Building the New Iraq: The Role of Intervening Forces

Daniel L. Byman

British and American military forces will find occupying Iraq more difficult than conquering it. Now that Saddam is gone, soldiers must help refugees and the displaced, restore Iraq's battered infrastructure and otherwise heal the ravages of war. But intervening soldiers will have to be more than well-armed aid workers. They will also need to help the new Iraq become democratic and transform its military forces. In addition, Iraq's new leaders (whoever they turn out to be) must be convinced not to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to seek peace with the country's neighbours.

This agenda is ambitious and is likely to encounter numerous obstacles. Coalition forces must reform Iraq's military from top to bottom and, in the interim, secure Iraq from domestic strife. Convincing future leaders to disarm will not be simple either. Iraq's WMD programmes are not solely creatures of Saddam: they also stem from Iraq's strategic weakness and the weapons' popularity in military circles. Democracy will prove hard to build in Iraq, which has little tradition of power-sharing and has a fragmented opposition. Iraq also must survive in a rough neighbourhood. Turkey, Iran and Syria have often meddled in Iraq, and they may do so again if a power vacuum develops. Although many of these challenges are political and diplomatic, military forces will bear the brunt of any failure.

These obstacles make a sustained intervention a formidable proposition. The military and reconstruction costs will be staggering: troop estimates for the first year often run over 100,000, and the final cost of rebuilding and occupation could be well over $100 billion. The military presence may last a decade or more. In addition, coalition forces risk stirring up a backlash against their presence and will be vulnerable to attacks from terrorists. Support from the United Nations, or even NATO allies, may be

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limited, given the stark divide that emerged in both bodies over the US-led military action. The weeks before the war saw the rending of NATO and the marginalisation of the United Nations, even though these bodies have valuable roles to play in a post-Saddam Iraq.

Overcoming these obstacles will require the careful application of both force and diplomacy. Gaining UN support and bringing in NATO troops would increase the intervention's legitimacy and reduce the burden on the United States and the United Kingdom. Political leaders must emphasise to their publics that the occupation will take many years, will be extremely costly and may involve casualties caused by a people they are supposedly liberating. Perhaps most important, Iraqis must be enlisted to play a prime role, in order to minimise charges of imperialism. Failing to take these steps would jeopardise hard-won military gains.

Force objectives and challenges

Simply stated, the goals of intervening forces are to ensure order, to end Iraq's WMD programmes, to help Iraq build a power-sharing system, to reform its military and to transform the regional security environment. It goes without saying that all five are complex and challenging. If Iraq quickly collapses into chaos, many observers will deem the war itself a failure. Yet Iraq is at risk of widespread strife. Already, coalition forces have had to stop looting and confront hostile crowds. Iraq's national identity was historically weak at best, and the country's myriad ethnic, sectarian and tribal groups have often fought one another. Iraq has had over 40 uprisings since it was founded in 1921.[1] Indeed, Saddam deliberately pitted different groups against each other, often transforming small grievances into major disputes.[2] Even if communal tension does not rise now that Saddam has fallen, banditry and revenge killings are likely with no government to keep order. Iraq has numerous hotspots where rival tribes or mutually hostile ethnic groups and religious sects uneasily mingle.

Moreover, Iraqi soldiers may turn to banditry or form militias. Before the war, Iraq's military forces were approximately 375,000-strong, along with over 300,000 reserves.[3] If these soldiers are kept in the military, they remain a threat to a fledgling democracy and a tremendous drain on Iraqi resources.[4] Yet the sudden release of several hundred thousands of young men into Iraqi society could provide recruits for warlords or radical groups if they do not find jobs or are otherwise unable to rejoin society. Widespread killings in remote areas, in turn, may create general panic and lead fearful communities to turn to their tribe or ethnic group to defend them.[5] Such a development would fracture Iraq further. Policing these areas, so as to forestall warlordism, will require incisive local intelligence on a country with which occupying forces do not speak

the same language, do not know the local culture and have had little recent contact. Intelligence must also be aggressive, identifying problems early before a spiral of hostility develops.

