2. The Iraq war: the enduring controversies and challenges

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I. Introduction

Operation Iraqi Freedom began early on 20 March 2003. In an address to the nation, US President George W. Bush announced that 'coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war'.[1] Later the same day coalition ground forces, consisting mainly of forces from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, entered Iraq.[2] On 9 April US forces took control of central Baghdad and the Iraq Government fell.[3] Major combat operations ended formally on 1 May 2003, although by 14 April—when US forces gained control of Tikrit, the last Iraqi city to exhibit organized resistance—coalition forces had occupied all of Iraq.[4] As of May 2004 the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)[5] was still in Iraq, facing resistance from various Iraqi forces, while the role of the USA and the wider international community in rebuilding the country remained deeply contentious.

The 2003 Iraq war was, and is likely to remain, one of the most controversial conflicts of modern times. The decision by the world's only superpower to go to war in Iraq without explicit authorization from the United Nations (UN) Security Council provoked deep divisions within the international community

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[1] 'President Bush addresses the nation', The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 19 Mar. 2003, URL <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>.

[2] While the armed forces of the USA, UK and Australia undertook the military operation, by 1 Jan. 2004 30 countries other than the USA had deployed a total of about 31 000 troops to Iraq of which 12 000 were from the UK. Other countries with sizeable forces in Iraq were Italy (3000), the Netherlands (1100), Poland (2300), Spain (1300) and Ukraine (1650). Japan and South Korea had pledged 3000 and 1000 troops, respectively, to arrive in 2004. Katzman, K., US Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Iraq: US Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance*, CRS Report for Congress (US Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 7 Jan. 2004), p. 36.

[3] The Baath Party, an Arab political party based on secularism, socialism and pan-Arab union, was founded in Damascus in 1941. The Iraqi Baath Party governed Iraq from Feb. 1963 until its collapse in 2003. The Syrian Baath Party remains in power in Syria.

[4] 'President Bush announces major combat operations in Iraq have ended', Remarks by the President from the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, at sea off the coast of San Diego, California, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 May 2003, URL <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/iraq/2003 0501-15.html>; and Brooks, V. (Brig. General), Deputy Director of Operations, CENTCOM, 'Operation Iraqi Freedom briefing', 14 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/Transcripts/ 20030414.htm>.

[5] The CPA is the name of the temporary governing body which has been designated by the UN as the lawful government of Iraq until such time as Iraq is politically and socially stable enough to 'assume its sovereignty'. See URL <http://www.cpa-iraq.org>. UN Security Council Resolution 1483, 22 May 2003, recognizes the 'specific authorities, responsibilities, and obligations under applicable international law of the [USA and the UK] as occupying powers under unified command (the "Authority")'.

and within states. Controversy surrounded the public justification for the war, in particular the degree and immediacy of the threat posed by Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapon programmes and whether the use of force was the most effective approach to dealing with that threat. The war was also controversial because it raised deeper issues of principle and precedent, including whether and under what circumstances the use of force may be a legitimate and effective response to the proliferation of NBC weapons, whether and under what circumstances the removal by force of governments or leaders—'regime change'—may be a legitimate and wise policy, the role of the UN Security Council in arriving at decisions of this kind given the inherent limitations of that body, and the role of the USA in world affairs given its overwhelming military power.

Section II reviews the origins of the war. Section III examines the major combat phase of the war in March–April 2003 and the reasons for the decisive victory of the USA and its coalition partners. Section IV analyses the post-war phase from April 2003 to early 2004, including the conduct of the low-intensity conflict waged against the forces of the occupying powers and the efforts to rebuild Iraq politically and economically.[6]

II. The road to war

The situation in Iraq has been a central international security preoccupation since August 1990, when Iraq invaded and occupied neighbouring Kuwait. Following the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991 the UN had managed and overseen an unprecedented set of measures intended to bring Iraq into compliance with Security Council demands that it eliminate all its NBC weapons.[7] Throughout the 1990s the USA maintained a policy of containing Iraq through Security Council-mandated economic sanctions and periodic air strikes against Iraqi military targets. The extent of Iraq's NBC weapon programmes, the nature of the threat they posed and the impact of the policy of containment, in particular the humanitarian impact of economic sanctions, were all highly contentious.

By the turn of the century the policy of containing Iraq was coming under increased criticism but no new policy had yet emerged. After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA the Bush Administration began to press for military action against Iraq, both to disarm the country of its weapons of mass destruction and to remove Saddam Hussein's regime.[8] From

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[6] The wider political dimensions of the war in Iraq are discussed in the Introduction to this volume. Its impact on the Euro-Atlantic institutions is discussed in chapter 1. The issue of WMD and Iraqi disarmament, including the conduct of UN weapons inspections, is discussed in chapters 15 and 16.

[7] These measures have been chronicled and analysed in successive SIPRI Yearbooks since 1990.

[8] Exactly when and why the Bush Administration decided to take military action against Iraq remains a matter for debate. Nevertheless, a variety of sources suggest that the Bush Administration decided in either late 2001 or early 2002 to take military action. See Woodward, B., *Plan of Attack* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2004); Clark, R., *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (Simon & Schuster: London, 2004); and Suskine, R., *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, The White House and the Education of Paul O'Neill* (Thorndike Press: Waterville, Maine, 2004).

early 2002, when President Bush referred in his State of the Union address to Iraq, alongside Iran and North Korea, as part of an 'axis of evil', the USA began to press for military action. The preparations for war accelerated in parallel with the diplomatic track after October 2002, when the US Congress authorized President Bush to use armed force as he determined to be necessary in order to defend the national security of the USA against the continuing threat posed by Iraq and to enforce all relevant UN Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.[9]

The Security Council discussed how to respond to Iraq's continued non-compliance with previous resolutions. Its five permanent members were divided, with the USA arguing for the authorization of the use of force if Iraqi non-compliance continued and France and Russia arguing against. Security Council Resolution 1441, unanimously adopted on 8 November 2002, was a compromise between these two views. It gave Iraq 'a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations' and required Iraq to submit a full, final and complete disclosure of all aspects of its WMD programmes to the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) within 30 days. The UN Security Council decided to convene immediately on receipt of the report to consider the situation and recalled in that context earlier warnings from the Security Council to Iraq that it would face serious consequences as a result of continued violations of its obligations.[10]

Following the adoption of Resolution 1441 attention shifted to the activities of the UN inspection regime.[11] The weapon inspections continued against the background of increasingly acrimonious debates within a polarized Security Council, with the USA and the UK advocating the early use of force and France, Germany and Russia opposing war.[12] In February and early March 2003 the USA and the UK pressed for a second UN Security Council Resolution specifically authorizing the use of force. On 5 March the French, German and Russian foreign ministers issued a joint declaration stating that in the prevailing circumstances they would 'not allow a draft resolution authorizing the use of force to go through'.[13] On 17 March the USA and the UK ended their efforts to gain support for a new UN Security Council Resolution. President Bush delivered an ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to leave the country within 48 hours.[14] The war began two days later.

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[9] The deepening crisis during 2002 is described in Anthony, I. *et al.,* 'The Euro-Atlantic system and global security', *SIPRI Yearbook 2003: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), pp. 55–58.

[10] UN Security Council Resolution 1441, 8 Nov. 2002.

[11] The activities of UNMOVIC are discussed in chapter 16 in this volume.

[12] Germany, a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2003–2004 and therefore lacking the power to veto a resolution, also participated in these debates. The implications of the divisions in the Security Council for the UN and the wider international system are discussed in the Introduction to this volume.

[13] 'Iraq: joint statement by Russia, Germany and France', Paris, 5 Mar. 2003, URL <http://www.ambafrance-au.org/media/pages/s2003/s2303.en.htm>.

[14] 'President says Saddam Hussein must leave Iraq within 48 hours', The White House, Remarks by the President in address to the nation, The Cross Hall, Washington, DC, 17 Mar. 2003, URL <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>.

III. The war

In military terms Operation Iraqi Freedom was remarkable. In the space of the three weeks between 20 March and 9 April the USA and its coalition partners succeeded in overthrowing Saddam Hussein's Baath regime, destroying the Iraqi military and gaining control of Iraq's major cities and towns. Sir Ian Forbes, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), pointed out that 'in comparison with the first Gulf war, the USA, Britain, and others in the coalition achieved a more ambitious goal, in almost half the time, with one third of the casualties, and at one fourth of the cost'.[15] There were fewer than 200 coalition (US and British) casualties. Iraqi casualties have been estimated at 10 800–15 100, of which about three-quarters are estimated to have been military and one-quarter civilian. Some sources put the number of Iraqi civilian casualties higher, at 5000–7000, while official coalition figures put the number at under 3000.[16]

The evolution of the war

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) was largely responsible for carrying out the operation in Iraq.[17] Operation Iraqi Freedom built on more than two decades of planning to project US power in the Middle East. The US Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was created for this purpose in 1980, after the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979. CENTCOM succeeded the RDJTF in 1983. By mid-March 2003 the USA had assembled a force of approximately 250 000 military personnel in the Gulf region, with 1200 tanks and 1000 aircraft supported by five aircraft-carrier battle groups. The primary ground force components were the US Army V Corps and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). The UK contributed approximately 40 000 troops, with the 1st Armoured Division as its primary ground force. Iraq was estimated to have 389 000 troops, made up of five regular army corps and six Republican Guard divisions. The readiness and combat effectiveness of Iraqi forces, especially the regular army but also the Republican Guard, were generally assumed to be low.

