioning Police and prosecution agencies.

The absence or weaknesses of institutions of justice also affects civil administration, thereby fermenting or accelerating conflict. Where civil administration can be subjected to judicial inquiry, it is obliged to be less arbitrary in its behavior. Yet, civil administration is scrutinized in only a handful of Asian countries. Democratisation, however, will require that civil administration be brought under the watchful eye of a competent justice system. Democracy must bring benefits and not costs. Mere formal

[11] Political democracy consists of popular sovereignty; universal suffrage; protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; majority rule and minority rights; fair representation and periodic elections; peaceful succession; direct voting (referenda) on critical issues such as rule of law, habeas corpus, bill of rights, and responsibilities of citizenship. See Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), Chap. IV.

democracy has not brought such benefits. Democratisation must emphasize improvements in institutions of justice and civil administration, rather than electioneering. Reforms in these institutions can realize equality, the core value of democracy.[12]

There has not been any automatic transition to democracy among the countries of Asia and the Pacific. Those societies, that have sought democratisation, have inevitably faced many complex problems, which, in turn, have led to numerous, sometimes bloody, conflicts. Comprehensive study of these experiences is very enriching, and necessary for an understanding of the complex processes at work, if meaningful institutions that will enhance the local possibilities for democratisation are to be developed.

However, global developments are threatening democratisation and limiting the initiatives of local actors. The dominant global ideology of recent times, though it uses the word 'democratisation' implies something very different domination. This is the enemy of democracy. Local partners in this global ideology threaten the rudiments of the rule of law and undermine democratic institutions of justice. As a result, even past achievements are now being eroded. More than ever, those persons with a commitment to the spread of genuine democracy must be critically aware of the dangers inherent in this trend.

How is the ideal to be achieved then?

There appears to be no one process of democratisation. What agreement there is on how best to achieve a stable democracy favors slow incremental development. Great Britain is, of course, the example of the gradual change over centuries from Absolute Monarchy to one of the World's most enduring democracies. However, such an incremental process seems neither necessary nor sufficient for democracy, nor for its stability. Great Britain is an example of a bottom-up process, where the non-governing elite or lower classes made incessant demands for an extension of rights and voting power that, by government concession after concession, chipped away at ruling authority. Not all such democratisation is so gradual, and, indeed, many appear revolutionary. The American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the Chinese Revolution of

[12] Omar G Encarnacion,. "Beyond Civil Society: Promoting Democracy after September 11", *Orbis*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2003), pp. 23-35.

1912 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 that preceded the Bolshevik Coup are examples, only the first of which established a long-lasting democracy.[13]

The process of democratisation may also be carried out by the governing elite themselves, as has often happened in South America, and indeed, one will find authoritarian leaders that claim their rule is required to create the conditions for democracy. However, this top-down process has more often ended in an unstable democracy, unless it has been responsive to revolutionary pressure and pro-democratic violence from those below.

Democracy may also be created and enforced by foreign powers. This is how the democracies of Japan and West Germany were created. After the Second World War, the United States occupied Japan. And with the help of democracy-minded Japanese intellectuals and politicians, reconstituted the Japanese Government, wrote the so-called MacArthur Constitution, and carried out social reforms, such as land reforms, that would strengthen democracy. This top-down, foreign-imposed democratisation produced a democracy stable enough to see in 1993 one of the longest lasting and most powerful governing parties among democracies thrown out of power by the Japanese people. Similarly, the new post-War democratic West German Government, erected with the help and under the watchful eyes of Great Britain, France, and the United States, has been stable and effective. Notably, it managed to accommodate both dramatic enlargement and economic strain as it absorbed the former East Germany into a single German State in 1990.[14]

Less clear is how democratisation occurs. It took an extended period of time to develop in the Industrialized Countries of Western Europe and North America. In the United States and Great Britain, it took well over a century before all the institutions and practices mentioned above were firmly in place. France, Germany, and Italy saw their democratic regimes collapsed and be replaced by fascist ones. It is undoubtedly true that democratisation can take place faster today. However, it certainly is not something that can be instituted overnight. Democratisation takes time because it requires the

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[13] Rummel, ibid., p. 21.

[14] Diane Ethier, "Is Democracy Promotion Effective? Comparing Conditionality and Incentives", *Democratization,* Vol.10, No. 1 (2003), pp. 99-102.

development of new institutions and widespread trust in them, which almost never happens quickly.

There were a handful of ambiguous cases in the 19th century in which democratizing countries fought other emerging democracies. But there have been no cases of an established democracy going to battle with another one since 1900. Obviously, that does not mean that democracies cannot go to war with each other. But there is something about democracy and the relationship between democracies that allows them to settle their disputes peacefully. ("Democratic Peace")[15]

Colonization, especially by the Great Britain, has provided an incubation period for democracy in a number of countries, which with independence became full-fledged and stable democracies. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are good examples. India is also an example, although its democracy has come under severe stain, and its survival is all the more remarkable, given regional, religious, linguistic, and ethnic centrifugal forces.

Rather than defining a process of democratisation, many have tried to define the empirical conditions necessary for the creation and success of democracy. In some of these works, there tends to be confusion between the conditions of democracy itself, such as a free press and political parties, and that of successful democratisation. If we understand the latter to mean those conditions that facilitate the creation of democracy and its stability, confusion can be avoided. In these terms, most put the importance of economic development to democratisation, with the concomitant high levels of literacy and education, and modern communications. It is believed that democracy requires an aware and relatively educated electorate, and that moreover, where poverty and inequality is as severe as it is in the least economically developed nations, democracy cannot take root.

Also there is the role of culture. Many democracy theorists now accept that democracy requires a political culture of negotiation, compromise, accommodation, and a willingness to lose. Where this culture is absent, democracy, even if created through

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[15] Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transition,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1990).

revolution by the people themselves, cannot succeed. However, as one considers such democracies as Japan, France, Germany, or India, their pre-democratic cultures were most conducive to authoritarian rule of some kind. It is only with the development of democracy that their political cultures gradually became democratic. Whether political democracy or democratic culture came first is clearly a chicken and egg question, but whether it comes before or after democracy is created, it is widely recognized as essential to democratic stability. Other conditions have been proposed, such as the importance of a vigorous, bourgeois middle class, or the necessity for a depoliticized military.

Finally, there is the question of why one should want democratisation? One argument is that people are all in nature equal, that it is a natural right that people govern themselves, that they be free in a democratic sense. Since each person is an individual with free will and is equal in this sense to any other individual, the only system of natural governance is the one in which all individuals collectively rule themselves.

Of all arguments for democracy, however, the most popular are the utilitarian ones. Democracy creates the greatest happiness of the greatest number; it promotes economic and personal development; public policy is most effective because of its incremental nature and the feedback of democratic elections; people are freer and minorities better protected; equality is promoted and enhanced; it enables gradual and incremental revolutionary change.

But especially, important here is the argument that democracy institutionalizes a means of nonviolent conflict resolution, the willingness to negotiate, compromise, and debate, rather than fight. Moreover, the ballot rather than the bullet is the very democratic ideal of voting to resolve differences and choose leaders. This is what it means by democracy.

**US Democratisation Agenda and the West Asia Region**

West Asia is the only place in the world where democracy is not an established principle in the State administration. As of late, even the debate of Democracy has become a subject of concern in the political realm of the region. Such debates and ongoing political liberalization are not the outcome of a political process, but the result of the economic crisis faced by the States in the region. As a result of this political

liberalization has become a matter of concern among the political elites as well as the public in the Arab world during the oil boom period. Since the 1990s, the region has undergone a long process of socio-economic and political transformation. Moreover, the newly emerged situation of wider interdependence in the global level as well as the integration of national economy with the international global market has strengthened political liberalization democratisation debates.[16] It is an attempt of the regimes in the region to reshape the domestic political and economic structures to protect their authority and power.

The popular understanding on globalization, that it has an inherent tendency to democratize societies through the creation of a free economic space, leads to the creation of free political space. But such arguments are not sustainable in the case of the Arab world. The Western powers realized that their political and economic interests could be protected by maintaining close ties with the authoritarian regimes in the region, than pressing for democratisation. Lack of mass movements and popular political participation and the distinct character of the State from the masses were the two major aspects of State formation in the region. In fact, the massive revenue from oil and the monopoly of State/ruling elites over petroleum industry have strengthened the regimes in the region.[17] It also helped the rulers to develop a rentier economy where State is totally independent in economic activities. Thus the traditional political system in the region has survived without any popular consent.[18] The economic crisis developed in the 1980s seriously challenged the legitimacy of the regimes. The introduction of economic reforms and the withdrawal of State from social sector questioned the economic legitimacy of the State whereas the rise of political Islam challenged the religious legitimacy of the regimes. In fact, it is the legitimacy crisis that pushed the democratisation debates forward in the political sphere of the Arab world. The changes in the US foreign policy goals, which were proposed in the context of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on 11th September 2001, were the harbinger of an advanced military action against its opponents.

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[16] Laura Guazzone, "A Map and Some Hypotheses for the Future of the Middle East", in Laura Guazzone *The Middle East in the Global Change: The Politics and Economics of Interdependence vs Fragmentation,* (London: McMillan, 1997), p-240.

[17] Roger Owen, *State Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East: Theoretical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.142-143.

[18] Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics* (London: Polity, 1999), p.169.

The revised the US National Security Doctrine has identified the path of action or the use of military power as the only road to global peace and security. In his speech at the West Point in June 2002, President Bush disclosed the long-term goals of the US foreign policy in the new context and the strategy to achieve them. The most important aspect of this was the positioning of the US as the protector and preserver of global peace, security, democracy and human freedom in international politics.

The creation of the new uni-polar world and the 'hegemonic stability' under the US has projected as the tool of democratisation in the post Cold War world. The Gulf War has reemphasized the undisputed leadership of the US in global/West Asia affairs. The US has for long played the role of the prime security guarantor and balance holder in the Gulf. Thus the US influence over the regimes in the West Asia has increased by the Gulf War.

The development of authoritarian States in the region has its historic roots in the Ottoman Tributary System. The new industrial class, who were supposed to be the champions of democracy didn't play any significant role in the democratisation in the Arab World. The strength of the Neo-liberal agenda, which considers market economy and participatory democracy as two pillars of liberal political order, has been questioned on the basis of the experience of the Arab World. Unlike the other developed States, the new middle class developed in the West Asia was highly dependent on the State/ruling elites. Historical structure, particularistic values and low-level social mobility have been identified as the major hurdles of democratisation in the Arab World. Those elements reinforced the patriarchal social relations and place effective control in the hands of those at the top of the social pyramid.[19]

The democratisation process sweeping across the world has very little impact in the West Asia in terms of the acceptance of the democratic principles as the philosophy of Statecraft. It remains an abhorrent idea to the mostly predominant authoritarian regimes in the region.[20] The elites in power still reject the idea of sharing of power, though there is increasing organization of parliamentary elections, establishment of Shura

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[19] Yakub Halabi, "Orientalism and US Democratisatioon Policy in the Middle East", *International Studies*, Vol. 36, NO. 4, (1999), p.388.

[20] Nassif Hitti, "Internationalization of State in the Middle East" in Yoshimazu Sakamoto (ed.) *Global Transformation: Challenges to the State System* (Tokyo: UN University Press, 1994), pp.845-106.

Councils - a few positive developments related to the new debates on democracy. But such developments were considered as tactical move by the State in order to address the economic crisis in the countries.[21]

The war against Iraq is projected by Western Powers, especially the United States, as the beginning of the end of authoritarianism in the Arab World, where the State structure is still predominantly authoritarian. The United States promised a future era of democracy in the region. The US administration continued its verbal rhetoric on political liberalization and democratisation in the West Asia during and after the war. The US Foreign Secretary, Colin Powell's presentation at the United Nations, his country's plan to democratize Iraq and rest of West Asia States should also be identified as part of the same rhetoric game.

The true democratic transition, according to Western standards, based on the consolidation of civil society and popular participation in political process has an inherent limitation in the context of West Asia. As evident, the Arab World is increasingly liberalized but not democratized in the real sense. There are certain formal institutions of democratic system like elections; Parties' legislature and Constitution which exist in many Arab countries. But it lacks the actual substance of democracy such as leadership accountability and transparency in political transactions.[22] In other words, the democratic process is much more advanced in procedural level than substantive level. The political culture of the region has been projected as the major stumbling block to the democratisation process. The projection for Arab society as a homogenous group has certain fundamental problems. The overemphasis on Arab-Islamic political culture as the determining factor of the politics of region has certain limitations. The society in the region is more complex and political system is more heterogeneous.

**Democratisation of Iraq: The New Agenda**

The United States' victory in Iraq in the wars of 1991 and 2003 by the use of force was a major turning point in the political liberalization process of the West Asia.

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[21] For details see Kentucky /webdekk Verry, A Citizen's Response to USA's National Security Strategy in <www.community bychoine.org>

[22] Korany, Bahgat and et al. *Political Liberalistion and Democratisartion in the Arab World: Comparative Experiences*, vol. 2 (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p.13.

The region is now more receptive and vulnerable to the US intervention. The major agenda of the US campaign against Iraq both in nineties and in the recent war was the 'democratic transition' in Iraq. The US has technically included democratisation of the region as one of the major goals of the post War US policy in the reconstruction of the region. In one of his speeches in the United Nations, the US Defense Secretary, Ronald Rumsfeld revealed the blue print of the political changes that the US intends to introduce in the region. Freedom in the Islamic World has been projected as the key intention of the United States.[23] As it seems, the war named 'operation Iraqi Freedom' has achieved the much awaited goal of leadership change in Iraq. But, at the ground level, Western Powers miserably failed to introduce a democratic regime in Iraq.

The ruling apparatus in the United States always played dubious role in the issue democratisation in the West Asia. In one of her articles, Madeline Albright, the former US Secretary of State, emphasized on the need of democratisation in the region. She says, "For years Arab populations have received a distorted message from Washington. The US stands for democracy, freedom and human rights everywhere, except in the West Asia and for everyone except the Arabs. Time has come to erase that perception and their reality that too often lines behind it. Democracy will not end terrorism in the Arab world but neither will it nourish it, as despotism does".[24] The words of Albright focused not only the regime in Iraq but also the entire Arab world including the authoritarian States in the region, which are close allies of the US. This plan in the US agenda has been projected as the major goal of attack against Iraq.

As far as Iraq is concerned, Albright observes, "Democratisation is the most intriguing part of the Administration game in Iraq. The creation of stable and united Iraq with a democratic regime would be a tremendous accomplishment with beneficial repercussions in other Arab Societies".[25] Here Albright emphasis on two points; first the unity, democratisation and stability of Iraq, second the spread of democracy to other Arab

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[23] Cited in G. Gopa Kumar, *Iraq War and The Future World Order* (New Delhi: Icon Publications pvt. Ltd, 2006), p. 86.

[24] Medeline Albright, "Bridges, Bombs and Bluster", *Foreign Affairs, Vol.* 5, No. 5, (September-October 2003), p.13.

[25] ibid., 14.

countries. By insisting on the US authority to supervise every aspects of Iraq's post war reconstruction, the US reemphasizes its plan for the future West Asia. The unity and stability of the country is the major concern of the United States through out their campaign against Iraq.

It is also argued that though the United States time and again emphasizes on the replacement of current authoritarian regimes in the Arab world through a democratic process, they are not interested in a genuine political change, if that is against their interest. For theme, in the current situation, stability helps than democratic transition.[26] It is clear that the economic and national security interests of the US that persuaded the State to raise an aggressive call for democratisation in 'Unfriendly States'. But they are totally silent about the democratisation of its friendly States. How far it can control the regimes in power in the West Asia is the major concern of the US as far as the democratic transition is concerned. The inability of the US to influence the internal political developments in the Arab States is the major drawback in its New West Asia Policy. The major opposition groups in those States, both Islamists and the liberals, are wary of the US influence and intension.[27]

The second major reason, which prevents the US from going with their democratisaton programmes in the region, is the possibility of the rise of fundamentalist Islamic elements in Iraqi politics. The Opposition also carries the seeds of authoritarianism and fundamentalism in the region, which is evident in the case of Algeria, Egypt and Iran. The democratisation experiences under powerful regimes in Algeria, Kuwait and Egypt failed to counter the growing Islamic influences in the politics and society of those States. Moreover, such groups effectively used the democratic platforms to consolidate their support-base. Saddam regime was successful in this aspect in effectively containing the fundamentalist elements. It is clear that none of the US-backed opposition groups in Iraq are capable to control the rise of Islamic fundamentalist elements in Iraq politics. The strong anti-American sentiments among Iraqis may be reflected in a democratic election and such a situation will definitely help the fundamentalist elements in consolidating their power. Such a development will create an

[26] Amy Hawthrone, "Can the US Promote Democracy in the Middle East", *Current History,* (January 2003), p. 21.
[27] ibid. 24.

extremely difficult situation which the US cannot handle easily. In Iraq, the majority Shia, that constitutes around 60% of the total population, and the most probable section which can assimilate power through a democratic process, boycotted every US initiatives to form an interim government.

Economic interest of the United States in the region is another major hurdle of the US to promote democratisation process in the region. The US policies in the West Asia have always been guided by their economic interests. Beyond the promotion of universal democratisation, the US interests in Iraq are more economic. Since the popular sentiments in West Asia are against the West, the pro-American undemocratic regimes could be the first challenged by a wave of democracy in the region. A challenge in the authority of the regimes of these States will definitely have negative impact on the economic interests of the United States.

In addition, some of the non-democratic States in the region have played the role of strategic outposts of the Western Powers. Any regime change in such States will threaten the interests of the Western countries keen on preserving the *status quo*. It is clear that an authoritarian regime in the present form can only protect the US interests in the region. Even mere leadership change in the GCC States, for instance, will create troubles to the US in the exploitative relationship with the States in the region. In this context, it may be an overestimation that the collapse of Saddam regime and the US domination in the region will lead to wider democratisation in the region.

The political liberlisation is essentially a strategy to protect and preserve power of the political elites who are extensively supported by the United States. No wonder, the existing power-structure in none of the Arab States has changed drastically despite the initiation of the so called political liberalisation since the early 1990s. On the contrary, the authoritarian regimes have successfully incorporated the opponents into the system and excluded or neutralised the undesirable elements from power.[28] The ongoing political liberalistion has neither weakened the ruling class nor strengthened the political opposition in the region. The ruling elites are still not ready to share, let alone transfer powers with a popularly elected representative government. The absence of any kind of

[28] Korany. et al, n. 11, p. 271.

real power shift reveals the limitation of possible democratic transition notwithstanding pressures from external forces in the region.

Americans have always had a strong interest in promoting democracy, especially as their country assumed an increasingly important role on the world stage after the beginning of the 20th Century. President Woodrow Wilson, who pledged to make the World safe for democracy, was clearly a man ahead of his time.[29] For generations, American leaders have emphasized on the promotion of democracy abroad as a key element of America's international role. Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that America was fighting World War-I 'to make the world safe for democracy'. In the 1920s and 1930s, the US politicians cast the various military interventions in the Caribbean and Central America as missions to establish democracy. In World War-II, America fought against fascist tyrannies in the name of 'Freedom and Democracy'. The US policy makers in the post-World War-II period emphasized democracy promotion as a fundamental policy towards the vanquished Japan and Germany. In the 1950s, the American leaders got involved in various international conflicts, apparently to stop the spread of Communism for the sake of protecting democracy, and framed the expanding Cold War as a struggle to preserve 'the Free World'. In the early 1960s, President J. F. Kennedy championed the idea of fostering democracy in the Developing World. Two decades later, President Ronald Reagan renewed the democracy theme by casting his ardent anti-Soviet policy as a 'Democracy Crusade'.

Since the mid-1980s, especially, democracy assistance became a significant element of the US foreign aid and foreign policy. By the end of the 1990s, the US Government was spending over $700 million a year on democracy aid in approximately 100 countries - primarily through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), but also through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Asia Foundation and the Eurasia Foundation.[30]

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[29] Thomas Carothers, "Democracy Promotion: A Key Focus in the World Order", at [www.usinfo.state.gov]

[30] See Peter Burnell and Peter Calvert, "Promoting Democracy Abroad", *Democartisation*, Vol. 12, No. 4 9 August 2005), pp. 433-438.

In the 1990s, President George H. W. Bush (Senior) and Bill Clinton asserted that democracy promotion was a key organizing principle of the US foreign policy after the Cold War. This is the long history of American policy of promoting democracy world wide. Looking back at the long chain of policy rhetoric, one also finds a less consistent policy reality. Security and economic interests have often outweighed or undermined the US interest in promoting democracy. Throughout the 20th Century, the US maintained friendly relations with several dictatorial regimes and intervened in other countries for reasons other than the promotion of democracy. Pro-democracy rhetoric is rarely reflected in reality. Nevertheless, democracy promotion was viewed as an important part of America's international tradition by successive US Administrations. The current effort is the most extensive, systematic and committed the United States has ever undertaken to foster democracy around the world.[31]

**Evolution of US Democratic Campaign**

The 20th century witnessed numerous attempts to bring democracy to countries that hitherto had been ruled by authoritarian regimes. The great majority of these efforts were promoted by the United States, and many of them were backed by the US military intervention and occupation.[32] The twentieth century, virtually, was the American century. Therefore, it was also the century of democratisation. Indeed, the century began with the United States getting engaged in three separate military occupations to bring democracy (albeit in a somewhat distant future) back to former colonies of the Spanish Empire: the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The Philippine occupation and successful repression of the insurgents there was especially bloody and costly. Woodrow Wilson sent the entire US military into Europe, declaring that the United States was going 'to make the world safe for democracy'. The US attempt at the beginning of the 21st century to use military conquest and occupation to bring democracy to Iraq and, by a vaguely defined process, perhaps to its neighbors as well, is thus the latest chapter in a

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[31] Thomas Carothers, *A Better Way to Support Middle East Reform*, Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), No. 33 (February 2005).

[32] James Kurth, "Ignoring History: US Democratization in the Muslim World", *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (Spring 2005), pp. 312-313.
Also see Richard H. N. Haas, "Toward Greater Democracy in the Muslim World", *the Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 137-148.

grand American narrative that has been underway for more than a hundred years. By now, many countries know what it means to be, in the words of Jean- Jacques Rousseau, 'forced to be free'. The United States has undertaken its epic drama of political democratisation through military occupation - ballots through bullets - in four great theaters over the decades: (1) the Caribbean Basin and Central America (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua) during the 1900s - 1930s and again during the 1960s - 1990s (the Dominican Republic and Haiti again and also Grenada and Panama); (2) Central Europe (West Germany, Austria, and Italy) during the 1940s - 1950s; (3) Northeast Asia (Japan and South Korea) during the 1940s - 1950s; and (4) Southeast Asia (particularly South Vietnam) during the 1960s - 1970s. Together, these add up to more than a dozen cases, where the United States has used military occupation in an effort to bring about political democratisation. They provide useful precedents and lessons for the current efforts in Iraq.[33]

The United States also made numerous attempts in the 1990s to bring democracy to the countries of the former Soviet Union and Communist Eastern Europe. With the exception of Bosnia and Kosovo, these democratisation projects did not involve military occupation with the US forces. However, these ex-Communist countries, almost two dozen in number, also provide plenty of evidence and lessons relevant to the prospects for democratisation in Iraq. In promoting the Iraq War and its accompanying regime change as the first phase in a grand project that would bring democracy to Iraq's neighbors and to the Muslim world more generally, the Bush Administration and neoconservative writers pointed to the US successes in West Germany and Japan as historical precedents. They were notably silent, however, about the large numbers of the US failures or disappointments elsewhere, particularly in the Caribbean Basin and Central America, to say nothing of Vietnam.[34] Nor did they mention the most recent, wide-ranging, and numerous democratisation efforts, in the former Soviet Bloc. If any honest discussion about the prospects for democratisation in the West Asia had included

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[33] See Omar G. Encarnacio´n,. "Beyond Civil Society: Promoting Democracy After September 11", *Orbis*, (Spring 2003).
See Thomas Carothers, "The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

[34] Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003),

an analysis of even a few of these cases, the discussion would have concluded that the prospects were bleak. But for whatever reason the Bush Administration and the neoconservative promoters of the war chose not to consider these cases. In Japanese cases, there were at least three crucial ways in which these circumstances differed from those of today's Iraq: A prior liberal democratic experience, a greater foreign threat and an ethnically homogenous population.

The US strategy for supporting democracy in the post-Cold War era initially rested on three interrelated instincts: first, using American democracy as a model or template; second, viewing democratisation as a process of 'Institutional Modeling' in which the democratizing country attempts to reproduce the forms of institutions of established democracies; and third, assuming that democratisation consists of a natural, orderly sequence of stages. With the exception of Israel, West Asian States have experienced decades of undemocratic practices with deeply entrenched personalities, whose interests are inimical to reform. With the end to the 'Democratic Exception' in the US policy goals for the region, the Bush Administration has committed Washington to be as supportive of accountable and representative governance in the West Asia as it is elsewhere.

It is proclaimed by the US regime that the end of dictatorship of Saddam Hussein would be the forerunner of wider democratisation process in the region. After 9-11, the Bush Administration concluded that decades of the US support for non - democratic leaders in the West Asia led not to stability but rather contributed to terrorism. While the US Government support for democracy promotion is not new, such sustained attention and allocation of resources marks a new emphasis on democratisation. The central focus of American foreign policy since 2001 has been the Muslim world. The 9/11 attacks detonated a series of the US military and political actions that by now have greatly transformed America's international role. The first of these was the US - led war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001. That war was widely approved at the time, both within the United States and around the world. Even today, with Afghanistan

still beset by political disorder, a significant insurgency, and major drug trafficking, the Afghan War is largely seen as a success.[35]

Another initiative was the promulgation in 2002 of the new National Security Strategy, often referred to as 'the Bush Doctrine'. With its emphasis on unilateral US military action and preemptive (really preventive) war, 'the Bush Doctrine' immediately became an object of criticism and controversy, both within the United States and around the world, and this continues to be the case today. The NSS also pointed toward a new and problematic political project for the United States, which was to bring democracy to the Muslim world.

President Bush ended the debate, when he placed democracy and human rights in the context of the war on terror in his January 2002 State of the Union Address. While media attention focused upon his formulation of an 'Axis of Evil', more consequential was his Statement of the importance of democratisation for the region. The December 2002 creation of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) furthered the US democratisation agenda. MEPI sought to effect change by funding pilot projects, such as an election assistance program in Jordan and a program to monitor Yemeni parliamentary elections. The willingness of governments to allow such funding in their countries signaled a tangible willingness to permit the advance of their democracies. This shifted focus from traditional government-to-government aid programs and, instead, emphasized smaller grants to smaller NGOs. The largest portion of the MEPI budget supported political programs to strengthen democratic processes, create or expand public space for critical democratic debates, strengthen the role of free media, and promote the rule of law to ensure government accountability. The State Department tailored these programs to account for both local needs and the art of the possible. MEPI also seeks to improve women's rights in order to increase women's economic independence and participation in governance. Critics say that MEPI programs are too small and scattered to fulfill the US policy goals for the region. Some elements of the bureaucracy within the State

[35] James Kurth, "America, Democratization, and the Muslim World", Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005), p.12. Also see Angel M. Rabasa, The Muslim World After 9/11, (2004), P- 469 at www.rand.org.

Department and US Agency for International Development (USAID) have been too slow to reflect the new emphasis on democracy and human rights promotion. [36]

The fund for democratisation is a joint venture between Western and regional governments on one hand and the private sector on the other. Its goal is to support 'indigenous reformers to draw upon their ideas and their ideals to nurture grassroots organizations that support the development of democracy' with grants to build civil society, strengthen the rule of law, and ensure greater opportunity for health and education. However, the fund's planned 2005 launch at the Forum for the Future Summit in Bahrain failed to produce a formal agreement due to Egyptian demands that only government-sanctioned NGOs be eligible. Such a condition, reflective of the strategy of many regional governments to create a class of government-operated NGOs, would derail promotion of independent civil society.

The fourth and most important US military action, begun in 2003, has been the war in Iraq. One of the official justifications for the war was that it would establish democracy in Iraq, thereby encouraging democracy in other Muslim countries. This war was widely criticized from the beginning, once again both within the United States and around the world. Now, with Iraq beset by a massive insurgency and an incipient civil war, this initiative is increasingly seen, even by past promoters of the war among Neoconservative writers and Republican members of Congress, as a major failure.