In particular, coalition forces will have to prevent a land grab by Kurdish forces. Of Iraq's many communities, the Kurdish population – approximately 20% of the country's total – suffered most during Saddam's regime. Baghdad slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Kurds and deported many others. In addition, Saddam's regime has encouraged the sometimes-brutal Arabisation of Kurdish areas, including oil-rich Kirkuk and the vicinity. Now that Saddam Hussein is gone, the Kurds are the best armed and best organised Iraqi force, having tens of thousands of fighters under arms. Left to themselves, they could easily take northern parts of Iraq that historically had large Kurdish populations, including Kirkuk. So far, Kurdish leaders have shown restraint, but any land-grab would lay the foundation for a future conflict between the Kurds and a new central government in Baghdad.

Since the primary purpose of regime change was to deprive Saddam's regime of destabilising WMD, the successful completion of regime change requires that the future Iraqi regime be convinced not to seek WMD. It will be impossible for coalition forces to eliminate the most essential part of Iraq's unconventional weapons infrastructure: its skilled scientists and engineers. Thus, a future regime will have the capability to quickly rebuild existing programmes, particularly biological ones. Historic enemies such as Iran have robust WMD programmes, as do potential enemies such as Israel. In addition, Iraq's conventional weakness vis-à-vis Turkey – now greater than at any time in recent history – will make WMD attractive as an equaliser. Moreover, chemical weapons are widely perceived in Iraq as having been instrumental in its victory over Iran, giving them considerable cachet in military circles. Given the country's legitimate security concerns, forcing Iraq to end its WMD programmes permanently is likely to be unpopular, even with Saddam's regime gone.

Of even more concern than post-conflict security problems is the task of political reconstruction. The Bush administration has declared that it will help Iraqis build a democracy to replace Saddam's tyranny. This lofty goal is sensible, but the difficulties are many. Alina Romanowski, a senior US government civilian official working on the Middle East, contends that 'Iraq presents as unpromising a breeding ground for democracy as any in the world'.[6] Chris Sanders, a Middle East expert, notes that 'there isn't a society in Iraq to turn into a democracy' – a view shared by a wide variety of experts interviewed by journalist James Fallows.[7] Even if all goes well, it will take time for new leaders to emerge because Iraq's civil society is devastated, and its communities have not learned democratic practices.[8]

Iraq's military must also be reformed. Its intelligence and security forces are fundamentally undemocratic: their primary purpose was to perpetuate a brutal dictatorship.[9] At the very least, most of Iraq's intelligence services, elite military units such as the Republican Guard, and praetorian elements such as the Special Republican Guard, have to be scrapped.[10] Unfortunately, a limited purge is not enough. The problem goes deeper than the elite units and intelligence services, requiring that the regular armed forces should be dramatically cut and should play, at most, a limited role in Iraq's security the near and medium term. Iraq's regular armed forces were less loyal to the Ba'ath regime than were the Republican Guard and other select units, but most of the senior officers were still highly politicised. Upon taking power in 1968, the Ba'ath purged over 2,000 senior and mid-level army officers to ensure their control.[11] Subsequently, the Ba'ath took particular pains to subordinate the military to its agenda.[12] As a result, the level of 'Ba'athisation' (or, more accurately, 'Saddamisation') is deep. Loyalty to Saddam's regime is not the only problem. Many officers exiled by the Ba'ath regime were heavily influenced by a highly nationalist and militaristic ethos that would be at odds with a multicultural and democratic Iraq. The key year for judging an officer's likely bias is not 1968, when the Ba'ath took power, but rather 1958, when radical nationalists toppled the monarchy.

Iraq's military is also tied to the dominant position that Sunni Arabs and particular tribes enjoyed in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The military leadership outside the uppermost levels is composed primarily of Sunni Arabs from several selected tribes. As a result, even if the top echelon were eliminated, it would remain primarily under the control of only one of Iraq's communities. Not surprisingly, Iraqi opposition voices consider the argument that most of Iraq's regular army can be trusted to play a constructive role in a post-Saddam Iraq to be 'without merit' and note that senior officers are 'compromised', with the result that the army 'cannot and should not be trusted with national politics'.[13]

The level of 'Ba'athisation' is deep

A new security environment will not materialise without the help of coalition forces. In their absence, Iraq's neighbours are likely to meddle once again in Iraqi affairs. During the Ba'ath era, both Turkey and Iran sent their own forces into Iraq and supported anti-regime insurgencies. Now that Saddam has fallen, Turkey might intervene to counter Kurdish guerrillas or simply to crush any possibility of a Kurdish state. Iran might be motivated by lingering fears of a powerful Iraq to use the Iraqi exiles it has armed and trained to intervene.[14] In addition, Tehran may fear that the new regime in Baghdad will work closely with Washington

to counter Iran. The question remains how to establish regional stability that survives the exit of coalition forces.