Immediately prior to the war there had been much discussion of a massive 'shock and awe' offensive designed not only to inflict enormous destruction on the Iraqi military but also to psychologically intimidate and perhaps trigger the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. The Iraq war actually began with a limited attempt to 'decapitate' the Iraqi regime. Early on the morning of

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[15] Forbes, I., 'Minding the gap', *Foreign Policy* (Mar./Apr. 2004), pp. 76–77.

[16] Conetta, C., *The Wages of War: Iraqi Combatant and Non-Combatant Fatalities in the 2003 Conflict*, Project on Defense Alternatives, Research Monograph no. 8 (Project on Defense Alternatives: Cambridge, Mass., 20 Oct. 2003); and Garden, T., 'Iraq: the military campaign', *International Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 4 (July 2003), p. 715 and fn. 51.

[17] CENTCOM is 1 of 9 unified combat commands to which the USA assigns responsibility for carrying out operations depending on the location. It has responsibility for operations in the region between the Horn of Africa and Central Asia.

20 March, two US F-117s dropped four 2000-pound bombs on a target in Baghdad in an unsuccessful attempt to kill Saddam Hussein.[18] Further strikes were carried out on the night of 21 March 2003 against Iraqi leadership and command and control targets. From the night of 21 March the USA deployed its full range of airpower against Iraq. At the very start of the war the USA had complete control of Iraq's airspace. The USA had destroyed Iraq's integrated air defence system in the first Gulf War and subsequent periodic air strikes against Iraq ensured that it was never able to rebuild its air defences. Further US air strikes in late 2002 and early 2003 destroyed what remained of these defences. In total almost 800 combat aircraft from Australia, the UK and the USA flew almost 21 000 sorties during Operation Iraqi Freedom, with the USA accounting for over 90 per cent of total aircraft and total sorties.[19] Aircraft flew from bases in the USA, the Middle East and Europe, as well as from aircraft carriers.[20]

Unlike the 1991 Gulf War, when the US-led ground offensive was preceded by over a month of air strikes, the US strategy in the Iraq war involved a combined air and ground offensive from the start. The initial US plan had been for a two-front ground war, with US and allied forces attacking from Kuwait and the Gulf in the south and Turkey in the north. The refusal of the Turkish Parliament and Government to permit US and British forces to use its territory or airbases, however, forced the USA to rethink its strategy at short notice and rapidly move forces and equipment that had been destined for Turkey to Kuwait. The war therefore began with an offensive from the south only.

US and British ground forces advanced into southern Iraq on 20 March.[21] The initial focuses of the ground war were the Rumaila oil fields, the oil terminals on the Al Faw Peninsula and the port of Umm Qasr, which US and British forces succeeded in securing on 22 March.[22] Following this, the main US offensive involved a rapid two-pronged drive through southern Iraq, with the V Corps advancing towards Baghdad from the south-west via Nasiriya, Samawa, Najaf and Karbala and the 1st MEF advancing from the south-east via Nasiriya, Diwaniya, Kut and Numaniyah. Throughout this advance regular Iraqi Army units surrendered en masse, while those that fought were quickly defeated by the US forces. The scale and speed of the US offensive were dramatic. By 24 March the V Corps had reached and largely defeated the Iraqi forces at Najaf, having moved 10 000 vehicles over 560 kilometres in 72 hours and fought three different battles (at Nasiriya, Samawa and Najaf).

[18] The USA had received intelligence on Saddam Hussein's reported location and was able to rapidly deploy aircraft to attack the target, initiating the war earlier than had been planned.

[19] Mosely, T. M., 'Operation Iraqi Freedom by the numbers', US CENTCOM Air Forces, Analysis and Assessment Division, Shaw Air Force Base, S. C., 30 Apr. 2003, pp. 6–8.

[20] Williamson, M. and Scales, R. H., *The Iraq War: A Military History* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2003), pp. 166, 169.

[21] Williamson and Scales (note 20), pp. 88–128.

[22] The immediate coalition objectives were to prevent Iraq from setting fire to the oil wells or releasing oil into the Gulf and to open Umm Qasr for the delivery of humanitarian aid. Williamson and Scales (note 20), pp. 112–17.

In order to maintain the speed and momentum of the offensive the USA largely bypassed cities and towns rather than being drawn into fighting in urban areas. From 23 March the USA encountered some problems with its advance. Iraqi Fedayeen and Baathist forces put up tough resistance at various points, US supply lines became stretched and vulnerable, a major sandstorm forced the USA to ground close support aircraft and slow the ground offensive, and US forces suffered a number of casualties.[23]

After a three-day operational pause on 28–30 March in order to secure supply lines and reinforce troops, US commanders began the final offensive against Baghdad. The US 3rd Infantry Division (the main component of the V Corps) advanced to the south-west of Baghdad via the Karbala gap (between the city of Karbala and Lake Razzazah). US forces took the Karbala gap on 1–2 April, deployed on the western outskirts of Baghdad on 3 April and took Baghdad's airport on 4–5 April. The 1st MEF advanced towards Baghdad from the south-east via Numaniyah, reaching the capital's eastern suburbs on 6 April, linking up with the 3rd Infantry Division on 7 April and thereby completely surrounding the city.[24]

At this point US commanders faced the question of how to take Baghdad. A prolonged offensive might involve fighting in an enclosed urban environment and significant US military and Iraqi civilian casualties. US commanders decided to initiate a series of 'thunder runs', or rapid movements in and out of central Baghdad by US forces, designed to demonstrate the US military's control of the situation and undermine the Iraqi leadership and armed forces. The first thunder run took place on 5 April and demonstrated that US forces could drive an armoured force into central Baghdad. US commanders decided that staying in Baghdad would demonstrate their control of the city, have a strong psychological effect on its population and signal that the war was over.[25] On 7 April three armoured task forces advanced at high speed into Baghdad from different directions, gaining control of the city centre and establishing a resupply route for the forces that were to stay there. Over the next two days US forces consolidated control of Baghdad and the Iraqi regime collapsed. On 9 April, US forces in central Baghdad were greeted by large cheering crowds. In front of worldwide live television audiences, the Iraqis, helped by US forces, tore down the statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad's central square—signalling the end of the Iraqi leader's rule.

In the south British forces faced the similar problem of how to take control of the key city of Basra. British forces placed a loose cordon around Basra and

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[23] E.g., on 23 Mar. a convoy of 33 US soldiers wandered off course into Nasiriya, resulting in the killing of 11 and capture of 6 of them. See Williamson and Scales (note 20), p. 111.

[24] The US offensive also involved a significant deception operation. Elements of the V Corps and the 1st MEF attacked the city of Hillah on the main southern road to Baghdad in order to convince the Iraqi leadership that the main offensive on the capital would come directly from the south. The deception was successful, causing the Iraqis to move their Republican Guard forces from the west to the south of Baghdad, away from the actual direction of the planned main attack, and bringing these forces into the open, making them vulnerable to US airpower. Williamson and Scales (note 20), pp. 198–203 and 223–24.

[25] Garamone, J., 'Remembering the 3rd Infantry Division's thunder runs', US Department of Defense, American Forces Information Service, News Articles 18 Mar. 2004, URL <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/n03182004_200403189.html>.

began a slow process of taking the city through small-scale raids on the Baath forces controlling it. They gradually infiltrated intelligence agents, sniper teams and special forces into Basra, using these to gain intelligence on the situation and to target Fedayeen forces, and Baath leaders and command facilities. In early April British forces escalated their attacks, using raids by Warrior armoured vehicles to target key Baath targets. On 6 April British forces launched a larger attack into Basra using Challenger tanks and Warrior armoured vehicles, supported by US Cobra attack helicopters. The initial British plan had been to move into the city and then withdraw, but the Baath regime was weaker than expected and British forces pressed on to take control of the city centre and defeat the remaining Baath forces. As Baath rule over Basra collapsed, the Shi'a population came on to the streets to celebrate and welcome the British force.[26]