Now, at the beginning of the second Bush Administration, there is a growing consensus across the political spectrum that this war may be the President's most disastrous undertaking as well. The initial justification the administration gave for the war, the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) was of course discredited when no such weapons could be found. The second justification, the purported connection between Saddam's Regime and Al Qaeda, had been discredited by most American experts on terrorism even before the war began, and indeed no evidence of any such connection has ever emerged. By summer 2003, only one justification for the war remained to the Administration, and that was its claim that the United States could bring democracy to Iraq and that Iraq would then become a model, and perhaps even a

[36] James M. Scott and Carie A. Steele, "Outside Support to Democratisation", *Democatisation*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (August 2005), pp, 439-460.

base, for the spread of democracy to other countries in the West Asia, particularly Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Now, four years after the beginning of the Iraq War, the promise of democratisation remains the only justification for the war. It is not surprising that the Bush Administration keeps telling the American people about the value, indeed the necessity, of the US democratisation project for Iraq and for other Muslim lands as well. The administration is always pointing to some impending political event, such as this or that election, to demonstrate that democracy in Iraq is just around the corner. Of course, whenever the US military forces turn a corner in Iraq, they keep getting hit by the improvised explosive devices planted by the Iraqi insurgents.[37]

The strenuous effort by the United States and its coalition partners to carry off a democratic transformation of Iraq has provoked a fierce, global debate over the legitimacy and limits of Western democracy promotion. The broader US and European commitment to supporting a democratic transformation of the West Asia rooted in the hope that positive political change in that region can be an antidote to radical Islamist terrorism has stirred up vivid emotions in the Arab world and many other quarters. Democracy promotion has in a short time become fused with 'High Policy' on the world stage, with the result that it is receiving an unprecedented level of public attention, as well as substantial new resources. This is of course hardly the first time Washington has invoked the idea of a democratic mission as a response to a crisis of American security. But the seriousness of the September 11, 2001, attacks against America, the spread of Islamist terrorism to Europe, and the threat of future attacks give this new push o democracy promotion a special intensity.[38]

In the recent past, the Bush Administrations declarations on the West Asia shifted noticeably in tone and content, setting out a vision of democratic change there. According to this vision, the United States will first promote democracy in the Palestinian territories by linking the US support for a Palestinian State with the achievement of new, more democratic Palestinian leadership. Second, the United States will effect regime change in Iraq and help transform that country into a democracy. The establishment of two

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[37] James Kurth, "Ignoring History: US Democratization in the Muslim World", *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (Spring, 2005), pp. 312-313.

[38] See Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

successful models of Arab democracy will have a powerful demonstration effect, 'inspiring reforms throughout the Muslim World', as Bush had declared at the United Nations. As the policies toward Iraq and Palestine unfold, the Administration may also step up pressure on recalcitrant autocratic allies and give greater support to those Arab States undertaking at least some political reforms, such as some of the smaller Gulf States.

**Critique**

Iraq has provoked the bitterest debate about American foreign policy since Vietnam. One rationale for the war proposed by Bush Administration was that it would lead to democracy - first in Iraq and then elsewhere in the West Asia. Many people thought that this was never a serious intention, but it is probably true that some members of the Administration believed that the war would make democratisation possible in Iraq. Four years later, most observers would agree that this effort has failed, despite the holding of several elections.[39] It is not yet clear how sharply Bush will shift the US West Asia Policy toward promoting democracy. Certainly it is time to change the long-standing practice of reflexively relying on and actually bolstering autocracy in the Arab world. But the expansive vision of a sudden, US-led democratisation of the West Asia rests on questionable assumptions. To start with, the appealing idea that by toppling Saddam Hussein the United States can transform Iraq into a democratic model for the region is dangerously misleading. The United States could certainly oust the Iraqi leader and installed a less repressive and more pro-Western regime. This would not be the same, however, as creating democracy in Iraq.

Furthermore, the notion that regime change in Iraq, combined with democratic progress in the Palestinian territories, would produce domino democratisation around the region is far-fetched. The US invasion of Iraq has triggered a surge in the already prevalent anti-Americanism in the West Asia, strengthening the hand of hard-line Islamist groups and provoking many Arab Governments to tighten their grip, rather than experiment more boldly with political liberalisation. Throughout the region, the

[39] See "Exporting Democracy: What Have We Learned from Iraq?", *Dissent,(* Spring, 2007).

underlying economic, political, and social conditions are unfavourable for a wave of democratic breakthroughs. This does not mean the Arab world will never democratise. But it does mean that democracy will be decades in the making and entail a great deal of uncertainty, reversal, and turmoil. But as experience in other parts of the world has repeatedly demonstrated, the future if the region will be determined primarily by its own inhabitants.

Excessive optimism about the US ability to remake the West Asia, a region far from ripe for a wave of democratisation, is therefore a recipe for trouble-especially given the Administration's proven disinclination to commit itself deeply to the nation building that inevitable follows serious political disruption. Today, many observers believe that the grand visions and dramatic departures from past policy expressed by the 'Bush Doctrine' have been largely damaged and discredited by the Iraq War. Some see the recent election results in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, and the West Bank and Gaza as a setback for the US Administration's agenda of promoting democracy. They argue that holding elections too soon can undercut democratisation, empower illiberal forces, and promote instability.

The US policymakers are not pleased with the rise of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, but supporter says President Bush's willingness to recognize the election results should silence skeptics of the US commitment to democratic reform. After the Hamas victory, regional critics would have difficulty maintaining the theory that democracy promotion is meant to install puppet regimes. That said, as with the case of Hamas, accepting the result of a democratic election does not signal the US endorsement of the resulting regime. Winning elections does not alone create democrats. Even with long established democracies, the US relations ebb and flow depending on who is elected. Elections have occurred in Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman in late 2006 and 2007 regardless of the US actions.

Obviously, the United States, like all other countries, seeks to make a foreign policy that is in accord with its interests. What is important is that the US leaders have usually defined American interests and tried to implement policies in the West Asia in a way most closely in accord with winning support from the widest possible group of Arabs and Muslims. It did not try to overthrow Saddam Hussein in 1991 partly because it

accepted the argument that to do so would make the United States unpopular in the Arab world. Even when Kurdish and Shi'ite Iraqis rose up against the regime, the United States did not help them bring down its most hated enemy in the West Asia.[40]

The US democratisation project in Iraq and in the Muslim world fits into a long chain of the US democratisation efforts that reaches back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Some of these efforts were successful, and some were not. Together they form a pattern that can tell us something about the prospects for the democratisation efforts now underway in Iraq.

**Ideological Underpinning**

Who are the people, who made such arguments and drove the United States into the Iraq war? The Bush Administration's democratisation policy is the product of a grand coalition of two of contemporary America's major ideological groupings: the Neoliberals and the Neoconservatives. The central interest of the neo-liberals is America's role in the global economy and society. They want the United States, with its unparalleled power and influence, to establish a global order characterized by liberal democracies, free markets, open societies, and the 'Democratic Peace'. The neoliberals are self-consciously and self-confidently carrying on the Wilsonian tradition of 'making the world safe for democracy' that has been so persistent in the US foreign policy. neoliberals may not seem to be prominent in the Bush Administration, as they clearly were in the Clinton Administration (e.g., Madeleine Albright and Richard Holbrooke), but their basic ideas seem to be expressed by President Bush himself. Conversely, the Neoconservatives' central interest is America's role in global security. They want the United States, with its unparalleled power and influence, to eliminate threats to the security of America and its allies, including Israel, which is in one of the least secure environments on the globe. In their own way, the Neoconservatives are also carrying on the Wilsonian tradition of making the world safe for democracy, with the emphasis on 'safe'. The Neoconservatives are especially prominent among the top civilian officials (definitely not the top military

[40] Barry Rubin, "The Truth about US Middle East Policy", *Middle East Review of International Affairs,* Vol. 5, NO.4, (December 2001) p.21.

officers, who are more likely to be traditional conservatives) in the Bush Administration's Defense Department.

The neo-liberals and neoconservatives each had a special interest in the West Asia in general and in Iraq in particular. The neo-liberals saw the West Asia lying between democratic Europe and democratizing East Asia, as the next great arena for democratisation. (They also knew that stable oil exports from the Persian Gulf were crucial for the smooth functioning of the global economy). The neoconservatives saw 'Rogue States' in the West Asia if they became armed with WMD and allied with Islamic terrorists, as the greatest threat to the US (and Israeli) security. Both, therefore, saw the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, which ruled an Iraq that might acquire WMD, which was rich in oil reserves, whose relatively well-educated population seemed ready for democratisation to be a fulfillment of their own central interests in the region. Historically, pro-Israeli groups and groups that emphasize the importance of oil exports have often opposed each other in regard to the US policies toward the region. The fact that these two groups came together in the Bush Administration around a policy of regime change in Iraq gave the project a new and extraordinary energy, a sort of fusion power. And so the war came, and a splendid little war it was at first. But then came the Occupation.

Upon invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam's regime, the Bush Administration used its rhetoric of democratisation to justify its immediate abolition of the Iraqi Army and other security forces that had functioned under Democratisation the regime. The abolition of these forces and the anarchy that resulted were important contributors to the ensuing insurgency. However, just because the United States destroyed the old authority did not mean that it really sought to establish a new democracy, as that term is normally defined. A real democracy in Iraq would have contradicted the neoliberals' and the Neoconservatives' primary interests. In order to understand what a real democracy would have meant in Iraq, one must consider each of its three major ethnic communities. The Shiite Majority by the normal definition of democracy, one would have expected the Bush Administration to propose an electoral system based upon one person/ one vote and majority rule. However, the Shiites comprise about 65 of the Iraqi population, and in such a system they could easily achieve a great preponderance of power and control of the

Iraqi State. The Shiites took very seriously their version of Islam and Islamic law; this made them repugnant to the neoliberals, with their fixation on such secular values as the free market, the open society, and Western conceptions of human rights.

The Shiites of Iraq also had many close connections with the Shiites of Iran and its Islamist regime, which made them repugnant to the neoconservatives, with their central interests in the security of Israel and the stability of the US allies in the Persian Gulf. The Bush Administration was therefore determined that, whatever kind of democracy might be established in Iraq, it could not issue in Shiite rule, or at least rule by Islamist Shiites.

Consequently, the Administration would not allow a system of majority rule. Rather, the system would have to be a truncated version of democracy, be it liberal, federal, elite, or some combination thereof. This explains why, in its first several months, the US occupation (the Coalition Provisional Authority, headed by L. Paul Bremer III), persistently tried to marginalize Shiite religious leaders (e.g., the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani) and religious parties (e.g., the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq). It also explains why the Administration persistently tried to inflate political groupings of secularized Shiites (e.g., Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress) that had no following at all among the vast Shiite population. This strategy had manifestly failed by December 2003. In June 2004, the CPA was succeeded by the collaborating Interim Iraqi Government, headed by Ayad Allawi, a secularized Shiite, which also had little following among the Iraqi population. Allawi understood that he would have to work with Sistani and the Islamic Shiites, and the new US authorities in Iraq now understood this, as well. However, Sistani and the Shiite Islamist parties, which were much better organized than the Shiite secular groups, wanted an Iraqi Constitution that would institute majority rule, and they wanted national elections to be held as soon as possible. These demands put them on a collision course with the Sunnis and the Kurds. These two minorities, each in their own way, naturally opposed Shiite rule and therefore majority rule and early elections.

**Summary**

To be sure, the US commitment to democracy is not total. The country, like all countries, still has security and economic interests that sometimes conflict with the goal of supporting democracy.[41] Critics say ample historical experience with a wide variety of democratisation projects predicts that the US effort to bring democracy to Iraq will fail. They say that it may fail because the Iraqi people do not have the cultural values, social conditions, or historical experience with which to construct a democracy; because the Iraqi people associate democracy with the US occupation and all the attendant disruptions and humiliations; or because there is no 'Iraqi people' after all. With all these paths leading straight to failure, it will take a miracle for the US democratisation project in Iraq to succeed. The failure of democratisation in Iraq will discredit the US efforts at democratisation elsewhere, since other countries will dismiss any US proclamation or promotion of democratisation as just another preposterous, feckless, and tiresome American conceit. The damage will be greatest in the West Asia and in the broader Muslim world, where the discrediting of democratisation may leave Islamism as the only valid ideology and Islamisation as the only vital political and social project.

The Bush Administration has put forward three justifications for the war on Iraq. The most pervasive and persistent of these justifications, however, was the Administration's democratisation project, its insistence upon getting inside Iraq, to remake the country from the ground up. In 1917, Woodrow Wilson, the original author of the democratisation project, described six US senators, who were trying to prevent America's entry into World War-I 'to make the world safe for democracy' as 'a little group of willful men'. By 1920, with the debacle of the Versailles Treaty and the shambles of democratisation in war-torn and revolutionary Europe, many Americans had come to think of Wilson as rather willful, too. Almost ninety years later, George W. Bush, the most recent in a long parade of Wilsonian Presidents, along with a little group of willful men in his administration, propelled America's entry into the Iraq War 'to

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[41] Thomas Carothers, "Democracy Promotion: a Key Focus in a New World Order" at <www.webhttp://usinfo.state.gov>
Also see Charles Taylor, "The Dynamics of Democratic Exclusion", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 4, (1998), p.144.

make the Muslim World safe for democracy'. By ignoring history or trying to sidestep it, there is doubt, whether it would make the Muslim world safe democracy.

Many hurdles remain to democratisation. Critics of the US policy complain about interference and conspiratorial motives. Some US opponents of democratisation say that the US pressure actually backfires. Despite the setbacks and adjustments, there is cause for optimism about the ability of democracy to take root in the West Asia. There were many changes underway in the region even before 9-11. The region is changing fast and often for the better. Women now have the right to vote in Kuwait. Observers can monitor multiparty elections in Egypt. Popular protests in Lebanon led to the end of Syrian occupation. The first elected Parliament in more than three decades took office in Afghanistan.

One of the fundamental challenges that democracy promotion faces as an organized endeavor is credibility on the part of people both in countries that are the recipients or targets of such activity and in countries that sponsor such work. Most people on the receiving end have an instinctive and wholly understandable suspicion about anyone, who comes to their country claiming to be sincerely dedicated to helping build democracy there. This is glaringly evident in the West Asia today but has been and often still is the case in many other parts of the world. Convincing people that democracy promotion is a credible enterprise is a slow, incremental task. It requires consistency and seriousness of purpose, skill, and capability in execution, and sobriety in evaluation and credit taking.

Assessing the place of democratisation agenda by the US is a complex undertaking. The story stretches back across most of the previous century and has long been subject to sharply confliction interpretation ranging from glowing portrayals of America as a uniquely noble, pro-democratic force in the world to dark portraits of a sinister superpower, habitually backing tyrannies and other forces of oppression. Be it Clinton Administration or Bush Administration they ended up making democracy promotion the rhetorical framework of their foreign policy. Yet, at the same time, these Administrations pursued what might be described as a semi realist policy in practice: Where supporting democracy in another country or region was consistent with the US economic and security interests, the United States stood up for democracy; but where

policy makers saw strong economic or security reasons for staying on friendly terms with authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, Washington almost always downplayed its democracy concerns. The gap between lofty, pro-democratic rhetoric and much more instrumental realities has been wide all along.

Although the war on terrorism has greatly raised the profile of democracy as a policy matter, it has hardly clarified the issue. The United States faces two contradictory imperatives: on the one hand, the fight against Al Qaeda tempts Washington to put aside its democratic scruples and seek closer ties with autocracies throughout the West Asia and the rest of Asia. On the other hand, the US officials and policy experts have increasingly come to believe that it is precisely the lack of democracy in many of these countries that helps breed Islamic extremism. Resolving this tension will be no easy task. Aggressive democracy promotion in the Arab world is a new article of faith among Neoconservatives inside and outside the Administration. However, it combines both the strengths and the dangers typical of neo-Reaganite policy as applied to any region. Increasingly, democracy promoters acknowledge the need to take account of the underlying interests and power relations in which institutions are embedded. Democratic change must be understood not as the reproduction of institutional endpoints, but as the achievement of a set of political processes that help engender a democratic culture.

It is still sobering to note the number of countries, where democracy is fading, failing or still nonexistent, no dramatic or quick results should be expected from democracy promotion efforts, especially in the case of those countries, where the mix of economic, social and political forces remains hostile to the development of democracy. Democracy aid, as well as the complementary tools of diplomatic and economic carrots and sticks, can do little to change the fundamental social, economic and political structures and conditions that shape political life in other countries.

CHAPTER - I

# REGIME CHANGE IN IRAQ

**Introduction**

Iraq has no previous experience with a democratic form of government, although parliamentary elections were held during the period of British rule under a League of Nations mandate (from 1920 until Iraq's independence in 1932), and the Monarchy of the Sunni Muslim Hashemite dynasty (1921-1958).[1] Iraq had been a Province of the Ottoman Empire until British Forces defeated the Ottomans in World War I and took control of what is now called Iraq in 1918. Britain had tried to take Iraq from the Ottomans earlier during World War I but was defeated at Al Kut in 1916. Britain's presence in Iraq, which relied on Sunni Muslim Iraqis, ran into repeated resistance, facing a major Shiites-led revolt in 1920 and a major anti-British uprising in 1941, during World War II. Iraq's first Hashemite king was Faysal bin Hussein, son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, who, advised by British officer T.E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), led the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Faysal ruled Iraq as King Faysal I and was succeeded by his son, Ghazi, who was killed in a car accident in 1939. Ghazi was succeeded by his son, Faysal II, who was only four years old. A major figure under the British mandate and the monarchy was Nuri As-Said, a pro-British, pro-Hashemite Sunni Muslim, who served as Prime Minister 14 times during 1930 - 1958.[2] Faysal II ruled until the military coup of Abd al-Karim al-Qasim on July 14, 1958. Qasim was ousted in February 1963 by a Ba'ath Party-Military Alliance.[3] Since that same year, the Ba'ath Party has ruled in Syria, although there was rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath regimes during Saddam's rule. The Ba'ath Party was founded in the 1940s by Lebanese Christian philosopher Michel Aflaq as a socialist, pan-Arab movement, the aim of which was to reduce religious and sectarian schisms among Arabs.

One of the Ba'ath Party's allies in the February 1963 coup was Abd al-Salam al-Arif. In November 1963, Arif purged the Ba'ath, including Ba'athist Prime Minister (and a military officer) Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, and instituted direct military rule.[4] Arif was killed

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[1] See Michael Eisenstadt and Eric Mathewson (eds.), *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience*, (Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003), Members of the Hashemite family rule neighboring Jordan.

[2] Discussed in Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 82-85.

[3] Eric Davis, "History Matters: Past as Prologue in Building Democracy in Iraq", *Orbis*, (Spring, 2005), p. 231.

[4] K. P. Fabian, *The Commonsense On the War On Iraq*, (New Delhi: Somaiya Publications pvt ltd ; 2004),.

in a helicopter crash in 1966 and was replaced by his elder brother, Abd al-Rahim al-Arif, who ruled until the Ba'ath Party coup of July 1968. Following the Ba'ath seizure, Bakr returned to Government as President of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, a civilian, became the second most powerful leader as Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council. In that position, Saddam developed overlapping security services to monitor loyalty among the population and within Iraq's institutions, including the Military. On July 17, 1979, the aging al-Bakr resigned at Saddam's urging, and Saddam became President of Iraq. Under Saddam Hussein, secular Shiites held high party positions, but Sunnis, mostly from Saddam's home town of Tikrit, dominated the highest party and security positions. Saddam's regime became repressive of Iraq's Shiites in the year after the February 1979 Islamic revolution in neighboring Iran because Iran's revolution had emboldened Iraqi Shiite Islamist movements to try to establish an Iranian-style Islamic Republic of Iraq.

**Major Anti-Saddam Factions**

The factions that dominate post-Saddam Iraq had been active against Saddam Hussein for decades. Prior to the launching on January 16, 1991, of 'Operation Desert Storm' to reverse Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush called on the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam.[5] That Administration decided not to militarily overthrow Saddam Hussein in the course of the 1991 war because the United Nations had approved only the liberation of Kuwait. Because the Arab States in the Coalition opposed an advance to Baghdad, since it feared becoming bogged down in a high-casualty occupation.[6] Within days of the war's end (February 28, 1991), Shiite Muslims in Southern Iraq and Kurdish factions in Northern Iraq, emboldened by the regime's defeat and the hope of the US support, launched significant rebellions. The Shiite revolt nearly reached Baghdad, but the mostly Sunni Muslim Republican Guard forces had survived the war largely intact and they suppressed the rebels. Many Iraqi Shiites blamed the United States for standing aside during Saddam's suppression of the uprisings. Iraq's Kurds, benefiting from a US-led 'No Fly Zone' set up in April 1991, drove Iraqi troops out of much of Northern Iraq and remained autonomous thereafter.

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[5] See Rodney p. Carlisle (2005), *Iraq War* ,( USA: Facts on file), pp.32-33.
[6] George H. Bush, W. and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

About two months after the failure of these uprisings, President George H.W. Bush reportedly sent to Congress an intelligence finding that the United States would try to promote a military coup against Saddam Hussein. The Administration apparently believed that a coup by elements within the regime could produce a favorable government without fragmenting Iraq. After a reported July 1992 coup failed, there was a US decision to shift to supporting the Kurdish, Shiite, and other oppositionists that were coalescing into a broad movement.[7] The following section discusses these organizations and personalities, almost all of which are major features of post-Saddam politics. Several of these groupings have militias that are increasingly conducting acts of sectarian-based violence.

**Major Anti-Saddam Factions/Leaders**

| | |
|---|---|
| Iraqi National Congress (INC)/ Ahmad Chalabi | Main recipient of the US aid to anti-Saddam opposition during 1990s. Chalabi was touted by some in the Bush Administration prior to 2003 war but has not proven his popularity in Iraq and fell afoul of the US officials in 2003-2004. Won no seats in December 15, 2005 election. |
| Iraq National Accord (INA)/Iyad al-Allawi | Consisted of ex-Ba'athists and ex-military in efforts to topple Saddam in 1990s. Allawi was Interim Prime Minister (June 2004-April 2005). Won 40 seats in January 2005 election but only 25 in December. |
| Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Masud Barzani/Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani | Two main Kurdish factions. Talabani became President of Iraq after January 2005; Barzani has tried to secure his clan's base in the Kurdish North. Control about 70,000 *peshmerga* militia. Both won 75 seats in January election but only 53 in December. |
| Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani | Undisputed leading Shiite theologian in Iraq. No formal position in government but has used his broad Shiite popularity to become instrumental in major questions facing it and in the US decisions on Iraq. |

[7] Congress more than doubled the budget for covert support to the opposition groups to about $40 million for FY1993, from previous reported levels of about $15 million to $20 million. Sciolino, Elaine. "Greater U.S. Effort Backed To Oust Iraqi." *New York Times*, June 2, 1992.

| | |
|---|---|
| Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)/Abd al-Aziz Al Hakim | Largest and best-organized Shiite Islamist party. The most pro-Iranian Shiite party, it was established in 1982 by Tehran to centralize Shiite Islamist movements in Iraq. First leader, Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim, killed by bomb in Najaf in August 2003. Controls 'Badr Brigades' militia. As part of United Iraqi Alliance (UIA- 128 total seats in December election), it has about 30 of its members in parliament. Supports formation of large Shiite 'region' composed of nine Southern Provinces. |
| Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party/Ibrahim al-Jafari | Oldest organized Shiite Islamist party (founded 1957), active against Saddam Hussein in early 1980s. Founder, Mohammad Baqr al-Sadr, was ally of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and was hung by Saddam regime in 1980. During 1980s, Da'wa activists committed terrorist acts in Kuwait to try to shake its support for Iraq in Iran-Iraq war. Part of UIA, controls about 28 seats in parliament. |
| Moqtada Al-Sadr | Young (about 31) relative of Mohammad Baqr Al Sadr, was in Iraq during Saddam's reign. Inherited father's political base in "Sadr City", a large (2 million population) Shiite district of Baghdad. Mercurial, has both challenged and worked with the US personnel in Iraq. Formed 'Mahdi Army' militia in 2003. Now part of UIA controls 32 seats in incoming Parliament. Also supported by |

Source: Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: U.S. Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance" *CRS (Congressional Research Service) Report for Congress* (February 2006). at <www.opencrs.com>

**Challenges of Political Reconstruction**

The United States' strategy for regime change in Iraq was arguably one of the most ambitious programmes that it had undertaken in recent years. Iraq, having been identified as a member of the 'Axis of Evil', was a major focus behind the formulation of the US National Security Strategy (NSS) 2002 and also the 'Bush Doctrine' of 'Preventive War'. Under such a strategy and doctrine, not only was Iraq going to undergo democratic transformation but one which would also mark the first phase of a grand design for political reconstruction of West Asia. It was believed by the Bush advisers that Saddam Hussein's fall would herald a new era for Iraq, one in which its long-suffering people would live in harmony and peacefully, while the nurturing of democracy would become an example for the rest of the region. Moreover, Iraq's example as a 'Beacon of

Democracy' would light up the darkest despotic corners of West Asia[8] As a part of 'Operation Iraqi Freedom', the US and the Coalition Forces have invaded Iraq and occupied the country for over four years now. While the removal of Saddam regime from power proved to be a relatively easy task, it has been extremely difficult for the occupying forces to bring normalcy and democracy to the country.

Several commentators have observed that the March 2003 invasion of Iraq marked the beginning of a new and dangerous phase of pre-emptive interventionism by the United States and its allies.[9] The brand of external interventionism adopted by the US and its Allies post 9/11 is based on a belief that powerful Western democracies can create liberal democratic societies in unstable or failing post-colonial and post-communist states through direct military and economic intervention in their internal affairs. The Bush Administration and its allies have self-consciously cast the Iraq war as a test-case for the merits of its external interventionism paradigm and are, subsequently, openly challenging the 'Sovereignty First' approach to international relations that was, at least in theory, the cornerstone of interstate relations for most of the twentieth century.[10]

As the debate over the legality and justifications of the US-led invasion of Iraq continues, supporters of the US interventionism believe there is little point in arguing over what has already occurred, in particular whether the invasion of Iraq was right or wrong. One should instead look ahead and judge the US intervention in Iraq on the basis of its ability to transform Iraq into a peaceful and prosperous entity, a development that will, in turn, inspire other Arab-Muslim societies in the region to democratise themselves and build free market economies. The ethos of external interventionism as promoted and practiced by the Bush Administration is based on a particular ideological view of the

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[8] Gareth Stansfield, "The Transition to Democracy in Iraq", in Alex Danchev and J.M. Macmillan, (eds.), *The Iraq War and Democratic Politics,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p.134.

[9] See Aylmer Sean "Bush Goes Back On the Warpath", *Australian Financial Review*, (10 March, 2005) Also discussed in Timothy Lynch, "America's Foes Should Fear Its Irrationality", *Daily Telegraph*, 24 July 2004.
See also Jeffrey Record, "The Bush Doctrine and the War in Iraq", *Parameters*, Vol.33, No. 1 (Spring. 2003)

[10], Michael Heazle and Iyanatul Islam (eds.), *Beyond the Iraq War: the Promises, Pitfalls and Perils of External Interventionism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006), p.1.

post-Cold War era, there is only 'a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise'.[11]

The essential justification for the 'New Interventionism' is its important role as a tool for creating a liberal democratic world, which will, according to the Neo-cons world-view, deliver peace, prosperity, and security for all. The new interventionist doctrine, as test driven in Iraq, clearly differs on this point from notions of humanitarian intervention, which aim only to either stop, or possibly prevent, large-scale socio-economic human rights abuses, such as genocide, or provide assistance in case of natural calamities such as famine.[12]

The United States has been attempting to change Iraq's regime since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, although achieving this goal was not declared policy until 1998. The goal of regime change in Iraq had been declared the US policy since November 1998. Although earlier, the US efforts to oust Saddam had been pursued, with varying degrees of intensity, since the end of the Gulf war in 1991. The United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) was formed to oversee the dismantling of Iraq's potential for the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems. UNSCOM withdrew in December 1998 on the eve of Operation Desert Fox, an intense four-day bombing campaign by the US and Great Britain, and Iraq didnot permit UNSCOM's return. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continued its inspection of Iraqi nuclear-related facilities, as it has with other signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The Iraqi regime amassed significant conventional military capacity and made serious efforts toward WMD capability before August 1990. The heavy bombing during the Gulf War in 1991 and the December 1998 attacks destroyed much of Iraq's conventional capacity, and UNSCOM and the IAEA have thoroughly disempowered Iraq's WMD capacity. On the conventional side, the military remains a power within Iraq but is strategically weakened relative to surrounding countries. On the WMD side, the last UNSCOM assessments in 1998 concluded that Iraq was free of nuclear weapons and

[11] See National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2002.

[12] Prevention, however, is a far more problematic and controversial basis for intervention, as the Iraq intervention has demonstrated.

missiles, almost free of chemical weapons, and questionable regarding biological weapons. Most weapons experts agree that the Iraqi regime probably desires to rebuild its WMD capacity, if that were possible (in part, because of Israel's nuclear arsenal), but that it does not have access to the materials to do so.