Requirements of the force

These five tasks require a large number of capable military forces. The demands will be particularly heavy in the first two years or so, until Iraqis can assume more of the burden themselves. It will be imperative for intervening forces to foster a benign cycle, such that the expectation of security helps create the possibility of security over the long term. This itself will take time and manpower. Further, the window of opportunity for action to keep order may be exceptionally small. For example, Kurdish steps to reclaim lost homes and land may create lasting resentment among other Iraqi communities. As Iraq's army melted under coalition attacks, weapons were probably dispersed widely. Moreover, even limited revenge killings could create lasting bitterness; stopping these is essential for assuring all communities of their continued safety. In addition, coalition forces must act swiftly to gain control over Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological programmes to ensure that WMD do not find their way into the hands of any would-be Iraqi warlords, foreign rogue governments or terrorist groups. Accordingly, intervening forces may have to retain decisive rapid-reaction capabilities to quell destabilising provocations as well sustain a large commitment to the region.

The forces initially required may run as high as 100,000 for the first year, and to start with there will be no substitute for well-trained, NATO-quality troops.[15] Alongside election monitors, they will have to ensure that elections are held without coercion, provide security for election workers and new democratic public officials, and blunt any demagogic efforts to stir up communal violence. Such broad-gauged support for democracy may involve taking sides in local and national disputes by backing one set of candidates against those who use violence. This, in turn, would call for the credible threat of the use of force, which means a sufficient number of troops and commensurate force protection. After the first year (or perhaps as early as six months if all goes well), the number of troops can decrease significantly, and non-NATO-quality troops can be more easily substituted. Over time, as new Iraqi forces are trained, they can begin to play an important role while outside forces are drawn down to 20,000 or less.

All may not go well, however, and intervening forces should be prepared to reinforce troops in Iraq. Problems that would require more forces include: massive reprisals and score-settling that creates lasting 'bad blood'; Iranian or Turkish cross-border intervention, either with their own forces or by supporting insurgents; and recalcitrant local warlords who hinder the distribution of relief or preparations for elections. In addition, progress on training a more professional Iraqi police force and a new Iraqi

army may prove slow, necessitating a continued large-scale presence for longer than initially anticipated.

The size of Iraq's forces should be at least cut by half, ideally by two-thirds.[16] Iraq has legitimate security needs, but it does not need over 600,000 active duty and reserve troops to defend itself against Iran (and even such a large force would be ineffective against Turkey's far more capable military). An Iraq with 150,000 well-trained troops would have more than enough forces for most security needs, particularly if it were part of a regional security system and had some sort of security ties to the US. Further, failure to dramatically reform the military would jeopardise any nascent democratisation in Iraq. Thus, Iraq's military also needs to be instilled with a doctrine of civilian control to replace the militaristic pan-Arabism of Saddam's 26-year regime. This can be done in part through the education of new recruits and retraining current officers. But it will also require the thorough purging of any officers who do not respect civilian control. As this will generate tremendous short-term resentment, it should be done when large numbers of coalition forces remain in the country. Ideally, Iraq's military forces would be primarily defensive in nature.[17] Several steps would assist in ensuring that this be the case.

- Minimising any systems and forces that offer strategic mobility.
- Reducing the number of tank transporters, which enable the projection of Iraq's forces outside its borders.
- Abolishing conscription.
- Developing a doctrine that emphasises defence.
- Encouraging the bulk of forces to be reserves, making it difficult to engage in a sudden surprise attack.[18]

Until the old guard of Sunni officers are removed, it will be far more difficult to foster a new, more professional, military culture. Even if they were to embrace non-Sunni Arab recruits, it would take decades for members of Iraq's other communities to reach senior positions if professional qualifications were the sole guide. Although inserting less-qualified non-Sunnis into the leadership will make Iraq's forces less effective in the near-term, it will make them more representative and less a source of fear or conflict. Leading officers should be pensioned off because of their association with Saddam's regime. In addition, the secondary tier – which was also selected in large part for its loyalty – should be encouraged to retire, to ensure that new ideas regarding civilian control and non-aggression permeate the senior ranks.