In northern Iraq Turkey's refusal to allow the use of its territory or airspace forced the USA and the UK to abandon plans for the deployment of a significant armoured ground force and to pursue an alternative strategy. Since the US and British establishment of a 'safe haven' to protect the Iraqi Kurds from Saddam Hussein's forces in the early 1990s, the Kurds had consolidated control over their own autonomous territory in northern Iraq.[27] The Kurds faced Iraqi forces along the 320-km 'green line'. The two main Kurdish political parties (the Kurdish Democratic Party, KDP, and the Party for a Unified Kurdistan, PUK—see table 2.1) had 45 000 and 20 000 'Peshmerga' guerrilla soldiers, respectively. One Iraqi Republican Guard corps and three Iraqi regular army corps were defending the green line, the main northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, and the nearby oilfields. In addition the radical Islamic group Ansar al-Islam also had approximately 1000 fighters, reportedly including al-Qaeda fighters who had escaped Afghanistan since the US intervention there in 2001, based in the far north-east of Iraq bordering Iran. There are reports that Ansar al-Islam is backed by Iran but also has connections with both al-Qaeda and the Iraqi intelligence services. This would be an alliance of convenience united only by opposition to the Kurds.[28]

Against this background, the USA decided to airlift a relatively small ground force into Iraq to reinforce the Kurds and lead an offensive against the Iraqis. US special forces were deployed in Iraqi Kurdistan before the war formally began, but troops began to arrive on a larger scale from 20 March. The forces that deployed into northern Iraq over the next two to three weeks included Army and Marine Corps units and British special forces. The coalition and Kurdish forces focused initially on Ansar al-Islam. On 27 March US airpower targeted Ansar al-Islam's base in the Sargat Valley, prior to a planned ground attack on the group. When US and Kurdish forces advanced

[26] Harris, P., 'Celebrating freedom in a spree of looting', Guardian Unlimited, 8 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,931963,00.html>.

[27] For an analysis of the situation in northern Iraq before the war see Judah, T., 'In Iraqi Kurdistan', Survival, vol. 44, no. 4 (winter 2002/2003), pp. 39–51.

[28] Sanders, E., 'Ansar, al-Qaeda seen as working more closely', available on the Internet site of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan at URL <http:www//.puk.org/web/htm/news040225a.html>.

into the valley they discovered that Ansar al-Islam had been devastated by the bombing. The majority of the fighters were either dead or had fled.

In early April Kurdish forces, supported by US ground forces, began to attack the Iraqi front line. The combination of accurate US airpower, the joint Kurdish–US ground offensive, the poor organization of the Iraqi defences and desertion by many regular Iraqi soldiers resulted in an effective collapse of the Iraqi defences. One day after the fall of Baghdad, on 9 April, Kurdish Peshmerga entered and took control of Kirkuk. The following day, US special forces and Kurdish Peshmerga entered Mosul after the entire Iraqi Army 5th Corps surrendered.

With the fall of Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk and Mosul, the only remaining stronghold of the Baath regime was Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit and the surrounding area to the north of Baghdad. Elements of the 1st MEF that had taken Baghdad moved north towards Tikrit. On 13 April US forces entered the outskirts of Tikrit engaging in fighting with Iraqi forces. The following day the US forces secured control of central Tikrit, signalling the final collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.[29] Just over two weeks later, on 1 May, in a victory speech aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* off the coast of California, Bush declared the end of the war: 'Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed . . . the tyrant has fallen, and Iraq is free'.[30]

The conduct of the war

The conduct of the Iraq war involved a number of important developments in military technology and strategy that help to explain the US victory and have important implications for future conflicts. The Iraq war reflects the implementation of ideas and plans of the Revolution in Military Affairs, military transformation and total battlefield dominance discussed since the 1990s.[31]

Joint warfare

Operation Iraqi Freedom involved a much higher degree of joint warfare—cooperation between different elements of ground forces and between ground, air and naval forces—than in previous wars. US CENTCOM Commander General Tommy S. Franks later remarked that Operation Iraqi Freedom was 'the most joint and combined operation in American history'.[32] The

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[29] Oliver, M. and Tran, M., 'US Marines enter Tikrit', Guardian Unlimited, 13 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,936078,00.html>; and Harding, L., 'The final fortress crumbles', Guardian Unlimited, 14 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,936274,00.html>.

[30] Remarks by the President from the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (note 4).

[31] For a discussion of these developments and their possible implications and limitations see Freedman, L., International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318 (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1998).

[32] Statement of Brigadier General Marc Rogers, USAF Director, Joint Requirements and Integration Directorate, J8 US Joint Forces Command before the 108th Congress House Armed Services Committee

planning and execution of large-scale, vertical and horizontal collaboration during major military operations is said to be:

on a scale that dwarfs any extant commercial application. In today's collaborative environment, every level of command throughout the entire force and including coalition partners is electronically linked to the Combatant Commander's decision-making process. Subordinate commanders and staffs understand the context behind key changes across the battlespace and are fully aware of changes in the commander's intent to guide their actions during specific missions.[33]

Whereas planning in previous campaigns had emphasized the 'de-conflicting' of different forces (preventing them from obstructing one another, in part to avoid incidents of 'friendly fire'), Operation Iraqi Freedom involved extensive combined operations by units from different parts of the US Armed Forces and by national units from coalition partners that remained under their own command authorities but nevertheless conducted operations within a unified overall plan.[34] There was also a limited use of exchange postings among US, British and Australian forces.[35] The joint nature of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the networking of forces allowed the coalition to concentrate firepower with a very high degree of accuracy and thereby produce the same effect traditionally achieved with a far greater mass of forces.

Airpower

Airpower was central to the US victory in the Iraq war. The combination of uncontested control of Iraq's airspace, detailed targeting information provided by airborne systems (as well as forces on the ground) and highly accurate precision munitions meant that US airpower was able to have a devastating impact on Iraqi ground forces while limiting collateral civilian deaths. Approximately 65 per cent of the munitions dropped during the Iraq war were precision weapons, compared with only 7 per cent in the 1991 Gulf War.[36] US airpower was able to destroy a large portion of Iraqi ground forces before US ground forces ever encountered them. As US forces advanced north they often found only the burning remnants of Iraqi tanks and other equipment.[37] Even when a sandstorm in late March forced the USA and its allies to ground close-support aircraft, US Joint Surveillance and Target Radar System (JSTAR) aircraft and long-range unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) were able to track Iraqi

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Terrorism, 21 Oct. 2003, URL <http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/lrs/docs/test03-10-21Rogers.doc>.

[33] Statement of Brigadier General Marc Rogers (note 32).

[34] However, instances of friendly fire did occur during the military operation. See, e.g., 'Friendly fire marred Iraq "battle"' CBSNews.com, Washington, DC, 29 Mar 2004, URL <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/03/29/iraq/main609179.shtml>.

[35] Australian Government, Department of Defence, 'The war in Iraq: ADF [Australian Defence Forces] operations in the Middle East in 2003', 23 Feb. 2004, available at URL <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/download/2004/feb/index.cfm>.

[36] Williamson and Scales (note 20), p. 177.

[37] According to US Army Intelligence Estimates, e.g., air strikes on the 3 Iraqi Republican Guard divisions defending Baghdad in late March and early April destroyed all but 19 of 850 tanks and all but 40 of 550 artillery pieces. Williamson and Scales (note 20), pp. 176–77.

forces despite the sandstorm, providing detailed targeting coordinates to high-flying US bombers armed with highly accurate 'smart' bombs.

Technology

Advances in military technology, in particular the increasing accuracy of weapon systems, intelligence systems capable of providing highly accurate targeting information, and command, control, communications and intelligence (C^3I) systems capable of making such information available to both commanders and front-line ground, air and naval forces, were central to the coalition strategy:

coalition air forces were capable of delivering thousands of precision guided bombs and missiles a day, and could concentrate hundreds against a single point. Cruise and surface-to-surface missiles added still more precision firepower. Against such an armada, failure to secure cover and concealment can be lethal to hundreds of combatants in just minutes; the Iraqis' exposure enabled the Coalition to slaughter whole formations at safe distances, and persuaded many Iraqis to abandon crew-served weapons lest they suffer the same fate.[38]

These technologies also make possible the targeting of highly specific targets at very short notice. Commenting on the 20 March attempt to kill Saddam Hussein, for example, Vice Admiral Arthur Cebrowski, head of the Office of Force Transformation in the US Department of Defense (DOD), noted that 'the real excitement was the rapid intelligence gathering, network structure and high-speed decision making that went into that'.[39]

Special forces

US special forces played an important role in the war, reflecting a trend already observed in the US-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and which analysts suggest may grow in future.[40] US, British and Australian special forces were deployed in southern, western and northern Iraq to provide intelligence, to help target airpower and destroy or disable Iraqi missiles and WMD, and to prevent Baath leaders from fleeing. When larger armoured formations could not be deployed in northern Iraq, special forces played a particularly important role in supporting Kurdish forces and leading the offensive against Iraqi forces in Kurdistan—reflecting the pattern seen in Afghanistan in 2001 of relatively small numbers of specialist US ground forces working alongside local allies.

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[38] Statement by Dr Stephen Biddle, Associate Professor of National Security Studies, US Army War College, before the Committee on Armed Services, US House of Representatives Hearing on Operation Iraqi Freedom: Outside Perspectives, 21 Oct. 2003, URL <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/108thcongress/03-10-21biddle.html>.