These efforts primarily involved the US backing for Opposition groups inside and outside Iraq, some of which received the US political and financial support and military training. Several of the groups backed by the United States are now contending for power in post-Saddam Iraq. Past efforts to change the regime floundered because of limited US commitment, disorganisation of the Iraqi Opposition, and the efficiency and ruthlessness of Iraq's several overlapping intelligence and security forces. Previous US Administration ruled out major US military action to change Iraq's regime, believing such action would be costly, risky, and not necessarily justified by the level of Iraq's lack of compliance on WMD disarmament. This combination of circumstances led President Bill Clinton to insist that another confrontation with the Saddam Hussein regime was inevitable and that the objective ought to be his removal from power.[13] Some Administration officials reportedly had hoped that major military and governmental defections from the Hussein regime would serve as the core of a successor government. However, the Bush Administration is expecting established Opposition groups and emerging local leaders to form the core of a new regime. Some of the pre-existing disputes and schisms among the various anti-Saddam Hussein groups are already beginning to break out into a post-war power struggle, and there is a debate among Iraqi groups over how great a role the United States should play in the process of choosing a successor Government.

**Clinton Administration Policy/Iraq Liberation Act**

From the time of Iraq's defeat of the INC (Iraqi National Congress) and INA (Iraq National Accord) in Northern Iraq in August 1996 until 1998, the Clinton Administration had little contact with the Opposition groups, believing them to be too weak to topple Saddam. During 1997-1998, Iraq's obstructions of United Nations Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) inspections led to growing Congressional calls to overthrow Saddam.

[13] David Sanger, "Tongue Lashing and Backlashes", *New York Times,* (November 22, 1998).

In November 1998, amid this crisis with Iraq over UN Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) inspections, the Clinton Administration stated that the United States would seek to go beyond containment to promoting a change of regime. A Congressional push for regime change began with an FY 1998 supplemental appropriations (P.L. 105-174) and continued subsequently. The sentiment was encapsulated in the 'Iraq Liberation Act' (ILA, P.L. 105-338, October 31, 1998).[14]

The ILA was viewed as an expression of Congressional support for the concept, advocated by Chalabi and some US experts, of promoting an Iraqi insurgency using the US air-power. In the debate over the decision to go to war, the Bush Administration officials have cited the ILA as evidence of a bi-partisan consensus that Saddam Hussein needed to be removed. President Clinton signed the legislation, despite doubts about Opposition capabilities. The ILA stated that it should be the policy of the United States to 'support efforts' to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein. In mid-November 1998, President Clinton publicly articulated that regime change was a component of the US policy toward Iraq. Section 8 states that the act should not be construed as authorizing the use of the US military force to achieve regime change. The ILA gave the President authority to provide up to $97 million worth of defense articles and services, as well as $2 million in broadcasting funds, to Opposition groups designated by the Administration. The ILA did not specifically provide for its termination after Saddam Hussein is removed from power. Section 7 of the ILA provides for continuing post-Saddam 'transition assistance' to Iraqi parties and movements with 'democratic goals'.

The signing of the ILA coincided with new crises over Iraq's obstructions of UN weapons inspections. On December 15, 1998, UN inspectors were withdrawn, and a three-day US and British bombing campaign against suspected Iraqi WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) facilities followed ('Operation Desert Fox', December 16-19, 1998). On February 5, 1999, President Clinton issued a determination (P.D. 99-13) making the following seven Opposition groups eligible to receive US military assistance: INC; INA;

[14] Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, *Public Law*, 105-338- Oct.31, 1998 at <www.news.findlaw.com>

SCIRI; KDP; PUK; the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK);[15] and the Movement for Constitutional Monarchy (MCM),[16] a relatively small party advocating the return of Iraq's Monarchy. However, the Clinton Administration decided that the Opposition was not sufficiently capable to merit weapons or combat training.

**Bush Administration Policy**

Even though several Bush Administration officials had been strong advocates of a regime change policy, many of the long-standing questions about the difficulty of that strategy remained.[17] The Bush Administration initially did not alter its predecessor's decision not to provide lethal aid. Some accounts say that the Administration was planning, prior to September 11, to confront Iraq militarily, but President Bush has denied this. During its first year, Administration policy focused on strengthening containment of Iraq, which the Administration said was rapidly eroding. The cornerstone of the policy was to achieve the UN Security Council adoption of a 'smart sanctions' plan relaxing the UN-imposed restrictions on exports to Iraq of purely civilian equipment[18] in exchange for improved international enforcement of the UN ban on exports to Iraq of militarily-useful goods. The major features of the plan were adopted by the UN Security Council Resolution 1409 (May 14, 2002).

As inspectors worked in Iraq under the new mandates provided in Resolution 1441, the Bush Administration demanded complete disarmament and full cooperation by Iraq if Iraq wanted to avert military action. The Administration had been downplaying the goal of regime change after President Bush's September 12, 2002 speech before the

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[15] Because of its role in the eventual formation of the radical Ansar al-Islam group, the IMIK did not receive the US funds after 2001, although it was not formally taken off the ILA eligibility list.

[16] In concert with a May 1999 INC visit to Washington D.C, the Clinton Administration announced a draw down of $5 million worth of training and 'non-lethal' defence articles under the ILA. During 1999-2000, about 150 oppositionists underwent civil administration training at Hurlburt air base in Florida, including Defense Department-run civil affairs training to administer a post-Saddam Government. The Hurlburt trainees were not brought into 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' or into the Free Iraqi Forces that deployed to Iraq toward the end of the major combat phase of the war.

[17] One account of Bush Administration internal debates on the strategy is found in Hersh, Seymour "The Debate Within", *The New Yorker*, 11 March., 2002.

[18] For more information on this program, see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil For Food Program, Illicit Trade, and Investigations*, by Kenneth Katzman and Christopher Blanchard.

United Nations General Assembly, in which he focused on enforcing the UN resolutions that require Iraqi disarmament.[19]

The Bush Administration's Iraq policy changed dramatically after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.[20] The shift to an active regime change effort followed President Bush's State of the Union message on January 29, 2002. In that speech, given as the US-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was winding down, he characterised Iraq as part of an 'axis of evil' (with Iran and North Korea). President George W. Bush in his Address said, "Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, and then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an 'axis of evil', arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic".[21]

Some US officials, particularly deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz, asserted that the United States needed to respond to the September 11, 2001, attacks by 'ending states' that support terrorist groups, including Iraq. Vice President Cheney visited the West Asia in March 2002 to consult regional countries about the possibility of confronting Iraq militarily, although the leaders visited reportedly urged greater US attention to the Arab-

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[19] "Remarks by the President in Address to the United Nations General Assembly", *Office of the Press Secretary*, Washington D.C., September 12, 2002, at <www.whitehouse.gov/news>

[20] For more see Paul Rogers, *Iraq and the War on Terror: Twelve Months of Insurgency,* 2004/2005, (London : I.B. Tauris, 2006)

[21] The President's State of the Union Address, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington D.C., January 29, 2002, at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases>
See also Dodge Toby, *Iraq's Future: The Aftermath of Regime Change* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), pp. 5-6.

Israeli dispute and opposed confrontation with Iraq.[22] President Bush and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair denied this. (On December 20, 2001, the House passed H. J. Res. 75, by a vote of 392-12, calling Iraq's refusal to readmit the UN weapons inspectors a 'mounting threat' to the United States.)

The primary theme in the Bush Administration's public case for the need to confront Iraq was that Iraq posted a 'grave and gathering' threat that should be blunted before the threat became urgent. The basis of that assertion in the US intelligence remains under debate. The Administration added that regime change would yield the further benefit of liberating the Iraqi people from a brutal dictator and promoting democracy in the heart of the West Asia.[23]

**WMD Threat Perception**

Senior US officials asserted the following about Iraq's WMD[24]:

(1) that Iraq had worked to rebuild its WMD programs in the nearly four years since the UN weapons inspectors left Iraq and had failed to comply with 16 UN resolutions that demanded complete elimination of all of Iraq's WMD programs;

(2) that Iraq had used chemical weapons against its own people (the Kurds) and against Iraq's neighbors (Iran), implying that Iraq would not necessarily be deterred from using WMD against the United States; and

(3) that Iraq could transfer its WMD to terrorists, particularly Al Qaeda, for use in potentially catastrophic attacks in the United States or elsewhere. Critics noted that, under the US threat of retaliation, Iraq did not use WMD against the US troops in the 1991 Gulf war. The US-led Iraq Survey Group, whose work formally terminated in December 2004,

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[22] Some accounts, including the book *Plan of Attack*, by Bob Woodward (published in April 2004) say that the then Secretary of State Powell and others were concerned about the potential consequences of an invasion of Iraq, particularly the difficulties of building a democracy after major hostilities ended. Other accounts include reported memoranda (the 'Downing Street Memo') by British Intelligence officials, based on conversations with the US officials. That memo reportedly said that by mid-2002 the Administration had already decided to go to war against Iraq and that it sought to develop information about Iraq to support that judgment.

[23] Satyanarayan Pattanayak, "Regime Change in Iraq and Challenges of Political Reconstruction", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.29, No. 4 (2005), pp.629-52.

[24] See more on WMD in Rodney P. Carlisle *America at War: Iraq War*, (USA: Facts on File, 2005).

determined that Iraq did not possess active WMD programs, although it retained the intention and capabilities to reconstitute them.[25]

**Links to Al Qaeda[26]**

Iraq was a designated state sponsor of terrorism during 1979-82, and was again designated after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Although they did not assert that Saddam Hussein's regime had a direct connection to the September 11 attacks or the October 2001 anthrax mailings, senior US officials said there was evidence of Iraqi linkages to Al Qaeda, in part because of the presence of pro-Al Qaeda militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Northern Iraq. The final report of the 9/11 Commission found no evidence of a 'collaborative operational linkage' between Iraq and Al Qaeda.[27]

**Prelude to the Invasion on Iraq**

It is now quite apparent that the White House inflated and manipulated weak, ambiguous intelligence to paint Iraq as an urgent threat and thus make an optional war necessary.[28] Even though no trace of involvement of Iraqi nationals in the incidents of 9/11 had been proved, yet the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, was accused of sponsoring international terrorism. In his State of the Union Address delivered in January 2002, popularly known as the 'Bush Doctrine', President Bush branded Iraq as being part of an 'axis of evil'. Furthering a quick step to act pre-emptively, on June 1, 2002, he said: "We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge".[29] On October 8, 2002 just four days before a crucial vote in the House and Senate on a resolution granting authority to go to war, President Bush asserted a strong connection between Al Qaida and Iraq.[30] John Bolton, the former US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, also said that the aim in Washington was to topple Saddam Hussein regardless of whether or not he allowed the

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[25] See the CIA website at <www.cia.gov/cia/reports/iraq>.
[26] See more in Rodney P. Carlisle *America at War: Iraq War*, (USA: Facts on File, 2005).
[27] 9/11 Commission Report, at <www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>, p. 66.
[28]. G.A. Lopez and David Cortright "Containing Iraq: Sanctions Worked", *Foreign Affairs*, (July/August 2004), p.90.
[29] Hollis Rosemary, "The US Role", in L. G. Potter and G. Sick, *Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 202-203.
[30] Lawrence Freedman, "War in Iraq: Selling the Threat", *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Summer, 2004), p.19.

UN inspectors back in to complete the disarmament process. Bolton maintained: Let there be no mistake, while we also insist on the re-introduction of the weapons inspectors, our policy at the same time insists on regime change in Baghdad and that policy will not be altered whether inspectors go in or not.[31] Ironically, a strong section of even the Republicans such as former Secretaries of State and National Security Advisors such as Henry Kissinger, James Baker III, Brent Scowcroft, drew attention to the risk of creating greater instability in the region.[32] Brent Scowcroft for instance, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "There is no evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist organisations, and even less to the September 11 attacks....Military action would seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, the global counter terrorist campaign that we have undertaken".[33] But President Bush, in his State of the Union Address delivered in March 2003 just before the invasion, clarified: "Saddam, a brutal dictator with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism, with great potential wealth, will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States".[34] Thus, the Bush Administration officials all through emphasized regime change as the cornerstone of the US policy toward Iraq since shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks,[35] well before the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 17, 2003. The Administration asserted on March 17, 2003, that diplomatic options to disarm Iraq peacefully had failed and turned its full attention to military action.

**Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): Major Combat**

Although it is not certain when the Administration decided on an invasion, in mid-2002 the Administration began ordering a force to the region, which by early 2003, clearly gave the President an invasion option. In concert, the Administration tried to build up and broaden the Iraqi Opposition. On June 16, 2002, the *Washington Post* reported that, in early 2002, President Bush authorized stepped up covert activities by the CIA and special operations forces to destabilize Saddam Hussein. In August 2002, the State and Defense Departments jointly invited six major Opposition groups to Washington, D.C. At the same

[31] Nasser Aruri, "America's War Against Iraq", in Anthony Arnove (ed.), *Iraq Under Siege* (Cambridge: Southend Press, 2002), pp.42-46.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., pp. 47-48.
[34] See details of the speech at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases>
[35] See more in Rodney P. Carlisle, and Jogn S. Bowman (eds), *America at war: Iraq war* (USA: Facts on File)

time, the Administration expanded its ties to several groups, particularly those composed of ex-military officers. The Administration also began training about 5,000 Oppositionists to assist the US forces,[36] although only about 70 completed training at an air base (Taszar) in Hungary.[37] They served mostly as translators during the war. President Bush urged the United Nations General Assembly on September 12, 2002 that the UN Security Council should enforce its 16 existing WMD-related resolutions on Iraq. The Administration subsequently agreed to give Iraq a 'final opportunity' to comply with all applicable Council resolutions by supporting Security Council Resolution 1441 (November 8, 2002), which gave the UN inspection body UNMOVIC (UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission) new powers of inspection. Iraq reluctantly accepted it. UNMOVIC Director Hans Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mohammad al-Baradei subsequently briefed the Security Council on WMD inspections that resumed on November 27, 2002. They not only criticized Iraq for failing to pro-actively cooperate, but also noted progress and said that Iraq might not have retained any WMD. The Bush Administration asserted that Iraq was not cooperating with Resolution 1441 because it was not pro-actively revealing information to UNMOVIC and the IAEA. (A 'comprehensive' September 2004 report of the Iraq Survey Group, known as the 'Duelfer Report',[38] found no WMD stockpiles or production but said that there was evidence that the regime retained the intention to reconstitute WMD programs in the future. The US-led WMD search ended on December 2004.[39] The UNMOVIC search remains technically active).[40]

During this period, Congress debated the costs and risks of an invasion. It adopted H.J.Res. 114, authorizing the President to use military force against Iraq if he determines that doing so is in the national interest and would enforce the UN Security Council resolutions. It passed the House October 11, 2002 (296-133) and the Senate the following day (77-23). It was signed on October 16, 2002 (P.L. 107-243). In Security Council debate,

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[36] Karen Deyoung,, and Daniel Williams, "Training of Iraqi Exiles Authorized", *Washington Post*, (19 October 2002)

[37] Daniel Williams, "U.S. Army to Train 1000 Iraqi Exiles", *Washington Post* (18 December, 2002)

[38] The full text of the Duelfer Report is available at <www.news.findlaw.com>.

[39] For analysis of the former regime's WMD and other abuses, see CRS Report RL32379, *Iraq: Former Regime Weapons Programs, Human Rights Violations, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.

[40] For information on UNMOVIC's ongoing activities, see <http://www.unmovic.org>.

opponents of war, including France, Russia, China, and Germany observed the pre-war WMD inspections showed that Iraq could be disarmed peacefully or contained indefinitely. The United States, along with Britain, Spain, and Bulgaria, maintained that Iraq had not fundamentally decided to disarm. At a March 16, 2003, summit meeting with the leaders of Britain, Spain, and Bulgaria at the Azores, President Bush asserted that diplomatic options to disarm Iraq had failed. The following evening, President Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay, an ultimatum to leave Iraq within 48 hours to avoid war.[41] They refused the ultimatum, and Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched on March 19, 2003.[42] Saddam Hussein's regime collapsed on April 14, 2003 under pressure from an overwhelming military onslaught by the US and British forces.

In the war, Iraq's conventional military forces were overwhelmed by the approximately 380,000-person US and British force assembled (a substantial proportion of which remained afloat or in supporting roles). Some Iraqi units and irregulars ('Saddam's Fedayeen') put up stiff resistance and used unconventional tactics. No WMD was used, though Iraq did fire some ballistic missiles into Kuwait. It is not yet clear whether those missiles were of prohibited ranges (greater than 150 km). The regime vacated Baghdad on April 9, 2003, although Saddam Hussein appeared publicly with supporters that day in the Adhamiya district of Baghdad. The regime fell on April 9, 2003.[43]

In the months prior to the war, the Administration had stressed that regime change through the US-led military action would yield benefits beyond disarmament, including liberation from an oppressive regime for the Iraqi people and enhancement of the prospects for peace and democracy throughout the West Asia. The developments after 9/11 and the rise of Neo-conservative thinking in the United States accelerated a process that culminated in the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The rapid collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime marked a defining moment in international relations.

'Operation Iraqi Freedom' and its aftermath created an entirely new geopolitical context not only in Iraq but also in the wider West Asia. Huge challenges have emerged

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[41] "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation," *Office of the Press Secretary*, Washington D.C., March 17, 2003, <www.whitehouse.gov/news>

[42] *Kessings Record of World Events*, March 2003, p. 45313.

[43] President's Radio Address, "Operation Iraqi Freedom", Office of the Press Secretary, Washington D.C., 14 April 2003, at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases>.

as a result of the invasion of Iraq, regime change, and the political reconstruction in Iraq. The dethroning of Saddam Hussein from power was comparatively an easier task than the construction of a democratic and federal post-Saddam Iraq. The US is facing a tougher challenge in the phase of occupation than the military invasion itself, primarily because its pre-war calculations failed to appreciate the likely postwar realities. While regime change has been widely popular among most segments of the Iraqi people, the externally driven process of reconstruction and democratization may ultimately drive Iraq towards civil war. If Iraq's three principal communities - the Shia's, Sunnis and Kurds do not come to an agreement on the constitutional order and sharing of power, serious de-stabilisation may engulf the whole region with grave implication on energy markets and global security.

The seriousness of the crisis in Iraq and the challenges of constructing a stable, peaceful, democratic, federal and united Iraq are now widely recognised even by the Bush Administration. In a December 18, 2005 speech, entirely devoted to the US policy in Iraq after the parliamentary elections, the US President stated: "The work in Iraq has been especially difficult, more difficult than we expected. In all three aspects of our strategy - security, democracy, and reconstruction, we have learned from our experience, and fixed what has not worked. Defeatism may have its partisan uses, but it is not justified by the facts. For every scene of destruction in Iraq, there are more scenes of rebuilding and hope. For every life lost, there are countless more lives reclaimed. For every terrorist working to stop freedom in Iraq, there are many more Iraqis and Americans working to defeat them. I also want to speak to those of you who did not support my decision to send troops to Iraq: I have heard of your disagreement. Yet, now there are only two options before our country - victory or defeat. And the need for victory is larger than any President or political party, because the security of our people is in the balance. It is also important for every American to understand the consequences of pulling out of Iraq. Not only can we win the war in Iraq - we are winning the war in Iraq".[44] Notwithstanding the confidence that America is winning the war, the choice between victory and defeat is not clear anymore. Iraq could well continue to be disturbed

[44] President Bush on the US Strategy in Iraq in a televised address from the White House on December 18, 2005, <www.usinfo.state.gov/mena>

and unstable for a long time and the regime change could still become a nightmare for all concerned. Despite all intentions of bringing about positive outcomes, the politico-security challenges are such that prediction of a happy future is not possible at present.

Four aspects are now seen to be particularly relevant to the later development of the Iraq war now in its four year. The first concerns the role of elite Iraqi forces and their substantive absence from the main areas of fighting. The ordinary Iraqi Army played little role in the war. It largely comprised poorly equipped conscript troops that had limited motivation for combat, and many of them were in under-strength and disorganized units that melted away in the face of the coalition attack. A more effective force was made up of several tens of thousands of the Republican Guard. In spite of some years of sanctions, these troops had some potential for resistance to occupation and some Republican guard divisions were engaged by the US forces south of Baghdad.

The second aspect of the war that is the development of violent responses by largely irregular forces as indicates by subsequent events of the war. The US forces and their coalition allies had little difficulty in moving their units across open country, meeting very little opposition in the process. They also had overwhelming firepower for defeating conventional Iraqi Army units, especially the Republican Guard, when these were deployed outside of urban areas. Even with the rapid movement of US forces toward Baghdad, it was possible for Iraqi groups to mount irregular yet costly attacks to US and other forces, and to do so without immediately encountering opposition from an indigenous population that had been expected to welcome the occupying forces as liberators.

That there was not a widespread welcoming of liberation is the third notable characteristic of the early weeks of the war. Given the support that the Saddam Hussein regime had in the largely Sunni areas of central Iraq, there was little expectation that regime termination would be welcomed there. In other respects it was also confidently expected that the Kurdish region of North-East Iraq certainly would welcome regime termination, and this indeed proved to be the case. What was surprising, and indeed discouraging to coalition forces was the lack of welcome in those substantial parts of central Iraq and almost the whole of the North-East of the country that were populated primarily by Shi'a communities.

The third was that elements of the regime were surviving in most of the towns and cities of Southern Iraq, and that these elements were sufficiently strong to intimidate local populations, ensuring that they did not provide any support for coalition forces. Again, there may be an element of truth in this but, if so, it demonstrates a resilience among supporters of the former regime that should have been recognized as indicating the potential for a longer-term resistance to foreign occupation.

The immediate aftermath of regime termination included widespread and large-scale looting and criminal disorder, especially in Baghdad and Basra. Coalition forces were quite unable to maintain public order, and the Iraqi police forces largely withdrew from the major centers of population. The immediate chaos did much to blunt the impact of regime termination on public opinion across much of Iraq, suggesting that the US forces and their allies were far less in control than might have been expected.

The fourth aspect of the war that was largely missed during the early weeks was the extraordinarily wide distribution of supplies of arms and ammunitions across Iraq prior to the outbreak of the war. It became evident within weeks of the termination of the regime that there had been substantial military stockpiles, in scores if not hundreds of locations, established over a considerable period of time. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, there was no possibility of the relatively limited numbers of coalition troops securing these military supplies and this, combined with the melting away of many of the old regime's elite forces, meant that there could be further rapid dispersal.

**Occupation Period/Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)**

After the fall of the regime, the United States set up an occupation structure, reportedly grounded in Administration concerns that immediate sovereignty would favor major anti-Saddam factions and not necessarily produce democracy. These concerns had led the Administration to oppose a move by the US-backed anti-Saddam groups to declare a Provisional Government before the invasion. The Administration initially tasked Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Jay Garner to direct reconstruction with a staff of the US Government personnel to administer Iraq's Ministries; they deployed in April 2003. He headed the Office of

Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA),[45] within the Department of Defence, created by a January 20, 2003 executive order. The Administration's immediate post-war policy did not make use of an extensive State Department initiative, called the 'Future of Iraq Project', which spent at least a year before the war drawing up plans for administering Iraq after the fall of Saddam. Some Iraqis who participated are now in Iraqi Government positions. The State Department project, which cost $5 million, had 15 working groups on major issues.[46]

The immediate role of ORHA was to restore law and order as early as possible.[47] Garner tried to quickly establish a representative successor Iraqi regime. He convened a conference in the Southern city of Nasiriyah that was presided over by Zalmay Khalilzad, (now Ambassador to Iraq) then a special adviser to President Bush organised a meeting in Nassiriyah (April 15, 2003) of about 100 Iraqis of varying ethnicities and ideologies[48] the conference was conspicuous by the absence of a significant number of the invitees (75). Also a huge protest demonstration was held outside the conference hall. It was reported that about 3,000 protestors took to the streets of Nasiriyah chanting the slogan, "No to America and no to Saddam".[49] The delegates who attended the conference failed to formulate a policy on ways to check insurgency. A subsequent meeting of over 250 notables was held in Baghdad (April 26, 2003), ending in agreement to hold a broader meeting one month later to name an Interim Administration. However, senior US officials reportedly disliked Garner's lax approach, including tolerating Iraqis naming themselves as local leaders. Although the turnout of this conference was larger than the previous one, it did not reach the expected number and it too failed to agree on a plan to curb the insurgency. In the meantime, the security situation in Northern Iraq, particularly in Mosul, deteriorated badly and the Coalition forces faced large casualties. As General Garner's attempt to control the city failed, his position vis-a-vis Washington became increasingly untenable.[50] Thus, on May 6, 2003 President Bush announced the

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[45]See David L Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Post War Reconstruction Fiasco* (Berlin: West View Press, 2005), pp.143-144.

[46] Information on the project, including summaries of the findings of its 17 working groups, can be found at <http://usinfo.state.gov>

[47] Gareth Stansfield, no.2, pp.150-51.

[48] Ibid

[49]Ibid

[50] Gareth Stansfield, no.2, pp.150-51.

appointment of a new Civil Administrator, Ambassador Paul Bremer III for Iraq. Paul Bremer took charge on May 13. A Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) replaced ORHA.[51] Garner and most of his staff were unceremoniously recalled to Washington by mid-May.[52] Ironically, within a few days after the appointment of Paul Bremer, the UN, on May 22, 2003, adopted a Resolution 1483 that recognised the US and the UK as 'occupying powers' in Iraq and said the CPA may administer Iraq until an internationally recognized, representative government is established".[53] Paul Bremer promptly dissolved the Iraqi Army. Under a new order, the Republican Guard and the Ministry of Defense were disbanded. His decision to outlaw the Ba'ath Party and to embark on a root and branch de-Ba'athification created more trouble and opposition for the US forces.[54] Anti-occupation attacks increased. The US Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Dundes Wolfowitz, on June 18, 2003, told the Congress, "The US forces are facing a 'guerrilla war' in Iraq".[55] On the same day, Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld told a news conference that the people of the US felt the US military effort in Iraq was 'worthwhile' and that they also recognized the difficulties of the task in Iraq.[56] In view of the severe insurgent attacks on the Coalition forces, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) drew up a new formula to control the situation by involving the Iraqis in a system of joint effort. Many local groups were established, with responsibility to work alongside CPA officials. At the highest level, the CPA constituted an Iraqi Governing Council (IGC).[57] Thus, Bremer suspended Garner's political transition process and decided instead to appoint a 25 to 30 member Iraqi advisory body that would not have sovereignty.

**Iraq Governing Council**

On July 13, 2003, Bremer named the 25-member Iraq Governing Council (IGC). Its major figures included the leaders of the major anti-Saddam factions, but it was

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[51] See more in Rogers Paul, *Iraq and the war on terror: twelve months o insurgency 2004/05*, (Oxford Research Group, International Security Report, 2005), pp.30-31.
[52] Ibid
[53] *Kessings Record of World Events*, May 2003, p. 45435.
[54] Gareth Stansfield, no.14.
[55] *Kessings Record of World Events*, June 2003, p. 45493.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Liam Anderson, and G. Stansfield *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division?*, (New York: Palgrave, 2004), p.185.

perceived in Iraq as an arm of the US decision-making. Some emergent figures were on it, including Ghazi al-Yawar, a Sunni elder (Shammar tribe) and President of a Saudi-based technology firm. (He was Deputy President in the Transitional Government.) In September 2003, the IGC selected a 25-member 'Cabinet' to run individual ministries, with roughly the same factional and ethnic balance of the IGC itself (a slight majority of Shiite Muslims). The IGC began a process of 'de-Ba'athification' - a purge from government of about 30,000 persons who held any of the four top ranks of the Ba'ath Party - and it authorized a war crimes tribunal for Saddam and his associates. That function was performed by a 323-member 'Supreme Commission on De-Ba'athification'. The IGC dissolved on June 1, 2004, when an Interim Government (of Iyad al-Allawi) was named.

**Interim Constitution/Transition Roadmap**

The CPA decisions on transition roadmap were incorporated into an Interim Constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which was drafted by a committee dominated by the major anti-Saddam factions and signed on March 8, 2004.[58] It provided for the following:

Elections by January 31, 2005, for a 275-seat Transitional National Assembly, with election laws aimed to have 'women constitute no less than 25% of the members of the National Assembly'. A Permanent Constitution would be drafted by August 15, 2005, and put to a national referendum by October 15, 2005. National Elections for a Permanent Government, under the new Constitution (if it passed), would be held by December 15, 2005. The new Government would take office by December 31, 2005.[59] Any three Provinces could veto the Constitution by a two-thirds majority. If that happened, a new draft was to be developed and voted on by October 15, 2006. In that case, the December 15, 2005, elections would have been for another Interim National Assembly. The Kurds maintained their autonomous 'Kurdistan Regional Government'. They were given powers to contradict or alter the application of Iraqi law in their Provinces, and their *peshmerga* militias were allowed to operate. Islam was designated 'a source', but not the primary source, of law, and no law could be passed that contradicts such rights as peaceful

[58] The text of the TAL can be obtained from the CPA website <http://cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html>
[59] Dodge Toby, *Iraq's Future: the Aftermath of Regime Change*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), p.37.

assembly; free expression; equality of men and women before the law; and the right to strike and demonstrate.