Coalition forces should deploy throughout the country in an effort to demonstrate their intention to maintain order. It is vital to establish the

perception of security from the start: indeed, the perception is arguably as important as the reality in reducing tensions and laying the groundwork for future security. A high degree of visibility will help enhance this perception. If Iraq experiences a power vacuum, local warlords or other unsavoury actors may fill it. In Afghanistan, warlordism arose in parts of the country that Western forces were not willing to patrol. A dispersal of forces, however, will raise force-protection concerns and create the likelihood that intervening forces will lose members to terrorists or others opposed to an outside presence.

Forces deployed in Iraq should be highly mobile, able to back up dispersed police, civil affairs personnel and others in the event of a crisis.[19] In politically vital areas (for example, Baghdad) or potentially dangerous ones (such as Tikrit, Saddam's home town) armour should be deployed to intimidate potential belligerents and reassure fearful citizens. Even small numbers of coalition troops should be sufficient to deter outright military intervention from Iran, whose military is in poor shape.[20] Similarly, deterring Turkey from intervening is a political, not a military, task. Turkish forces are highly unlikely to engage in any conflict with their NATO allies. Forging agreements between Turkish and Kurdish leaders with an eye towards avoiding hostilities and suppressing provocative anti-Turkish guerrilla operations out of Iraq should remain US priorities.

Intervening forces may, however, seek to patrol borders in order to regulate the flow of refugees, to prevent arms smuggling, or to apprehend terrorists.[21] Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran are porous and go through mountains and swamps. Completely sealing off the borders from illicit activity is not realistic. Moreover, any border patrol efforts must take care to respect the sensibilities of neighbouring states, to avoid inadvertently encouraging meddling. US forces, for example, could patrol near the Turkish border without angering Ankara, but similar patrols near the Iranian border could backfire and make Tehran more suspicious of a new regime in Baghdad, and thus more prone to intervene. Necessary patrols would be better handled by other Western military forces.

Supporters of a strong military in Iraq and elsewhere may contend that the 'weak' Iraqi army envisaged may be too weak, by itself, to ensure Iraq's legitimate security needs – particularly if Iran engages in an unexpected but still possible build-up. Ideally, Iraq would also be part of a broader regional framework. Kenneth Pollack calls for embedding Iraq 'within a regional alliance system including the Gulf states, the United States, and possibly Jordan and Egypt as well'.[22] Such an alliance system would focus on mutual defence, confidence-building measures, and other means of minimising rivalries and reassuring all states in the region. Creating such a system

would take many years, even if all went well. Accordingly, the United States should prepare for a lasting military presence in Iraq. As it has done in Kuwait, the United States could pre-position significant assets in Iraq and regularly deploy smaller units to exercise and 'fall in' on the pre-positioned equipment. To minimise the size of any footprint in Iraq itself, basing in Jordan, Turkey and Kuwait should also be considered.

A mix of nationalities in the occupying force is essential. Initially, as the United States did the bulk of the heavy lifting during the war, a US commander will be necessary. By the same token, however, as leader of coercive regime change against a sovereign Arab government, the US has drawn the ire of large segments of the Arab population. To deflect and dilute political hostility to the US, the United States should minimise its public leadership role. When possible, competent allied states or cooperative Iraqis should be the face of occupation, even when the United States pulls the levers in the background.

A mix of nationalities in the occupying force is essential

Several US allies have made impressive efforts with regard to developing forces for humanitarian intervention. Canada's forces, for example, specialise in peacekeeping, and the Nordic Brigade and Baltic Battalion could also play valuable roles. Italian *carabinieri* could assist in law enforcement, as they have in the Balkans. Forces from regional states should be used, but only in limited numbers. Realpolitik concerns would probably guide the actions of troops from Turkey and Iran in particular. Jordan might provide small numbers of trained forces, as might Morocco and Egypt.[23] In these cases, however, the level of training is not as high as NATO-quality forces. Politically and operationally, however, it is essential to have Arabic speakers, and forces from the region may be necessary as local liaisons if there are not enough properly vetted Iraqis or enough linguists in the intervening forces.

