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BUILDING A BETTER LEGACY: CONTRASTING THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN IRAQ

by

Patrick G. Miller

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Thesis Co-Advisors: Anne M. Baylouny
Abbas K. Kadhim

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The U.S. invasion of Iraq and its continued presence has been costly in terms of lives, money and reputation. Britain suffered the same consequences in Iraq during its post-World War I mandate. In both cases, the U.S. and Britain attempted Iraqi state building following the initial successes of their invasions but were met with significant political and institutional obstacles. Critics of the U.S. invasion often state that the American administration should have heeded the lessons learned from the British Mandate.

This thesis will carefully examine the case studies of the British Mandate and the U.S. involvement in Iraq in order to show that the two experiences are not identical. Firstly, the ideological motivation and impetus for the invasions differ substantially. The U.S. notion of stability and security through democracy is arguably more conducive to state building than the underlying imperialist motivations of the British. Moreover, the progression of "World Time" has created a dissimilar operational environment between the two invasions and state building endeavors. The U.S. state building venture will hopefully yield better results and create a more stable Iraq than what the British Mandate created.

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BUILDING A BETTER LEGACY: CONTRASTING THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN IRAQ

Patrick G. Miller
Captain, United States Army
B.S., Grand Valley State University, 1998.

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December 2008**

Author: Patrick G. Miller

Approved by: Anne M. Baylouny
                   Thesis Co-Advisor

                   Abbas K. Kadhim
                   Thesis Co-Advisor

                   Harold A. Trinkunas
                   Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The modern state of Iraq is characterized by cyclical periods of colonial rule, puppet monarchies, despotism and uninvited regime change. Beginning with ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, Islamic empires and foreign occupations, history has shown that Iraq is "a very difficult country to govern."[1] The current American presence in Iraq is the latest variable in the political cycle of a state searching for an identity and self-determined government. The ongoing American presence in Iraq is a critical issue not only to the Iraqis themselves, but to Americans as well. It is at the forefront of the candidates' platforms in the 2008 Presidential elections. A key issue for the American voter will be the choice between the candidate who supports an accelerated troop withdrawal versus the candidate who advocates prolonged commitment and gradual troop withdrawals. Either way, the fact remains that with or without American assistance, Iraq must rebuild a politically fractured and socially decimated state. Similar to the aftermath of the British Mandate, Iraq's path to success and its efficiency in state-building will be a legacy that the American government will inherit regardless of presidential election results.[2]

It is alarmingly evident that America's global reputation is suffering. A recent New York Times article documented U.S. global alienation resulting from its position as a sole super-power.[3] The article cited global irritation with America's "muscular morality" in its foreign policy. The international community, especially the Arab world, has squarely placed blame for Iraq's woes on the United States. To make matters even gloomier, the American population has increasingly become disillusioned with the Iraq war and the predicament of their country. Current economic troubles, continued threats of terrorism and the pro-longed Iraq/Afghanistan war have convinced almost 80% of

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[1] Tim Niblock, *Iraq: The Contemporary State* (New York: Saint Martin Press, 1982), 1.

[2] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xix.

[3] Parag Khanna, "Waving Goodbye to Hegemony." *New York Times,* January 27, 2008.

Americans that their country is in one way or another on the "wrong track."[4] Even in its attempts to rectify the situation, the U.S. finds itself constrained by distrust abroad and doubt and war weariness at home. It is indisputable that despite the tenuous success of the 2007 "Troop Surge," Iraq is still a country in turmoil and current American reputation abroad is that of a global culprit. It is in the interest of the American people and the international community that the U.S. extricates itself from Iraq in a manner that leaves behind a better country than what the British left following the Mandate.

Critics of the American invasion and continued presence in Iraq often attribute the country's political and social instability to the American's failure to learn from the mistakes made during the British Mandate.   In a February 2008 interview, British royal Prince Andrew stated that there were "occasions when people in the UK would wish that those in responsible positions in the US might listen and learn from our experiences."[5]

This thesis argues that a comparison of the British and American ventures in Iraq is not an "apples-to-apples" assessment, but rather more attention should be paid to the contrasting aspects of the two experiences. Although comparing the two invasions has some merits, in fact, the Iraq the U.S. invaded was significantly different from the Iraq that the British occupied during its 1920 Mandate. Social and political scientists have posited that time affects the potential for state-building and its processes.[6] However, exactly how different eras, institutional legacies, and global trajectories interact with the creation of a state and national identities has not been specified. The overarching question I will research in this thesis is how the in-congruency of the conditions preceding the two invasions affected the processes of Iraqi state-building. A historical comparison of the political and social conditions present prior to the onset of both occupations will query if and how the British state-building endeavor of the post-colonial era was a vastly different animal than the current U.S. state-building campaign in Iraq. As such, this thesis will contribute both to policy concerns regarding the search for a

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[4] Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of the Rest," *Newsweek,* May 12, 2008.

[5] *BBC News,* "Prince Andrew Rebukes US on Iraq," February 5, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7227627.stm. (accessed on February 12, 2008).

[6] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions, A Comparative Analysis of France, Russian and China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 23.

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state-building formula in Iraq as well as offer theoretical insight into the difference between state-building during the multi-polar colonial era and state-building in the current global environment.

The main conclusion in this research stems from the analysis of the operating environments facing the two invading forces. The international relations spectrum and global trajectories as well as the existing political and social institutions of the two occupation eras differ drastically. Political and social structures in Iraq have changed drastically over the last portion of the twentieth century. When the British secured its Mandate from the League of Nations, Iraq did not have a unified country falling under the auspices of one capital. Instead the country was divided into three provinces: Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. Iraq, known to the West at that time as Mesopotamia, was still immersed in the institutions and influences of the Ottoman Empire and accordingly lacked any strong semblance of nationalist sentiment. Any sort of unifying force in Iraq had been quashed by the Ottoman "tanzimats" (re-organization) in which "Turkishness" was emphasized.[7] Reaction to the Ottoman tanzimat came in the form of "Arabization" in Iraq, which emphasized Arabic language use and Arab political appointments.[8] The invading British forces managed to expel the Ottomans from Iraq before Arabization could take strong roots within the country and thus were more easily able to occupy a disjointed country.