[39] Stone, P., 'Cebrowski sketches the face of transformation', US Department of Defense, American Forces Information Service, News articles, 29 Dec. 2003, available at URL <http://www.dod.mil/news/Dec2003/n12292003_200312291.html>.

[40] For a discussion of special forces operations see Australian Government (note 35).

Urban warfare

Prior to and during the war there were fears that coalition forces might be drawn into prolonged urban warfare involving significant coalition casualties as well as potentially very high numbers of civilian deaths. The USA largely avoided this by defeating major Iraqi military formations but bypassing cities and towns as its forces drove towards Baghdad. The thunder runs which the USA eventually used to take Baghdad were a risky strategy. US forces sustained heavy fire from well-prepared defensive positions and non-armoured vehicles supplying the fuel and ammunition for armoured vehicles were particularly vulnerable to ambush.[41] In taking Basra, British forces used a slower strategy of encirclement and infiltration, although Basra eventually fell when similar tactics to the US thunder runs produced the collapse of the local Iraqi regime. Better organized resistance, especially if it had had significant local support, might have caused much greater problems for coalition forces.

The immediate aftermath of the fall of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Kirkuk also resulted in very significant looting, disorder and destruction of infrastructure by elements of the local population, suggesting that coalition forces were not well prepared to provide for post-war law and order. The decision to bypass (rather than take) many towns and cities during the war has been criticized for contributing to the problems encountered by the USA in dealing with post-war Iraqi resistance, establishing a new political order and beginning economic reconstruction. The preliminary US assessment of the major combat operations pinpointed urban operations as an area where further enhancement in capabilities was required. Analysts have argued that, while war-fighting operations may be possible with smaller forces than in the past, post-war peacekeeping may require the deployment of larger follow-on forces immediately afterwards.[42]

While military technology and strategy were central to the coalition victory, the weakness of the Iraqi military, and indeed of the Iraqi Government and state as a whole, also contributed greatly to the outcome of the war. Iraq had been greatly weakened by more than a decade of international isolation, economic sanctions, an arms embargo and periodic air strikes. The destruction of the Iraqi air defences in the 1991 Gulf War and periodic air strikes throughout the 1990s made it relatively easy for the USA to establish complete control of Iraqi airspace from the outset of the 2003 war and from then on to use air power to target Iraqi ground forces and leadership targets with little threat of retaliation. Iraqi military technology was also vastly inferior to that of the USA.[43] While US intelligence and information technology gave it a complete

[41] Zucchino, D., *Thunder Run: The Armored Strike to Capture Baghdad* (Atlantic Monthly Press: Boston, Mass., Apr. 2003).

[42] Statement by Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani Jr., Commander, United States Joint Forces Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation (NATO), on Lessons Learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom before the House Armed Services Committee, US House Of Representatives, 2 Oct. 2003, URL <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2003/pa100203.htm>.

[43] Much Iraqi equipment was Soviet-era dating from the 1970s or earlier. A British officer described a battle between Iraqi T-55 tanks and British Challenger tanks as like 'a bicycle against a motor car'. Williamson and Scales (note 20), p. 148.

picture of the battlefield, the Iraqi Armed Forces and leadership were probably 'flying blind' with little real knowledge of the rapidly evolving situation or what the USA might be planning. Similarly, the Iraqi forces lacked the ability to target US forces with any degree of accuracy. While Iraqi Fedayeen and other irregular forces did pose problems for US and British forces, they were armed only with light weapons, had only limited military training and were not suited to taking on the USA and the UK in a conventional war.

The nature of Saddam Hussein's regime also contributed significantly to the Iraqi defeat. The vast majority of the regular conscript army had no loyalty to the Baath regime, as indicated by the mass surrenders and desertions US forces encountered throughout the war. For Saddam Hussein, although the Iraqi military was an instrument of his rule, it was also a potential threat to his regime. As a consequence, the Iraqi military, including even the elite Republican Guard, was to some extent deliberately kept weak and was thus not well prepared to fight the USA. The poor skill, low levels of training and poor leadership of the Iraqi military also contributed to its defeat.[44]

Two other factors contributed to the coalition's military victory. First, before combat operations began there was great concern that Iraqi forces would use missiles, perhaps armed with chemical or biological warheads, against coalition forces or targets in neighbouring countries. In the early stages of the war the coalition also attached a high priority to locating and destroying Iraqi ballistic missile launchers.[45] However, the chemical and biological weapons threat never emerged and subsequent developments have revealed that Western intelligence assessments of Iraqi WMD capabilities were inaccurate. Second, there had been fears of an Iraqi 'scorched earth' campaign that could have significantly complicated coalition operations and caused major human, economic and environmental damage. In the event, Iraqi forces did not implement this strategy. Bridges over rivers that were wired with demolition charges were not blown up, the Rumaila and Kirkuk oilfields were not set on fire (in the latter case not only were oil wells not prepared for demolition, but defences were erected around them to prevent accidental damage during fighting), the port of Umm Qasr was not sabotaged to an extent that denied its use to the coalition, and in a number of places where terrain could easily have been flooded to obstruct the advance of coalition forces, in particular the Karbala Gap, this was not done.[46] Exactly why Iraqi forces did not implement a 'scorched earth' strategy is unclear. Advance assessments of Iraqi plans may have been inaccurate, but the Iraqi leadership may also have lost centralized control of its military at an early stage in the conflict—and not delegated authority to implement such a strategy in this event.

In summary, the impressive victory of coalition forces reflected both their superiority and the weakness of Saddam Hussein's regime and its military. Precisely where the balance lies between these two elements and the conse-

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[44] Williamson and Scales (note 20), p. 227.

[45] Cowieson, K., 'Operation Iraqi Freedom: beyond certification', *Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Journal* (summer 2003), URL <http://www.arrc.nato.int/journal/summer03/iraqi_freedom.htm>.

[46] Statement by Dr Stephen Biddle (note 38).

quent implications for future conflicts are more difficult questions to answer. Many analysts have pointed out that there is a growing military gap between the USA and most other states, including not only possible US opponents but also most of its allies. On the other hand, the weakness of the Iraqi military and regime made it relatively easy for the USA to translate its military superiority into a decisive victory. In other situations this may not be the case. The ability of the USA to use its military superiority to achieve decisive victory in future conflicts is therefore likely to depend on a range of other factors, including the relative strength or weakness of any future opponent and its armed forces, geography, the ability of the opponent to threaten retaliation (including with WMD) and the willingness or otherwise of the USA to accept casualties.

IV. Post-war Iraq

After the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003 the war did not end but entered a new phase of low-intensity conflict that continued throughout the rest of the year and still continues as of 1 May 2004. The nature and conduct of this conflict have been highly controversial. The US-led coalition has faced armed guerrilla-style resistance from various quarters. The identity of those who have been undertaking and organizing this resistance and the extent to which it has support among the Iraqi people are highly contentious. Coalition forces fighting this resistance operate under the US CENTCOM, which is itself under the control of US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Although the number of countries contributing forces to coalition operations in Iraq reached 33, the USA and the UK provide the overwhelming majority.[47] In parallel with this, the Coalition Provisional Authority was established and given responsibility for managing the occupation of Iraq, the country's political transition and its economic reconstruction.[48]

   Before the war began there was significant debate about the prospects for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and how the USA should approach the challenge of stabilizing the country after the war. Supporters of the war argued that US forces would be greeted as liberators and that the transition to a new Iraq could be managed relatively easily. Critics warned that the potential for instability and violence in post-war Iraq was high. Within the US Government there were significant divisions over planning for post-war Iraq. Influential supporters of the war—such as Vice-President Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz—were inclined towards an optimistic assessment of a post-Saddam Iraq. Their view also reflected a more general wariness of extensive engagement in so-called nation building, especially if this would involve a large and prolonged commitment to post-war peacekeeping on behalf of the US military. This position rested on the assumption that the USA would be able to facilitate a relatively

[47] Katzman (note 2).
[48] See note 5.

rapid and straightforward transition to a democratic Iraqi regime, that a long-term US military and political presence would not be necessary to stabilize Iraq, and that only limited US financial support would be required for post-war economic reconstruction. Because a benign environment was anticipated by this group, the approach to peace-building proposed the use of Iraqi oil wealth to engage the private sector in economic reconstruction.