Over time, Iraqis themselves can – and indeed must – play a greater role. In the first year, this role will be highly limited, as the purging and retraining of the Iraqi armed forces will not be complete. But to minimise the risk of backlash, it is vital to encourage local 'ownership' of the coalition-established security structure as soon as possible.[24] During the first year, then, Iraqi forces should focus on two tasks. The first is liaising with coalition forces to supply them with essential local knowledge. The second is re-establishing themselves as the public face of force, discreetly backed up by coalition capabilities. More particularly, the US and NATO should consider forming mixed units that incorporate Iraqis, particularly for policing. Although this would create coordination and command-and-control problems, it would also guarantee intervening forces abundant local knowledge and reduce the strain on Western military forces.

Challenges and uncertainties

An international force equal to these tasks will be difficult to sustain, and perhaps even to create. Moreover, several factors will imperil its mission. They include the risk of a backlash, the danger of terrorism, strain on military forces and the legacy of the pre-war diplomatic debacle.

The risk of a backlash in Iraq poses arguably the greatest threat to coalition forces. Although most Iraqis appeared to have welcomed the US intervention as of May 2003, this welcome may wear thin over time. In this connection, it is worth remembering the 1992–93 intervention in Somalia, which evolved from a humanitarian mission into coercive peace enforcement. Already, members of the anti-Saddam opposition, particularly Shi'ite members with ties to Iran, have criticised the US role in opposition politics.[25] Over time, Kurdish groups have skewered the idea of a US occupation. Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, declared, 'If we don't accept an Iraqi general, how are we going to accept an American general?'[26] Even those Iraqi leaders who have no personal or ideological opposition to the United States may regard intervening forces as a threat to their power. In Somalia, for example, UN efforts to ensure the distribution of humanitarian relief changed the balance of power among Somali warlords. Those who were powerful under the Ba'ath regime may try to stir up anti-US sentiment to protect this power.

Over the short term, the risk of a backlash is probably overstated. Claims that citizens of the former Yugoslavia, and particularly those of Afghanistan, would never abide foreign military forces in their countries have so far proven false. In addition, warlordism in Iraq is currently an appreciably smaller problem than it is in Afghanistan, Somalia or the Balkans. The long-term scenario, however, is tougher to project. Missteps by coalition forces, or unfulfilled promises regarding elections or communal rights, may inflame nationalist sentiment.

Intervening forces should take several additional steps to reduce a backlash. First, they should seek to remedy the misery of the Iraqi people quickly by ensuring the provision of humanitarian relief. Second, whenever possible intervening forces should work through the United Nations to enhance the legitimacy of the occupation. Third, dispersing military forces would make them appear less confrontational and thus reduce the sense of occupation. Fourth, as quickly as possible, it should be made clear that Iraqis are part of the decision-making and that foreign forces are working with and for Iraqis, not for their own interests. Fifth, transparency is essential. Iraqis and other observers should know what the intervening forces plan to accomplish and the conditions under which they will leave.

Even if there is no popular backlash in Iraq, the risk of terrorism remains high. If occupying forces are welcomed, or at least tolerated, force

protection will be far easier, as they will have support and intelligence from a sympathetic local population – the key to successful counterinsurgency.[27] But even under the best circumstances, some Western forces are likely to die in post-war Iraq. Al-Qaeda has made numerous threats related to the US campaign in Iraq, viewing it as yet another episode of American imperialism in the Middle East. Intervening forces would constitute high-value targets. Radicals are likely to take advantage of the initial power vacuum to infiltrate Iraq and try to enlist Iraqis to their cause. Consequently, force protection will be a major concern – and may risk jeopardising broader goals. Deploying forces to remote parts of Iraq to ensure local security will make the force protection challenge even greater. Dispersing intervening forces virtually ensures some casualties. In dangerous areas where local resentment may be high (for instance, Tikrit), civil affairs personnel and others responsible for liaising with the local population should be backed up by a visible and large outside force. The risk, however, is that force protection measures such as concentrating forces and separating them from the local population may detract from their ability to ensure order in Iraq.