On the other hand, the U.S. invaded a unified, albeit restive, Iraq with an existing central government. The Iraq that the United States invaded was in fact created by the legacy of the British. The existing central government was defined by the dominance of the Sunni minority, a political facet dating back to the Gertrude Bell era of Iraqi history. The aftereffects of the Iran-Iraq War, the First Gulf War and long standing United Nations sanctions had transformed a once wealthy country into a stagnant and repressive state. Any chance for reconstruction or economic rehabilitation had been severely

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[7] David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 28.

[8] Ibid., 28.

constrained by large debts and international demand for Gulf War reparations.[9] The Iraq which the U.S. invaded was a country that had experienced (in the period of less than two decades) the loss of two-thirds of its GDP, soaring unemployment, dramatic losses in educational institutions and a precipitous loss of skilled professionals.[10] The bleak numbers and statistics of pre-invasion Iraq supports the notion that the U.S. invaded a considerably more troubled country than their British counterparts and thus any democratic state building venture would be significantly dissimilar.

Another point of divergence in the two invasions, which has analytical implications, is the actual impetus behind the initial attacks. The British entered Iraq just before the collapse of Ottoman Empire. The British utilized the colonial institutions of the India Office to establish an administration in Iraq in an attempt to assert dominance in the region and also secure economic resources. The British Mandate's colonial, direct-rule foundation contrasts with the U.S. self protective motivation to create an American-style democracy in Iraq. Despite the differences in the two countries motivations, both were self-serving and resulted in general confusion and befuddlement in reference to Iraq's fate. The British policy was initially uncertain and confused while the American administration was caught off-guard and bewildered by the sudden power vacuum in the wake of Saddam's overthrow. In the end, both the U.S. and Britain had to decide what system of state-building would be the most beneficial for Iraq's future as well as their own.

Throughout the course of this research, I expect to find that the different eras in which the British and American invasions occurred will play strongly into the framework of Iraqi state-building. The British Mandate was awarded at the start of post-colonialism following World War I. Wilsonian notions of self-determination and liberal divergence from imperialism were consistent with post-World War I allied sentiment that "populations ought not to be bandied about without regard to their own wishes as if they

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[9] Abbas Alnasrawi, "Iraq: Economic Sanctions and Consequences, 1990-2000," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 22 (April 2001), 217.

[10] Ibid., 214.

were property."[11] The American invasion occurred during a post-Cold War era where the U.S. was an apparent uni-polar hegemon. The chronological gap separating the two eras of foreign presence in Iraq created conditions that significantly shaped the efforts of the state-building struggle.

Chapter II of this thesis is a historical study of the British Mandate and American invasion into Iraq. This chapter will briefly examine the political, social and economic environment preceding and subsequent to the invasion. Chapter II will also address the issue of the different starting points or operational environments that the British and American forces encountered. Chapter III will examine the ideological differences in motivation for the invasion. This chapter will look at the moral, philosophical and economic impetus for the British Mandate and the United States invasion. In particular, the section outlines British colonial, imperialist ideology and contrasts it to American neoconservative and protectionist ideologies.

Chapter IV examines the link between pre-existing conditions and the invasions that could have affected the policies and their supposed failures. More importantly, Chapter IV will show how the intrusions into Iraq occurred in two different eras in "world time" and as such, external and internal conditions had significant affects on the follow-on foreign presence. Finally, after examining the two operational environments and their separate time periods, Chapter V explains that although a taking the lessons learned approach to the Iraqi state-building seems to make historical sense, the disparity of the invasions makes this approach imperfect. Chapter V will examine evidence for the hypothesis that the incongruence of the British and U.S. experiences has created an entirely different state-building venture for the current U.S. administration.

A.   LITERATURE REVIEW

To fully understand the circumstances of the British Mandate and the current American presence in Iraq, one must closely examine the unique and turbulent history of Mesopotamia. Echoes of the Ottoman occupation and other foreign influences

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[11] Ernest B. Haas, "The Reconciliation of Conflicting Colonial Policy Aims: Acceptance of the League of Nations Mandate System," *International Organization,* Vol. 6. No. 4 (November 1954): 522.

significantly shaped Iraq identity throughout the twentieth century and beyond. *The Modern History of Iraq* by Phebe Marr and *A History of Iraq* by Charles Tripp offer detailed historical studies of the country during its fledgling years. Although both authors cover the topic of Iraqi history, Marr tends to use more analytically driven commentary while Tripp favors an in-depth date-by-date account of history. Throughout her historical analysis, Marr transitions in a more fluid and effective manner. For example, Marr's description of the major demographic groups (Shi'a, Sunni and Kurds) in the introductory chapter is helpful in setting up the social identity of the country during ancient Mesopotamia and prior to the Islamic empires.

Marr also briefly touches on the role of Arab nationalism at the conclusion of the Ottoman rule. However, she states that although it had sown seeds "among a small educated group," the sense of nationalism had not taken root among the population. The country was instead still drawn together by tribal, familial and religious ties rather than sense of national unity. Marr cites that prior to the British Mandate, there was no Iraq and that the British rule created a state containing the Western institutions of a constitution, bureaucracy and parliamentary rule.[12] Marr also writes that the British rule left three major impressions on the Iraqi state: a hastening of modernization, an "Arabization" of administration, and the creation of a real nationalist movement.[13] These unintended consequences were not evident until later in the Mandate as the British interjected influence into Iraqi politics.

Both Marr and Tripp make pointed references to the fact that the British were uncertain about what policies to pursue in Iraq. Marr writes that "for much of Britain's tenure in Iraq, its policy was vacillating and indecisive"[14] while Tripp notes, "The British themselves were undecided about its [Iraq's] future—notoriously so, as the Iraqis found to their bewilderment."[15] The indecision of the British colonial India Office would eventually result in its political officers relying on the "imperial school" learned from

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[12] Phebe Marr, *A Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 29.

[13] Ibid., 29.

[14] Ibid., 29.

[15] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), 36.

colonial experience in India. As a result, the British consolidated the administration of the three pre-existing provinces under a single unit and in effect created artificial Iraqi borders.