**Interim (Allawi) Government/Sovereignty Handover**

The TAL did not directly address the formation of the Interim Government that assumed sovereignty. Sistani's opposition torpedoed an initial US plan to select a National Assembly through nationwide 'caucuses', not elections. After considering other options, such as the holding of a traditional assembly, the United States tapped the UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to select that Government,[60] but maneuvering by senior politicians led to their domination of it. The Interim Government was named on June 1, 2004, and began work immediately; the IGC dissolved. The formal handover of sovereignty occurred on June 28, 2004, two days before the advertised June 30 date, partly to confound insurgents. The Interim Government, whose powers were addressed in an addendum to the TAL, had a largely ceremonial President (Ghazi al-Yawar) and two Deputy Presidents (the Da'wa's Jafari and the KDP's Dr. Rowsch Shaways). Iyad al-Allawi was Prime Minister, with executive power, and there was a Deputy Prime Minister and 26 Ministers. Six Ministers were women, and the ethnicity mix was roughly the same as in the IGC. The key Defense and Interior Ministries were headed by Sunni Arabs.

**UN Backing of New Government/Coalition Military Mandate**

The Bush Administration asserts that it has consistently sought international backing for its Iraq efforts, and it has supported an increase in the UN role since late 2003. Resolution 1483 (May 6, 2003) recognized the CPA as an occupying authority; provided for a UN special representative to Iraq; and it called on Governments to contribute forces for stabilization. Resolution 1500 (August 14, 2003) established the UN Assistance Mission - Iraq (UNAMI).[61] The size of UNAMI in Iraq is rising to a target level of about 300 people. In a further attempt to satisfy the requirements of several major nations for greater UN backing of the Coalition military presence, the United States obtained

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[60] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Envoy Urges U.N.-Chosen Iraqi Government", *Washington Post*. (15 April 15 2004)

[61] On August 12, 2004, its mandate was renewed for one year and on Aug. 11, 2005 (Resolution 1619), for another year.

agreement on Resolution 1511 (October 16, 2003), formally authorizing a 'multinational force under unified [meaning US] command'.

Resolution 1546 (June 8, 2004) took the UN involvement a step further by endorsing the handover of sovereignty, reaffirming the responsibilities of the Interim Government, and spelling out the duration and legal status of the US-led forces in Iraq. It also gave the United Nations a major role in helping the Interim Government prepare for the two elections in 2005, and it authorized a coalition component force to protect the UN personnel and facilities. Primarily because of Sistani's opposition to the TAL's provision that would allow the Kurds a veto over a Permanent Constitution, the Resolution did not explicitly endorse the TAL. The Resolution also stipulated the following:

"The US officials would no longer have final authority on non-security issues. The Interim Government and the elected Government could have amended the TAL or revoked CPA decrees, but they did so on only a few occasions. The Coalition's mandate would be reviewed "at the request of the Government of Iraq or twelve months from the date of this resolution" (or June 8, 2005); that the mandate would expire when a Permanent Government is sworn in at the end of 2005; and that the mandate would be terminated "if the Iraqi Government so requests". The Security Council reviewed the mandate in advance of the June 8, 2005 deadline, and no alterations to it were made. However, on November 11, 2005, in advance of the termination of the mandate, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1637 extending the Coalition Military Mandate to December 31, 2006, unless earlier requested by the Iraqi Government. There would also be a review of the mandate on June 15, 2006".

The relationship between the US and Iraqi forces is 'coordination and partnership', as spelled out in an annexed exchange of letters between the United States and Iraq. The Iraqi Government does not have a veto over Coalition operations, and the Coalition retains the ability to take prisoners. Iraqi forces are 'a principal partner in the multi-national force operating in Iraq under unified [American] command pursuant to the provisions of [Resolution 1511] and any subsequent resolutions'. An agreement on the status of foreign forces (Status of Forces Agreement, SOFA) in Iraq was to be deferred to an elected Iraqi Government. No such agreement has been signed, to date, and the US Forces operate in Iraq and use its facilities (such as Balad air base) under temporary

Memoranda of Understanding. However, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told journalists on July 27, 2005, that the US military lawyers are working with the Iraqis on a SOFA or other arrangements that would cover the US operations in Iraq after a Permanent Government takes over. There would be a 100-seat 'Interim National Council' to serve as an Interim Parliament. The body, selected during August 13-18, 2004,[62] did not have legislative power but was able to veto government decisions with a 2/3 majority. The Council held some televised 'hearings', including questioning Ministers. Its work ended after the National Assembly was elected in January 2005.

**Post-Handover US Structure in Iraq**

The following were additional consequences of the sovereignty handover, designed in part to lower the profile of the US influence over post-handover Iraq. As of the June 28, 2004, handover of sovereignty, the state of occupation ceased. Subsequently, a US Ambassador (John Negroponte) established US-Iraq diplomatic relations for the first time since January 1991. Negroponte's philosophy was to generally refrain from directly intervening in internal Iraqi debates. A US embassy formally opened on June 30, 2004; it is staffed with about 1,100 US personnel.[63] Negroponte was succeeded in July 2005 by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, who was previously Ambassador to Afghanistan and who takes a more activist approach. In August 2005, Secretary of State Rice named a new State Department-based Chief Coordinator for Iraq; former Deputy Chief of mission in post-Saddam Baghdad, James Jeffrey. The US military headquarters in Baghdad (Combined Joint Task Force-7, CJTF-7) became a multi-national headquarters 'Multinational Force-Iraq, MNF-I', headed by four-star US Gen. George Casey. As of January 2006, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli was the Operational Commander of the US forces as head of the 'Multinational Corps-Iraq'.

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[62] Sabrina Tavernise "In Climax to a Tumultuous 4-Day Debate, Iraq Chooses an Assembly", *New York Times* (19 August 2004)

[63] See CRS Report RS21867, *U.S. Embassy in Iraq*, by Susan B. Epstein.

**Global Reactions to Regime Change**

The United Nations, the NATO, the OIC and the Arab League initially criticized the US-led invasion of Iraq. But the major global and regional bodies as well as countries have gradually, someway or other accepted the action and legitimized the reconstruction and democratic process. The UN, in various resolutions adopted after the invasion, has not only endorsed the US aggression but also legitimized a system of neo-mandate over Iraq. It even equated the armed resistance of Iraqi people against the occupation forces with 'terrorism', for example, the Resolution 1618 (2005) adopted unanimously by the Security Council affirmed: "acts of terrorism must not be allowed to disrupt political and economic transition currently taking place in Iraq".[64] In short, the Security Council has accepted the consequences of the US invasion and supported the Bush Administration's political agenda in Iraq. The former UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, too hailed the success of the December 2005 elections and called for national reconciliation. He had also pledged the World Body's help in the Country's ongoing political transition.[65] The NATO has shown a similar trend. The German Chancellor Schroeder in a meeting with President Bush on June 9, 2004 said: "a NATO role in training Iraqi forces is possible".[66] The OIC and the Arab League have also supported the ongoing democratic process in Iraq. The Arab League Chief, Amr Moussa, has indicated that the League has accepted the constitutional process and the democratic agenda. The Arab League, with 22 member-States from Algeria to Yemen, has in a statement called the "Iraqi vote an important vote".[67] Some of the important countries of the region, such as the Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have not only individually supported the US role in Iraq but also expressed their strong faith in a democratic Iraq and the US measures to crush terrorism in the region. After the assassination of the Egyptian diplomat in Iraq and the Sharm el- Sheikh bombings, Egypt had asked the US to help set up a more stringent mechanism under the UN against terrorism. President Mubarak, in a meeting with President Bush, expressed his concern about the threat of serious terrorist activities and the deteriorating situation in

[64] UN Report at <http://www.un.org/News>

[65] UN Report at <www.un.org.>

[66] See <www.gabriellereillyweekly.com>

[67] The detailed report is available at <http:// www.npr.org >

Iraq.[68] Foreign Ministers from six Countries such as Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey meeting in Amman released a 12-point statement emphasizing their respect for the sovereign, independent, territorial integrity and national unity for Iraq.[69] By and large, the global community has accepted the democratic process in Iraq along with several criticisms.

'Operation Iraqi Freedom' succeeded in overthrowing Saddam Hussein, but Iraq remains violent and unstable because of Sunni Arab resentment and a related insurgency, as well as increasing sectarian violence. The US goals for Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein have changed somewhat. Its goals initially were to create a model democracy that is at peace with its neighbors, free of WMD, and an ally of the United States. However, according to its November 30, 2005, 'Strategy for Victory' the Administration goal was to create an Iraq that can provide for its own security and does not serve as a host for radical Islamic terrorists. The Administration believes that, over the longer term, Iraq will still become a model for reform throughout the West Asia and a partner in the global war on terrorism but there is growing debate over whether the US policy can establish a stable and democratic Iraq at an acceptable cost.[70] The political transition in post-Saddam Iraq has advanced, but insurgent violence is still widespread and sectarian violence is increasing.

However, mounting casualties and costs have intensified a debate within the United States over the wisdom of the invasion and whether to wind down the US involvement without completely accomplishing the US goals. The Bush Administration asserts that the US policy in Iraq is showing important successes, demonstrated by two elections (January and December 2005) that chose an Interim and then a full-term National Assembly, a referendum that adopted a Permanent Constitution (October 15, 2005), progress in building Iraq's security forces, and economic growth. While continuing to build, equip, and train Iraqi security units, the Administration has been working with the new Iraqi Government to include more Sunni Arabs in the power structure; Sunnis were dominant during the regime of Saddam Hussein but now feel

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[68] See details in *Khaleej Times* at <http://www.khaleejtimes.com>, September 8, 2005 and also Common Dreams News Center, at <http://www.commondreams.com>

[69] See <http:// www.rferl.org. >

[70] For text of President Bush's June 28, 2005, speech on Iraq, see <http://www.whitehouse. gov/news>.

marginalized by the newly dominant Shiite Arabs and Kurds. The Administration believes that it has largely healed a rift with some European countries over the decision to invade Iraq, and it points to NATO and other nations' contributions of training for Iraqi security forces and Government personnel. Administration critics, including some in the Congress, believe the US mission in Iraq is failing and that major new policy initiatives are required. Some believe that the US counter-insurgent operations are hampered by an insufficient US troop commitment. Others believe that a US move toward withdrawal might undercut popular support for the insurgency and force compromise among Iraq's factions. Still others maintain that the US approach should focus not on counter-insurgent combat but on reconstruction and policing of towns and cities cleared of insurgents, a plan the Administration says it is now moving toward under an approach termed 'clear, hold, and build'.[71]

**Concluding Remarks**

Despite several problems that have emerged it is clear that the US strategists correctly gauged the powerful appeal of liberation among the people of Iraq but miscalculated on how it would be carried out. In the aftermath of the invasion various steps have been taken by the US for the political reconstruction of Iraq. However, some basic problems remain. Jay Garner, who was assigned the duty to reconstruct the ravaged country, was replaced primarily because insurgency had taken a front seat during his period and the Coalition troops suffered heavy casualties. Paul Bremer, who took over from Jay Garner, created the IGC that involved the Iraqis in the reconstruction process. But he introduced the element of sectarianism in selecting the members for the IGC. He also made a mistake by involving those leaders who were with the exiled parties during Saddam's rule. These leaders not only lacked the necessary popular support needed to curb violence and 'insurgency' but also became ineffective in mobilising the Iraqi people because of their long absence from the country. Thus, the IGC failed in performing its immediate task and Paul Bremer had to adopt some other alternatives. In due course, the

[71] See CRS (Congressional Research Service) Report for Congress "Iraq: U.S. Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance" Updated February 9, 2006 by Kenneth Katzman

Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) came up. But the selection of members for the IIG too was flawed since most of these leaders were alien to Iraq's new state of affairs.

The TAL also created a lot of controversies because of its contentious clauses. Competing claims on various issues surfaced among the elected members while the Transitional Government was formed after the January 2005 elections. While the Bush Administration highlighted the fact that the transfer of power to Iraq was 'necessary', it did not do so properly. The process of changing the banner simply from 'IGC' to 'IIG' or to 'ITG' without proper attention to the actual leaders of the masses could not solve the problem of political reconstruction.

The process of imposing a set of constitutional principles upon various nominated Iraqi bodies complicated the reconstruction and eroded the legitimacy of the democratic process but also questioned the very basis of democracy. Saddam's removal had proved to be the beginning rather than the culmination of a protracted and uncertain process of reconstruction and state-building. The lawlessness and looting that had greeted the liberation of Baghdad on April 9, 2003 was soon replaced by a state of widespread violence, criminality and instability. The popular apathy and reaction expressed against the repressive US action by almost all communities complicated the situation even more. There is little doubt that Saddam's regime was repressive in nature. It was widely reported that "Saddam ordered the execution not only of those who took up arms or conspired against the regime but also of rivals and potential rivals within the regime, the party, and his own ruling group".[72] This method of physical elimination, which he used against friends and rivals alike, had implications regarding the way dissent and differences were handled within the Iraqi society. Saddam's Iraq, hence, required a regime change and drastic transformation of the power structure. By toppling the regime, the US ended Saddam's autocracy and ushered in a new Iraq towards 'constitutional democracy'. Yet, liberation from the above is clearly arduous and without elite consensus on a new state system, unity and stability are difficult to attain. According to Bush, "Iraqis of every background are now recognizing that democracy is the future of the

[72], Michael Eppeal, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004), p.260.

country they love". [73] Earlier he had declared: "all Iraqis must have a voice in the new Government, and all citizens must have their rights protected".[74] Zalmay Khalilzad, who was the special Presidential Envoy and Ambassador-at-large for free Iraqis, had also called for "a broad-based, representative and democratic government, in a post-Saddam Iraq".[75] In addition, Bush reiterated in his December 2005 speech, "Iraq's December 15 election marked the beginning of a constitutional democracy at the heart of the Middle East".[76] Richard Perle, a neo-conservative strategist, once contended: "It was plausible that Saddam's replacement by a decent Iraqi regime would open the way to a far more stable and peaceful region".[77] Hence, it is clear that the Bush Administration's vision is not limited to Iraq alone and extends beyond it in the region. But building democracy in a traditional state is many times more difficult and a long process than regime change.

Despite the current problems most Iraqis as also the international community have welcomed the democratization of Iraq. Internally, regime change and democracy have destroyed the repressive powers of the Ba'ath Party and Republican Guards of Saddam's regime. 'Constitutional democracy' in Iraq liberated the Shiite Muslims and ethnic Kurds from repression. The Iraqi women, too, were not only liberated but also given a place in a constitutional process. Further, the features of Federalism and Secularism in such a democracy can enable various sections to enjoy their rights equally. However, some of the moot questions still remain unsolved. Will Iraq be able to maintain its unity in the long term while maintaining many democratic features such as Federalism, Secularism etc.? Will the country be able to bring the insurgency to a halt under a Government whose legitimacy has been eroded because of an imposed system? Will the US troops be able to leave the country in the near future? Most importantly, will the US pursue its Great Power Agenda, specifically 'democracy' in greater West Asia, where most of the

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[73] President Bush's televised address from White House on the US Strategy in Iraq, no. 1

[74] George W. Bush's remarks before the American Enterprise Institute, Washington DC, February 27, 2003, at <http://www.foreignpolicy.org> also available in Daniel Byman (2003), "Constructing a Democratic Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities", *International Security, Vol.*28, No. 1, Summer, p.47.

[75] Zalmay Khalilzad,, "The Future of Iraq Policy", remarks at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, DC, October 5, 2002 at <http:// www.wadinet.de>

[76] President Bush's televised address from the White House on the US Strategy in Iraq, no.1

[77] Quoted in Daniel Byman, No. 87, p.48.

countries are authoritarian? During the formation of the Transitional National Assembly and the drafting of the Constitution, serious problems cropped up among the three major Iraqi groups - Sunnis (Arabs), Shiites (Arab) and Kurds (Ethnic) on matters relating to Iraq's national and ethnic and sectarian identities. While all these groups differed primarily on matters relating to the federal structure of the state, the role of regional security apparatus and that of religion in governing the state, there was no unanimity either on how to keep Iraq united. The continuing demands made by various sections suggest that Iraq would have a weak centre and strong federal and autonomous regions. Such a state structure might further weaken the central authority that is essential to keep Iraq united and may lead to serious destabilisation. As such the Constitutional provisions and the related process of government formation have already divided Iraq along sectarian (Shi'a-Sunni) and ethnic (Kurd-Arab and Kurd-Turkoman) lines. The long-term impact of such a division is not only hazardous for Iraq itself but also dangerous for the wider South-West Asia region and the world. Since the Kurds also inhabit the adjoining states of Turkey, Iran and Syria, any effect on Iraqi Kurds will have a spill over effect on the Kurds inhabiting these countries. Shia's not only rule in Iran but also constitute a majority in Bahrain. They are a substantial minority in Kuwait, UAE, and in Al-Hassa province of Saudi Arabia. Hence such a sectarian split will have wider ramifications not only for the country but also for the region. The sectarian coloring of the Iraqi insurgency will therefore have grave politico-security impact. At a time when the world is facing the danger of 'Islamic terrorism', the sectarian insurgency of Iraq may further encourage it. Iraq is now going to become a part and parcel of the international democratic system. The new Government has expressed its desire to crush terrorism. President Bush has justified the US actions by saying that: "We can not only win the war in Iraq, we are winning the war in Iraq".[78] How far the newly formed government will be able to pursue such a goal remains to be seen.

The most important questions for the US, at present, are two-fold: first, in view of the rising American domestic criticism of the war, the mounting loss of lives, and the continuing presence of troops in Iraq, by when can it withdraw its troops from the

[78] President Bush's televised address from the White House on the US Strategy in Iraq.

country. Second, in view of the Iraqi experience would it continue to pursue its great power agenda in the Greater Middle East? With Iraq in turmoil a US withdrawal of troops at this juncture might be hazardous for both Iraq and the US. Iraq is still in the process of developing a trained police force, and other structures of law and order, security, and governance. The larger goal of democratisation of the West Asia, however, remains both precarious and distant since the most of the authoritarian States of the region are friendly towards the US. However, the success or failure of the democratic process in Iraq clearly would have very different political consequences for Iraq, the region and the United States.

# CHAPTER – II

# POST-WAR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

Shortly after Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) that overthrown the Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, the Bush Administration linked the end of the US military occupation to the completion of a new constitution and the holding of national elections, tasks expected to take two years. However, prominent Iraqis agitated for a rapid restoration of sovereignty, and the Bush Administration returned sovereignty to an appointed Iraqi Government on June 28, 2004, with a new government and a permanent constitution to be voted on thereafter. The elections were provided for in a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), signed on March 8, 2004.[1]

Its provisions are as follows:

- The elections would be held on January 30, 2005 (within the prescribed time frame) for a 275-seat National Assembly; for a provincial assembly in each of Iraq's 18 provinces (41 seats each; 51 for Baghdad); and for a Kurdistan Regional Assembly (111 seats). Results are to be released on February 13, 2005.
- The elected National Assembly would commence on March 16, and it is to try to select a "Presidency Council," consisting of a President and two Deputy Presidents, by a two-thirds vote. The Presidency Council will have two weeks to choose a Prime Minister by consensus, and the Prime Minister then has one month to recommend (to the Presidency Council) and obtain Assembly confirmation of his cabinet choices. Cabinet ministers could be persons not elected to the Assembly. The Prime Minister and his cabinet are subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the Assembly.[2]
- The National Assembly is to draft (by August 15, 2005) a constitution to be put to a national vote (by October 15, 2005). The TAL allows two thirds of the voters in any three Iraqi provinces to veto the Constitution, essentially giving every major community (Kurds, Sunnis, or Shiites) a veto. If the Permanent Constitution is

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[1] "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period," March 8, 2004, at <http://cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL>

[2] See also Salem Chalabi, P. Koshy, Niran "Iraq: Transfer of Sovereignty", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.39 No. 32 (2004), pp.3597-98.
See also Permanent Constitution for Iraq: Pittals ahead", *World Today*, Vol. 61, No. 8-9, (2005), pp. 41-42.

approved, elections for a Permanent Government are to occur by December 15, 2005, and it would take office by December 31, 2005. If the Constitution is defeated, the December 15 elections will be for a new Transitional National Assembly and a new draft is to be written and voted on by October 15, 2006.

**January Elections**

The CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority), in conformity with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the TAL, ordered election for Iraq by the end of December 2004 if possible and, in any event, not later then January 31, 2005.[3] The whole country was treated as a single electoral district and proportional representation was used as the system for the election to the National Assembly.[4] The elections took place under a list system, whereby voters chose from a list of parties and coalitions. 230 seats was to be apportioned among Iraq's 18 governorates based on the number of registered voters in each as of the January 2005 elections, including 59 seats for Baghdad Governorate.[5] The seats within each Governorate was to be allocated to lists through a system of Proportional Representation. An additional 45 'compensatory' seats will be allocated to those parties whose percentage of the national vote total (including out of country votes) exceeds the percentage of the 275 total seats that they have been allocated. Women will be required to occupy 25% of the 275 seats.[6] The change in the voting system would give more weight to Arab Sunni voters, who make up most of the voters in several provinces. It was expected that these provinces would thus return mostly Sunni Arab representatives. In the previous election the largest Sunni Arab block received only 5 seats. Arab Sunni parties withdrew from the elections so late that they could not be removed from the voting lists.[7] The election was boycotted by most Sunni Arabs.[8]

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[3] "Regulations of the Coalition Provisional Authority for Iraq" at <http://cpa_iraq.org/regulations>
[4] Ibid.
[5] "Appoint of Seats to Governorates," *The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq*, IECE Statement No. 23, <http://www.ieciraq.org>

[6] "Guide to Iraq Election," *BBC News*, December 13, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>
[7] Ellen Knickmeyer, and Jonathan Finer, *Iraqi Vote Draws Big Turnout for Sunnis, The Washington Post*, December 16, 2005.
[8] Anthony H Cordesman,. "The Impact of Iraqi Election: A Working Analysis", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, January 10, 2006,

As per the CPA order number 92, the UN had to assist in creating an Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI).[9] The IECI was to be structured to ensure complete independence from political groups and to benefit from close consultation with international entities, such as the United Nations.[10] A Board of Commission was to head the IECI. It consisted of nine members, including seven Iraqi voting members and two non-voting members. The two non-voting members were the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and an International Electoral Expert who were to be chosen by the United Nations.[11] The election for the 275-member Transitional National Assembly, as per the plan, was to be direct, universal and through secret ballot.[12] All seats in the National Assembly were to be allocated to various 'political entities' through a system of proportional representation.[13] The formula for the allocation of seats in the National Assembly was based initially on a calculation employing a simple quota and subsequent calculation employing the largest remainders. The threshold was a natural threshold, which was calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes for all political entities by the total number of seats in the National Assembly.[14] If a 'political entity' had received valid votes less than the threshold, no seats were allocated to that 'political entity' and it was excluded. A quota was then calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes recorded for all the un-excluded political entities' by the total number of vacancies to be filled, i.e., 275. Seats in the Assembly and the provincial assemblies were allocated in proportion to a slate's showing; any entity receiving at least 1/275 of the vote (about 31,000 votes) won a seat. As per the electoral law, all 'political entities' presented to the IECI a list of candidates or 'slate' for election to the National Assembly. The list of candidates or slate so presented to the IECI was required to have the candidates in a ranked order. Seats in the National Assembly were allocated to candidates at the top of the ranked list submitted and accepted by the IECI before the election took place.[15] The lists presented to the IECI prior to the election could not to be recorded or changed after a

[9] "Report of the Council of Foreign Relations, U.K"at <http://www.fco.gov.uk>.
[10] "Report of the Independent Electoral Commission for Iraq (I.E.C.I.)" at <http:// CPA_ Iraq.org>
[11] Ibid.
[12] "Regulations of the Coalition Provisional Authority for Iraq", no.36
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] "Rules and Regulations of the I.E.C.I" at <http:// www.ieciraq.org>

date fixed by the IECI.[16] The electoral law also provided that at least one out of the first three candidates on the list would be a woman; and such a ratio would be kept till the end of the list. A female candidate occupied every third position on electoral lists in order to meet the TAL's goal for at least 25% female membership. A total of 111 entities were on the National Assembly ballot: 9 multi-party coalitions, 75 single parties, and 27 individual persons. The 111 entities contained over 7,000 candidates. About 9,000 candidates, organized into party slates, ran in provincial and Kurdish elections.

No slate contained fewer than 12 or more than 275 candidates, except that individual persons certified as Political Entities by the IECI presented themselves on a list as single candidates. These provisions of course did not apply to an individual candidate certified as a 'Political Entity'. The ballot paper contained the names of political entities alone, not the name of candidates. Under the rules, at no time could a Political Entity withdraw a seat in the National Assembly from the candidate to whom it had been initially allocated.[17] If a candidate died before the seats were allocated, then the next person male on the candidate list (if the candidate was male) or the next woman on the list (if the candidate was female) was allocated the seat. If a candidate was disqualified after being allocated a seat, then the seat had to remain vacant in the assembly or council, until a method of replacement was determined.[18] While the CPA claimed that the elections were conducted smoothly, its smoothness and fairness came under serious suspicion.[19] As per the figures of the IECI a total of 8.4 million voters cast their ballot. While the Commission had counted 14.2 million registered voters inside Iraq it also had identified another 1.2 million Iraqi expatriates who were allowed to cast their ballot.[20] In the January 30 (and December 15) elections, Iraqis abroad were eligible to vote. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was tapped to run the "out-of-country voting" (OCV) program.[21] OCV took place in Australia, Canada, Denmark,

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[16] "The electoral Law of the Coalition Provisional Authority" at <http:// pa_iraq.org>
[17] Ibid.
[18] See "Rules and Regulations of the IECA" no.44.
[19] Rasheed Rahman, "Elections under Occupation",*Daily Times*, at <http://www.dailytimes.com.>
[20] The IECI noticed these large Iraqi communities residing in 14 different countries such as Australia, Canada, Demark, France, Germany, Iran, Jordan, the Nether Lands, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, U.A.E., the U.K., the USA.
[21] Sonia Nettnin, "Iraq Out-of-Country Voting Program," *Scoop*, January 14, 2005.

France, Germany, Iran, Jordan, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, UAE, Britain, Netherlands, and the United States. About 275,000 Iraqi expatriates (dual citizens and anyone whose father was Iraqi) registered, and about 90% of them voted (January).

Inside Iraq, registration of voters and political entities took place on November 1 - December 15, 2004. Voter lists were based on ration card lists containing about 14 million names; voters needed to be at least 18 years old. Voters did not need to formally 'register' to vote, but they had the opportunity to verify or correct personal information on file at 550 food ration distribution points around Iraq. In some of the restive Sunni areas, this verification process did not take place, but voters were able to vote by presenting valid identification on Election Day. Each political entity was required to obtain 500 signatures from eligible voters and pay about $5,000 to be registered. There were about 5,200 polling centers on Election Day; each center housed several polling stations. About 6,000 Iraqis staffed the branches of the IECI in each province, and 200,000 Iraqis staffed polling places on Election Day.

Violence was less than anticipated; insurgents conducted about 300 attacks, but no polling stations were overrun. Polling centers were guarded by the 130,000 members of Iraq's security forces, with the 150,000 US forces in Iraq available for backup. Two days prior to the polling day, vehicular traffic was blocked, Iraq's borders were closed, and polling locations were confirmed. Security measures were similar for the 'October 15' and 'December 15' votes, although with more Iraqi troops and police trained (about 215,000) than in January. Polling places were staffed by about 200,000 Iraqis in all three elections in 2005. International monitoring was limited to 25 observers (in the January elections) and some European parliament members and others (December elections).

**Competition and Results**

The Iraqi groups that took the most active interest in the January elections were those best positioned: Shiite Islamist parties, the Kurds, and established secular parties. The results of this and the December 2005 election are shown in the table below. The most prominent slate was the Shiite Islamist 'United Iraqi Alliance' (UIA), consisting of 228 candidates from 22 parties, primarily the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Da'wa Party. The first candidate on this slate was SCIRI leader Abd

al-Aziz al-Hakim; Da'wa leader Ibrahim al-Jafari was number seven. Even though radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr denounced the election as a US-led process, 14 of his supporters were on the UIA slate; eight of these won seats. The two main Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) offered a joint 165-candidate list. Interim Prime Minister Iyad al-Allawi filed a six-party, 233-candidate 'Iraqi List' led by his Iraqi National Accord (INA) party.[22]

Sunni Arabs (20% of the overall population), perceiving electoral defeat and insurgent intimidation, mostly boycotted and won only 17 seats spread over several lists. The relatively moderate Sunni 'Iraqi Islamic Party' (IIP) filed a 275-seat slate, but it withdrew in December 2004. The hard-line Iraqi Muslim Scholars Association (MSA), said to be close to the insurgents, called for a Sunni boycott.