Elsewhere in the US Government (in the Department of State, within parts of the US military establishment, the Central Intelligence Agency and the US Agency for International Development) and in the humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) there were significant concerns about the problems that might be encountered in post-war Iraq. As early as October 2001 the Department of State had begun planning for a possible post-war Iraq in what became its Future of Iraq Project: a series of working groups bringing together US Government officials, Iraqi exiles and non-governmental experts to explore the problems of a post-Saddam Iraq.[49] The project concluded that there were likely to be significant problems in stabilizing a post-war Iraq, that a prolonged and large US political and military presence would be necessary and that very substantial amounts of external economic assistance would be required. Similar assessments were also advanced by the US military.[50]

The White House accepted the more optimistic assumptions of the civilian leadership within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In early 2003 it was agreed that planning for post-war Iraq would be controlled by the DOD and a retired three-star army general, Jay Garner, was appointed as the coordinator for US policy towards post-war Iraq. This contrasted significantly with other recent post-war peace-building efforts, such as those in Kosovo and Afghanistan, where the international community, in particular the UN, played a central role; political management of the transition had been vested in the hands of civilian political institutions; and a wide range of international, governmental, and non-governmental actors and agencies were involved. The Bush Administration's approach in Iraq reflected assumptions that the USA would retain control of the transition, did not greatly need or want the help of the wider international community, especially the UN, and that the US military would play the central role in managing the transition.

The establishment of transitional political authority

On 21 April 2003 Garner arrived in Baghdad from Kuwait. As noted above, while the end of Baath rule in Iraq was initially greeted with celebrations in major cities, it was also accompanied by a widespread descent into civil disorder and the looting of many buildings. At the same time, attacks on coalition (primarily US) forces began to escalate. It rapidly became clear that a more comprehensive approach to peace-building was needed.

[49] Fallows, J., 'Blind into Baghdad', *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 293, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2004), URL <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/01/fallows.htm>.
[50] Fallows (note 49).

According to the international laws of war a territory is considered occupied when it is placed under the authority of a hostile army and the occupying powers are legally responsible for providing security and other public goods in an occupied territory.[51] On 6 May 2003, less than three weeks after Garner's arrival in Baghdad, President Bush announced that he was appointing a new civilian administrator for Iraq, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, and that the USA would establish a Coalition Provisional Authority as the interim governing authority of Iraq. On 8 May the USA and the UK acknowledged their responsibilities as the 'occupying power' in a letter to the President of the UN Security Council.[52] Ambassador Bremer arrived in Baghdad on 12 May and the CPA was established as a temporary body to govern Iraq on 16 May 2003. Bremer was appointed Administrator of the CPA. The preamble to UN Security Council Resolution 1483 recognized the status of the USA and the UK as occupying powers and the CPA as the authority to undertake the occupation of Iraq.[53]

The CPA was given responsibility for stabilizing the political situation in Iraq, assisting with the development of a government for the country and stimulating economic recovery. The CPA's specific tasks include recruiting and training an Iraqi national army, a local police force, a civil defence corps and a border security force. The CPA also drew up regulations on weapon control and disarmament. In these elements of its mission the CPA cooperates closely with, but has no formal authority over, the armed forces of the coalition under CENTCOM. While indigenous Iraqi capabilities are being created, the forces of the coalition are also responsible for maintaining security. For these reasons the CPA reports to the US Secretary of Defense, as does the Commander of CENTCOM.

One of the CPA's first decisions was to attempt a comprehensive 'de-Baathification' of the Iraq state and Iraqi society. As part of this process, on 23 May the CPA formally disbanded the Iraqi military and security services. This decision has subsequently been strongly criticized. Disbanding the Iraqi military and security services removed one of the forces that might have helped to restore security and law and order, left a large number of men with weapons, military training and no income, and created the major problem of having to establish new Iraqi military and security forces from scratch.[54]

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[51] The definition is contained in Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Convention IV. Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Annex to Convention IV), The Hague 18 Oct. 1907, reprinted in Schindler, D. and Toman, J. (eds), *The Laws of Armed Conflicts: A Collection of Conventions, Resolutions and Other Documents*, 3rd edn (Martinus Nijhoff: Dorrdrecht, 1988), pp. 63 and 88.

[52] United Nations, Letter from the Permanent Representatives of the UK and the US to the UN addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN document S/2003/538, 8 May 2003; and 'US plans for postwar Iraq presented to Security Council', Online News Hour, 9 May 2003, URL <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/un_05-09-03.html>.

[53] UN Security Council Resolution 1483 (note 5).

[54] The order creating a new Iraqi army was issued on 8 Aug. 2003; the order creating a Department of Border Enforcement was issued on 24 Aug. 2003; the order creating a Facilities Protection Service was issued on 4 Sep. 2003; and the order creating a Civil Defence Corps was issued on 3 Sep. 2003. The Iraqi Police Force was never disbanded.

In mid-April, as the war was coming to an end, the USA brought together various Iraqi groups to discuss the future of the country. However, the meetings were marred by divisions between these groups, and by divisions within the US Government over which Iraqi groups to back, and were boycotted by one of the leading Shi'a groups, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI, see table 2.1).[55] On 13 July 2003 a 25-member Governing Council was appointed by the CPA, which recognized the Council as 'the principal body of the Iraqi interim administration' and agreed to 'consult and coordinate' with it 'on all matters involving the temporary governance of Iraq'.[56] While the Governing Council was intended to represent all major strands of Iraqi society, its US-appointed nature, the fact that ultimate decision-making power remained with the CPA and the apparent reluctance of the USA to hold early elections generated some resentment from Iraqis.[57] An increasing number of powers were de facto delegated to the Governing Council as 2003 progressed. On 3 September the Governing Council formed a Cabinet but failed to agree a procedure for drafting a new constitution or holding national elections. On 15 November 2003 an agreement was signed between the CPA and the Governing Council establishing 30 June 2004 as the date at which the transitional administration would be recognized by the coalition, at which point it would assume full sovereign powers for governing Iraq.[58] At this point it is planned that the CPA will be dissolved. In a 15 November agreement, the Governing Council and the CPA established a timetable for the transfer of authority, including a number of interim milestones and a commitment to hold national elections under an agreed constitution by 31 December 2005.[59]

The management of economic reconstruction

The financing and delivery of assistance to post-conflict reconstruction efforts are always complex operations, but the particular context in which the Iraq war took place added additional layers of complexity. The political disagreements over the war risked spilling over into the discussion of humanitarian assistance and economic reconstruction. The creation of the CPA by the occupying powers raised questions, prior to its endorsement by the UN, about who would contract with suppliers of assistance and how contracts would be awarded. The US plans to rebuild the economy of Iraq envisaged a prominent

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[55] MacAskill, E. and Burkeman, O., 'Power vacuum that has taken US by surprise', Guardian Unlimited, 11 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/Story/0,3604,934485,00.html>; and McCarthy R. and MacAskill, E., 'Chaos mars talks on Iraqi self-rule', Guardian Unlimited, 16 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/Story/0,3604,937667,00.html>.

[56] CPA, Regulation no. 6: Governing Council of Iraq, 13 July 2003, available at URL <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/index.html>.

[57] Howard, M. and Steele, J., 'Iraq takes first step towards self-rule', Guardian Unlimited, 12 July 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/Story/0,3604,996583,00.html>.

[58] As of 1 May 2004, the debate over the extent of the handover of sovereignty and the continuing role of coalition troops in providing security was continuing.

[59] 'The November 15 Agreement: timeline to a sovereign, democratic and secure Iraq', URL <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/government.html>.

role for the private sector and raised the issue of how private actors would cooperate with or substitute for more traditional service providers.[60]

The main sources of revenue to finance the reconstruction effort were the assets left by the Government of Iraq, revenue from the sale of Iraqi oil and money provided as assistance by governments and organizations.

The CPA did not initially have the capacity to develop and manage a budget. A US official, Peter McPherson, was designated to develop a budget to cover the period from the creation of the CPA to the end of 2003. This budget called for expenditure of roughly $6 billion and the creation of a currency reserve of approximately $2 billion at the national bank. The CPA expected to raise around $4 billion of this sum from the sale of Iraqi oil. However, oil sales provided less money than anticipated.[61]

The use of revenue from the sale of Iraqi oil required cooperation between the CPA and the UN. After April 1995 the UN had established the 'oil-for-food' Programme to provide for the needs of the Iraqi people in conditions where the government of Iraq was not exercising waivers available to it for the import of humanitarian goods under the comprehensive economic sanctions regime established by the UN in 1990.[62] The programme was financed by oil revenue under the control of the UN and administered by the Office for the Iraq Programme under procedures established by the Security Council.

On 28 March 2003 the UN Security Council gave the Secretary-General authority to facilitate the delivery of goods already contracted for.[63] Foreign UN personnel had been evacuated from Iraq on 18 March, prior to the onset of major combat operations. However, after 1995 the UN had built up a local network of Iraqi personnel to implement the oil-for-food Programme.

On 22 May Security Council Resolution 1483, which lifted economic sanctions on Iraq (while maintaining the arms embargo in a somewhat modified form), also created the post of Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Iraq to work with the CPA in delivering assistance and providing finance to the reconstruction effort.[64] Ambassador Sergio Vieira de Mello was appointed as the Special Representative.