While Tripp's account of the British administration in Iraq is very detailed and historically specific, Marr again gives more of an analytical description of the ideology driving the British occupation. She writes that India Office was driven by the philosophy of "the white man's burden" which was based upon the notion of direct rule and the distrust of the ability of the occupied to rule themselves. This philosophy and cultural imperialism derived from the schools of thought espoused by John Stuart Mills who held firm in his belief that force was needed for social democratic transformation and that indigenous traditions were wholly inadequate.[16] Eventually, under the auspices of Gertrude Bell, the British approved of the concept of Iraqi self-government under "British tutelage."[17]

Tripp and Marr document the transition to Iraqi self-governance with the British introduction of King Faisal. Tripp writes that King Faisal, despite his appointed position, was a "sovereign of a state that itself was not sovereign."[18] Upon recognizing his tenuous position, the new monarch set out to achieve two difficult tasks: 1) gain real independence from British control and 2) integrate the communities of Iraq into a single, inclusive system.[19] King Faisal quickly realized that freeing Iraq from British influence was a particularly hard task, but to his advantage, there existed a popular opposition towards the Mandate. Eventually, the British and the Iraqis compromised with the signing of a treaty which gave the "appearance of a normal relationship between two sovereign states."[20]

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[16] Stanley Kurtz, "Democratic Imperialism: A Blueprint," *Policy Review* (April/May 2003), http://www/hoover.org/publiciations/policyreview/344917.html (accessed February 12, 2008).

[17] Tripp, 39.

[18] Ibid., 49.

[19] Ibid., 50.

[20] Ibid., 52.

In the conclusion of the British Mandate chapter of his book, Tripp describes the circumstances of the admission of Iraq into the League of Nations and the start of the Hashemite Monarchy. On the other hand, Marr marks a transition from British occupation to an "era of instability". In her historical analysis, she states that the end of the mandate brought about a period of disillusion and uneasiness as there was an immediate breakdown of Iraqi unity.[21]

Although his book does not exclusively address the British Mandate, but instead tells the story of foreign influence over the entire region, David Fromkin's *A Peace to End all Peace* offers insight into the growing unease among the Arabs in Iraq and the surrounding territories. Fromkin's account of the turbulence in the Middle East is generally focused on the time period punctuated by World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The author also addresses the fragility in Iraqi identity during the British occupation. When referencing the animosity between the Shi'a and Sunni communities, the author writes, "Mesopotamia provinces experienced incoherence, communal strife and habitual discord--rather than organized nationalism."[22] Fromkin also mentions the relative uneasiness and skepticism the British were experiencing during their occupation. He cites an August 1920 London Times article lamenting "We are spending sums in Mesopotamia and in Persia which may well reach a hundred million pounds this year [in support of] the foolish policy of the Government in the Middle East."[23]

William Polk also documents British frustration about the costly and dangerous occupation in his book *Understanding Iraq*. Polk also compares British historical issues to America's current tribulations. He contends that the British occupied Iraq in order to counter the possible rise of Pan-Islamism in the region subsequent the Ottoman collapse.[24] This is similar to the American pre-emptive goals of stabilization and the

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[21] Marr, 55.

[22] Fromkin, 58.

[23] Ibid., 452.

[24] William R. Polk, *Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation* (New York: Harpers Collins, 2005), 68.

elimination of terrorist threats in the region. Polk writes that the British tried to occupy "on the cheap" with limited military presence and the expectation of living off of the land while developing the Iraqi economy.[25] This again is similar to the controversial initial troop levels and American intentions of financing Iraqi reconstruction through oil revenues. Unfortunately, as history has shown, neither plan worked in full. The lack of sufficient troop levels resulted in a protracted revolt against the British, which was only quelled through the use of air power and chemical weapons. Additionally, the British were successful in developing only five hundred square miles of food producing land and conducted meager attempts at simple equipment manufacturing.[26] The lack of sufficient American troop presence has haunted the U.S. efforts and has only been partially resolved by the 2007 troop surge. Despite American expectation, Iraqi oil production during 2007 was less than half of anticipated capacity.[27] Moreover, a recent report found that the Iraqi government had utilized only 24% of the $10 billion budget set aside for reconstruction.[28]

Polk states that a principle part of the Iraqi agenda was to reduce expenditures, decrease the military presence, and end the occupation. However, this was not going to happen until "such a time as it [the Iraqi government] can stand by itself, when the Mandate will come to an end."[29] This dogged and misguided policy is also referred to in Toby Dodge's *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied.* Although *Inventing Iraq* touches briefly on Iraqi history, Dodge is more focused on a direct comparison of British and American experience in Iraq. The shortfall of his book is that it was written in 2003, shortly after the initial invasion. Dodge includes a preface for his 2005 edition of *Inventing Iraq* in which he provides an assessment of the U.S. presence in Iraq for the previous two years. The author accurately predicts the course of

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[25] Polk., 72.

[26] Ibid, 72.

[27] Peter Grier, "Iraqi's Oil Production Falls Short of Goals," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 7, 2007, http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0507/p01s02-wome.html?page=1 (accessed February 18, 2008).

[28] James Glanz, "Senate Committee Seeks Audit of Iraqi Oil Money," *New York Times,* March 8, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/world/middleeast/09iraq.html?fta=y (accessed February 18, 2008).

[29] Polk, 78.

the American policy when he writes "the probability is that President Bush, while still in office will continue to 'gamble on resurrection'...because the political and personal costs of radical change, in effect of admitting defeat, would be too great."[30]

The concept of defeat or failure of democratic state building in Iraq is dealt with in George McGovern and William Polk's *Out of Iraq* and in Noah Feldman's *What We Owe Iraq*. McGovern and Polk focus on the international implications of failure in Iraq. They highlight the extreme financial burden and human costs of the continued presence in Iraq. The authors also discuss the political and moral losses that the United States has suffered as a result of their actions in Iraq. Although McGovern and Polk offer a very detailed twenty-four point plan for Iraqi exit, they fail to answer a critical question should the United States abruptly withdraw from Iraq: what about internal and regional insecurity? They briefly address the question in their conclusion, "The likely result will be greatly increased regional insecurity …creat[ing] conditions in which warfare is likely, not only within and among the major ethnic and religious sections of Iraqi society, but also with neighboring countries."[31] McGovern and Polk leave this issue unaddressed and simply state, "These effects will have unpredictable but pernicious consequences."[32] Their failure to provide a remedy for instability weakens the argument for withdrawal.