After the elections, factional bargaining over governmental posts and disagreements over Kurdish demands for substantial autonomy delayed formation of the government. During April and May, the factions formed a government that US officials said was not sufficiently inclusive of Sunnis, even though it had a Sunni (Hajim al-Hassani) as Assembly Speaker; a Sunni Deputy President (Ghazi al-Yawar); a Sunni Deputy Prime Minister (Abd al-Mutlak al-Jabburi); a Sunni Defense Minister (Sadoun Dulaymi); and five other Sunni ministers. Most major positions were dominated by Shiites and Kurds, such as PUK leader Jalal Talabani as President and Da'wa leader Ibrahim al-Jafari as Prime Minister; SCIRI's Adel Abd al-Mahdi was second Deputy President. In provincial elections, the Kurds won about 60% of the seats in Tamim (Kirkuk) province (26 out of 41 seats), strengthening the Kurds' efforts to gain control of the Province.

The voters' participation from within Iraq was slightly more than 50 per cent. Out of a total population of 26 million the IECI could prepare a voter list of 14 million registered Iraqi voters on the basis of age above 18 years.[23] There were reports that a

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[22] The Iraqi National Accord (INA) is an Iraqi political party founded by Iyad Allawi and Salah Omar Al-Ali in 1991. Al-Ali subsequently left the party after he realised the extent of Allawi's links to foreign intelligence agencies.It was founded at the time of the Persian Gulf War as an opposition group to Saddam Hussein. At that time the two most active anti-Saddam groups were the SCIRI and al-Dawa both Islamic Shi'ite parties and based in and supported by Iran. This did not suit the western powers or Saudi Arabia, who had long poor relations with the Islamic Republic. The INA was thus set up to be an alternative, largely funded with money from Saudi Arabia and received support from Britain and the United States.

[23] Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Post-Saddam National Elections", CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress, pp. CRS 1- CRS.6.

large number of voters, particularly in Sunni (Arab) dominated areas, failed to cast their votes since their names were either wrongly written or missing from the voter list that was prepared on the basis of Food Ration Card. Many Sunnis also boycotted the vote. In Nineveh province, which had many Sunni Arabs, the turnout was as low as 17 per cent.[24] In Anbar to the west of Baghdad, which witnessed fierce armed resistance to the US occupation, a mere 2 per cent of voters went to the polls.[25] A few reports suggested that only 29 per cent of the people voted in the main Sunni-dominated Salahaddin Province.[26] In the northern city of Mosul (Iraq's third largest city) dominated largely by Arab Sunnis, only 50,000 people out of 500,000 eligible voters could cast their votes. Almost no ballots were cast in Fallujah, Tikrit, Ramadi, Samara and various other Sunni (Arab) dominated towns in the south of Baghdad city and suburbs of the capital.[27] Iraq's Interim President, Ghazi al-Yawar, reported on February 2, 2005 that "tens of thousands were unable to cast their votes because of the lack of ballots in Basra, Baghdad and Najaf.[28] Hence a huge section among the registered voters either could not or did not cast their votes. The Association of Muslim Scholars, the organization of some 3,000 Sunni clerics, which led the boycott agitation, issued a statement declaring the election illegitimate.[29] Nonetheless, Iraq moved forward through the formation of Iraqi Transitional Government.

**Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG)**

The results of the January 2005 elections were not surprising. The United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), a grouping of 22 parties dominated largely by two Shiites parties SCIRI and Da'awa, won 140 seats in the National Assembly. The Kurdish Alliance won 75 seats. However, 'The Iraqis list', headed by Ayyad Allawi, mustered only 40 seats while 'the Iraqis Party' led by the Interim Iraqi President, Ghazi al-Yawar, received only five

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[24] <http: //www.abc.net.au>.
[25] Peter Symonds, "Iraq election results reflect broad hostility to US occupation", at <http://www.wsws.org>
[26] Ibid.
[27] James Cogan, "Iraq election sets stage for escalating political turmoil", at <http:/ /www.wsws.org>
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

seats. The other parties drew only small numbers. Under the framework of the TAL, a two-third majority was essential to choose the Presidential Council that would consist of a President and two Vice-Presidents. The Presidential Council had to select the Prime Minister unanimously. Although UIA had a simple majority in the Transitional National Assembly, it required a coalition as the Presidential Council had to be formed with the support of at least two-third of the Assembly, i.e.,184 members. Hence the UIA had to negotiate with the Kurdish Alliance and after some bargaining the Presidential Council was formed. Jalal Talabani, a Kurd(PUK leader), became the President. The two Vice-Presidents were Adel Abd al-Mahdi, a Shiite politician and Ghazi al-Yawar, a Sunni. The leader of al-Dawaa, Ibrahim al-Jaafri, a Shia was unanimously elected as the Prime Minister. Hajim al-Hassani, an Arab Sunni of 'the Iraqis Party' was made the Speaker. However, the difficult part was in forming the cabinet. Almost three months elapsed in constituting the 37-member ministry, and even then seven crucial ministries remained undecided. In addition, the Kurdish alliance put forward three critical demands: first, the creation of federalism in Iraq that would guarantee the autonomy of the Kurdish region comprising the three provinces of Dahouk, Erbil and Sulaymania; second, the incorporation of the city of Kirkuk and the surrounding oil fields in the Tameem province into the Kurdish region; and third, the separation of powers and the giving of primacy in legislation to secular democracy over religion.[30] The Alliance argued that Kirkuk was historically a part of the Kurdish region in Northern Iraq until Saddam's campaign to 'Arabize' it in 1987. Hence it must be part of the Kurdish autonomous region.

However, as per Article 58 of the TAL, the final status of the Tameem province is to be determined after a fair and transparent census ratified by a Permanent Constitution.[31] The IECI, however, has complicated the situation by granting permission to around 1, 00,000 Kurdish refugees to resettle in the Tameem province even prior to the January elections. Another demand of the Coalition that *Peshmerga* (the Kurdish Militia) would be part of the National Army but remain under the absolute control of the Kurdish

[30] See details in "Iraqi Elections: Inquiry and Analysis", Series no-207, The Middle East Media Research Institute, at <http://www.memri.org>

[31] See Article 58 of Official Text of TAL, Iraq - Interim Constitution, sourced from <http://www.oefre.unibe>

Regional Government. However, all these contentious issues had been suspended for the moment till a Permanent Constitution and the formation of Permanent Government.

The Iraqi Government has received some diplomatic support, even though most of its neighbors, except Iran, resent the Shiite and Kurdish domination of the regime. As of late 2005, there were 46 foreign missions in Iraq, including most European and Arab countries. At a June 22, 2005, international conference on Iraq held in Brussels, Jordan and Egypt pledged to appoint ambassadors to Baghdad. Perhaps in an effort to derail that effort, on July 2, insurgents kidnapped and killed Egypt's top diplomat in Baghdad; he was to be appointed the ambassador there. Jordan nonetheless did go forward with appointing an ambassador. On July 5, insurgents attacked and wounded Bahrain's top diplomat in Iraq. In late July, insurgents captured and killed Algeria's two highest ranking envoys in Iraq, prompting Algeria to pull out. In November, two Moroccan embassy employees were killed and Oman's embassy was shot at. In September 2005, Kuwait pledged to re-establish full diplomatic relations with the new Government.

To be sure the new Government was, from the standpoint of democracy improvement on the preceding two. The country's first post war government, the Iraqi governing Council (IGC) was a US creation designed to reflect Iraq sectarian and ethnic diversity. Accordingly, the 25 member body comprised 13 Shi'a Arabs (a mix of secular and religious), 6 Sunni Arabs, 4 Kurds, and a representative from Iraq's Turcoman and Assyrian communities. Within nominal turnover of sovereignty to Iraq in June 2004, the IGC gave way to the Iraq Interim government (IIG), a body that was barely distinguishable from the IGC in terms of demographic balance, personnel, and the absence of credibility and meaningful power. The key power position (Prime Minister) went to former Ba'athist operative and CIA asset Iyad allawi (a secular shia), when the supporting caste included a Sunni Arab President (Ghazi al-yawer) a Kurdish Vice President (Roj Shawaise), and a religious Shi'a Vice President (Ibrahim al Jafari). The allocation cabinet posts adhere scrupulously to the principle of descripritive representation that had governed the appointment of the IGC. Each communal group received positions of power in proportion to their numerical strength in the population.

Beside their ineffectiveness, Iraq's first two post war government share common features. First, both governments were appointed by CPA head Paul Bremer rather than

elected by the Iraqi people. In practical terms, this was probably only option, but the obvious draw back was that both clearly lack legitimacy in the eyes of Iraqi people. By the time of its demise in June 2004, the IGC enjoyed the confident of barely one quarter of the Iraqi population. Likewise, the elections of January 2005 in which Iyad Allawi's political vehicle-'the Iraqi List-polled about 13 percent of the vote, can scarcely be considered a ringing endorsement of Alawi's tenure at the helm. In reality, both government were perceived for what they were-creations of the United States and totally dependent on the United States for their continued survival. Second, while obsessively demographically representative of Iraqi society, both governments were unrepresentative in the sense of being dominated by returning exiles. None of the power positions in either government was occupied by an authentic 'Iraqi's Iraqi'. As a consequence, those in power position lack the popular support base necessary to function as a credible, unifying 'Voice of Iraq'.

The January 30 elections may have given the sheen of democratic legitimacy to the new Government, in contrasts to its predecessors, but the fundamental problems remained. Turn out among Sunni Arab voters was negligible. In Sunni-dominated Anbar Province, for example, recorded turn out for the national assembly election was two percent, and for the Anbar provincial council, less than one half of one percent.[32] Estimating Sunni Arab throughout Iraq as whole is extremely difficult, but based on votes for the only two significant Sunni Arab party that participated (Ghazi al-Yawer's 'Iraqis', and the Iraqi Islamic party) an educated estimated would be between five and ten percent.[33] Whether through principal opposition to foreign occupation fear insurgency reprisals, or unwillingness to participate in a loosing venture, the vast majority of Sunni Arabs opted not to exercise their democratic right to vote. The marginalization of Sunni Arabs from the political process, and the virtual exclusion of their representatives form the National Assembly creates a serious problem for future political stability.[34]

One consequences of the exceptionally low Sunni Arabs turn out is that other groups especially the Kurds are over-represented in the assembly. Comprising perhaps 20

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[32] Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield, "The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division?, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.201.
[33] Ibid, p.206.
[34] Ibid. p.202.

per cent of Iraq's population, the Kurds turned out in huge numbers to ensure to Kurdistan alliance-a coalition of, principally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)-over 27 per cent of assembly seats. Kurdish Parties also enjoyed disproportionate triumphs at a provincial level, winning majority control in five of Iraq's 18 provinces. A notable Kurdish victory was scored in the province containing the oil rich and deeply divided city of Kirkuk, where a Kurdish-dominated list of obtained 26 of the councils 41 seats.

The third electoral outcome that challenges Iraq's social and political stability was the strong performance of Shi'a religious parties. At the national level , the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA)-a coalition of parties that included SCIRI, various faction of al-Dawa , a faction associated with the radical cleric Muqtada al Sadr, and the Badr Brigades (now renamed the Badr Organisation)-obtained an overall majority of seats in the national assembly (140 from 275). The UIA was pieced together with the assistance of Grand Ayotallah ali- Sistani and was openly promoted by religious authority in mosques throughout Iraq. The main secular alternative-Iyad Alawi's Iraqi List-performed poorly, winning 40 seats on an overall vote of less than 14 percent. In the national election, the UIA won either majority or pluralities in 12 of Iraq's 18 provinces, while the Kurd triumphed in five, and Allawi's Iraqi List in just one (Anbar).

When the government was finally announced in May, it scarcely marked a radical departure from Iraq's previous two governments. Indeed, the clearest pattern is one of continuity. This is a government designed to reflect Iraq's ethnic and sectarian diversity rather than the results of a democratic election. Despite an electoral boycott by credible Sunni organizations and the bulk of the Sunni Arabs population, Sunni Arabs control seven ministries in the government, including the Defense Ministry. A Sunni Arab-Mutlaq al-Juburi-is also one of four Deputy Prime Minister. This allocation - 7 from 37 portfolios is out of all proportion to the presence of Sunni Arabs in the Assembly (17 of 275 members). The Presidency Council is dutifully carved of among the Kurds (President Jalal Talabani), religious Shi'a (Vice President Abdul al-Mahdi), and Sunni Arabs (Ghazi al-Yawer). The allocation of the 37 ministerial portfolios follows the similar pattern, with positions assigned to Kurds, Shi'a (secular and religious), and the Sunnis on the basis of their presumed numerical strength in the population rather than their presence in the

Assembly. Also notable in the striking continuity in personnel. Several key figures, including Prime Minister Ibrahim al Jafari, Vice President Ghazi al –Yawer, President Talabani and Deputy PM Ahamed Chalabi, participated in one or both of Iraq's preceding two Governments. Hence the ITG is organized according to the same principle (power-sharing on the basis of demographic), and staffed by much the same cadre of exiles as both the IGC and the IIG. Arguably, the only distinction between this and previous Governments is that the TG has the 'legitimacy' of an electoral mandate. What that mandate means in terms of policy is far from clear.

**Referendum**

The next step in the transition process was the drafting of a permanent Constitution. On May 10, 2005 the National Assembly appointed a 55-member Drafting Committee, chaired by SCIRI activist Humam al-Hammoudi. The constitutional process leading to the crucial Referendum on October 15, 2005 on the Iraqi Constitution was short. The Constitution was drafted by a Constitutional Committee initially consisting of 55 members but subsequently increased to 70 with the inclusion of 15 members from the Sunni (Arab) community. The committee included only two Sunni Arabs, prompting Sunni resentment, and 15 Sunnis (and one member of the small Sabian community) were later added as full committee members, with 10 more as advisors. While the drafting was in process, insurgents assassinated some Sunni members of the Committee. Missing the August 15 deadline to produce a draft, the talks produced a document on August 28 that included some compromises sought by Sunnis - the Shiites and Kurds declared it final. The Kurds achieved a major goal; Article 136 set December 31, 2007, as a deadline for resettling Kurds in Kirkuk and holding a referendum on whether Kirkuk will join the Kurdish region. There were heated debates among various groups as to how 'new Iraq' should look like and how it would be governed. While the Shiite group said the name would be 'Islamic Republic of Iraq', the Kurds pleaded it would be 'Secular Republic of Iraq' and the Sunnis wanted it to be simply 'Republic of Iraq' as under Saddam.[35]

However, during this process many Iraqis and the Arab League voiced concerns on the drafts. For example, Amr Moussa, the chief of the Arab League, reacted to the

[35] See details in <http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects/constitution>

draft which mentioned in one of its articles that: "Iraq is part of the Islamic world and its Arab people are part of the Arab nation". Moussa said: "I share the concerns of many Iraqis about the lack of consensus on the Constitution and (provisions that) denied Iraq its Arab identity. I do not believe in this division between Shi'a and Sunni and Muslims and Christians and Arabs and Kurds. I find this is a true recipe for chaos and a catastrophe in Iraq and around it".[36] Noting the concerns of the Arab League, some of these clauses were modified. Even the final version that was submitted to the UN and circulated for voting in the referendum had features that were highly controversial. Article 1, for example, declared: the name of Iraq would be "Republic of Iraq" and it would be "a single, independent, federal state". However, Article 2 said: "Islam is the official religion of the state and is a fundamental source of law" as against the basic secular source of law.[37] When the draft was finally ready for voting, the Iraqi Parliament introduced a clarification regarding the definition of 'voter' in the referendum. Since the definition was not clear in Article 61 of TAL, the approved law of the Parliament said: a voter will understood to be the number of registered voters when its (referendum) rejection is sought and the case for approval would be the number of voters who actually cast their votes. However, this duality had to be abolished due to huge protests by the major chunk of Sunni Arab community and only the number of votes cast was taken into account.

The draft (Article 2)[2] designated Islam "a main source" of legislation and said no law can contradict the "established" provisions of Islam. Article 39 implied that families could choose which courts to use to adjudicate family issues such as divorce and inheritance, and Article 34 made only primary education mandatory. These provisions provoked opposition from women who fear that the males of their families will decide to use Sharia (Islamic law) courts for family issues and limit girls' education. The 25% electoral goal for women was retained (Article 47). Article 89 said that federal Supreme Court will include experts in Islamic law, as well as judges and experts in civil law.

The remaining controversy centered on the draft's provision allowing two or more provinces together to form new autonomous "regions" Article 117 allowed each "region" to

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[36] "Arab League Chief Warns Iraqi Charter", at <http://www.arableague.org>, <http://www.commondreams.org> and <http://www.nzherald.co.nz>

[37] See the full text of Iraqi Constitution, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com> and <http://www.cpa-iraq.org>.

organize internal security forces, which would legitimize the fielding of sectarian (presumably Shiite) militias, in addition to the Kurds' *peshmerga* (allowed by the TAL). Article 109 requires the central government to distribute oil and gas revenues from "current fields" in proportion to population, implying that the regions might ultimately control revenues from new energy discoveries. These provisions raised Sunni alarms, because their areas have few known oil or gas deposits. Sunni negotiators, including chief negotiator Saleh al-Mutlak of the National Dialogue Council opposed the draft on these grounds. Article 62 establishes a "Federation Council, a second chamber of a size with powers to be determined, presumably to review legislation affecting regions".

After further negotiations, on September 19, 2005, the National Assembly approved a "final" draft, with some Sunni proposals, such as a statement that Iraq has always been part of the Arab League. However, no major changes to the provisions on new regions were made and Sunnis registered protest in large numbers (70%-85% in some Sunni cities) to defeat the Constitution. The United Nations printed and distributed 5 million copies. The continued Sunni opposition prompted the US Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad to mediate an agreement (October 11) between Kurdish and Shiite leaders and a major Sunni party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, providing for (Article 137) a panel to convene after the installation of a post-December 15 election government and, within four months, propose a bloc of amendments. The amendments require a majority Assembly vote of approval and, within another two months, would be put to a public referendum under the same rules as the October 15, 2005 referendum. As of its seating on March 16, 2006, the new parliament was expected to begin work on amending the constitution, as provided in Article 137.

The October 15 referendum was relatively peaceful. After the referendum on October 15, 2005, the IECI finally announced the approval of the Constitution almost after 10 days. Results, released on October 25, were 78.6% in favor and 21.4% against, nationwide. The Anbar and Salahaddeen governorates registered 96.96 per cent and 81.75 per cent[38] negative votes respectively while the status of Ninevah remained controversial for some days until the IECI declared its special support for the Constitution. Mostly

[38] See IECI Reports available at <http://www.ieci.org>, *Regime Change in Iraq and Challenges of Political Reconstruction.*

Sunni Nineveh Province voted 55% 'no' and Diyala, mostly Sunni, had a 51% 'yes' vote. Of the crucial three Sunni majority provinces two voted against and one in favor, meeting the basic requirement for the Constitution's approval. The draft passed because only two provinces, not three, voted 'no' by a 2/3 majority. This paved the way for the Assembly elections. The Administration praised the vote as evidence that Sunnis support the political process.

**Permanent Constitution**

The crux of Sunni opposition to the new Constitution is its provision for a weak central government ('federalism'). The provision, placed in the constitution at the insistence of the Kurds and Shiites, whose regions have substantial oil reserves, allows groups of provinces to band together to form autonomous 'regions' with their own regional governments, internal security forces, and a large role in controlling revenues from any new energy discoveries. The Sunnis oppose this concept because their region lacks oil and they depend on the central government for revenues. Despite Sunni opposition, the Constitution was approved on October 15; Sunni opponents achieved a two-thirds 'no' vote in two provinces not enough to defeat the Constitution. It became effective after a new government was seated following the December 15 election.

**Elections to the National Assembly**

Following the ratification of the Constitution of Iraq on October 15, 2005, a general election was held on 15 December to elect a permanent 275-member Iraqi Council of Representatives. The elections took place under a list system, whereby voters chose from a list of parties and coalitions. 230 seats was to be apportioned among Iraq's 18 governorates based on the number of registered voters in each as of the January 2005 elections, including 59 seats for Baghdad Governorate.

In the December 15 elections, under a formula designed to enhance Sunni representation, each province contributed a pre-determined number of seats to the new 'Council of Representatives'. Of the 275-seat body, 230 seats were allocated this way, and there were 45 'compensatory' seats for entities that did not win provincial seats but garnered votes nationwide, or which would have won additional seats had the election

constituency been the whole nation. A total of 361 political 'entities' registered: 19 of them were coalition slates (comprising 125 different political parties), and 342 were other 'entities' (parties or individual persons). About 7,500 candidates spanned all entities.[39]

The seats within each Governorate were to be allocated to lists through a system of Proportional Representation. An additional 45 'compensatory' seats was to be allocated to those parties whose percentage of the national vote total (including out of country votes) exceeds the percentage of the 275 total seats that they have been allocated. Women were to be required to occupy 25% of the 275 seats. The change in the voting system gave more weight to Arab Sunni voters, who make up most of the voters in several provinces. It is expected that these provinces will thus return mostly Sunni Arab representatives. The nationwide vote of the previous election meant that the low voter turnout among Sunni Arabs was overwhelmed by the high turnout of the Arab Shi'ites and the mostly Sunni Kurds. In the previous election the largest Sunni Arab block received only 5 seats. Arab Sunni parties withdrew from the elections so late that they could not be removed from the voting lists. The election was boycotted by most Sunni Arabs.

Turnout for the elections was reported to be high, at 70%. The White House was encouraged by the relatively low levels of violence during polling, with some insurgent groups making good on a promised election day moratorium on attacks, even going so far as to guard the voters from attack. President Bush frequently points to the election as a sign of progress in rebuilding Iraq.

In December 2005, Iraq went to the much-awaited polls to choose a permanent National Assembly as enshrined in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). Six major coalitions and fifteen minor coalitions fought the election.[40] Voter turn out was as high as 70 per cent and there were also reports that people preferred to vote for their ethnic and sectarian identities. Even the US Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said: "It looks as if people preferred to vote either on ethnic or on sectarian lines. But for Iraq to succeed there has to be cross-ethnic and cross-sectarian cooperation".[41] Each of the

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[39] Iraq Elections: Road to Democracy February 2005 <www.usinfo.state.gov>

[40] See details in "Report of Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq" and BBC reports at <http://www.ieciiraq.org> and <http://www.newsvote.bbc.co.uk.>

[41] See <http:// news.independent.co.uk>

country's three largest communities - Sunni Arabs, Shiite Arabs and ethnic Kurds voted overwhelmingly on December 15 for lists of parliamentary candidates that represented its own group. The largest share of votes was won by the alliance of Shiite Muslim religious parties that leads Iraq's outgoing government. Minority Sunni Arabs, meanwhile, appeared to have won fewer votes than they had anticipated. That voting pattern, and the subsequent unrest and charges of fraud by Sunnis, exacerbated longstanding fears and distrust that had emerged since the fall of Saddam Hussein. In recent weeks, Shiite and Sunni leaders have called for the formation of sectarian armies to police their respective regions, a step that could be a precursor to open clashes between the groups. The Kurds, who dominate most of Northern Iraq, already have their own fighting force, as do several Shiite parties. Sunni parties, together with the secular Shiite leader and former Interim Prime Minister, Ayad Allawi, have denounced the elections as fixed and threatened to boycott the next parliament if re-polling is not ordered. In a demonstration on December 23 more than 10,000 Iraqis promised to 'extinguish the candle' - a reference to the symbol employed by the Shiite parties during the campaign. Leaders of top Shiite religious parties such as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq have opposed reelections on grounds that there is no such provision under existing Iraqi law. They have also blamed the former regime's supporters and insurgents for organizing the street protests and seeking to 'disrupt the political process.

However, despite the public standoff, factional leaders are engaged in behind-the-scenes negotiations. Jawad Maliki, a senior member of the Supreme Council, acknowledged in a December 24 news conference in Baghdad, that Iraq could not move forward without factional unity and that negotiations had "started already between us and the slates that won in the elections". Iraq's Shiite parties represent about 60 per cent of the population and estimated to have won 128 of 275 seats in the new parliament. With the largest share of seats, they would have the first opportunity to form a new government. But lacking the two-third majority required for approval of a Prime Minister, they were seeking to build a coalition - similar to the last Administration, which comprises mainly Shiites and Kurds - to line up behind their top candidates for Prime Minister: the Supreme Council's Adel Abdul Mahdi and the incumbent, Ibrahim Jafari of the Dawa Party. But as the US Defense Secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld observed during a

visit to Iraq soon after the December elections, "The challenges ahead are real". The task of "fashioning a government as described, a government of national unity that governs from the center, that has the confidence and the capability to lead this country during a challenging period, is a considerable task". On December 24, recognizing the seriousness of the political challenges, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the most influential Shiite cleric in Iraq with unparalleled influence over Shiite politicians, called for a government that would help maintain unity. Currently, every group in Iraq is suspicious of every other group. In the elections people voted on the basis of identity.

Since Iraq is now part of the global democratic system with an elected government, its validity and utility in the context of the war against terrorism has now increased. Of course, much depends on whether the new government is able to restore normalcy, end insurgency and create a stable system with the help of the international community.

**December 15 (2005) Elections**

Final uncertified results were released by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq on Friday 20 January 2006.[42]

**Summary of the 15 December 2005 Iraqi Council of Representatives Election Results**

| Alliances and parties | Votes | % | Seats | Gain/ loss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Iraqi Alliance | 5,021,137 | 41.2 | 128 | -12 |
| Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan | 2,642,172 | 21.7 | 53 | -22 |
| Iraqi Accord Front | 1,840,216 | 15.1 | 44 | +44 |
| Iraqi National List | 977,325 | 8.0 | 25 | -15 |
| Iraqi National Dialogue Front | 499,963 | 4.1 | 11 | +11 |

[42] The KIU contested the previous election as part of the main Kurdish Alliance.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kurdistan Islamic Union | 157,688 | 1.3 | 5 | +5 [1] |
| The Upholders of the Message (*Al-Risaliyun*) | 145,028 | 1.2 | 2 | +2 |
| Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc | 129,847 | 1.1 | 3 | +2 |
| Turkmen Front | 87,993 | 0.7 | 1 | -2 |
| Rafidain List | 47,263 | 0.4 | 1 | 0 |
| Mithal al-Alusi List | 32,245 | 0.3 | 1 | +1 |
| Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress | 21,908 | 0.2 | 1 | +1 |
| National Independent Cadres and Elites | | | 0 | -3 |
| Islamic Action Organization In Iraq - Central Command | | | 0 | -2 |
| National Democratic Alliance | | | 0 | -1 |
| Total (turnout 79.6 %) | 12,396,631 | | **275** | |

Sources: www.en.wikipedia.org

**Split of United Iraqi Alliance seats by party (includes 2 members from The Upholders of the Message who caucus with the UIA)**

| Party | District Seats | Compensatory Seats | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SCIRI & Badr Organization** | 21 | 15 | 36 |
| **Sadrist Movement** | 27 | 2 | 29 |
| **Islamic Virtue Party** | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| **Islamic Dawa Party** | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| **Islamic Dawa Party - Iraq Organisation** | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| **Independents and others** | 24 | 1 | 25 |
| **Total** | 111 | 19 | 130 |

Sources: <www.en.wikipedia.org>

Most notably for the US policy, major Sunni slates competed. Most prominent was the three-party 'Iraqi Concord Front', comprising the IIP, the National Dialogue Council, and the Iraqi People's General Council. The UIA slate formally included Sadr's faction as well as other hard line Shiite parties *Fadila* (Virtue) and Iraqi Hezbollah. Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress ran separately. Former Prime Minister Iyad al-Allawi's mostly secular 15-party 'Iraqi National' slate was broader than his January list, incorporating not only his Iraq National Accord but also several smaller secular parties. The Kurdish alliance slate was little changed from January.

Violence was minor (about 30 incidents) as Sunni insurgents, supporting greater Sunni representation in parliament, facilitated the voting. However, results suggest that voters chose lists representing their sects and regions, not secular lists. The table gives results that were court-certified on February 10, 2006. According to the constitution: within 15 days of certification (by February 25), the Council of Representatives was to convene to select a speaker and two deputy speakers. The Council first convened on March 16, but without selecting these or any other positions. After choosing a speaker the Council was to select (no deadline specified, but a thirty-day deadline for the choice after subsequent Council elections), a Presidency Council for Iraq (President and two Deputies). Those choices required a 2/3 vote of the Council. Within another 15 days, the Presidency Council (by consensus of its three officials) was to designate the "nominee of the [Council] bloc with the largest number" as Prime Minister, the post that has executive power. Within another 30 days, the Prime Minister designate was to name a cabinet for approval by majority vote of the Council.