Resolution 1483 established the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), to be held by the Central Bank of Iraq and audited by independent public accountants approved by an international board whose members included a representative of the UN Secretary-General, the International Monetary Fund, the

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[60] The use of non-competitive contract awards to companies such as Halliburton for support of US forces and for reconstruction activities in Iraq proved a particularly controversial aspect of the arrangements put in place. While the need for rapid delivery of goods and services was offered as a justification for the practice, there were allegations of incorrect invoicing and that contracts yielded excessive profits. Spinner, J. and Flaherty, M. P., 'US auditors criticize Halliburton subsidiary', *Washington Post* (Internet edn), 12 Mar. 2004, URL <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51961-2004Mar11.html>.

[61] Tarnoff, C., US Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Iraq: Recent Developments in Reconstruction Assistance*, CRS Report for Congress RL31833 (US Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 2 Oct. 2003), p. 2.

[62] United Nations Security Council Resolution 986, 14 Apr. 1995.

[63] UN Security Council Resolution 1472, 28 Mar. 2003. By 28 Mar. *c*. $11 billion worth of goods had been contracted for and approved and these were at various stages of delivery.

[64] UN Security Council Resolution 1483 (note 5).

World Bank and the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development. The CPA, which controlled the DFI, into which revenue from oil sales and external assistance was paid, disbursed money in consultation with the Iraqi Governing Council. The oil-for-food programme was terminated on 21 November 2003.

In addition to oil revenue, money was paid into the DFI by the USA (which consolidated roughly $3 billion in existing aid accounts); from frozen and recovered Iraqi assets (*c*. $2.5 billion was recovered from Iraqi overseas bank accounts, mainly in the USA and Japan); and from external assistance by other donors (between the passage of Resolution 1472 in March and the end of 2003 international assistance worth $2.2 billion was pledged).

The United Nations, the Governing Council, international financial institutions, the USA, the European Union (EU) and Japan have planned the financing of reconstruction in close cooperation. At the International Donors Conference on Reconstruction in Iraq held in Madrid on 23–24 October 2003 ministers from 73 countries as well as representatives of 20 international organizations and 13 NGOs pledged a total of $33 billion to be delivered in the form of grants or loans by the end of 2007.[65] Of this total the USA has pledged roughly $20 billion, part of an $87 billion supplemental budget request to conduct military operations and finance reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan.[66] The EU (including contributions from the individual member states and the common budget) has pledged about $1.2 billion.[67]

At the time of the fall of the Iraqi regime, Iraq owed around $120 billion in foreign debt, of which about $21 billion was public debt (loans either given or guaranteed by foreign governments). The seven largest debt holders were (in order) Japan, Russia, France, Germany, the USA, Italy and the UK. In 2003 President Bush appointed former Secretary of State James Baker as a special envoy to persuade foreign debt holders to reduce or write-off Iraqi debt. In December 2003 France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK agreed to reduce the debt owed to them by Iraq, and China and Russia agreed to consider doing the same.[68]

The changing pattern of the continuing conflict

The dramatic collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003 appeared to give credence to the view that US and British forces would be greeted as liberators. Shortly afterwards, however, it became clear that there was not only general disorder but also significant organized opposition to the occupation.

[65] World Bank, Conclusions by the Chair, International Donors Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, Madrid, 23–24 Oct. 2003, available at URL <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS>.

[66] The US Congress approved the budget request in Nov. 2003. The economic costs of the war in Iraq are discussed in chapter 10 in this volume.

[67] A complete breakdown of pledges made at the conference is available from the Internet site of the World Bank at URL <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:2014 2813~menuPK:34466~pagePK:64003015~piPK:64003012~theSitePK:4607,00.html>.

[68] US Council on Foreign Relations, 'Iraq: the regime's debt', 31 Dec. 2003, URL <http://www.cfr.org/background/background_iraq_debt.php?print=1>.

From April 2003 onwards an escalating series of attacks on coalition forces began.[69]

In the first few months after the creation of the CPA US forces were the main target of attacks believed to have been organized and carried out by former regime elements. General John Abizaid, who succeeded General Franks as the Commander of CENTCOM, stated:

What is the situation in Iraq? Certainly we're fighting Baathist remnants throughout the country. I believe there's mid-level Baathists, Iraqi intelligence service people, Special Security Organization people, Special Republican Guard people that have organized at the regional level in cellular structure and are conducting what I would describe as a classical guerrilla-type campaign against us. It's low-intensity conflict, in our doctrinal terms, but it's war, however you describe it.[70]

The initial centre of opposition to the USA was the so-called Sunni triangle between Baghdad, Tikrit and the city of Falluja to the south of the capital—the political and ethnic heartland of Saddam Hussein's regime. The US military faced significant problems in controlling and responding to this opposition. The use of armed force to control demonstrations and attempts to capture guerrilla leaders risked causing Iraqi casualties, exacerbating Iraqi resentment, reinforcing the image of the USA as occupier and strengthening support for those opposed to the US presence.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2003 the attacks on US forces escalated, with small numbers of US soldiers killed each week in a variety of ambush, bomb and suicide attacks.[71] At the same time, attacks increasingly began to target other coalition forces (which partly reflected the transfer of responsibility for certain sectors previously patrolled by US forces). Moreover, attacks began to be carried out against the personnel and operations of the UN and international NGOs, including the Red Cross.[72]

On 7 August 2003 a car bomb outside the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad killed 11 people. Jordan has played an important role in providing training facilities for the emerging Iraqi security forces. On 19 August a truck bomb attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad killed at least 20 people, including Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello. The attack on the UN headquarters symbolized a widening of the violence beyond targeting the USA to include the entire international presence in Iraq. In response to the attack the UN decided to withdraw virtually its entire presence from Iraq until a more secure situation made its work possible.[73] The majority of NGO humanitarian

[69] On 18 Apr. 2003, less than 2 weeks after Saddam Hussein's fall, tens of thousands of Iraqis demonstrated in central Baghdad against the US occupation. Oliver, M., 'Thousands demonstrate against US', Guardian Unlimited, 18 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,939468,00.html>.

[70] US Department of Defense, DOD News Briefing: Mr Di Rita and Gen. Abizaid, 16 July 2003, URL <http://www.dod.gov/transcripts/2003/tr20030716-0401.html>.

[71] 'Iraq timeline: July 16 1979 to January 31 2004', Guardian Unlimited, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/page/0,12438,793802,00.html>.

[72] British Ministry of Defence, *Operations in Iraq: Lessons for the Future* (Directorate General Corporate Communication: London, Dec. 2003).

[73] For a discussion of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq see chapter 4 in this volume.

aid agencies also evacuated their personnel from Iraq as a result of the worsening security situation. The year ended with a further series of attacks including: (*a*) an assassination attempt on Ambassador Bremer; (*b*) attacks on government buildings and foreign troop bases in Kerbala using suicide bombers, machine guns and mortars, resulting in the deaths of 19 people and the wounding of about 120; and (*c*) on New Year's Eve, a car bomb at a Baghdad restaurant that killed 8 people and injured more than 30.[74] In January 2004 the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq since the launch of the war in March 2003 reached 500, with more US soldiers killed since President Bush declared an end to major combat operations than in the war itself.[75]

Southern Iraq—where the Shi'a majority had suffered greatly under Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime, and which had initially welcomed British and US forces—and northern Iraq—where the Kurds had worked closely with the USA during the war—were both relatively free from violence in the immediate post-war period. During the second half of 2003, however, violence also spread to both regions.[76]

The focus of the attacks widened to include economic and infrastructure targets as well as influential individual Iraqi businessmen, professionals and medical staff, presumably to prevent or delay economic reconstruction and thereby foment further resentment of the occupying powers. In August, for example, guerrillas blew up a key oil pipeline in northern Iraq, halting oil exports to Turkey. Similar attacks on oil pipelines and other infrastructure (such as the water supply) were undertaken elsewhere.

The attacks also targeted Iraqis, raising the prospect of escalating intra-Iraqi violence and even possible civil war. After July 2003 members of the Governing Council were targeted and, in September, one was badly injured in an assassination attempt and another died in an ambush attack. Such attacks appeared to be designed to undermine the US-led attempt to rebuild Iraq's political and state infrastructure and deter Iraqis from cooperating with the USA. The Iraqi police were a particular target for attack. The majority Shi'a population, key Shi'a leaders and Shi'a holy sites were also attacked in the second half of 2003. In late August a car bomb attack outside a mosque in Najaf killed leading Shi'a cleric Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim. In February 2004 an assassination attempt on Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani took place. Although the identity of the perpetrators of such attacks is uncertain, it was feared that their purpose was to intensify Shi'a–Sunni tension and perhaps provoke a civil war.

Ethnically, Iraq is divided between its Arab majority (constituting 75–80 per cent of the country's population), Kurds (15–20 per cent), and Turcoman, Assyrians and a number of other smaller groups (about 5 per cent of the

[74] 'Iraq timeline: July 16 1979 to January 31 2004' (note 71).

[75] Harris, P. and McCarthy, R., 'Bomb takes US toll in Iraq war to 500', Guardian Unlimited, 18 Jan. 2004, URL <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1125638,00.html>.