On the other hand, in *What We Owe Iraq*, Feldman acknowledges the moral obligation and practical dilemmas the United States faces in the Iraqi state building venture. He states that we need some sort of model of how to proceed in Iraq, but this model should not be based off of the British experience. Feldman cites a possible solution reminiscent of the Lebanese Confessional system, which would involve "elected elites sharing power and distributing resources roughly in proportion to the relative numbers of different groups in the population, while respecting basic civil liberties."[33]

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[30] Dodge, xxxvii.

[31] George McGovern and William Polk, *Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2006), 123.

[32] Ibid., 124.

[33] Noah Feldman, *What We Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 32.

However, as Lebanese political history has shown, proportional power sharing while respecting basic civil liberties is an arduous and sometimes impossible task.

Feldman wrestles with the moral implications of embarking on a state building mission without a blueprint. He contends that the United States lacked a blueprint because it pursued Iraqi regime change and subsequent state building for its own interests and not the Iraqi peoples' interest. He asks "why should the United States—with or without the UN's assistance—succeed where the British and League of Nations had failed?"[34] The question of how and why the United States and Iraq should succeed in state building is the central question of current American foreign policy in the Middle East. Given what can be learned from the British Mandate, as well as an analysis of the dissimilar current operating environment in Iraq, can the United States and Iraqi government develop a state-building solution with a more stable legacy than that of the British Occupation?

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[34] Feldman, 32.

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II.   A HISTORICAL COMPARISON

Throughout the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and in some part Operation Enduring Freedom, the mantras have been "we should learn from the lessons of Japan and Germany" and "we should learn from the lessons of the British." There are remarkable similarities between the British and American ventures, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The fact remains, however, that that geo-political and societal start points of the two occupations are vastly dissimilar. Moreover, because of the U.S. position as the sole super-power, its stake in Iraq and follow-on legacy is may be more critical than that of the British Mandate.

A historical analysis of the invasions and the events surrounding them can offer insight as to why a direct "apples to apples" comparison is not entirely valid. This chapter's first section will give a brief overview of Mesopotamia and Iraq's turbulent political history and the major actors to include the Ottomans, the British and the Americans. Chapter II also dissects the historical origins behind each invasion and explains how they influenced the subsequent foreign presence and state building eras in Iraq. Additionally, this chapter will lay the groundwork for Chapter III's further analysis of the ideological motivations of the invasions and now their moral and political underpinnings shaped the state building processes.

A.   MESOPOTAMIA – A BRIEF HISTORY

Mesopotamia has experienced its lion's share of empires, rulers, monarchs, dictators and occupation. Prior to the Islamic Empires and conquests during the seventh century, Mesopotamia had seen several civilizations form and disappear. Iraq historian Phebe Marr writes that Mesopotamian empires began with the Akkadians in 2400 B.C.E. after they conquered the pre-existing Sumerian city-states.[35] Subsequent empires followed the Akkadians including the Babylonians, Kassites, and the Assyrians.[36] The

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[35] Phebe Marr, *A Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 14.

[36] Ibid., 14.

early Mesopotamian empires generated numerous cultural, scientific and literary contributions. The institutions and traditions of the Mesopotamian empires were upended by Alexander the Great's conquest of the Middle East.[37] Marr asserts that Alexander's introduction of Hellenistic ideas and "scientific rationalism" helped paved the way for the Islamic era.[38] The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah in 637 C.E. signaled the beginning of another era of foreign invasion.[39] It was during the early periods of the first Islamic century punctuated by Arab-Islamic rivalries and Husayn's death that Mesopotamia gained its enduring reputation of being a land difficult to rule.[40]

The Islamic territories in Iraq were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[41] The Ottomans attempted to expand their domain while at the same time counter the influence of their regional challenger, the Persians.[42] Mesopotamia was designated with the new name of "Iraq" and administratively divided into three provinces: Mosul, Baghdad and Basra.[43] The Ottomans exercised direct rule through appointed governors (usually Turkish) and generally abstained from interfering with local traditions and customs. The new rulers simply considered Iraq as a revenue generating territory. During the early nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire began to opt for more direct rule policies due to the emergence of regional European interests and the growing influence of Egypt.[44] Subsequently, the Ottomans began the "Tanzimat" (Reforms) and restructured their policies in landholding, education and conscription.[45]

The Ottoman Empire's grasp on the Arab territories weakened during the years preceding World War I. Europe had regained interest in the region it had previously

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[37] Marr, 15.

[38] Ibid., 15.

[39] Ibid., 16.

[40] Ibid., 16.

[41] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), 8.

[42] Ibid., 8.

[43] Ibid., 8.

[44] Ibid., 13.

[45] Ibid., 14.

considered inconsequential. Britain in particular recognized that Iraq and the Euphrates River provided a much more appealing link to India than the long voyage around the Horn of Africa.[46]   Realizing that Western powers, led by Britain, were quickly expanding their interests in the Middle East, the Ottomans sought to ally with the Germans.[47]   The Ottomans also attempted to re-assert their authority and military capabilities in the region by emphasizing "Turkishness" and limiting political freedom.[48] Reaction to these measures created the beginning of Arab nationalism, or "Arabism," which focused on three major tenants: 1) decentralization of the prior administrations, 2) use of Arabic language rather than Turkish in schools and 3) political appointment of Arabs instead of Turks.[49]   The British seized upon the opportunity for change in the regional power balance and formed a coalition with Arab Nationalists. In 1914, the British mobilized into Iraq and began their conquest and eventual occupation.

B.   THE BRITISH OCCUPATION

The British initially invaded southern Iraq in order to protect their oil interests against the Ottomans and the Central powers. The British Navy had recently converted from coal power to oil driven engines and on the eve of World War I, oil interests were critical.[50] As the war progressed, Britain began to entrench itself in Iraq and following the Armistice of Mudro had effactually occupied the entire country. In the absence of indigenous authority, the new occupiers took upon themselves the task of establishing a new order in Iraq. High Commissioner A. T. Wilson claimed that Iraq had no competent means of rule and to allow self-determination would mean sowing "seeds of decay and

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[46] William R. Polk, *Understanding Iraq* (New York: Harper Collins 2005), 62.

[47] David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 50.

[48] Ibid., 28.

[49] Ibid., 28.