Coalition forces face the risk of over-extension

Coalition forces face the risk of over-extension. The United States, for example, has forces involved in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, or deterrence in Korea, Bosnia, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Djibouti, as well as smaller contingents elsewhere. Deployments required to police Iraq will strain already overburdened forces, hindering other potential missions and leading to morale and retention problems. Special operations forces, civil affairs and other units designed for liaising with local militaries and populations will be particularly overwhelmed. Such overstretch is particularly risky, given that it is often difficult to extract international forces once in place. The strain may become unbearable if large-scale military action against other adversaries is also undertaken. Forces from the US National Guard and reserve units can ease the burden, but they raise political costs, as part-time soldiers are pulled away from their civilian jobs. Allied participation would also reduce the strain, but not all allies are prepared for the onerous responsibilities of occupation. Several European militaries are poorly trained and in dire need of modernisation.[28]

The diplomatic dimension of the occupation is also important. While the force and financial requirements for the intervention are daunting, allied participation could reduce the burden significantly. Optimists can plausibly argue that both the United States and those countries that opposed war have a common interest in putting the discord generated during the weeks before conflict behind them. Yet with France and Germany strongly

condemning the operation, they may be reluctant to play any significant role in the post-conflict era or to allow NATO to do the same if such participation is seen as implicit endorsement of the war. In any case, a clear and supportive UN mandate is essential for the intervening forces' success. The experiences of other successful interventions indicate that the UN plays a valuable role in ensuring legitimacy and international support.

UN authority would also offset (though by no means eliminate) charges of imperialism and colonialism. Ideally, the UN would set forth general goals for the establishment of democracy in Iraq and grant intervening forces wide authority and latitude to accomplish this.[29] But the Bush administration's decision to go to war without a second authorising resolution in March 2003 may have created lasting problems for the UN in general. In Kosovo, the UN eventually assumed important responsibilities after the conflict ended, even though it did not authorise it. However, the Kosovo war occurred with the support of all 19 NATO countries. On war in Iraq, Russia was firmly opposed and Europe divided. Of course, even if the UN does endorse the occupation, it may matter little where it matters most: the Islamic world. Many Muslims already see the UN as a creature of Washington, and its endorsement of the occupation could reinforce this misperception. Thus, the primary benefits of UN sanction will probably be outside the Middle East.

The biggest uncertainties coalition forces face are not in Iraq, but rather at home in the US. The forces will number approximately 100,000 troops for the initial stabilisation period, followed by smaller but still considerable forces for several years. Bush administration statements have been extremely vague on this score; the common refrain is that the United States will not stay 'a day longer' than necessary. Leaders of the US military have expressed discomfort with long-lasting missions in the Balkans, the Sinai and elsewhere, and they may make similar arguments with respect to Iraq. Because terrorists are likely to attack coalition troops, they will almost certainly take casualties, raising the question of whether the coalition has the stomach for an occupation. Sceptics note that in Lebanon, terrorists forced the United States to depart after killing 241 Marines and 63 embassy personnel in 1983; in Somalia, the deaths of 18 servicemen led to America's departure in 1993. But the US is more likely to show staying power in Iraq. In contrast to Somalia and Lebanon, the Gulf has long been recognised as a strategically critical region. Furthermore, the US has undertaken a substantial geopolitical risk in attempting to change the status quo in that region, and will be at pains to vindicate its decision. Thus, the record of the more recent past may be more indicative of American commitment. The US did not withdraw from the Persian Gulf despite successful terrorist attacks in 1995, 1996 and 2000.

At the same time, the financial sacrifices that post-conflict operations entail will be significant. The United States is rapidly moving from a period of budget surpluses to one of deficits. Although estimates of the cost of occupation vary widely, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cost of a post-war occupation range from $1bn to $4bn a month – a hefty amount even in times of surplus.[30] Several estimates for the occupation go well over $100bn.[31] As the implications of the budget deficits sink in, taxpayers will face unpleasant tradeoffs with other forms of military spending, social programmes and tax increases. Taxpayers will face unpleasant tradeoffs among higher deficits, decreased spending on military or social programmes and tax increases, none of which will be popular.