[76] For details of casualties sustained during attacks on British forces in southern Iraq see British Ministry of Defence, 'Details of British fatalities', available at URL <http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/casualties.htm>.

population). In terms of religion, Iraq is overwhelmingly Muslim but divided between the Shi'a majority (60–65 per cent of the population) and the Sunni minority (32–37 per cent of the population).[77] Table 2.1 summarizes the main political, religious and ethnic groups in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. Local tribal allegiances have historically played an important role in Iraqi society. Although Saddam Hussein's Baath regime was strongly secular in character it was also predominantly Sunni and Iraq's Shi'a majority was one of the prime targets of repression by the regime. The collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime therefore raised the prospect of the Shi'a becoming the dominant force in the new Iraq, but also of new Shi'a–Sunni tensions. The escalating attacks on the Shi'a population in late 2003 and early 2004 appeared to be designed to fuel such tensions. Against this background, building a new Iraqi politics involves the challenge of managing not only Shi'a–Sunni tensions but also the competing demands of those who favour an Islamic state against those supporting a secular state, and of those, in particular the Kurds, who support a federal state, against those who advocate a more centralized system.

The nature of the escalating violence in Iraq is a matter of controversy. The initial view that remnants of the Baath regime were the primary perpetrators of the attacks was reinforced by the emergence of a number of audio tapes purportedly of Saddam Hussein urging guerrillas and the Iraqi people to escalate their resistance to the USA.[78] To the extent that remnants of the Baath regime were responsible for the attacks, it was unclear how far these were centrally coordinated by Baath leaders in hiding (including Saddam Hussein prior to his capture by US forces in December 2003) and how far they were undertaken on a local basis. By the end of the year 44 of the 55 senior Iraqi leaders identified in April 2003 by the USA as 'most wanted' had been either captured or killed.[79] As opposition to the US occupation continued to grow, however, the possibility emerged that the violence reflected a more spontaneous Iraqi nationalism. It is difficult to assess the extent to which the violence directed against the US and coalition forces and the broader international presence in Iraq have support among the Iraqi people. Nevertheless, the occupation of the country by Western powers, the killing of significant numbers of Iraqis by coalition forces both during and after the war, and the inability of the USA to achieve a rapid improvement in people's security and economic circumstances has certainly generated significant resentment and may have contributed to support for violence. It may also be the case that the tactics used by US forces that had not been trained in peace operations (a limited engagement with Iraqi people, targeted on groups of young Iraqi men) contributes to the alienation of the local population.

[77] US Central Intelligence Agency, 'World Factbook: Iraq page', available at URL <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html>.

[78] Three such tapes emerged in early July, late July and Sep. 'Iraq timeline: July 16 1979 to January 31 2004' (note 71).

[79] On 22 July Saddam Hussein's sons Uday and Qusay were killed. A full list of senior Iraq regime leaders and the dates of their surrender, capture or death is available on the Internet site of US CENTCOM, URL <http://www.centcom.mil/Operations/Iraqi_Freedom/55MostWanted.htm>.

Table 2.1. Political, religious and ethnic groups in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein

Group	Leader(s)	Armed forces	External backing/links
Islamic groups			
Shi'a	Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani[a]		
Islamic Daawa Party[b]	Sheik Mohammed Nasseri		Iran
Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)[c]	Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim (killed Aug. 2003); Abdel Aziz Hakim	Badr Brigade (10 000 militia)	
Sadr Group (Jamaat al-Sadr al-Thani)[d]	Muqtada Sadr	'Islamic army' 10 000 strong (?)	
Iraqi Islamic Party[e]	Mohsen Abdel Hamid		
Kurdish Islamic Union (Yekgirtu)[f]	Sheikh Salah al-Din Muhammad Baha al-Din		Saudi Islamic organizations
Secular groups			
Iraqi Independent Democrats[g]	Adnan Pachachi		USA (?)
Iraqi National Congress (INC)[h]	Ahmed Chalabi	Free Iraqi Forces	USA
Iraqi National Accord (INA)[i]	Iyad Alawi		USA
Iraqi National Coalition[j]	Tawfik al-Yassiri		
Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)[k]	Hamid Majid Musa al-Bayati		
National Democratic Party (NDP)[l]	Naseer al-Chaderchi		
Constitutional Monarchy Movement[m]	Sharif Ali Bin-al-Husayn		
Baathists[n]	Saddam Hussein (captured Dec. 2003)	Elements of former armed forces, security services, Fedayeen, Baathists	Syria (?), Iran (?) al-Qaeda (?)
Kurds and other minorities			
Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)[o]	Massoud Barzani	45 000 Peshmerga guerrillas	USA
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)[o]	Jalal Talabani	20 000 Peshmerga guerrillas	USA
Assyrian Democratic Party[p]	Younadem Kana		
Iraqi Turkmen Front[q]			
Marsh Arabs[r]			

[a] Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraq's Shi'a, is highly influential but lacks a formal political organization.

[b] A Shi'a Islamist movement.

[c] A Shi'a Islamist movement which opposes the US administration in Iraq.

[d] A radical Shi'a Islamist movement which supports the establishment of an Islamic state.

[e] The Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, a moderate Sunni Islamic party.

[f] The largest Islamic group in Kurdistan.

[g] A liberal democratic group.

[h] An opposition group that was exiled during Saddam Hussein's rule.

[i] An exile opposition group during Saddam Hussein's rule made up primarily of military and security defectors.

[j] An exile opposition group made up of former military officers.

[k] The Communist Party is re-emerging after having been banned for 35 years.

[l] A political party from pre-Baath Iraq which is now re-emerging.

[m] The Constitutional Monarchy Movement supports the restoration of the pre-1958 constitutional monarchy.

[n] Remnants of the Baath regime and Baath officials who have either retained or regained their posts.

[o] A Kurdish party which seeks autonomy or independence for Iraqi Kurdistan.

[p] A party which represents Iraq's small Assyrian Christian minority.

[q] A party which represents the small Turkmen minority in northern Iraq.

[r] A small minority group in the southern Iraqi marshlands.

Sources: 'Who's who in post-Saddam Iraq', BBC News Online, URL <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/sp1/hi/middle_east/03/post_saddam_iraq/html/default.stm>; and 'Postwar power brokers', CBSNews.com, URL <http://www.cbsnews.com/elements/2003/04/15/iraq/whoswho549503_0_1_person.shtml>.

Attention has also shifted to the possibility that the violence was being undertaken and/or sponsored by foreign terrorists, in particular al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamic groups have obvious motivations for opposing the US occupation of an Islamic state, and the unstable situation in Iraq might provide fertile ground for attacks on the USA and a more general attempt to mobilize around the cause of radical Islam. As the violence continued throughout the latter part of 2003 and into 2004, the US Administration argued that it was increasingly being undertaken or fomented by al-Qaeda and associated external Islamic groups. In February 2004, for example, the USA released a letter reportedly from an anti-US fighter to al-Qaeda's leadership asking for help in launching attacks against Shi'a Muslims in order to undermine any future Iraqi government.[80] Some observers, however, remained sceptical about the extent to which external Islamic groups were behind the violence. There was also debate about the extent of cooperation, if any, between remnants of the Baath regime and al-Qaeda. Some in the USA argued that there was, or at least might be, significant cooperation between them. Critics suggested that secular Baathists and fundamentalist Islamists made unlikely allies.[81] The one specific area where there did appear to be strong evidence of foreign support for violence was northern Iraq, where Ansar al-Islam had previously had ties with both al-Qaeda and the Iranian Government. The growth of violence in northern Iraq in late 2003 and early 2004, and the targeting of the main Kurdish groups, suggested that Ansar al-Islam had regrouped and started a new campaign against the Kurds and US forces.

There was also discussion of how far foreign governments, in particular Iran and Syria, were sponsoring the violence in Iraq. Although radically different in nature, both Syria's Baath regime and Iran's Islamic rulers fear the expansion of US influence in the region, face pressure from the USA over their WMD programmes and would be threatened by the emergence of a democratic Iraq. During the war itself at least some of the Baathists fighting the

[80] Teather, D., 'US claims to uncover war plot', Guardian Unlimited, 10 Feb. 2004, URL <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1144777,00.html>.

[81] This debate mirrored the pre-war debate over links between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda, where some supporters of the war argued, unconvincingly, that there had been extensive cooperation between the Iraqi Government and al-Qaeda.

USA were reportedly Syrians.[82] Some US officials have hinted at Syrian support for the anti-US forces within Iraq, although no decisive evidence has emerged to prove this.[83] Iran has a more direct recent history of involvement in Iraq. Apart from its connections with Ansar al-Islam, it has backed and provided sanctuary to the Badr brigade, a small armed Islamic group that opposed Saddam Hussein's regime. There has been some speculation that forces within the Iranian Government may have been supporting the Badr brigade and other Islamists in carrying out attacks in Iraq.[84] In August 2003, for example, US officials claimed that hundreds of Islamic militants who had fled to Iran during war had returned to Iraq to plan terrorist attacks.[85] In both countries, but especially Iran, however, there are also divisions between hardliners strongly opposed to the USA and moderates more willing to pursue compromise. Shi'a-dominated Iran is an unlikely sponsor of attacks on the Shi'a majority in Iraq, and Iran has historically been an ally of neither secular Baathists nor the predominantly Sunni al-Qaeda. The extent and nature of Iranian and Syrian involvement in the violence in post-war Iraq, therefore, remain both unclear and contentious.