[50] Polk, 64.

dissolution."[51] Gertrude Bell, the Oriental Secretary to the Commissioner, echoed these sentiments, claimed that the Iraqi population was mostly passive, and approved of British rule.[52]

The British quickly set out to replace the Ottoman political system with its own administrative institutions. Upon their arrival to Iraq, Wilson and his political officers promptly applied the policies of the British-Indian school of colonialism. Modeling their administration from the Indian imperial school, the British divided Iraq into political districts, established an Anglo-Indian justice system and incorporated the Indian rupee as the currency of choice.[53]

The United Nations awarded the British the Iraqi mandate in 1920 following the San Remo Conference. The mandate translated into colonialism which was not particularly appealing in the eyes of the Iraqis. Eventually the clerics, the Shi'a in particular, began to speak out against the mandate and occupation. Imam Mohammed Tahi al-Shirazi issued a fatwa which stated that "none but Moslems have any right to rule over Moslems."[54] Armed with this fatwa, Iraqi religious leaders and nationalists fomented a rebellion in 1920. The British were not prepared for the insurrection or the guerilla tactics that it entailed. The occupying forces suffered more than 2,200 casualties and spent approximately forty million pounds.[55] Discontent of the occupation was not limited to Iraq and its citizens. English citizens were increasingly dissatisfied with occupation in terms of costs and along ideological grounds. T.E. Lawrence claimed that the British occupation was no better than the previous Ottoman rule:

> Our rule is worse than the old Turkish system. They kept fourteen thousand local Conscripts and killed a yearly average of two hundred Arabs in maintaining peace. We keep ninety thousand men, with

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[51] Dodge, 11.

[52] Ibid., 11.

[53] Fromkin, 31.

[54] Edwin Black, *Banking on Baghdad: Inside Iraq's 7,000-Year History of War, Profit, and Conflict* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2004), 85.

[55] Ibid., 259.

areoplanes, amoured cars, gunboats and armoured trains. We killed about ten thousand Arabs in this rising this summer.[56]

Although the 1920 revolt had been diffused, it was the genesis of Iraqi nationalism and revealed the desire for identity and self-interests in the foundation of the state.[57] The British were keenly aware of the Iraqi desire for self rule and replaced Wilson with Sir Percy Cox as the Higher Commissioner in Iraq. His three primary duties were 1) ending military administration, 2) creation of a popularly approved constitution and 3) establishment of a government with an Arab president.[58]

Cox adhered to the language of the mandate requiring that the British establish and nurture an emerging Iraqi government. Sensing public unrest both at home and abroad, the British parliament enacted the Administrative Inspectorate Law of 1923 which hastened the transition of the occupiers from administrators to advisors.[59] Cox and his new staff agreed that "The Iraqi Government must be allowed to make mistakes and learn by them during this probationary period, provided that such mistakes are not of a nature to lead to disaster."[60] Due to the unpopularity of direct rule in Iraq, the British sought out an Arab leader who would be "malleable" under the terms of the mandate.[61] After significant persuasion by Cox, the Iraqi Council of State approved the appointment of Faysal ibn Husayn as the first king or Iraq.[62] King Faysal brought with him loyal supporters who harbored Arab nationalist sentiments while at the same time were amenable to the British mandate.[63] In addition to his de facto appointment of King Faysal, Cox also decided that the Sunnis should hold a dominant position in Iraqi politics.[64] Gertrude Bell had previously advised A.T. Wilson that working through the

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[56] Black, 78.

[57] Tripp, 44.

[58] Marr, 34.

[59] Toby Dodge, Inventing *Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 28.

[60] Ibid., 29.

[61] Marr, 36.

[62] Ibid., 36.

[63] Ibid., 36.

[64] Polk, 79.

Sunni nationalists would be more prudent than coordinating with the Shi'a tribes and clerics whom she categorized as "reactionary and obscurantists."[65]

Despite having a monarch, the Iraqi government remained subject to external pressure and interference. The new administration was in limbo as a "quasi-colony, quasi-independent" state.[66] Continued division within Iraq along tribal, sectarian and religious lines allowed for easy manipulation. Although the 1920 revolt had spurred the beginnings of Iraqi nationalism, the inability to build a broad consensus among the population had constrained the nationalist movement.[67] King Faysal did not hold any delusions being completely sovereign and thus could not create a broad following or ignite nationalist sentiment. He knew that despite being regarded as a Sayyid (descendant of the prophet), he was also considered by the Iraqis as an interloper.[68] Regardless of his questionable legitimacy, King Faysal maintained his throne for twelve years, during which the British maintained their influence over internal Iraqi politics.

In 1931, the League Mandates Commission reluctantly acknowledged that Iraq had fulfilled its requirements for admittance into the League of Nations.[69] The League expressed their concerns about the future treatment of minority groups (the Kurds, Assyrians, Turkomens, and Yazidis) within Iraq. The Assyrians in particular held trepidations about their future security as they had been used by the British as proxy military forces.[70] The Iraqi government agreed to the League's requirement of minority protection and was unanimously approved membership in the League of Nations in 1932.[71] The British Mandate ended in 1932, however, informal British influence and interference would continue for more than two decades.

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[65] Tripp, 39.

[66] Polk, 78.

[67] Marr, 46.

[68] Tripp, 48.

[69] Ibid., 74.

[70] Polk, 85.

[71] Tripp, 75.

C.   THE U.S. INVASION AND CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ

The exact motivation for the U.S. invasion into Iraq is controversial and convoluted. As George Packer writes in *The Assassins Gate,* "The answer has something to with September 11. But what exactly?"[72] In his contention that the Iraq war was a necessity, former Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith claims that "Iraq policy was re-examined in light of our post-9/11 sense of vulnerability."[73] The Bush administration's rationale and justification for invading Iraq will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. Motivation aside, the U.S. intent to pursue military action into Iraq had its genesis long before the 9/11 attacks. A regime changing invasion into Iraq had been mulled during the conclusion of the first Gulf War. Ultimately the U.S. military leadership and the first Bush administration nixed the idea after realizing that the entire Arab world would strenuously object. The American administration was also hoping and predicting that Saddam would fall from power due to internal turmoil.[74] This obviously did not happen and Iraq, and the oppressive Hussein regime, would remain a point of contention in American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Because of his legacy of using chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. was deeply suspicious about Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs. In 1998, the U.S. and the United Kingdom launched Operation Desert Fox in an attempt to hamper Iraqi WMD manufacturing. During his 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush referred to Iraq as a member of the "Axis of Evil" and asserted that "This regime has something to hide from the world."[75] One year later on March 20, 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq.