With 181 seats combined (nearly two thirds of the Council), the UIA and the Kurds were well positioned to continue their governing alliance. However, their alliance frayed when the Kurds, Sunnis, and Alawi block protested the UIA's February 12 nomination of Jafari to continue as Prime Minister. In March 2006, attempting to promote comity, Iraqi leaders agreed to a US proposal to form extra-constitutional economic and security councils including all factions. On April 20, Jafari agreed to step aside, breaking the logjam. On April 22, the Council of Representatives approved Talabani to continue as President, Abd al-Mahdi to continue as a Deputy President, and another Deputy President, Concord Front/IIP leader Tariq al-Hashimi. National Dialogue Front figure

Mahmoud Mashhadani was chosen Council Speaker, with Deputies Khalid al-Attiya (UIA/Shiite) and Arif Tayfour, a KDP activist (continuing in that post). Senior Da'wa Party figure Jawad al-Maliki was named Prime Minister. Maliki, who was in exile in Syria during Saddam's rule, is considered a Shiite hardliner, although he now professes non-sectarianism.

**New Cabinet**

Amid US and other congratulations, Maliki named and won approval of a 39 member cabinet (including Deputy Prime Ministers) on May 20, one day prior to his 30-day deadline. However, three key cabinet slots (Defense, Interior, and National Security) were not filled permanently until June 8 because of factional infighting. Many believe that Iran has substantial influence over the Iraqi Government because of the presence of several officials who belong to Shiite Islamist organizations that have had close ties to Iran.

Of the 37 ministerial posts, a total of eight are Sunnis; seven are Kurds; twenty-one are Shiites; and one is Christian. Kurdish official Barham Salih and Sunni Arab Salam al-Zubaie are Deputy Prime Ministers. Four Ministers are women. KDP activist Hoshyar Zebari remained Foreign Minister. The Defense Minister is Gen. Abdul Qadir Mohammad Jasim al-Mifarji, a Sunni who had been expelled from the Iraqi military and imprisoned for criticizing the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. More recently, he commanded operations of the post-Saddam Iraqi Army in Western Iraq. The Interior Minister is Jawad al-Bulani, a Shiite who has been associated with a number of Shiite Islamist trends, including Sadr's faction, and the *Fadila* (Virtue) party that is prominent in Basra. The Minister for National Security is Sherwan al-Waili, a Shiite who is from a different faction of the Da'wa Party. He has served since 2003 as head of the Provincial Council in the city of Nassiriyah and as adviser in the National Security Ministry. The Minister of Trade and Minister of Education are from this Da'wa faction. Reflecting Shiite strength: Sadr followers are Ministers of Health, of Transportation, and of Agriculture. Another is Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquities. From SCIRI, the pro-Iranian party, Adel Abd al-Mahdi, is one of two Vice Presidents. Bayan Jabr is Finance Minister, moving there

from Minister of Interior. The Minister of Municipalities and Public Works is from the Badr Organization, SCIRI's militia wing.

Several officials in the new Government are from other pro-Iranian Shiite organizations. Deputy Parliament Speaker Khalid al-Attiyah spent time in exile in Iran. The Minister of Civil Society Affairs is from the Islamic Action Organization, a Shiite Islamist grouping based in Karbala. A Minister of State (no portfolio) is from Iraqi Hizbollah, which represents former Shiite guerrilla fighters against Saddam's regime based in the city of Amarah. The Minister of Oil (Hussein Shahristani) is an aide to Shiite leader Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The Minister of Electricity and the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs are independent UIA Shiites.

In this election, some anti-US Sunnis moved further into the political arena. That vote was also mostly peaceful, and, in contrast to the January elections, Sunni slates were offered, including a broad slate ('The Concord Front') led by the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) but consisting of the Conference of Iraqi People, headed by the elderly Adnan al-Dulaymi, and the Sunni Endowment. Another Sunni slate was the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, headed by constitution negotiator Saleh al-Mutlak. Because Sunnis voted in large numbers (over 50% Sunni turnout), the Concord slate won 44 seats and the Dialogue slate picked up 11. Final results were released in January 2006.

Once the 'Council of Representatives' convenes, it had to (within 15 days) name a speaker. The body would then name a Presidency Council (with a two-thirds majority), which then has fifteen days to tap the leader of the largest bloc in the Parliament as Prime Minister. That person has 30 days to name and achieve parliamentary confirmation of a Cabinet (by a simple Assembly majority). On the basis of final results, the UIA won 128 seats and the Kurds 53, leaving them just short of the two-thirds of seats needed to reconstitute their bilateral governing alliance. However, minor Kurdish and Shiite blocs could put them over that threshold. Together, the Sunni slates mentioned above hold 55 seats, still not necessarily enough to win Sunnis the most senior positions in Government. It is therefore unclear whether the election and Sunni participation in it will reduce Sunni resentment and insurgency.

**Election Results (January and December, 2005)**

| Slate/Party | Seats (Jan. 05) | Seats (Dec. 05) |
|---|---|---|
| UIA (Shiite Islamist); Sadr formally joined list for Dec. vote (Of the 128: SCIRI~30; Da'wa~28; Sadr~30; Fadila~15; others~25) | 140 | 128 |
| Kurdistan Alliance (PUK and KDP) | 75 | 53 |
| Iraqis List (secular, Allawi); added some mostly Sunni parties | 40 | 25 |
| Iraq Concord Front (Sunni). Main Sunni bloc; not in Jan. vote | — | 44 |
| Dialogue National Iraqi Front (Sunni, Saleh al-Mutlak) Not in | — | 11 |
| Iraqi National Congress (Chalabi). Was part of UIA list in Jan. | — | 0 |
| Iraqis Party (Yawar, Sunni); Part of Allawi list in Dec. vote | 5 | — |
| Iraqi Turkomen Front (Turkomen, Kirkuk-based, pro-Turkey) | 3 | 1 |
| National Independent and Elites (Jan)/Risalyun (Mission, Dec) | 3 | 2 |
| People's Union (Communist, non-sectarian); on Allawi list in | 2 | — |
| Kurdistan Islamic Group (Islamist Kurd) | 2 | 5 |
| Islamic Action (Shiite Islamist, Karbala) | 2 | 0 |
| National Democratic Alliance (non-sectarian, secular) | 1 | — |
| Rafidain National List (Assyrian Christian) | 1 | 1 |
| Liberation and Reconciliation Gathering (Sunni, secular) | 1 | 3 |
| Ummah (Nation) Party. (Secular, Mithal al-Alusi, former INC | 0 | 1 |
| Yazidi list (small Kurdish, heterodox religious minority in | — | 1 |

Sources: www.en.wikipedia.org.

**Democracy-Building and Local Governance**

The United States and its coalition partners have also been trying to build civil society and democracy at the local level. The US officials say Iraqis are freer than at any time in the past 30 years, with a free press and the ability to organize politically. According to a State Department report to Congress in January 2006 detailing how the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 108-106) "Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund" (IRRF) is being spent ("2207 Report"): According to that report:

About $1.034 billion was spent on 'Democracy Building' activities. About $110 million is allocated for related 'Rule of Law' programmes, About $159 million to build and secure courts and train legal personnel, About $128 million for 'Investigations of Crimes

Against Humanity', primarily former regime abuses, $10 million for the US Institute of Peace democracy/civil society/conflict resolution activities, $10 million for the Iraqi Property Claims Commission (which is evaluating Kurdish claims to property taken from Kurds, mainly in Kirkuk, during Saddam's regime) and $15 million to promote human rights, human rights education centers had been allocated.[43]

In addition to what is already allocated, the FY2006 regular foreign aid appropriations (conference report H. Rept. 109-265 on P.L. 109-102) provides $56 million for democracy promotion. It incorporates a Senate amendment (S. Amdt. 1299, Kennedy) to that legislation providing $28 million each to the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for democracy promotion in Iraq.

Run by the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL), USAID, and State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), some of the activities funded, aside from assistance for the various elections in Iraq in 2005, include the following.

Several projects attempting to increase the transparency of the justice system computerize Iraqi legal documents, train judges and lawyers, develop various aspects of law, such as commercial laws, promote legal reform, and support the drafting of the Permanent Constitution. Activities to empower local governments; policies that are receiving increasing US attention and additional funding allocations from the IRRF. These programs include (1) the 'Community Action Program', through which local reconstruction projects are voted on by village and town representatives. About 400 such projects have been completed thus far; (2) Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDCs) to empower local governments to decide on reconstruction priorities; and (3) Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which are local enclaves to provide secure conditions for reconstruction, as discussed further below. Some of the allocated funds are for programs to empower women and promote their involvement in Iraqi politics. Some funds have been used for easing tensions in cities that have seen substantial US-led anti-insurgency combat, including Fallujah, Ramadi, Sadr City district of Baghdad, and Mosul.

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[43] Stevenson W Hook, "Building Democracy' through Foreign Aid: The Limitation of United States Political Conditionalities, 1992-96", *Democratization*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1998), pp. 156-160.

Attempting to determine the outcome of events in Iraq remains as challenging as ever, not least because of the contradictory messages put out by the main protagonists and independent observers and analysts. In the immediate aftermath of the January 2005 elections, for instance, it was possible to view the future of Iraq with some optimism. All parties were able to agree to some level of compromise during the constitution process, and the December 2005 election saw a high level of Sunni participation. Although the level of participation has increased, voting has continued to be along sectarian lines and time and resources to develop a genuine Iraqi national defence and police force are declining as international support is waning. Nor are there any indications that the level of violence will diminish in the foreseeable future.[44]

The 8.5 million people who voted in the January 2005 election, a turnout of 58 per cent, appeared to have spread their choices widely enough to be assured that power in the new Government, and in the drafting of the new Constitution, would have to be broadly shared among the Assembly's 275 members, thus lessening the possibility that a religious Shiite theocracy could emerge from the elections.

Another positive outcome was that all parties appeared to have entered the negotiation phase that was part of the coalition building exercise and which would herald a lengthy process leading to the drafting and acceptance of a constitution. While all parties were attempting to assert their authority in this process, they were also thinking as Iraqis and not simply as Shi'a or Sunni or Kurd. Furthermore, as the process evolved, there was, in every likelihood, of a new political maturity emerging, making political actors less reliant on sectarian or religious values.[45]

But all this has changed. The Sunni drafters of the Constitution were unable to agree with their majority Shia's and Kurdish counterparts on a final version of a draft Constitution. Signs of the continuing sectarian division, however, are evident in the results of the December election and secular and non-sectarian parties have performed

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[44] "Post Election Iraq: A Case for Declining Optimism" John Hartley in the book "Beyond the Iraq War: the Promises, Pitfalls and Perils of External Interventionism" edited by Michael Heazle and Iyanatul Islam, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006), p-93.

[45] Adeed I. Dawisha and Karen Dawisha "'How to Build a Democratic Iraq", Foreign Affairs, May/June(2003),. Authors claim that nurturing democracy will not be easy. But neither is it impossible as Iraq has an educated middle class and a history of political pluralism.

poorly.[46] Some analysts believe these events will trigger a period of further political infighting that could sharpen communal divisions and intensify the insurgency. In the words of Sunni constitution drafter: 'We have reached a point where this constitution contains the seeds of the division of Iraq'.[47]

If this were to occur, it would undoubtedly complicate the Bush Administration's intention to reduce the number of American troops in the short term and undermine Washington's hopes that Sunnis might turn from violence once they saw the benefits of political participation. And all this is happening as increasing numbers of Americans are questioning the validity of the war.[48] As with most issues on Iraq, however, there are equally valid counter-proposals.

The increased Sunni representation in parliament is a key difference brought about by the December 2005 elections. But even though the Sunnis now hold more seats than the Kurds, the insurgency is unlikely to diminish substantially, at least in the short term. Indeed, there could be an escalation in violence as some militant elements may come under increased pressure to pursue essentially political options. It is even possible that the Sunni leadership may see the continuation of thee insurgency, at least parts of it, as a political bargaining factor to ensure that Sunni aims are given a greater chance of succeeding.[49]

There are also the unknown factors of a split in the Shite ranks. Nor is it clear how secular Iraqis and female voters will react as both groups failed to register a significant vote. There is also a sense that many Iraqis are more concerned with basic security and the provision of water and electricity than they are with political goals.[50] Finally, regardless of the outcome and the obvious flaws and uncertainties in the draft, many Iraqis see this as the most democratic constitution offered to any Muslim nation in the West Asia.[51]

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[46] Robert F. Worth 'Shiite-Kurd Bloc Falls Just Short in Iraqi Elections', New York Times, (21 January, 2006).
[47] Dester Filkins and Robert F. Worth, 'Leaders in Iraq Sending Charter to Referendum', New York Times, (29 August, 2005).
[48] Steven R. Weisman 'News Analyses; For Bush, Small Goals in Iraq', New York Times, (29 August. 2005).
[49] 'Iraq's Election: New Government, Negotiations and Violence', Stratfor, (20 January 2006).
[50] Dester Filkins and Robert F. Worth "Leaders in Iraq sending charter to referendum", *New York Times,* (29 August, 2005),.
[51] Amir Tahiri "A Giant Step Away from Tyranny", *The Australian,* (26 August, 2005)

**The Future Challenge**

Two factors, above all else, appear to stand out in determining the immediate future of Iraq. The first is essentially political: how the Iraqi people will handle the new legislature. This is very much an unchartered territory. The political situation is complex and volatile, and there are many players with different agendas and even contradictory goals.

The second, which very much influences the first, is the security situation. Of course, the outcome of either factor will influence the other and their evolution will go hand in hand. The outcome of these factors will also set the agenda for an American withdrawal, and indeed for the role that the US may play in the whole of West Asia, and may even be the defining issue by which George bush's second term is judged. It will also have an impact on the region and beyond, the war against terror and the global economy.[52] Whether diverse groups with their disparate vision of the future and conflicting objectives could eventually forge a common national identity and unity remain would be possible for the diverse groups with their separate visions of the future and a new sense of identity to forge a common national identity and unity that is crucial for restoring stability and order in Iraq.

[52] Heazle, Michael and Iyanatulo Islam (ed.), *Beyond the Iraq War: the Promise, Pitfalls and Perils of External Interventionism*, (Vheltenham: Edward Elgar), pp. 96-97.

# CHAPTER - III

# INTERNAL FACTORS IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

Democracy requires the consent of the governed. It cannot be forced onto an unwilling population.[1] The internal structure of a country is very important for the successful transplantation of democracy. Democracy is essentially a government of the people, by the people and for the people. So, whether the initiatives for democratisation in a country steams from an outside agent or indigenous forces, the internal situation and domestic structure play a decisive role. Hence, in the case of Iraq, though the initiative is from an outside power (the US), this analysis of democratisation process in Iraq will be incomplete without an objective assessment of Iraq's internal conditions.

**Historical Context**

Crucial to the assessment is the ethno-religious structure of the Iraqi society. Iraq's ethnic groups are Arabs (75-80%), Kurds (15%-20%) and Assyrians, Iraqi Turkmen and other (5%). Other distinct groups are Armenians, Persians, Shabaks and Lurs. Arabic is the most commonly spoken language. Kurdish and Syriac are spoken in the North, and English is the most commonly spoken Western language. Most Iraqi Muslims are members of the Shiites (Shi'a), but there is a large Sunni Muslim population as well, made up of Arabs, Turkmen, and Kurds. Smaller communities like Christians, Jews, Bahá'ís, Mandaeans, and Yezidis also exist, although most Jews have fled Iraq over the last Century. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslim, with about 10% being Shi'a Faili Kurds. Muslim constitue 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%) and Christian or other 3% of the total population of Iraq.[2]

Iraq was an artificial British creation, stitched together from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire. The two key British decisions- to append the Kurdish-dominated Province of Mosul to the Arab-dominated Provinces of Baghdad and Basra, and to continue the Ottoman tradition of governing through Iraq's minority Sunni Arabs, effectively condemned Iraq to a painful future. Throughout Iraq's history, the Kurds have never willingly participated in the State of Iraq. Sporadically during the 1920s, and again

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[1] Liam Anderson and Gateth Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), P.189.

[2] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), Tripp's account is chronological, beginning with the three Ottoman provinces (Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul), which became Iraq following the First World War.
See also Marr Phebe, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2nd Edition, 2003)

during World War II, the Kurds fought stubbornly to assert their independence against central control. The identity of the power at the center has never mattered greatly to the Kurds.[3] From 1961 to 1991, the Kurds conducted what can only be described as a low-level civil war against central authorities. At times, as in 1975, 1988, and 1991, the war reached full-scale proportions. Subsequent to 1991, the Kurdish region has functioned as a *de facto* independent State, complete with political institutions, armed forces, and a functioning civil society. The 'Golden Age' of Iraqi Kurdistan will not be yielded without a struggle.[4] The minimum requirement for the Kurds in a post-Saddam environment is a continuance of the status quo. Realistically, it is difficult to see how it is possible to reintegrate the Kurds back into the State of Iraq given that the Kurds have never been integrated into the State of Iraq. Nor is it difficult to understand why, after the *Anfal* campaign[5] of 1988, and the brutal suppression of the 1991 uprising, harmonious relations between Kurdistan an Area-dominated government in a unified State of Iraq will not be achieved overnight. Viewed from the Arab perspective, the Kurds have always been traitors to the Iraqi State, willing to ally themselves with any foreign power to fight against the Arab population. Few Arabs in Iraq shed tears for the Kurds of Halabja. Many thought the Kurds got what they deserved for betraying the Arab cause.[6]

The sectarian (Sunni/Shi'a) divide has always been more complex. The Shi'as are not a homogenous group, and the degree of geographic integration among Sunnis and Shi'a has always been much greater than between Kurds and Arabs. In the Shrine cities of the south, the Shi'a religious leadership has periodically infused the sectarian divide with political meaning.[7] But the target has traditionally been the Secular nature of all regimes of the Iraqi Republic, and the attempts by the successive regimes, especially the Ba'ath regime, to exert central control over religious life in the south. Beyond this, more

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[3] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes & The Revolutionary Movements In Iraq,* (London: Saqi Books, 2004)

[4] Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development,* ( New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006)

[5] The al-Anfal Campaign also known as Operation Anfal, was an anti-Kurdish campaign led by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein between 1986 and 1989 (during and just after the Iran-Iraq war), and culminating in 1988. The campaign takes its name from Surat Al-Anfal in the Qur'an, which was used as a code name by the former Iraqi Baathist regime for a series of military campaigns against the *peshmerga* rebels as well as the mostly Kurdish civilian population of rural Kurdistan.

[6] Wadie Jwaideh, p.188.

[7] Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2004)

radical Islamic groups, such as al-Dawa and SCIRI, have made clear their intentions to spread, by violent means if necessary, the Islamic Revolution. To the extent that the sectarian divide has become politicised, it threatens the unity of the Iraqi State. The return of perhaps 400,000 religious radicals from Iran will serve to fuel the fire. However, the extent to which religion has become politicized within the Shi'a population as a whole is probably limited. Historically, Shi'a discontent has focused on the perpetual Sunni dominance of all positions of power within the Iraqi State.

Resolving the Kurdish problem and sustaining Sunni hegemony have meant that, more often than not, violence has been the key currency of governance in Iraq. The cycle of violence-whether inflicted but the government on dissenting groups or vice versa has escalated in intensity over time. It is no coincidence that Iraq's most brutal leader (Saddam) was also its most durable. It may be that, in its current geographic configuration, Iraq is ungovernable in the absence of a strong, ruthless leader at the head of a powerful, highly centralized coercive State. Over time, growing oil revenues provided the Iraqi State with the resources to penetrate society and further tighten control. This process reached its zenith under Saddam during the 1970s when the Iraqi State, serving the interests of the Ba'ath Party (and thereby, Saddam), came to dominate the political, social, and economic life of Iraq.[8] The elusive quest to forge an inclusive Iraqi national identity was pursued with energetic vigor under Saddam. Existing ties of loyalty were shattered, to be replaced by ties of loyalty to Saddam himself via the Ba'ath Party.[9] The goal was to atomize the Iraqi people, then reconstruct a glorious new vision of 'Iraqi Man', a being that transcended sectarian and ethnic divisions and that owed primary allegiance to the State of Iraq and its 'Great Leader'. This was an epic attempt to create a collective identity for the people of Iraq; a combination of social engineering on a massive scale and liberal doses of violence. But it failed, as had all efforts by previous Iraqi regimes, because it proved impossible to create an Iraqi identity that could bind together Sunni and Shi'a while simultaneously accommodating the Kurds in the north. Displays of national unity have been few and far between. The rebellion against the

[8] Peter Slaugen "Blunder Books: Iraq since Saddam", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 2, (2006), pp. 361-65.
[9] David C Hendrickson, "Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War", *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2005), pp. 7-10.

British in 1920, and dogged defense of the homeland against Iran between 1980 and 1988, solidified Iraq's Arab majority, but did nothing to integrate the Kurds.

Iraq has always been a difficult country to govern. Over time, it has become progressively more difficult, not just because of internal divisions, but also because external powers have found it increasingly difficult to resist interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq. Since the early 1960s, almost every important regional power (including Israel, the Soviet Union, and the US) has, at one time or other, sought to exploit Iraq's internal divisions for strategic gain. Usually this has taken the form of funneling resources to either the Kurds or the Shi'a Islamic parties in order to weaken and destabilize the central regime. Fostering rebellion in the north and south may have served the strategic interests of regional powers, but the Kurds and Shi'a have paid a heavy price for serving as surrogates. The coherence of the State of Iraq has also suffered as a consequence. The immense challenge of creating a shared sense of national unity in Iraq has been rendered virtually impossible by perpetual external interference. [10]

The complex and traumatic legacy of 80 years of Iraqi history will prove difficult to overcome. In the absence of a strong centralized State willing to resort to violence to impose internal stability, it remains to be seen whether Iraq can be held together as a coherent territorial entity. The real problem is, and always has been, that the majoritarian form of democracy in Iraq will terminate Sunni dominance of State structures. No doubt some form of power-sharing arrangement can be implemented that protects the minority Sunni Arab population and guarantees them at least some say in the direction of the State; but any form of democracy will require the Sunnis to cede a sizable quantity of the power and influence they recently enjoyed. Almost overnight, the Sunnis will go from a position of political dominance to one of subservience. This will not be easy to swallow. If history is any guide, the Arab component of Iraq has been most strongly united when the State itself has been faced with an external threat. Initially, the threat was provided by the British (1920), and subsequently by the Iranians (1980-1988). An US occupying force has great potential to achieve the same effect.

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[10] Hanna Batatu, "Of the Diversity of Iraqis, the Incohesiveness of Their Society, and Their Progress in the Monarchic Period Toward a Consolidated Political Structure" in Alber Hurrani (ed), *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* (London: I. B. Tauis & Co Ltd, 1993), pp. 503-505.

**Prospects of Democratic Consolidation**[11]

The question arises in mind what does it take to sustain democracy? If the answer to this question were truly known, presumably the world would be full of stable, consolidated democracies. Optimism during the 1990s concerning the ease with which States with no previous track record of democracy could be 'democratized' has now been forced to confront an uncomfortable empirical reality. Of close to 100 of those countries considered 'in transition' to democracy, less than one fifth are clearly moving in the right direction. The vast majority has either reverted to former levels of authoritarianism, or appears simply to be stuck in a gray area between democracy and authoritarianism and is going nowhere fast. Overwhelmingly, successful transitions have occurred in geographically/culturally specific concentrations (Central Europe, Latin America) suggesting that political culture matters, and that the 'anyone can do it' approach to democratization requires substantial modification.[12] Democracy is apparently more difficult to engineer than previously thought.

**Francis Fukuyama's Model**

An analysis of prospects of democracy in Iraq will be easier by using the model suggested by Fancies Fukuyama, which he discussed in his article "The Primacy of Culture" published in the Journal of Democracy. Some of the difficulties involved are highlighted by him, who advances a (relatively uncontroversial) model of democratic consolidation that envisages "four levels on which the consolidation of democracy must occur."[13] Level one the most superficial level, involves a normative commitment to the idea of democracy, the point being that democracy cannot long survive unless people believe in it, but also that a widespread belief in the legitimacy of democracy is not sufficient to guarantee a consolidated democracy. Below this level, democracy is consolidated at the level of institutions-constitutions, electoral systems, political parties,

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[11] Democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, in a way that means it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an external shock. The notion is contested because it is not clear that there is anything substantive that happens to new democracies which secures their continuation beyond those factors that simply make it 'more likely' that they continue as democracies.

[12] See Thomas Carother, "The End of the Transition Paradigm", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.13, No. 1), (January, 2002).

[13] John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation", *Foreign policy*, (November/December 2002), p-55.

and the like. Level three involves the existence of civil society[14]- spontaneously created social structures (interest groups, an independent media, civil rights groups) that exist outside the realm of State control, and serve to mediate the interactions between individuals and the government. Finally, level four, the deepest level, "includes phenomena such as family structure, religion, moral values, ethnic consciousness, 'civicness', and particularistic historical traditions".[15] This is the realm of political culture.

Two important insights emerge from this analysis. The first is that as we move from level one through four-from the shallow to the deep, so change becomes progressively slower and more difficult to achieve. It is easier to change institutions than it is to change political culture. There is nothing very controversial about this. The second is that democracy cannot be considered fully consolidated until it is rooted in the political culture of a society. Hence, a society can be convinced of the moral legitimacy of democracy, and the appropriate institutional trappings can be put in place, but the real problems are encountered at levels three and for, because these are beyond the level of social engineering.[16] As Fukuyama puts it, "I would go so far as to argue that social engineering on the level of institutions has hit a massive brick wall, the real difficulties affecting the quality of life in modern democracies have to do with social and cultural pathologies that seem safely beyond the reach of institutional solutions, and hence of public policy".[17]

This assessment, depressingly in accord with the empirical evidence of the last few years, suggests that, at best, the consolidation of democracy is a slow, painful process that is only marginally affected by manipulating institutions. It also offers insights into the magnitude of the task confronting democracy builders in post-Saddam Iraq.

While democracy continues to prosper in such unlikely terrain as India, one cannot rule out completely the potential for democracy to take root in Iraq. But by any realistic assessment, the prospects are not good. Fukuyama's idea of layers of democratic

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[14] Civil society is composed of the totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society as opposed to the force-backed structures of a state (regardless of that state's political system) and commercial institutions.

[15] "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", Washington D.C.: The White House, (September 17, 2002), introduction.

[16] Liam Anderson and Gateth Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), P.189.

[17] Gaddis, p-55.

consolidation can help to illustrate some of the difficulties involved. During a four-year military occupation, the US can realistically hope to affect developments at the two most superficial levels identified by Fukuyama - the normative and the institutional. The prospects of a vibrant civil society emerging from the political wreckage of Iraq in so brief a period of time are slim to zero; similarly, the likelihood that democratic norms and values will become embedded in the political culture of Iraq in anything short of decades is remote indeed. The best the US can hope to achieve over a four-year period is to implant democracy at the normative and institutional levels. But even here, there are some serious, perhaps insurmountable, obstacles to be overcome.

**Level one: Democratic Norms**

At level one-the normative level - what evidence is there that the Iraq people will consider democracy to be a 'right', legitimate system of government? Certainly, many prominent figures in the exiled Iraqi Opposition Movements seem convinced of the moral legitimacy of democracy. But most of these figures have lived outside Iraq, many in Western liberal democracies for decades. For example, Ahmed Chalabi, the urbane leader of the Iraqi National Congress, has lived a life of extreme comfort since he departed Iraq in 1956. It would be unsurprising indeed if Chalabi did not accept the legitimacy of a democratic order. But Chalabi, and many other prominent Opposition figures, have existed on a different planet from average Iraqis over the last few decades. Other Opposition groups - SCIRI and al-Dawa, for example, are known to be much more ambivalent, even hostile to the Western-style democracy; and these two groups are going to constitute a much more significant presence in Iraq than are the likes of Chalabi. In deed, the whole question of the future political role of Shi'a religious leaders (which is likely to be significant) raises important concern about the compatibility of Western democratic norms and those of politicized Islam. At the procedural level, the idea of resolving disputes peacefully via the institutional mechanisms of democracy need not create problems, but at the substantive level, democracy is associated with a raft of values such as gender equality, universal suffrage, and freedom of speech that may prove more difficult for the Shi'a religious establishment to tolerate. For Sunni Arabs, the advent of democracy, even at the procedural level, spells the death knell of Sunni dominance over

the Iraqi State. Moreover, the hardcore of anti-Western, anti-Zionist, pan-Arab sentiment has always emanated from the Sunni triangle. It is optimistic to expect Sunni Arabs to accept normatively a democratic system 'imposed' on Iraq by a Western, 'imperialist' power (and, not inconsequentially, a power that is Israel's staunchest ally) and that guarantees their future political subservience in the State of Iraq.