The continuing escalation of the violence and the growing recognition of the scale of the problem of political and economic reconstruction in Iraq led to a rethinking of US policy towards international cooperation. In October 2003 the UN Security Council responded by endorsing the US-led force's role in Iraq and calling on UN member states to assist and contribute troops to the force.[86] The range of countries willing to contribute troops to the post-war stabilization operation, however, remained limited to those that had supported the war.

In early October 2003 President Bush created the Iraq Stabilization Group, led by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, to take responsibility for coordinating Iraq reconstruction efforts across the US Government, while leaving operational control with the DOD.[87] As 2003 ended, the nature and timing of any transition of power from the CPA to an Iraqi interim authority remained uncertain and the relationship between this interim authority, a new

[82] Williamson and Scales (note 20), p. 215.

[83] Scarborough, R., 'US sees Syria "facilitating" insurgents', *Washington Times* (Internet edn), 21 Apr. 2004, URL <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20040420-115628-7182r.htm>.

[84] 'Iran embeds Badr troops in Iraq's Shiite centers, races US for control', DEBKA file special report, 22 Apr. 2003, URL <http://www.debka.com/article.php?aid=473>; and Middle East Media Research Unit, 'Iran's role in the recent uprising in Iraq', URL <http://www.memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD 69204>.

[85] 'Iraq timeline: July 16 1979 to January 31 2004' (note 71).

[86] UN Security Council Resolution 1511, 16 Oct. 2003.

[87] 'I don't operate, I don't implement. I coordinate policy. . . . The Defense Department and Secretary Rumsfeld remain the lead agency in the reconstruction of Iraq. They are on the ground. Jerry Bremer reports . . . up through the Pentagon to the President. Nothing has changed in that; nothing was intended to change in that. . . . We have to make sure that we're mobilizing the entire US Government. The Treasury Department has an important role to play. The State Department obviously has an important role to play. Justice has an important role to play. We're trying to mobilize the entire US Government to support this effort.' Sample, D., 'Pentagon still in charge in Iraq, Rice tells reporters', American Forces Information Service, 15 Oct. 2003, URL <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2003/n1015 2003_200310152.html>.

constitution, and a transition to a fully sovereign and democratic Iraq remained unclear.

On 13 December 2003 US forces captured Saddam Hussein near Tikrit. For the embattled Bush Administration this was a major coup. Coming on top of the capture or killing of the majority of other senior Baath leaders it symbolized the success of the USA in overthrowing the Iraqi regime. Nevertheless, continuing violence in late 2003 and early 2004 and the ongoing debate about Iraq's political future indicated that the USA's future success in building a new Iraq remained deeply uncertain. In late February and early March, under US pressure, the Iraqi Governing Council reached agreement on an interim constitution under which Iraq would be a federal state and Islam would be one source but not the only source of law. However, disputes continued between the US authorities and the Iraqi Governing Council over the interim authority and the timing of elections. As of early 2004, therefore, the future prospects for Iraq remained highly uncertain. A successful transfer of power to an interim Iraqi authority and subsequent elections might pave the way for the creation of a democratic Iraq. However, a failure to control the escalating violence and the far from resolved differences between Iraq's political, religious and ethnic groups might result in an intensifying conflict, even civil war, and the continuing disintegration of the Iraqi state.

V. Conclusions

The decision by the USA to go to war unilaterally in order to impose WMD disarmament and regime change on Iraq marked a major break with past international practice and provoked deep divisions within the international community. The wisdom and legitimacy of the war, and the motivations of the Bush Administration in deciding to go to war, are likely to remain highly controversial. Supporters of the war can claim that one of the world's cruellest regimes has been brought to an end, the possibility that that regime might develop a strategically threatening WMD arsenal or supply such weapons to terrorists has been removed, and new prospects for political change in the Middle East have been generated. Critics can argue that the extent of the WMD threat posed by Iraq—the primary *casus belli*—was greatly exaggerated, that the costs of the war in terms of lives lost, economic outlays and the destabilization of Iraq have been high and that the fabric of international order has been damaged. The ambiguous outcome of the war—the successful overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, the discovery that previous assessments had exaggerated the threat posed by Iraq's WMD programmes[88] and the continuing post-war problems—suggests that neither argument has been fully vindicated.

The Iraq war and the Bush Administration's formalization of the doctrine of pre-emptive warfare in its 2002 National Security Strategy provoked much debate about whether the USA would engage in similar operations elsewhere

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[88] For a discussion of the search for Iraqi WMD in 2003 see chapter 16 in this volume.

in the world—with Iran, North Korea and Syria seen as the most likely targets for US-imposed regime change.[89] The rapid and overwhelming military victory in April 2003 appeared to endorse the view that US military superiority had revolutionized the nature of warfare and to suggest that the Iraq war might be a precedent for similar US actions elsewhere. The subsequent post-war problems faced by the USA, however, demonstrated that the challenges of post-war stabilization may be greater than those of war itself; that the long-term costs, direct and indirect, of regime change may be very great indeed; and that the USA is likely to need wider international support to achieve its objectives. As a consequence, the USA is likely to be more wary of engaging in similar operations elsewhere in the world than some supporters of regime change hoped and many opponents feared.

Despite the decisive victory of the USA in the major combat operations, as of early 2004 the long-term outcome of the Iraq war remains uncertain. The USA could yet succeed in building a democratic Iraq, defeating those determined to prevent such an outcome and making Iraq a catalyst for democratic change elsewhere in the region. The ongoing violence in Iraq and the continuing disputes between the country's political, religious and ethnic groups could, however, also result in continuing instability, the country becoming a failed state or even descending into civil war, with possible spill-over effects of increased instability into neighbouring states. The long-term impact of the war on the wider Middle East is therefore also uncertain. The war has made Iraq a magnet for Islamic jihadists opposed to the USA; fuelled Arab and Islamic resentment of US hegemony; and raised the possibility of instability, violence and Islamic radicalism in other states, particularly Saudi Arabia. At the same time, however, it has also pushed the issue of political reform in the wider Middle East to the top of the international agenda, increased pressure on the region's authoritarian regimes and created a more fluid and uncertain domestic and international environment than the region has experienced for some decades. The impact of these competing trends on the region remains to be seen. A fuller assessment of the impact of the Iraq war must therefore await developments in Iraq and the wider Middle East in coming years.

The impact of the Iraq war on the broader international security environment—in particular on the behaviour of the USA as the world's only superpower, on the twin challenges of proliferation and terrorism and on global alliances and security institutions—also remains controversial. The Iraq war dramatically illustrated the extent of US military power and the willingness of the USA, since 11 September 2001, to assert that power. Post-war developments in Iraq have, however, sharply illustrated the limits of US power. The issue of the purposes and limits of US power is likely to be the subject of continuing debate—in the 2004 US presidential elections and beyond.

The impact of the Iraq war on WMD proliferation and terrorism is also difficult to assess. Potential proliferators may draw the conclusion that the costs

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[89] 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', The White House, Washington, DC, Sep. 2002, URL <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

and risks of acquiring WMD have increased significantly, but they may also conclude that the only way to prevent themselves from becoming the victims of regime change is to develop a credible deterrent. Similarly, the Iraq war may have exacerbated the problem of international terrorism by creating a new front line in Iraq and fuelling Arab and Islamic resentment. Conversely, by triggering new debate on the political future of the greater Middle East it may also have created a chance to address the deeper causes of radical Islamic terrorism.

The impact of the Iraq war on global security institutions and on alliances is also complex. In the short run, the war undoubtedly undermined the United Nations, but predictions of the UN's death have proven greatly exaggerated. As the only truly universal international framework the UN is likely to remain indispensable if flawed.[90] The development of the coalition in Iraq illustrated an increasing emphasis in US policy on ad hoc alliances in relationship to particular issues and states—suggesting that the relatively fixed US-led alliance pattern of the post-1945 era is being replaced by a more flexible and complex set of relationships. Although the ultimate outcome of the war, and its wider impact on the Middle East, remains uncertain, the 2003 Iraq war has reinforced the centrality of proliferation and terrorism to the new security agenda, pushed the future of the Middle East to the top of that agenda, underlined the USA's defining role in shaping responses to these challenges, and contributed to the consequent reshaping of international alliances and institutions. These trends will continue to define the international security landscape of the early 21st century.

[90] Berdal, M., 'The UN Security Council: ineffective but indispensable', *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 2 (summer 2003), pp. 7–30.