The initial American invasion and "conquest" of Iraq was significantly easier than the British invasion a century prior. During their invasion, the British faced an organized Ottoman army which was able to draw reinforcements quickly through conscriptions.

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[72] George Packer, *The Assassins Gate* (New York: Farr, Strauss and Giroux, 2005), 46.

[73] Douglas J. Feith, "Why We Went to War With Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 2008, 11.

[74] Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002), 53.

[75] George W. Bush, "The State of the Union Address" (speech, Washington D.C., January 29, 2002).

Following its relatively uncontested landing in Basra, the British army's advance onto Baghdad took eighteen months and endured tens of thousands of casualties.[76] The siege of Kut where over 13,000 British troops surrendered to the Ottomans is testimony as to the difficulty of the British conquest.[77] On the other hand, by the time President Bush announced the end of military operations in Iraq in May 03, the U.S invasion and complete occupation had taken less than three months with the loss of 176 American service members.[78]

Overwhelming U.S. military success in its initial campaign against the Iraqi Army was attributed to a variety of factors. A recent Rand Study report cited that Iraqi resistance was weak due to a combination of Saddam's miscalculations, poorly managed battlefield operations, inferior equipment, poor motivation and inferior warfighting capabilities.[79] The U.S. Army quickly crushed the Iraqi army despite its relatively small invasion force of approximately 145,000 troops and 500 tanks and armored vehicles facing the much larger Iraqi army of 400,000 troops and 4,000 tanks and armored vehicles.[80] The U.S. Air Force and the numerous bombing sorties it executed played a key role in diminishing the Iraqi Army's numerical advantage. During the opening salvos of the invasion the Iraqi army leadership was in shambles and the Saddam regime continued to deny the presence and impending engulfment of American forces. Confusion and delusion was widespread among the Iraqi army high echelons. During the famous Third Infantry Division's "Thunder Run" into Baghdad, American troops captured an Iraqi colonel who accidentally drove his car into a Bradley while on his way to work.[81] The colonel, having been misinformed by government media sources, was unaware that U.S. forces were in Baghdad.[82]

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[76] Black, 187.

[77] Ibid., 188.

[78] Icasualties.org. "Iraq Coalition Casualties," http://icasualties.org/oif/ (accessed February 22, 2008).

[79] Stephen T. Hosmer, *Why the Iraqi Resistance to the Coalition Invasion Was So Weak* (Arlington: Rand Corporation, 2007), ix.

[80] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 117.

[81] David Zucchino *Thunder Run,* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 35.

[82] Ibid., 35.

The rapid and complete collapse of the Iraqi army and Saddam's regime was a surprise to all involved parties. However, the celebrations in Washington and in Iraq were short lived. The newly liberated country quickly dissolved into a virtual anarchy with criminal elements and activity becoming the norm. U.S. military and civilian leadership were unprepared and unclear as to how to respond.

Despite the growing chaos, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld remained unconcerned, "Stuff happens…and it's untidy, and freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things."[83] In contrast to Rumsfeld's perceptions, the American troops on the ground recognized the seriousness of the situation. A U.S. Marine Corps officer ominously wrote that "A finite supply of goodwill towards the Americans evaporated with the passing of each anarchic day."[84] Iraqi response to American passivity in response to the looting was bitter. Conspiracy theories began to sprout reference the U.S. ability to protect the Oil ministry but not the Baghdad Antiquities Museum or the Mosul Museum of Antiquities.[85] Some Iraqis also suspiciously believed that the Americans were complicit in the looting in order to secure future reconstruction contracts.[86] Eventually lawlessness gave way to attempts of self-security through militias and armed gangs. Civilian militancy grew until the U.S. found itself pitted against a full-fledged insurgency.

The Bush administration realized that despite the initial success of the invasion, the military could not fill the leadership void or fully quell the lawlessness in the Iraq. Shortly following the invasion, military authority in Iraq remained in the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) commanded by LTG McKeirnan. Civilian authority resided in the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (OHRA) led by former General Jay Garner. The working relationship between the two organizations was never clearly defined which created confusion with very little tangible post-invasion progress. Moreover, a lack of communication or mission understanding

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[83] Packer, 136.

[84] Ricks, 136.

[85] W. Andrew Terrill, "Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of the U.S. Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq," *Strategic Studies Institute* (July 2003): 13.

[86] Ibid., 13.

between the two components hampered the effectiveness of the OHRA. Early OHRA preparations detailed reconstruction plans which coincided with military movement into Iraq. For example, once the southern city of Basra was secured, the OHRA would enter the city, presumably secured by the military, to begin reconstruction projects.[87] However, unbeknownst to the OHRA, CLFCC had already decided on plans to invade all the way to Baghdad—leaving no rear security element for reconstruction efforts.[88]

State Department officials recognized the OHRA's ineffectualness and created the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which had more authority.[89] As chief of the CPA, former Ambassador Paul Bremer was given the task of finding a solution to this new mess in Iraq. His two critical tasks were to reestablish order and revitalize government services.[90] Bremer subsequently implemented three policies which would have resounding consequences throughout post-invasion Iraq: 1) De-Baathification, 2) dissolution of the Iraqi army and 3) elimination of unprofitable state run industries.[91] One of Bremer's allies, Undersecretary of Defense Feith, justified the dissolution of the army by asserting that it had "already disbanded itself" and that "These actions [Bremer's] are part of a robust campaign to show the Iraqi people that the Saddam regime is gone, and will never return."[92]

Bremer's decision immediately created Iraqi dissension and there was a palpable transition in perceiving the U.S. as a liberator to seeing the foreign administration as occupiers. In the days that followed, a CPA staff member supposedly lamented that "My personal belief is that the insurrection in Iraq is a result of those initial policy mistakes— failure to stop the looting, failure to establish firm control right away and the initial decisions made when Bremer came in…"[93]

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[87] Nora Bensahel, "After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq," (Santa Monica: Rand, 2008), 24.

[88] Ibid,, 24.

[89] Catherine Marie Dale, "Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, and Issues for Congress," *Congress Research Service* (February 22, 2008): 33.