Failure: not an option

The burden of occupation is heavy, but failure to build a peaceful and democratic Iraq would be calamitous. Were Iraq to sink into chaos or return to tyranny, it would become a breeding ground for terrorism and might once again attack its neighbours or seek WMD, destabilising the region. Yet the tasks involved in the occupation of Iraq are daunting in scope and complexity. Success would be more likely if politicians could restore transatlantic harmony, or at least repair some of the damage. Regardless of the merits of the disagreement among France, Germany, the UK and the US on going to war, ensuring a stable Iraq in the aftermath is in the interests of all concerned. The occupation is an indispensable opportunity to bury the hatchet.

If intervening governments are to exploit this chance fully, they need to secure support for their commitment to Iraq's post-war reconstruction. This, in turn, requires them to educate their respective domestic populations. As campaigns in the Balkans have demonstrated, the role of military forces can extend many years beyond the initial fighting. Domestic constituencies must be prepared for continued financial sacrifices and for the post-war deaths of soldiers, civilian administrators and relief agency personnel that may, ironically, increase now that the war has ended.

Finally, an effective endgame must intimately and substantially involve Iraqis in Iraq's governance. Minimising a backlash, protecting forces against terrorism and ensuring the emergence of a popular Iraqi leadership that can eventually assume control cannot be done if Iraqis feel oppressed or infantilised. Moreover, Iraqi support is essential to the integrity of the Western position in the Middle East in general. The war was widely perceived as a twenty first-century version of colonialism. The best way for the coalition to dash this perception is to demonstrate through judicious political reconstruction that Iraqis themselves desire a new regime, can run one and will thrive under it.

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Notes

1 Amatzia Baram, 'Post-Saddam Iraq: What Follows a US-Led Intervention', *Policywatch* 615, 9 April 2002 (electronic version).

2 For a review, see Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985) and Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978). For work on Saddam exacerbating tribal tension, see Phebe Marr, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 August 2002.

3 From Cordesman, 'If We Fight Iraq', p.3. Cordesman relies on US Central Command estimates.

4 Until 2000, the new state of Bosnia and Herzegovina dedicated 40% of its budget to defence spending because it failed to properly demobilise. See Jeremy King, A. Walter Dorn and Matthew Hodes, 'An Unprecedented Experiment: Security Sector Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina', (Bonn International Center for Conversion, September 2002), p. 5.

5 For a description of this phenomenon, see Barry Posen, 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,' *Survival*, Vol. 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993), p. 32.

6 Barbara Slavin, 'Iraq a Harsh Climate to Try to Grow Democracy,' *USA Today*, 12 November 2002 (electronic version).

7 Fallows, 'The Fifty-first State?'

8 'The Transition to Democracy in Iraq', Iraqi Future Affairs Institute (November 2002), available at http://www.iraqiaffairs.org, pp. 17 and p. 55.

9 Under Saddam Hussein, leading Iraqi intelligence services included (but were not limited to) the Special Security Services, the General Intelligence Directorate and the General Security Services. For a review of Iraq's security and intelligence apparatus, see Ibrahim al-Marashi, 'Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis', Middle East Review of International Affairs, vol. 6, no. 3 (September 2002). See also Regis Matlak, 'Inside Saddam's Grip', *National Security Studies Quarterly*, Spring 1999.

10 Some experts believe that properly vetted former Republican Guard personnel might eventually be part of a new Iraqi Army. 'Iraq: Looking Beyond Saddam's Rule', Institute for National Strategic Studies, 20–21 November 2002.

11 Amatzia Baram, *Building Toward Crisis* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy), p. 44.

12 Andrew Parasiliti and Sinan Antoon, 'Friends in Need, Foes to Heed: The Iraqi Military in Politics', *Middle East Policy*, vol. VII, no. 4 (October 2000), pp. 131–133

13 'The Transition to Democracy in Iraq', Iraqi Future Affairs Institute (November 2002), available at http://www.iraqiaffairs.org, p. 18. Similarly, Charles Tripp contends that while it is tempting to rely initially on Iraqi forces to minimise US involvement, the Iraqi Army might be drawn into politics for the long term. Charles Tripp, 'After Saddam', *Survival*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Winter 2002–03), p. 28.