Among ordinary Iraqis, the little information available makes for depressing reading. According to a recent survey, Iraqis are almost completely apathetic about the nature of the political system that emerges after the war. Disturbingly, many seem to long nostalgically for a return to the 'Golden Age' of the 1970s, a period not noted for its political liberalism. One Iraqi said "before the war and the sanctions, our Dinar was strong and our purchasing power was the envy of the Arab World. We want to return to the period of prosperity our parents lived through in the 1970s".[18] Given the immense suffering endured by the Iraqi population over the last 20 years, it is not surprising that stability and survival are the primary concerns of most Iraqis. Esoteric debate about the moral legitimacy of political systems is not a priority. This does not bode well for the introduction of a political system that demands and relies on popular participation.

**Level Two: Political Institutions**

Ordinarily, decisions concerning the type of electoral system, whether to have a presidential or parliamentary system, and the degree of power assigned to the central government relative to the regions, are important, but not matters of life and death. In the case of Iraq, no doubt most interested parties will agree in the abstract that power needs to be shared among the Kurds, Shi'a, and Sunnis (and perhaps, the Turcomen and Assyrians). Such a division of power could be accomplished in a variety of ways. A collegial executive comprising on Shi'a, one Kurd, and one Sunni is an obvious solution. Beyond this, the problems occur. Does each group get a veto over policy decisions, in which case these arrangements is prone to perpetual gridlock; or are decisions made on the basis of majority rule, in which case the Kurds can be permanently outvoted by the Arabs? The template for the former is the arrangement put up for the governance of Bosnia in 1995. Bosnia is an instructive example because it provides a reasonable

[18] "Polls Apart", *The Guardian*, November 11, 2002, at <www.guardian.co.uk>

approximation of the nature of the situation that confronts Iraq, that is, serious ethnic and (potentially) religious unrest with a veneer of stability provided by a Western occupation force. In the case of Bosnia, each of the three major groups (Croats, Bosniacs, and Serbs) is represented in a Collegial Presidency. While the exact process is inordinately complex, each group has an effective veto over all presidential decisions. Combined with a barrage of classic checks and balances, the provisions of the Bosnian constitution provide precisely the sort of strong guarantees that were deemed necessary to protect any minority group. Such a system will need to be adopted in Iraq to safeguard the Kurds. The problem is that in the absence of basic foundation of trust among groups, the system of checks and balances has almost completely paralyzed the central government. By all accounts, the Bosnian constitution has been a disaster for all concerned, and has served to heighten rather than reduce ethnic tensions. Bosnia's most recent elections in 2002 saw dramatic gains for virulently ethnic/nationalistic political parties, which now dominate the political process in the failed State of Bosnia. A continued NATO presence would, in all probability prevent the resumption of serious ethnic violence in Bosnia. The parallels with a post-Saddam Iraq are ominous. The deeper problem with power-sharing arrangements such as collegial executives is that they have a tendency (as in the case of Bosnia) to codify and solidify existing ethnic or religious divisions. Affording constitutional and institutional recognition to the existence of distinct groupings may serve merely to encourage such groups to think and act as distinct entities.[19]

Yet decisions about power-sharing will be straightforward relative to decisions regarding the division of power between central and regional governments. The issue of federalism (the power division between central and local/regional governments) is a political disaster in the making. Once again, there is little disagreement in the abstract about the need for some sort of arrangement for devolving power away from the center. It is clear, however that each of Iraq's groups has a very different conception of what this will look like in practice. Symptomatic of this difference in perception is the proposal by the INC. The INC website advances a none-too-helpful formula for a democratic Iraq with a federal system and a strong central government. But herein lies the problem. This

[19] A further significant problem is that power-sharing schemes cannot just be limited to the political institutions of government.

is probably exactly what a future democratic Iraqi government requires, but to the extent that power is devolved to regional governments, it is taken away from the center, so there is an inherent contradiction between federalism and a strong central government. The INC's formulation is basically a meaningless, lowest-common-denominator 'sound bite', which attempts to obscure the fundamental conflicts that exist among Iraq's various groups on the issue of federalism. To simplify somewhat: the Kurds are unlikely to settle for anything less than the degree of autonomy enjoyed since 1992: the Sunni and secular Shi'a opposition want to retain a strongly centralized State: and the religious Shi'a opposition wants to establish local autonomy in certain spheres (religion, education), but otherwise favors a strong central State. As it stands, the degree of autonomy demanded by the Kurds is far in excess of what the other groups are prepared to tolerate.

The Kurds favor 'Ethnic Federalism', whereby regional boundaries are drawn to coincide with the distribution of ethnicities; other groups (including the Turks) have explicitly rejected this in favor of 'Territorial Federalism', in which regional boundaries may or may not coincide with ethnic/sectarian population distributions. The future battle lines are drawn. The Kurds want clearly demarcated zones of autonomy in which Kurds are the dominant majority and they will fight to include Kirkuk within this autonomous region. Somewhat ambitiously, the Turcomen population numbering perhaps one million, and concentrated in Kirkuk and Mosul have called for the establishment of a Turcomen 'federal unit' to include the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk. This formula is supported by Turkey, and the Turks have declared themselves willing to intervene militarily in the event that Kirkuk is incorporated into a Kurdish autonomous region. Thus far, all those involved in discussions of a Post-Saddam Iraq have simply avoided addressing these explosive issues.

Beyond issues of territorial delimitation, the more basic concern of how to divide power between levels of government has yet to be seriously engaged. Critical issues to be resolved (just to mention two) include the status of religion and the future role of militia forces. In the first case, the problem is not one of religious tolerance-Iraq actually has a relatively good record here, but of the degree of autonomy afforded to the religious establishment in the Shi'a south. The likely demands of the Shi'a, as reflected in the 2002 'declaration of the Shi'a of Iraq', include guaranteed autonomy for 'teaching circles' (the

bawzas), and 'the right to establish independent schools, universities and other teaching establishments and academies'.[20] Historically, organized religious opposition to the central government has emerged from educational institutions; and has been championed by prominent religious scholars. Hostility has traditionally erupted in response to the efforts of avowedly secular regimes at the centre (notably the ICP-supported Qasim regime and the Ba'ath regime) to advance the cause of individual rights and liberties, particularly changes to the status of women and to control the religious establishments sources of revenue and educational infrastructure. It seems likely that after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, Shia'a Islam in Iraq will become radicalized by the return of nearly half a million Shi'a exiles from Iran. The presence in Iraq of some of Shi'a Islam's holiest sites (especially the shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf) could turn Southern Iraq into a magnet for Islamic fundamentalism. The evolving relationship between a hardcore of Islamic fundamentalism in the South and a secular, liberal democracy in Baghdad should be interesting to observe. The key question remains whether Western liberal democracy or organized religion will have greater appeal to the majority Shi'a population.

The question of what to do about the proliferation of private armies in Iraq is critical, but deeply problematic. For obvious reasons, in most federal systems, the armed forces are placed under the control of the central government. Even in Switzerland, one of the most highly decentralized political systems in existence, Article 58 of the constitution States clearly, "the use of the army is a federal matter". A post-Saddam Iraq resembles Afghanistan to the extent that there is numerous well-armed militia forces, each defending particular tracts of territory, and none overly inclined to lay down arms. To give some idea of the likely scale of this problem, it is worth noting that during the war, there were (at least) five separate armies operating in Northern Iraq-not counting Turkish or coalition forces. Add to this the numerous tribal militias dispersed throughout the country, and the magnitude of the internal security problem becomes apparent. But the real problem here will be the two (PUK and KDP) Kurdish forces. In light of the recent historical record of Kurdish/Arab relations, it is inconceivable that the Kurds will simply demobilize their *peshmerga* fighters. Historically, their tenacious military

[20] "Driclaration of the Shi'a of Iraq", June 2002, <www.bab.com>

resistance against central rule is the only thing that has afforded any form of autonomy to the Kurds.

The time will come when the central government will need to enforce the rule of law in Iraqi Kurdistan. How will this be done? To take just one possible example, for most of the 1990s, the Turks have enjoyed an informal right of 'hot pursuit' (the right to cross the Turkish/Iraqi border) in their brutal struggle against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). In fact, for most of the period, Turkish armed forces have occupied parts of Iraqi territory under the guise of fighting a counterinsurgency war. It is very easy to envisage a scenario under which one of the major Kurdish groups would clash with the central Government over whether this should continue or be curtailed. Under this scenario, how is the central government's decision to be enforced? The reality is that the existence of independent, well-armed, battle hardened armies in the north means that central government edicts will be unenforceable. The Kurds may choose to obey, or they may not, but in the latter case, any attempt by the center to enforce the law will result in bloodshed. The broader problem is that the Kurds will need to compromise-especially over the emotional issue of the future status of oil-rich Kirkuk, yet there will be no incentive to so while the Kurds retain their capacity to resist enforcement, either politically, through the exercise of veto power, or militarily, through their *peshmerga*. Additionally, if, as some experts have suggested, the Kurds are legally permitted to retain their armies as militias of a federal unit, why should other units of a future federation not be extended the same privilege? Should SCIRI's militia army, the 10,000-15,000 strong Iranian backed Badr Brigade be afforded the same privilege? Where does this end the only realistic parallel to this sort of arrangement is the situation in Bosnia, where the constituent 'entities' retain their own armed forces and thus, their capacity to resist rule from the center. In practice, this has produced a paralyzed central government that is unable to enforce its will. Today, Bosnia is two separate States in all but name. A similar situation in Iraq would please the Kurds, but it would mean the end of Iraq as coherent territorial entity.

A counterargument could be made, and is made by those optimistic about the future of a democratic federal Iraq, that these are details that can be ironed out at some point through a process of compromise and consensus. Perhaps; but these have not been

prominent sentiments historically in relations between the Kurds and the center. It is also worth noting that when moving beyond the level of detail, the bigger picture provides few grounds for optimism. Federalism is a highly sophisticated form of democracy. Successful federal arrangements presuppose the existence of a stable democratic order. It is unsurprising that almost all real world examples of successful federal arrangements are located in Western Europe (Switzerland, Austria, and Germany, for example) or in the Anglo-Saxon world (the US, Canada, Australia). Beyond this, there are isolated instances of functioning federalism (Brazil, India) but the record is not good. The obvious conclusion is that the requirements for successful federalism greatly exceed those for successful democracy. The basic requirements are much the same (consensus among decision-makers, willingness to compromise, acceptance of the rule of law, a strong independent judiciary to arbitrate political disputes, and so on), but these are required not just among branches of government at the center, but also at different levels of government. Federalism necessarily involves "relatively complex systems of division and sharing of powers and authority", which in turn requires "populations with a supportive, or at least congenial, poetical culture".[21] Summarizing what how considers the "accepted body of knowledge in the field," one of the leading experts on federalism States, "The existence of civil society is vital to the idea of federalism"; furthermore, "ethnic nationalism is probably the strongest force against federalism", and hence "ethnic federations are the most difficult of all to sustain".[22] The problem, then, is that the simplest part of reconstructing Iraq politically will be to get some sort of democracy working. But above and beyond this, mutually acceptable federal arrangements will need to be established that can encompass bitter ethnic divisions and a tense sectarian divide.

But what may prove to be the deepest problem confronting nation builders in Iraq is that Iraq has always been governed by a strong authoritarian center. It may be indeed that dictatorial rule from the center is the logical product of governing an inherently artificial State, riddled with all manner of factional strife. If this is the case, then the elimination of the regime's governing institutions (the Ba'ath Party, various militia groups, security services, and so on) essentially, the institutional 'glue' that holds

[21] Elazar Daniel, "Internatioal and Comparative Fedralism", *PS: Political Science and Politics,* Vol. 26, No. 2, (June 1993)
[22] Ibid, p.193.

together the State of Iraq coupled with a massive decentralization of power from the center to the regions will likely precipitate the beginning of the end for the State of Iraq.

**Level Three: Civil Society**

Civil society can be defined as "the realm of spontaneously created social structures separate from the State that underlie democratic political institutions".[23] These social structures - comprising, among other things, active interest groups, watchdog groups, community associations, and a free press are, according to many, "a necessary precondition of stable democratic intuitions".[24] Others have used the term 'social capital' to refer to the reservoirs of 'trust, norms and networks' that bind the social fabric of a country and in turn, affect significantly the prospect for an effective democratic order.[25] To use an analogy, civil society is the topsoil onto which the seeds of democratic institutions are sown. The quality of the soil determines the likelihood of the seeds germinating.

Much of the current Western analysis of Iraq completely ignores Iraqi history prior to the Ba'ath Party, including the first Ba'athist regime, which seized power in February 1963, and the second, which seized power in July 1968. Both Regimes imprisoned, tortured, executed, or expelled intellectuals and political activists, who had been working to build a civil society and to promote democratic politics.

***The Rise of Iraqi Civil Society***

In deed, the Iraqi nationalist movement that developed following the Ottoman collapse in World War - I exhibited an ecumenical tradition, advocating cultural pluralism, political participation, and social justice. This Iraqi nationalist vision was most evident in the 1920 revolt against British rule in Iraq. Sunni and Shiite Arabs joined forces, praying in each others' mosques and celebrating together their respective holidays. Iraqi Muslims went to the houses of Christians and Jews the largest single

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[23] Francis Fukuyama, "The Primacy of Culture", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (1995), p. 8.
[24] Ibid, p.8
[25] Robert D Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), P.27.

ethnic group in Baghdad at the time of the uprising and insisted that they join protest marches and demonstrations because they were Iraqi citizens like everyone else.

The Hashemite Monarchy installed by the British during a rigged national referendum in 1921 undermined the Iraqi nationalist vision as a 'big tent' which, while recognizing Iraq's predominantly Arab character, would offer cultural and political space to all Iraq's ethnic groups. The dominant Iraqis, or domestically oriented, wing of the nationalists stood in opposition to a smaller, State-supported Pan-Arabist political tendency, which sought to make Iraq part of a larger Pan-Arab State. One of the goals of the Pan-Arabists was to change Iraq's Sunni Arabs' status as a minority in Iraq to a majority once Iraq was only a region *(qutr)* of a larger Pan-Arab State.

The Pan-Arabist tendency rejected pluralist notions of Iraqi political community, instead emphasizing a xenophobic and chauvinist interpretation of Arabism that promoted Sunni Arab domination of Iraqi politics and society. Under the Hashemite Monarchy, the Iraqi Government attempted to inculcate a Pan-Arabist consciousness among Iraqi schoolchildren. The Hashemite Monarchy, which carried the stigma of having been installed by the British, sought to use Pan-Arabism to bolster its legitimacy by stressing its ties to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, of which the Hashemites were the guardians, and its blood ties to the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet Mohammed.

During the 1930s, Pan-Arabists developed proto-fascist organizations such as the al-Muthanna Club and its al-Futuwwa movement, and in June 1941 they participated in an attack on Baghdad's Jewish community. In contrast, the Iraqi nationalist movement developed a broad political coalition encompassing members of all Iraq's ethnic groups, including Sunni and Shiite Arabs, Kurds, Jews, Christians, Armenians, and other minority groups. Iraqi civil society began to flourish with the formation of numerous student and professional associations, including a highly respected legal profession, a vibrant press, artist ateliers, writers' associations, labor unions, and an extensive coffeehouse culture. Political parties such as the National Party, *Jamiyat al-Ahali,* and the Iraqi Communist Party promoted political participation by all Iraqis and emphasized the need to develop an inclusive sense of political community. Iraqis from all the country's ethnic groups cooperated in opposing the British-imposed Constitution in 1924,

organizing the 1931 General Strike against the British, and maintaining solidarity during numerous labor strikes from the 1930s through the 1950s which called for better working conditions. They also organized broad-based uprisings against the Monarchy and the British in 1948 (known as the Wathba) and 1953 (the Intifada).

This nascent civil society expanded greatly after the end of World War II, as large numbers of Iraqis participated in Iraqi politics through the many new political parties, such as the National Democratic and Independence parties formed after the war. With the temporary relaxation of State control, a coalition of Iraqi nationalists and moderate Pan-Arabists competed in the June 1954 elections, running a highly professional campaign and scoring impressive victories in the country's most important electoral districts, including Baghdad and Mosul. Efforts by sectarian elements during the electoral campaign, particularly those from the Ba'ath Party, which was first formed in Iraq in 1952 to separate Arab nationalists from Iraqi nationalists, were unsuccessful, and the electoral coalition retained its cohesion.

During the 1950s, Iraqi poets developed the 'Free Verse Movement', one of the most important innovations in modern Arabic poetry. Similar developments occurred in other areas of literature, such as the short story, and in the plastic arts, particularly in sculpture. Iraqi poets (Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayati, Nazik al-Malaika, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, and Buland al-Haydari), short story writers (Abd al-Malik Nuri, Mahdi al-Saqr), artists (Jawad Salim and Ismail al-Shaikhly), and historians (Abd al-Razzaq al-Hasani and Faysal al-Samir) became famous throughout the Arab World.

Iraqi nationalism received a strong impetus from the regime of Staff Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim (1958–1963), which took power after the overthrow of the Hashemite Monarchy in July 1958. While sympathetic to Pan-Arab concerns, Qasim believed that Iraq needed to address its internal development problems first. Instead of a unitary Arab State, he favored a federated entity, much along the lines of the European Union. Under Qasim, sectarianism disappeared as a key element in recruiting for positions within the State bureaucracy, the military, and other official walks of life. Indeed, Qasim is the only ruler of modern Iraq who eschewed sectarian criteria in ruling the country. His refusal to exploit sectarian divisions for political ends; his focus on

social justice, such as the need for land reform; and his own ascetic lifestyle made Qasim the only truly popular leader since the founding of the modern State. After he was overthrown and executed by the first Ba'athist regime in February 1963, it was discovered that he had no personal wealth, having donated to the poor his military pension and his two Government salaries as Prime Minister and Defence Minister.[26]

Qasim's fate offers many lessons for the current situation in Iraq. Immediately after the July 1958 Revolution, Qasim assembled a cabinet of distinguished Opposition leaders from the Monarchist era, including Kamil al-Chadirji, head of the National Democratic Party, and Muhammad Mahdi al-Kubba, head of the Independence Party. Unfortunately, after consolidating his power, Qasim felt he could dispense with the cabinet, thereby foregoing the opportunity to institutionalize a moderate, non-sectarian Government committed to political pluralism and social reform. While others have argued that Qasim feared a democratic political system because it would allow in either the Pan-Arabists, who had many followers within the Sunni Arab-dominated officer corps, or the powerful Iraqi Communist Party, the fact remains that power corrupts.[27] No matter how well intentioned Qasim was in trying to bring about better living conditions for the Iraqi populace and in eliminating sectarianism in politics, his authoritarian rule, however non-violent, gradually isolated him from the citizenry, facilitating his overthrow in 1963.

### *The Rise of the Ba'athParty and the End of Civil Society*

The Ba'athist regime that came to power in February 1963 and its brutal National Guard Militia foreshadowed the extensive human rights abuses that would characterize the Ba'athist regime that seized power in a July 1968 putsch. Counting petty criminals among its members, the February 1963 regime quickly tried to undo many of the social reforms enacted by Qasim, such as equal rights for women. Shocked by the excesses of its National Guard, a forerunner of Saddam Hussein's security apparatus, the military

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[26] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 116–17.

[27] For a discussion of these trends, see ibid., pp. 109-47; and Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), esp. p. 764 et passim.

toppled the regime in November 1963. Iraq was ruled by a number of weak Pan-Arabist regimes until Saddam, Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, and Ba'athists drawn largely from the rural tribal areas around the town of Tikrit in the Sunni-Arab Triangle of North-Central Iraq seized power in 1968.

This second, or Tikriti, Ba'athist regime was very weak. In January 1969, it hung a group of Iraqi Jews in Liberation Square in downtown Baghdad in an effort, as British diplomatic Correspondents reported at the time, to intimidate the populace. Internal schisms afflicted the Ba'athists until 1973, when the chief of security, Nazim al-Kazzar, tried the last unsuccessful coup attempt. The regime felt so vulnerable that it invited the Iraqi Communist Party, its historical nemesis, to join a national-front coalition, to give the Government greater legitimacy as 'revolutionary' and 'anti-imperialist'. This front was short-lived, as rising oil wealth during the 1970s allowed the regime to initiate an ambitious development plan and co-opt large numbers of middle class and educated Iraqis.

Just when the Tikriti Ba'ath seemed to have consolidated power during the late 1970s, having eliminated the communists by executing party members who had become government ministers in 1978, Saddam ousted Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and seized the presidency in 1979. He then invaded Iran in September 1980 to seize territory from the new Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini. The war was a disaster. Iraq suffered huge human and material losses and probably would have lost the war had it not been for Saudi and Kuwaiti financial support and US Intelligence and military assistance.

When a truce was finally arranged in 1988, the Ba'athist regime faced massive domestic discontent, since lower oil prices prevented it from sustaining the 1970s social welfare State. The seizure of Kuwait in August 1990 was a desperate attempt to buy the support of Ba'ath Party members and security-force operatives by allowing them to plunder Kuwaiti society. Through its so-called Project for the Rewriting of History (Mashru Iadat Kitabat al-Tarikh), the regime sought to undo all the progressive change enacted by the Iraqi nationalist movement until 1963. Saddam began to believe this

project's Iraq rhetoric—namely, that he was a semi-deity foreordained to lead a Pan-Arab State, and that Iraq's military was invincible.[28]

***The 1991 Uprising***

The 1991 *Intifada* almost led to the collapse of the Ba'athist regime. Suddenly the historical memory of the Iraqi nationalist movement reinserted itself into Iraqi political discourse. For the first time in their modern history, Iraqis openly discussed sectarianism. Opposition groups met to develop ways of promoting civil society in a post-Ba'athist Iraq. One of the results was Charter 91, produced at a conference in liberated Kurdistan in 1991, which called for a federated, democratic, and culturally pluralistic Iraq.

The huge exodus of Iraq's middle and upper-middle classes, which has been estimated to comprise as much as 15 percent of the populace—one of the largest expatriate communities in the world—began producing some of the most important works on the need to confront sectarianism, to develop political institutions that would control would-be authoritarian rulers, and to be tolerant of cultural diversity. Qasim's rule was reexamined in view of its lack of corruption and anti-sectarianism. Still, Qasim was criticized for not allowing free, democratic elections. Even Iraq's Jewish community was reexamined in monographs and articles detailing the contributions of the Iraqi Jewish community to Iraqi society. While some Iraqi Jews had been sympathetic to Zionism, the vast majority considered themselves Iraqi citizens and fully integrated members of Iraqi society.

These developments had a powerful impact on Saddam and the Ba'ath. A long series of articles attributed to Saddam and published in the Ba'ath Party newspaper, *al-Thawra,* in April 1991, demonstrated the impact of the intifada and the democratic opposition. For the first time, Saddam himself publicly discussed sectarian differences in Iraq and the role of the Shiite in the 1991 uprising. While Saddam tried to tar the Shiite, Kurds, and other oppositional forces, he did not blame Western imperialism or Zionism for the intifada but recognized that it represented an internally generated movement.

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[28] Eric Davis, "History Matters: Past as Prologue in Building Democracy in Iraq", *Orbis,* Vol. 49, No. 2 (2005), pp. 229-31.

Increasingly insecure over his role, Saddam continued to narrow the social base of his regime. Executions, even of many Tikritis, led him to rely increasingly on his immediate family and clan members. He created what Iraqi sociologist Faleh Abdel Jabar calls "the Family-Party State" *(dawlat hizb al-usrd),* dominated by close family members and tribal associates, and the Ba'athist regime became more an organized crime syndicate than a political party. Saddam's two sons, Uday (1964–2003) and Qusay (1966–2003), acquired ever-greater power, and in desperation Saddam even revived the moribund system of tribalism in the countryside. Tribal sheiks took control of the rural populace, replacing the many Ba'athist leaders killed during the 1991 intifada.

At the same time, a democracy, albeit imperfect, developed in liberated Kurdistan in Iraq's Northern provinces. Landlocked, having no economic resources to speak of and suffering from a blockade from the Ba'athist regime to the south, the Kurdish regional government established a parliament, held free elections, allowed radio and television stations and an ideologically diverse press to develop, and built new schools and hospitals. Infant mortality declined and educational levels rose, while in Ba'athist-controlled areas, the opposite occurred. The Kurdish experience clearly demonstrated that, once freed from Ba'athist repression, Iraqis were perfectly capable of ruling themselves.

In Iraq, the process begins from a position of sowing seeds onto concrete. The golden age of Iraqi civil society occurred under the latter years of the monarchy. Even then, this was a civil society comprised of elites, which never penetrated the vast majority of the population. Since 1968, when the Ba'ath assumed power for the second time, civil society in Iraq has simply ceased to exist. The nature of totalitarian regimes is such that the elimination of civil society is consciously pursued by the regime, because the existence of autonomous social structures beyond the direct control of the State is perceived as a threat. No one should underestimate the effectiveness with which the Ba'ath regime succeeded in shattering any vestige of civil society that may have lingered on beyond the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958. In terms of social structures beyond the control of the regime, almost all have been dismantled. This atomization of the Iraqi people which included a concerted effort to inculcate in the young a sense of loyalty to the regime more fundamental even than family ties cannot but have had a devastating

effect on future prospects for the emergence of civil society. At the same time, after 1991, the regime fortified certain structures. In particular, the 1990s witnessed the birth of 'neo-tribalism' in Iraq, a strange perversion of traditional tribal values coupled with the channeling of favours and material benefits to certain tribal groups at the expense of others. Viewed optimistically, the tribes could provide some form of stability in post-Saddam Iraq. Many tribes, for instance, span the sectarian divide and thus serve to integrate rather than divide the Arab population of Iraq. More realistically, the existence of multiple, heavily armed tribal groups used to operating relatively free from direct central control could degenerate into a large scale version of Afghan war-lordism.

Nurturing the seeds of civil society in Iraq will be a long and painful process. It will involve providing a social, economic, and political context conducive to the emergence of moderate groups, such as trade unions, professional associations, and political parties committed to the democratic process; at the same time, it will also require the US to make difficult decisions about how to deal with 'immoderate' groups, such as Islamic fundamentalists, anti-Zionist groups, or, more pertinently, anti-American groups.

**Level 4: Political Culture**

At the deepest level, political culture encompasses factors such as religion, moral values, ethnic consciousness, and the like. This is the deeper soil within which the germinated seeds of democratic institutions establish strong, durable roots. This is the deepest level at which a democracy must become embedded in order to be considered fully consolidated, and it is a level that is beyond social or political engineering. In Fukuyama's words, "Culture can be defined as a rational, ethical habit passed on through tradition".[29] Culture does not change rapidly, but over the course of generations. At this level, of course, uncomfortable questions arise about whether the norms and values associated with the Western liberal democratic tradition are even compatible with the norms and values of an Arab Islamic society. This is a complex debate, and one that cannot be proven either way. But empirically, the record of stable democracies in the Arab world is not good. In 2001, the highpoint of democracy in the world, 121 (63

[29] Fukuyama, P.8

percent) of the world's 192 countries had democratically elected governments. Of the 16 Arab States, none was democratic. Nor has an Arab State ever been governed which, under the monarchy, at least maintained a reasonable pretense at being democratic. But in no sense did democracy penetrate into the culture of society. At best, one might describe it as an elected oligarchy. The record of Islamic countries is slightly better. In 2001, of the 45 countries with Muslim majorities, 11 had democratically elected governments. Note, however, that this figure comprises countries like Nigeria, the democratic credentials of which are marginally convincing at best.[30].

None of this is to argue that an Arab or Islamic democracy is inherently oxymoronic, but rather to highlight the magnitude of what needs to be done in Iraq. The creation of a successful, consolidated democracy in Iraq would dwarf America's achievements in Germany or Japan. It would be history's first fully functioning, consolidated Arab democracy. For democracy to survive and prosper in Iraq will require a massive commitment on the part of the United States. Iraq (with the exception of Iraqi Kurdistan) has enjoyed nothing resembling a functioning civil society since the early 1950s, and has never had a democratic political culture. More often than not in Iraq's history, political disputes have been resolved through the use of violence rather than at the ballot box. Iraq is not a latent democracy, waiting to explode into life the moment the shackles of oppression have been cast aside. Civil society and a supportive political culture will need to be created from scratch and this will take time-generations perhaps.

[30] Liam Anderson and Gateth Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), P.189.