[90] Dodge, 159.

[91] Ibid., 165.

[92] Joshua Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 293, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2004):18.

[93] Ricks, 196.

Doubts about the legitimacy of the U.S. intervention into Iraq also pervaded the international community. The U.S. had sought international assistance from a "Coalition of the Willing" after realizing the seriousness of the deteriorating situation in Iraq[94] However, a few major global players, namely Russia, France and Germany, were reluctant to support the initial invasion and were thus curtailed from participating in post-invasion reconstruction and stability efforts. Other countries withheld support because they did not "want to appear to have supported the war by engaging in postwar efforts."[95] Of the approximately 85 countries that the U.S. appealed to for post-invasion assistance, only 48 counties were tallied as members of the coalition in 2003.[96] Coalition numbers would dwindle considerably and by 2007 only 25 countries would remain as troop-providing supporters in Operation Iraq Freedom.[97] This number further shrank to 17 coalition partners in 2008.[98]

Like their British Mandate predecessors, Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority, took upon themselves the task of reasserting a central authority over the Iraqis. The U.S. administration had assigned Bremer and his staff this job according to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 that granted the Coalition broad authority to administer in Iraq until a legitimate government could be established.[99] This commitment was uncannily similar to the League of Nation's mandate that prescribed British administration for "a people not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world."[100] The resolution's actual wording didn't

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[94] Stephen A. Hildreth, Jeremy Sharp, Iraq: International Attitudes to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Reconstruction, CRS Report for Congress (December 18, 2003): 4.

[95] Ibid., 4.

[96] Peter Slevin, "Policing of Iraq to Stay U.S. Job," *Washington Post,* June 22, 2003.

[97] Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq: Coalition Support and International Donor Commitments, United States Government Accountability Office. May 9, 2007.

[98]Multi-National Forces Iraq. "MNFI Coalition Partners, Operation Iraqi Freedom," MNFI Official Website, http://www.mnfiraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=49&Itemid=129 (accessed November 3, 2008).

[99] Hildreth., 2.

[100] Keith D. Watenpaugh, "The Guiding Principles and the U.S. 'Mandate' for Iraq: 20th Century Colonialism and America's New Empire" (2003) http://logosonline.home.igc.org/watenpaugh_iraq.htm (accessed February 21, 2008).

seem to give the same broad scope of mandate authority as the 1920 League of Nations Article 22. However, the resolution clearly indicated the desire of external aid, "*Stressing* the right of the Iraqi people freely to determine their own political future and control their own natural resources, *welcoming* the commitment of all parties concerned to support the creation of an environment in which they may do so as quickly as possible."[101]

Official transfer of authority occurred on June 30, 2004 ending the official period of "occupation" as prescribed the UN Security Council.[102] At that time, Iraqi officials and the U.S. administration renegotiated the terms for continued American presence and created Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I).[103] After the transfer of authority, the CPA ceased to exist and foreign authority was exercised through coordination of MNF-I and the new American embassy.[104] The UN subsequently extended authorization for foreign presence and stated it was at the request of the interim Iraqi government.[105]

The interim Iraqi government readily requested an extension of American presence and administration due to the tenuous security situation. At this point, the post-invasion insurgency was inflicting a costly toll on the population and the coalition forces. The U.S. administration and the State Department were startled by the scope and ferocity of the insurgency. In a stroke of irony, Saddam Hussein had accurately believed that an insurgency was inevitable as the Iraqi people would not stand to be occupied or conquered.[106] The common perception in the Bush administration was that the Iraqis would welcome the Americans as liberators and thus pacifying the country would not be a difficult task. The administration was optimistically hoping to ride the wave of goodwill and hand over the country to Iraqi expatriates who would quickly establish an

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[101] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 (May 23, 2003) http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/368/53/PDF/N0336853.pdf?OpenElement (accessed February 29, 2008).

[102] Dale, 29.

[103] Ibid., 30.

[104] Ibid., 33.

[105] Ibid., 30.

[106] "Delfeur Report," Central Intelligence Agency - Regime Strategic Intent (2004) https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/chap1.html (accessed February 29, 2008).

American-style democratic government.[107] The administration was also especially confident that the previously oppressed Sh'ia would support the U.S.

Although Grand Ayatollah Sistani did not issue a fatwa calling for action against the U.S. invasion, the Shi'a community did not provide the assumed bastion of support for the Americans. Instability and intra-sectarian turbulence within the Shi'a hampered and even precluded any whole scale support from the community.[108] The U.S. administration also had concerns about Sunni dissension. Being the former power holders in Iraq, the Sunni had the most to lose as the result of Bremer's de-Baathification measures. Moreover, the Sunnis harbored trepidation that their community would be held responsible for the Saddam's past transgression.[109] After initial reluctance and boycotting of elections, the Sunni leadership gradually asserted themselves into the new Iraqi political system. In early 2005, former Sunni militant leaders urged that it was time for a "new Jihad" which entailed turning from fighting to politics and as such, the Sunnis returned to politics, albeit to vote against the newly drafted constitution.[110]

Sunni political participation highlights one of the many signs of progress that the Iraqis and U.S. administration have accomplished during its involvement in Iraq. Unfortunately these episodes of success are overshadowed by bleak accounts of political failure, economic stagnation, sectarian strife and insurgent spawned terror. The American military casualty count totals more than four thousand deaths and Iraqi losses amount to hundreds of thousands. Some reports even estimate that Iraqi deaths have reached an excess of one million.[111] Iraqi oil production in 2007 was at half of the anticipated production rates as envisioned by the U.S. administration.[112] Sectarian

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[107] Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq: Blundering in Baghdad," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 83, No. 5 (September/October 2004): 83.

[108] Terrill, 21.

[109] Ibid., 25.

[110] Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, "The New Sunni Jihad: 'A Time for Politics,'" *Washington Post,* October 27, 2005. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/10/26/AR2005102602512.html (accessed March 3, 2008).

[111] Megan McArdle, "Body Counting: Why Even the Most Dubious Statistics Influence Our Thinking." *The Atlantic* (April 2008): 26.