14 Phebe Marr, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1 August 2002.

[15] Using the standard 'rule of thumb' of one soldier for every 500 people, Iraq would require 48,000 peacekeepers. See James Quinlivan, 'Force Requirements for Stability Operations', *Parameters* (1995). NATO, however, initially sent 60,000 troops to Bosnia to enforce the Dayton Accords, even though the population was roughly one-fifth of Iraq's and, equally important, the country was far smaller. US forces deployed in Kuwait, Turkey and afloat could supplement US forces in Iraq itself to slightly reduce the size of the footprint. In addition, there is far less of a need to deploy forces to the Kurdish north, which already has a functioning government independent of the current regime. However, some forces will be necessary to police Kurdish areas to avoid creating a perception that the Kurds have a privileged relationship with intervening forces. Michael O'Hanlon estimates that international forces may rise to 150,000 initially and may stay about 100,000 for several years. Michael O'Hanlon, Remarks before the American Enterprise Institute, 3 October 2002, p. 26. O'Hanlon is drawing on precedents from other cases of peacekeeping such as the Balkans and post-war Germany and Japan.

[16] CSIS recommends cutting Iraq's forces to a standing forces of 150,000. 'A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq', *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, January 2003, p. 17.

[17] In reality, the vast majority of weapon systems, use of force doctrines and so on are difficult to distinguish between offence and defence. For example, an air-defence system is necessary to ensure the security of invading troops from an enemy counter-attack as well as protecting one's own airspace against an invader. Similarly, Israel has long relied on an aggressive mode of warfare to remove the conflict from its soil, even though its overall strategic goals were primarily defensive.

[18] 'The Transition to Democracy in Iraq', Iraqi Future Affairs Institute, November 2002, available at http://www.iraqiaffairs.org, p. 81, and Michael Eisenstadt, 'Envisioning a Post-Saddam Iraqi Military', talk on 25 November 2002 at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

[19] The 101st Airborne Division has a high level of mobility, as do various US cavalry regiments. Also essential are several special forces groups. These would be necessary to secure WMD, provide protection to VIPs, hunt down war criminals, liaise with various Iraqi officials at the local level and train Iraqi police and security services.

[20] For a review of Iran's military and its weaknesses, see Anthony Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), pp. 405–416. For more on Iran's cautious security policy, see Daniel Byman, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001).

[21] 'Iraq: Looking Beyond Saddam's Rule', Institute for National Strategic Studies, 20–21 November 2002.

[22] Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 408.

[23] Some outside experts contend that many Iraqis harbour a 'superiority complex' vis-à-vis other Arabs and thus would prefer non-Arab peacekeepers as a way of assuaging national pride. Interview with

[24] See Neil Cooper and Michael Pugh, 'Security-sector transformation in post-conflict societies' (London: Centre for Defence Studies of the Conflict, Security and Development Group, 2002), p. 12.

[25] Craig S. Smith, 'Groups Outline Plans for Governing a Post-Saddam Iraq', *New York Times,* 18 December 2002 (electronic version).

[26] Judith Miller and Lowell Bergman, 'Iraqi Opposition is Pursuing Ties with Iranians', *New York Times,* 13 December 2002, p. 1.

[27] For a valuable recent work on this, see James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review* (forthcoming 2003).

[28] Craig S. Smith, 'Germany's Military Sinking to 'Basket Case' Status', *New York Times,* 19 March 2003 (electronic version.)

[29] Ideally, the UN role should not involve directly managing the military effort, but rather welcoming the contributions of member states. A formal UN leadership role will cause problems with regard to unity of command, and in general, UN peacekeeping oversight is underfunded and undermanned. The shift in Bosnia from a UN force to a NATO-led force led to a marked change in the force's credibility with local combatants. In East Timor, Australian forces were given the leading role with UN backing, enabling them to quickly and effectively create order.

[30] Congressional Budget Office, 'Estimated Costs of a Potential Conflict with Iraq' (September 2002), electronic version. Available at http://www.cbo.gov.

[31] Alan Fram, 'White House to Seek Up to $90 Billion for War', *Associated Press,* 18 March 2002 (electronic version).