# CONCLUSION

At present, it is very difficult to predict about the future prospects of democracy in Iraq at present. Iraq has a great history with great civilization. It has the potential to become an advanced country of the region. It possesses the capability to become a leading democratic country of West Asia, once the security issue and various contemporary problems solved. But, needless to say, it is not an easy task. If the insurgency cannot be defeated, or at least contained at manageable levels, then there is obviously no chance of democracy taking root in Iraq any time soon. Civil war remains a very real possibility, perhaps more of a probability at this point. The magnitude of the challenge and dilemmas faced by the Bush Administration is, therefore, immense. In a November 2003 speech to the National Endowment for Democracy, President Bush reiterated his commitment to democratizing Iraq; while recognizing that it would be a "massive and difficult undertaking," he argued, "it is worth our effort, it is worth our sacrifice, because we know the stakes. The failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the world, increase dangers to the American people, and extinguish the hopes of millions in the region. Iraqi democracy will succeed". If Iraqi democracy does succeed, it will be a stunning achievement for the Bush Administration; if it does not, the negative repercussions will be felt in Iraq and the West Asia as a whole for decades to come.[1]

In the best-case scenario, an American withdrawal would provide the Iraqi Government with increased legitimacy and support. Similarly, though the insurgency is a complex amalgam of forces ranging from criminal gangs to Sunni fundamentalists, there is undoubtedly a significant nationalist element that fights, because Iraq is under occupation. If this is the case, then the insurgency will grid as long as the US troops remain, and, once again, their continued presence becomes part of the problem.[2]

The Bush Administration's push for elections resulted in the United States effectively losing control over the political process. It is one thing to maintain veto power over appointed governments, such as the IGC and the IIG, but the United States cannot simply impose its will on an elected government. The greater the American interference,

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[1] Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 236.

[2] See Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon", *Foreign Affairs,* Vol.85, No.2 (2006), pp. 45-47.

the less legitimacy the government will have; the less legitimacy, the greater the opposition, including among the Shi'a, whose leader, Ayotollah Sistani, has skillfully played the democracy card to advance Shi'a, interests much to the chagrin, it must be admitted, of the Bush administration.

Assuming the US troops will depart at some point in the near future, the key question becomes if, and for how long, Iraq can survive as a democracy thereafter. On the positive side of the ledger, Iraq's most influential politicians Ayatollaha Sistani apparently sees no inherent contradiction between his interpretation of the tenants of Islam, and democracy as a mechanism for producing Government based on the will of the people. Similarly, the fact that a sizeable portion of the Iraqi people voted in an election conducted under extremely challenging circumstances suggested that there is considerable enthusiasm among Iraqis for participating directly in the political process. On the negative side, it is, at best, a mixed blessing that the guardian of democratic procedures in Iraq is himself an unelected Ayatollaha. Moreover, Sistani's support for majority rule apparently dose not extend to support for other established democratic principles, such as protection of minorities. Sistani has, in fact, made it very clear that he is strongly opposed to the provision in the TAL (Transitional Administrative Law) that affords the Kurds a de facto veto over the Permanent Constitution.[3] One might be excused for suspecting that Sistani's support for democracy is pragmatic rather than principled, as he strategically supports a procedure that effectively guarantees shi'a rule while opposing procedures that dilute the power of the Shi'a majority. It remains to be seen if the value of the democracy supercedes the value of protecting one's group's interest, whether for Sistani or others in Iraq.

Interpreting the election as evidence of a deepening attachment to democratic norms on the part of Iraqis is also problematic. Almost certainly, the turnout figure quoted in most media sources (between 55 and 60 percent) was exaggerated. This figure was a percentage of eligible (that is, registered) voters, not total Voting Age Population (VAP). Turnout figures the world over including in the United States are measured as a percentage of Voting Age Population (VAP), and using that metric in Iraq places the

[3] The TAL actually provides for two-thirds majorities in any three provinces to reject the permanent Constitution.

actual turnout figure at somewhere between 40 and 45 percent. Given low turnouts in many democratic countries, perhaps not too much should be made of this. But if the foundation of democracy includes norms and values such as compromise and tolerance, along with transparency, there are reasons to be cautious that democracy in substance, rather than just form, has taken root. The election was marked by the absence of coherent party platforms, the understandable lack of anything resembling a political campaign, and the unwillingness of the Iraqi Election Commission to publish the names of the candidates representing the parties. It would be difficult to conclude, therefore, that Iraqis knew either who are what they where actually voting for. In the absence of available policies and ideologies the clearest pattern was one of voting (or not voting, in the case of Sunni Arabs) along ethnic/ sectarian lines.[4]

The apparent hardening of divisions among the communal groups should not obscure the other defining political trend: fragmentation within each communal group. The elections offered insight into the emerging anarchy of the Iraq's political order. More than one hundred political entities competed, but only five polled greater than one percent of the vote. Of these, two (the Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan, and the Iraqi Turcoman Front) were avowedly ethnic parties, two (Allawi's Iraqi List, and al-Yawer's The Iraqis) were the political vehicles of a single politicians, and one (the UIA), was an incoherent assemblage of groups united by little other than a desire to capitalize on the Sistani endorsement. Of the twelve parties represented in the Assembly, only the people's Union is recognizable as an ideologically coherent political party.

The role of Sistani in piecing together Iraq's diverse shi'a population into an electoral alliance provided a veneer of coherence to an otherwise divided shi'a community.[5] The shi'as are most obviously divided along secular/religious lines.[6] Within the religious community there are divisions between those groups perceived as being

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[4] Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield, "The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?" (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.249.

[5] Indeed, Grand Ayotollah al-Sistani's influence may be the only "glue' that currently holds the UIA together. Otherwise, the UIA is a loose coalition of 23 diverse (mainly Shi'a) groupings that embrace a wide variety of ideological viewpoints.

[6] The trouncing of secular parties such as Allawi's in the election is probably not an accurate indicator of the degree of secularism within the Shi'a community. The religious parties were better organized, and enjoyed the tacit endorsement of Sistani, while the main secular alternative was headed by a former Ba'athist and tainted by its association with occupying forces.

under Iranian influence (SCIRI (Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, al-Da'wa) and those that are distinctly Iraqi (Arab) and nationalists, including groups associated with Muqtada al- Sadr. One two occasions since the occupation began, al-Sadr's Mahdi Army has risen up to challenge both the presence of occupying forces and more importantly, the traditional Shi'a religious establishment in Najaf with its historic ties to Iran. As a consequence, al- Sadr has emerged (with Mahdi Army depleted but still intact), as population. Al- Sadr's message clearly resonates with the young and disposed residents of Baghdad's Sadr City and, as his influence spreads, the likelihood of confrontations with other Shi'a religious groups (SCIRI, for example) increases accordingly.

The Kurds have, to date, maintained unity and cohesion as a group in post war Iraq. Whether this is due to reconciliation between the two major Kurdish political organizations, the PUK and the KDP, or simply a marriage of convenience remains to be seen. The historical animosity, political and personal, of each toward the other may have set aside as both see cooperation as promising greater benefits. Nevertheless, one should not forget the 1990's when the KDP allied with the Saddam against the PUK. The Kurds have benefited greatly from American support and presumably are loath to lose it. If and when the American withdraws, a resumption of competition between the PUK and KDP remains a distinct possibility.

The deepening inter-communal divisions combined with inter-communal fragmentation could, in theory, result in free flowing coalition and cross cutting cleavages. That is tactical alliances across communal lines are possible and those might ultimately lead to breakdown in communal identification and loyalty and a movement towards interest-based representation. Perhaps oppositions to foreign interferences would provide a catalyst as the recent developments in Lebanon suggest. In combination with the pressure from the United States and France, the 'Cedar Revolution' sparked by the assassination of Rafik Harari in Lebanon forced the Syria to withdraw its troops. Even if one assumes that there has been a major breakthrough in Lebanon after thirty years of civil war in terms of bringing an end to the sectarian politics, a few would want like to see Iraq go through the similar experience to reach the desired endpoint.

The reality is that any government in Iraq that is democratically elected will be fractured by communal blocs that seek to advance their interests. There is a basic contradiction between the type of political system that Iraq seems destined for, and, the type of governance the country needs in order deal with the crises it currently faces. At heart, A power-sharing system, complete with ethic/ sectarian quotas for position of power, and veto powers to protect minority communities, seems inevitable, but such a system is, by design, incapable of taking firms, decisive action. For democracy to stand any chance of taking root in Iraq, it must produce a Government that can improve the quality of life for ordinary Iraqis, and sooner rather than later. A power sharing arrangement (democratically elected government or otherwise) is ill-equipped to meet this challenge. Given that this is the case when relatively little is at stake, given that the government has limited access to economic and other resources because these are largely controlled by the fractured, competitive, and antagonistic if and when the Iraqi government does gain access to resources. Quite the opposite: increased access to resources will almost inevitably lead to increased competition, resentment, antagonism and most likely violence.

So much is already apparent in the maneuvering for access to oil revenues, the bulk of Iraq's economic bounty. The violence in such places as Mosul and Kirkuk of course has historical causes, including the legacy of Saddam's 'Arabization' strategy of moving Arabs to the North and displacing Kurds, usually through coercion. But just as that strategy was intended to ensure control over oil, so too is the current Kurdish call for the return of Kurds to Kirkuk, even if it means the expulsion of Arabs. The conflict on the ground is paralleled by political debates over the proper allocation of oil revenues to various geographic and communal areas. Issues of justice and fairness and historical inequities mark these debates, which are thus highly contentious.

The prospects for democracy thus look not so bright in near future. The current structure of the government simply reflects and reinforces and underlying communal competition, and there is little reason to believe that any group will be willing to make a compromise for the greater good. There is no agreement about what the greater good is, and not enough trust between the groups for any to take a risk of appearing weak and thus

being taken advantage of. If in the final analysis, each group believes that it can rely only on its own, the temptation to formalize distinctiveness with separation is inconsiderable.

Thus the question as to whether the separation in a federal format, keeping the veneer of a unified Iraq, or through a division of the country along communal lines remains tricky and hence, unaddressed. A related question concerns the role of violence. For the more violence there is, the greater the likelihood of each group hunkering down and pushing for divisions, which may be a violent process itself. If the only thing that held Iraq together, historically, was violence and its threat from the Sunnis center. Likewise, what is holding it together now is the America presence and once the America leaves, it is unlikely that the center will hold.

Through its intervention, the Untied States opened up possibilities it did not desire and did little to prevent a dynamic from developing that is likely to result in an outcome least desirable from the American standpoints. By refusing its possibility, American officials have been willfully blind. It is too soon to tell whether the consequence will be positive or negative. The United States has no trump cards left to play and no obvious way to change the momentum of events.

**Prospects of Democracy in Contemporary Iraq**

It seems at the moment that the hopes and expectations of the large majority of Iraqis that a more participatory and tolerant society would be created in the wake of the fall of the Ba'athist regime were unrealistic. The inability of the various Iraqi governments since the occupation and the US military forces to suppress a widespread insurgency seems to underscore this view. The hostility of many Iraqis towards the US occupation is cited as further evidence that democracy will not find fertile soil in Iraq. But does the current unrest in Iraq really indicate a lack of commitment to creating democracy?

Public opinion polls show that Iraqis continue to support democracy in large numbers. Iraqi society is highly capable of creating a political community characterized by democratic governance. However, many factors are working against the will of the citizenry, including a wide array of domestic and international forces. Despite the heavy

odds that have been stacked against them, Iraqis continue to press forward to create a more democratic society.[7]

A widespread insurgency was planned by the Ba'athist regime prior to its overthrow. Knowing that the Iraqi Army would be unable to confront the US military superiority, Saddam's regime organized a resistance movement that would fight American forces after the invasion. Large caches of arms and money were planted throughout Iraq, especially in the rural towns and villages of the Sunni-Arab Triangle. These resources were to be used in escalating attacks on American military units intended to sap the US forces' resolve and oust them from Iraq.

Those who ran the family-party state, having lost their political and economic prerogatives, instigated the initial uprising, which also involved members of the massive security apparatus Saddam had created before being overthrown, the Fedayeen and other elite military units loyal to Saddam, and high-ranking army officers and Ba'ath Party officials. However, the insurgency grew much wider in the months following the regime's overthrow in March 2003. Iraq's porous border allowed foreign radicals, many of them Islamist militants, to infiltrate the country and widen the insurgency's social and political base.

Gradually, the insurgency also began to attract rural inhabitants of the Sunni-Arab Triangle. These included young, nationalistic Iraqis not necessarily associated with the Ba'ath Party, many of whom were even hostile to Saddam. In their view, the US occupation threatened to marginalize the Sunni Arab community, which would lose the privileged access to the State it had enjoyed since the Ottoman period. This latter group of Sunni Arabs found much of the American troops' behavior e.g., public interrogations of handcuffed and blindfolded male insurgents shaming and insulting. Other Sunni Arab supporters of the insurgency have come from tribes that were close to the Ba'athist regime, Saddam having hand-picked their leaders in the 1990s.[8]

Despite the insurgency's intensity, large areas of Iraq have remained relatively calm. The Kurds have not joined the uprising. In the South, the vast majority of the

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[7] See, Adeed Dawish "Democratic Attitude and Practices in Iraq, 1921-1958", *Middle East Journal,* Vol.59, No.1, (2005), pp-11-13.

[8] Rick Fawn and Raymond Hinnebusch (eds), *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences* (New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2007.

Shiites have likewise avoided violent confrontation with Iraqi and American security forces. The important exception was Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Al-Sadr is from a prominent clerical family, the son of revered Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, who was assassinated by the Ba'athist regime in 1999. Al-Sadr boldly renamed Saddam City, the impoverished Shiite quarter of Baghdad, as Al-Sadr City, and appealed to unemployed Shiite youth. His Mahdi Army attracted large numbers of those young male Shiites who, like their counterparts in the Sunni-Arab Triangle, envision a bleak future for themselves. But al-Sadr's Militia found itself fighting not only American forces, but also other Shiite groups. These included the Badr Brigade of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which rejects al-Sadr's claim to leadership of the Shiite community.

**US Policy and Iraqi Resistance**

To understand why the insurgency has been able to destabilize Iraq and impede the movement toward democratisation, we need to examine the US policy in Iraq. Ironically, many decisions taken by the former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) after the invasion in March 2003 helped strengthen the insurgency and inadvertently created serious obstacles to a democratic transition. The US military's failure to prevent widespread looting after Baghdad fell sent the message that the United States did not have a well thought-out plan for post-Ba'athist Iraq. Its failure to protect cultural sites such as the National Library and the Iraq Museum, while it did secure the Republican Palace and the Ministry of Oil, sent the same message. Many Iraqis therefore exercised great caution in committing to the US-proposed projects intended to rebuild civil society.

Despite warnings from Iraqi and American Military Experts not to do so, CPA Administrator Paul Bremer dissolved the Iraqi army shortly after the war, putting nearly 400,000 troops out of work. Suddenly unemployed, and in an inflation-plagued economy, many former troops provided weapons to the insurgents or participated in attacks on the US forces in return for money, which they often needed to feed their families. Bremer also dismissed most Ba'ath Party members from Government posts, not appreciating that, far from being committed Ba'athists, and many had joined the Party only to maintain

their positions. Dismissing them denied Iraq the important professional skills of those who had been Ba'athists in name only.

Nor did the CPA confront the large unemployment problem that developed after the war. While rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure including potable water, electricity, and sewage treatment was crucial, much of the funds designated for rebuilding Iraq would have been better directed towards a comprehensive, New Deal-type, public-works and education program that would have provided Iraqis with immediate employment. Removing garbage and sewage, painting and repairing schools, and providing schoolchildren with lunches would not only have provided a source of income and have sent a message of hope to Iraqis, but also would have undermined support for those seeking to subvert democratisation. In other words, a large portion of the billions of dollars that were allocated to Iraq would have been better spent at the grassroots level rather than on projects for short-term benefits.

While Bremer and the CPA received high marks from many Iraqis for efforts such as promoting new organizations designed to protect women's rights, they were also criticized for being too removed from the citizenry. The CPA did not fully utilize micro politics i.e., direct contact with Iraqi communities to solicit their views on their country's future. One official who did adopt this approach was Lt. General David Petraeus, who vigorously pursued contacts with tribal leaders and notables in and around the Mosul area under his command. His policy received high marks from Iraqis.

The CPA did not attempt to develop these close contacts with the Sunni Arab community or sufficiently reassure Sunnis that they would not be discriminated against in the post-Saddam political order, even though they would need to share power with the Shi'a and the Kurds. Such reassurances would have helped to offset Sunni Arab hostility to the CPA. By not cultivating prominent Sunni Arab leaders in rural and tribal areas, the CPA failed to make these areas less fertile ground for ex-Ba'athists and foreign militants.

For several months, the CPA likewise ignored the Hawza, the loosely-knit association of Shiite clerics, until Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani began to raise political demands during fall 2003 that ran counter to the CPA's goals. Al-Sistani was forced to enter politics not just by the United States' neglect of the Shiite community's interests, but also by the challenge posed to the Hawza's authority by al-Sadr. Al-Sadr's supporters

felt that the Shiites were not adequately represented in the post-Saddam political planning and opposed the dominant Hawza view that religion and politics should be largely separate. While most of the Hawza wanted to limit the clergy's involvement in politics to being consulted by the government on matters relating to education and personal-status law, al-Sadr's followers want an Islamic State in Iraq. By not engaging the more moderate Shiite clergy early on, the CPA created an opening for al-Sadr, justifying his claim that once again Iraq's Shiites were being left out of the corridors of power.

Iraq's current political problems cannot be attributed solely to the insurgency and the CPA's political decisions. Because the post-Ba'athist Sunni Arab community had no recognized political authority, it was difficult for the CPA, and it remained difficult for the IIG, to identify interlocutors with whom to negotiate on political interests and creating new political institutions. The current Government of Nuri al Maliki has also not been able to resolve those issues. The struggle between the Hawza and the Sadrists also initially prevented the Shi'a from being able to speak with one voice. The Kurds insist that they be given strong, constitutionally specified protections that will prevent Baghdad from engaging in the type of attacks on Iraqi Kurdistan that have characterized many Arab Governments in the past. However, al-Sistani and the Hawza oppose a Constitution that gives the Kurds the types of guarantees that would amount to veto power over national policy decisions. In short, contention among Iraq's political elites constitutes another serious impediment to democratisation in Iraq.

But Iraqis' socio-political behavior at the grassroots level tells a story beyond the ethnic divisions so often used to characterize Iraqi politics. There was a massive flowering of the institutions of civil society after the overthrow of Saddam's regime. The Iraqi Communist Party's People's Path soon reappeared in Baghdad, followed by more than two hundred newspapers and magazines in Arabic, English, and the languages of Iraq's major minority groups. Labor unions began to reorganize legally for the first time since the early 1960s. Iraqi women started a large number of organizations to protect rights that they had already won earlier, in the twentieth century. A large number of literary groups were formed, and numerous artists' groups and experimental theater troupes appeared in Baghdad. The latter count many Iraqi youth among their members, indicating that support for democracy extends beyond those older Iraqis who are

conversant with pre-Ba'athist civil society. Many of these new organizations are inter-ethnic in membership. Of great importance as well to a nascent Iraqi civil society is the reemergence throughout Iraq of a coffeehouse culture. It is in this informal institution that the political and cultural ideas of the day are discussed and debated.

**The Iraqi Understanding of Democracy**

Many Western analysts are perplexed that the post-Ba'athist process of democratisation in Iraq has not proceeded in a more positive direction. They are confused by the widespread hostility towards the United States' occupation of Iraq. However, Iraqis increasingly view the post-Ba'athist occupation of their country not as a vehicle for democratisation and progressive change, but as a mechanism for domination of Iraq by the United States and its allies. For many Iraqis, 'democracy' has become a code word for using Iraq to remake the West Asia in the United States' image. They fear that through this 'domino democracy', the United States actually is seeking to enhance its strategic interests in West Asia is using this pretext to put pressure on neighbors such as Syria and Iran to enhance Israel's power in the region, and to control Iraq's oil.

Given this background, it is not difficult to see how, ironically, former Ba'athists have been able to argue that, for Iraq, democracy is not culturally authentic (Ghayr Asil) and does not accord with Iraq's national character and historical traditions.[10] In authoritarian discourse, whether that of ex-Ba'athists or Islamist radicals, democracy is painted as an imported form of rule designed to suppress Iraq's national aspirations. That is why, in order to promote democratisation, the discourse of democracy in Iraq has to be restructured so that it cannot be used by those political forces that seek to reintroduce authoritarian rule in order to undermine progressive change.

One of the problems when discussing democratisation in Iraq is that everyone assumes a uniform definition of the term 'democracy'. Here again, history matters. In the West, definitions of democracy as applied to Iraq have largely been derived from what has often been referred to as a Neoconservative understanding of the term i.e., a notion of the State's role being limited to protecting civil liberties and the rule of law, not one that is extensively involved in the market or that provides social welfare benefits. This Neoconservative definition of democracy does not resonate with a sizeable segment of

the Iraqi populace, and it is inconsistent with the term as understood by the mainstream of the Iraqi nationalist movement.

When asked about their vision of the future, Iraqis have stressed three values or issues above all in poll after poll: first and foremost, a desire for security; second, regular employment and a decent standard of living; and third, a democratic form of government. Thus, in keeping with the use of the term by the Iraqi nationalist movement before the first Ba'athist regime suppressed it in 1963, the term 'democracy' means self-determination (i.e., no foreign domination of Iraq), social justice, and anti-sectarianism (social tolerance). Elections and representative institutions are not the critical first issues that come to mind when democracy is mentioned.

In Iraq, what is really meant by democracy is 'social democracy', a form of democracy that implies much greater State involvement in a society's political economy than the Neoconservative model would allow. It also emphasizes a desire to promote processes and institutions that fight, rather than promote, sectarianism. It is this strongly felt desire that Iraq never return to the sectarianism of the Ba'ath that offers the greatest hope for a pluralist Iraq and ultimately a respect for democratic institutions.

One of the main problems facing contemporary Iraq is the lack of trust among Iraq's main constituent ethnic groups. This mistrust is less of a primordial reflection of an 'Iraqi national character' than the legacy of forty years of Ba'athist and sectarian rule. Restoring a longer historical memory could help to overcome that legacy.

Lack of trust does not just imply problems in creating political coalitions, especially among different ethnic and regional interests, but it also relates to the issue of political self-confidence, of making Iraqis feel capable of ruling themselves without the need for an authoritarian ruler such as Saddam to maintain political stability. A positive historical memory can also help promote trust among ethnic groups and overcome feelings of a lack of self-confidence.

The images we possess of the current political situation in Iraq are somewhat distorted. To be sure, kidnapping, political violence and sabotage of oil facilities are ongoing and present a serious threat to political stability. Kurdish demands for minority guarantees in a Permanent Iraqi Constitution have yet to be worked out. However, there is another reality that has been largely being ignored by the Western media. Very little

mention has been made of the myriad examples of Iraqis who, since the fall of Saddam and the Ba'ath, have been actively involved in civic life, such as establishing municipal councils, publishing newspapers and journals, and forming artistic organizations and who are committed to working for democratic change. Little mention has been made of public opinion polls in Iraq that show consistently strong support for the idea of creating a democratic Iraq. There are numerous English-language websites on Iraq, including translations of Iraqi newspaper articles, which do note these phenomena, but they are underreported in the Western press. And, of course, the substantial participation of the Iraqi electorate in the January 30, 2005 National Assembly elections is yet another indicator of the populace's commitment to democracy.

**A Historical Analysis**

In post-Ba'athist Iraq, historical memory could have a powerful political impact by demonstrating four elements critical to the process of building democracy. First, the pre-1963 Iraqi nationalist movement was characterized by a history of cross-ethnic cooperation, including a wide variety of social and political efforts by Sunni and Shiite notables prior to World War I to create a national education system, and by Shiite clerics to protect Iraq's independence from British occupation forces both during and after that war. Nationalist demonstrations against British influence in Iraq throughout the period between the 1920s and 1958 were characterized by cross-ethnic cooperation and devoid of significant sectarian influences.[9]

Second, Iraq has a history of associational behavior. Already before World War I, Iraqis demonstrated a strong desire to join political and civic-minded organizations. One of the most impressive indicators of associational behavior was the establishment of a large number of labor unions beginning in the late 1920s.[10] These unions supplemented preexisting artisan associations in many Iraqi cities and towns, which themselves formed a national association in 1930. Especially noteworthy about those Iraqi labor unions, whether in the oil sector, the state railways, or the port of Basra, were their ethnic

[9] Stephen Blackwell, "Between tradition and transition: State Building Society and Security in the Old and New Iraq", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.41, No.3, (2005) pp-445-46.
[10] Eric Davis, "History Matters: Past as Prologue in Building Democracy in Iraq", *Orbis*, Vol.49, No. 2, (2005), pp. 229-44.

diversity and the solidarity that members maintained during lengthy strikes, despite the fact that the majority had little education and were often illiterate.

Third, a historical study of the nationalist movement indicates a desire to promote cross-ethnic and regional communication, namely the yearning to create a public sphere. Here we see, beginning with the period after the so-called Young Turk Revolt of 1908 against the Ottoman regime, a flourishing of newspapers and journals, indicating that Iraqis wanted to share political, social, and cultural views.

Fourth, the nationalist movement encouraged widespread artistic creativity and innovation. The enormous strides made by Iraqi artists and writers prior to and after 1963 evidence a desire to challenge tradition, or to reinterpret it, and to maintain porous cultural boundaries, the exact opposite of the effort of the Ba'ath and sectarian regimes, which sought to rigidify such boundaries.What all four processes demonstrate is that the Iraqi nationalist movement, especially its Iraqist wing, involved in Iraqi politics from the early 1900s until being suppressed in 1963, always maintained a commitment to participatory politics, cultural tolerance, and social justice.

Of course, the Iraqi State itself, as well as democracy advocates, needs to take historical memory more seriously. While the Iraqi government's first concern is to suppress the insurgency in order to ensure the long-term success of democracy, it needs to convince Iraqis that democracy will work in their country by restoring historical memory. Government agencies, such as the Ministries of Education, Higher Education, and Culture, and state television and radio could take several steps to mobilize historical memory: For example, rewriting Iraqi secondary-school textbooks and designing new introductory textbooks in the social sciences and humanities at the university level would be a creative idea. Rather than being written by foreign experts, these texts would be written by Iraqis and draw upon modern Iraqi social and political history to elucidate concepts designed to promote better understandings of civic responsibility and democratic politics.

Likewise, the mass media can be used to promote better understandings of the past, with a strong emphasis on folklore. The Ba'ath Party's Project for the Rewriting of History used television effectively to stress Iraqis' common folkloric heritage *(al-turath al-shabi)*. Extremely popular, for example, was a television program called

*Baghdadiyat* (Aspects of Baghdad), which emphasized the folk history of Baghdad's popular quarters and folk poetry and music. The Ba'ath Party created sectarian subtexts when sponsoring folklore, where Qasim had earlier used folklore in a unifying fashion that emphasized ethnic solidarity and tolerance. Iraq's new Government could use folklore to stress the commonalities of Iraq's major ethnic groups and minority populations, as well as to educate the populace as to the unique cultural characteristics of the country's diverse ethnic groups and traditions.

The state could bring together older intellectuals, artists, and political activists to discuss, in nationally televised town meetings, the unity that Iraqis demonstrated following World War I and in the context of Iraq's pre-1963 nationalist movement. Because many intellectuals wrote on political events and processes that occurred prior to 1963, these discussions would not only serve an educational function, but help bridge the political and cultural gap that separates these older intellectuals from a younger generation of Iraqis who have known only Ba'athist rule.

Finally, the state could offer low-cost loans to increase the number of coffeehouses, especially those devoted to promoting poetry, music, and the arts. Historically, the Iraqi coffeehouse has been one of the cornerstones of Iraqi civil society. As a popular Arabic saying goes, "The Egyptians write, the Lebanese publish, and the Iraqis read", Iraq has the capability to become one of the most advanced countries of the West Asia. It has a large and highly educated middle class, a tradition of a flourishing civil society, an agricultural sector whose potential is greatly underutilized, one of the world's great civilisational heritages, and a rich base of oil wealth. Once no longer at odds with its neighbors in the Gulf region, it will be able to cooperate with them to produce serious economic development. The demonstration effect of a functioning Iraqi democracy can have a salutary impact on neighboring authoritarian regimes.

What would an Iraqi democracy look like? Because Iraq is a multiethnic society, it would undoubtedly have a rough-and-tumble quality. Interestingly, with its wide variety of political parties and strong inter-elite competition, Iraqi democracy will most likely resemble Indian democracy. Numerous Iraqi political parties will no doubt vie for power. However, a federated country in which the Sunni and Shiite Arabs and the Kurds as well as other minorities can feel that their traditions are respected and not subject to

state repression, and in which economic development assures every citizen a decent standard of living, will work to offset the political strife that facilitated the rise of the Ba'ath Party and its authoritarian policies.

Creative uses of historical memory will not provide a panacea for Iraq's political problems. However, effective mobilisation of the past, if organised in a straightforward and non-romanticised fashion, can help to inspire Iraqis to regain a sense of civic pride and trust in their ability to forge ahead with democratisation. Historical memory can help deprive those who seek to return Iraq to an authoritarian past of the ability to exploit elements of fear, suspicion, and distrust that are inimical to current efforts at bringing about democratic change.

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