[112] Peter Grier, "Iraqi's Oil Production Falls Short of Goals," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 7, 2007, http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0507/p01s02-wome.html?page=1 (accessed February 17, 2008).

violence reached record highs during 2006 following the Golden Mosque bombing. The insurgency in Iraq is still rampant despite lauded "Surge" successes. For the U.S. military and coalition forces, 2007 has been the deadliest year since the initial invasion with a record 2,592 deaths. The insurgency's deadliness and resiliency is a far cry from Vice President Cheney's June 2005 declaration that the insurgency was in its "last throes." Overall, the general feelings of both the Iraqi and American population are of impatience and exhaustion—identical to the sentiments shared by their British and Iraqi counterparts in the century prior.

D. MIRROR IMAGES

The British and U.S. experiences in Iraq have historical similarities that help explain the current troubles in Iraq. A brief description of these parallels will assist in framing Chapter Three's analysis of the ideological motivations behind the two invasions. Although the invasions commenced from significantly different political and social starting points, it is only fair to mention their striking congruencies:

1) "Picking Sides" – Under the advisement of Gertrude Bell, the British decided that the Sunni should be the power brokers for the nascent state. Although the U.S. has refrained from outright declarations, the Shi'a have replaced their formerly powerful Sunni counterparts and hold sway to much of the military leadership.

2) Use of proxies – The British used Assyrian Levies in order to stabilize the state during rebellions. The Assyrian would later pay the price in the absence of British protection. During the early years of the occupation, U.S. forces allied with Kurdish militias, the Pesh Merga, in counter-insurgency efforts in Northern Iraq. Moreover, the U.S. utilized individual Iraqi tribes to fight against elements of Al-Qaeda.

3) Treaties – The British and Iraqi governments entered into the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 in order to give the appearance of state sovereignty and reaffirm support. The treaty was decidedly more beneficial for the British, however, the illusion of Iraqi sovereignty was propagated. The U.S. and Iraqi government

signed a "Declaration of Principles" in November 2007. Although the U.S. refrained from referring to the declaration as a treaty, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zabari called it "a long-term treaty."[113] Critics of the declaration fear that it will be used as a tool for prolonged and costly U.S. involvement in Iraq.

4) Troops Strength – Analysis of both invasions indicates that total troop numbers were insufficient to properly sustain stability in the country. The British resorted to airpower in order to compensate for insufficient troop strength when combating instability during the Mandate. In response to continued post-invasion instability, the U.S. deployed 155,000 troops in January 2005 to maintain security. Strategists and analysts, to include the former Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki, predicted that the occupation forces should total 400,000 to 500,000 in order to maintain nation-wide stability.[114]

Although there are numerous more similarities in the British and American invasions, the aforementioned patterns are perhaps the most influential in the Iraqi state building endeavor.

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[113] Guy Raz, "Long Term Pact with Iraq Raises Questions," *National Public Radio,* January 24, 2008.

[114] Toby Dodge, "Iraq: The Contradictions of Exogenous State-Building in Historical Perspective," *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 27, No.1 (2006): 192.

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III.   IDEOLOGICAL COMPARISONS

Although Chapter II ended with a list of similarities between the invasions (picking sides, using proxies, treaties, and under strength troop deployments), there still exists glaring contrasting factors in the British and American experience. For example, the British and American ideological motivations for invading Iraq have significant differences. This chapter delves further into the historical underpinnings of the two countries rationale and perceived legitimacy for their invasions. The chapter's first sections analyze and explain British imperialistic impulses despite the advent of the Mandate system. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to scrutinizing the American transition from the self protectionist realism to pseudo-idealism and the spread of Western-styled democracy.

During the waning years of World War I and the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Allied powers quickly realized the strategic and economic importance of Middle East. European and Russian powers began to jockey for positions of influence in the region and the politics of the Middle East became "explosive."[115]   Eventually the struggle for control in the Middle East became a battle between England and the other European states (France in particular) and Russia.[116] However, because of its imperial ventures of the previous centuries, England has stretched its colonial capabilities to their limits and resolved to not directly control the region but instead prevent its European counterparts and Russia from gaining control.[117] Queen Victoria succinctly stated that English intent in the region was "a question of Russian or British Supremacy in the world."[118]

British self-serving motivations in Iraq were thinly veiled at best. In a paper to the British Institute of International Affairs in 1924, British civil servant B. H. Bourdillon verbalized England's initial intents for the 1914 Basra invasion. He acknowledged that

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[115] David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 25.

[116] Ibid., 26.

[117] Ibid., 27.

[118] Ibid., 27.

England was bolstering the pre-existing Arab nationalist movement and fulfilling promises of support to Sharif Hussein.[119] However Bourdillon also admitted to the less altruistic reason for the Basra incursion which was the protection of the Anglo-Persian oil fields.[120] British self-interests and pre-occupation with other international matters such as the Treaty of Versailles and the emerging Zionists movement did not allow for timely or assertive policy decisions during the early days of occupation.[121] Early indecision about the political future of Iraq would haunt the British throughout the course of the Mandate and cause years of administrative inefficiency and missteps.

In a similar manner, the United States was equally confused about the future of the Iraqi state in the days after the 2003 invasion. The "shock and awe" campaign quickly morphed into an indecisive and confused campaign of stabilization and state-building. Over-optimism and misperceptions by the American administration had resulted in a failure to plan for a postwar Iraq.[122] However, this optimism and faith in democratic transitions and modern day "Wilsonianism" was one motivation behind the U.S. invasion into Iraq. The pre-emptive war with Iraq was strongly based upon the "Bush Doctrine" and its premise that stability and security in the Middle East would be achieved through democracy.[123] As a result, the U.S. embarked on a "benevolent" and arguably idealistically naive mission to invade and rebuild a new Iraq through a democratic framework and a re-invigoration of Iraqi nationalism.

During the later period of the Mandate, the British recognized the importance of Iraqi nationalism transcending sectarian and cultural factionalism. In a speech to the Grotius Society, Islamic and International law scholar S.G. Vesey-Fitzgerald stressed that "A federation of self-interest is much stronger than a purely centralized government of

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[119] B. H. Bourdillon, "The Political Situation in Iraq," *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs,* Vol. 3, No. 6 (November 1924): 273.

[120] Ibid., 274.

[121] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), 76.

[122] Fukuyama, Francis. "After Neoconservatism," *The New York Times,* February 19, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/magazine/neo.html (accessed February 23, 2008).

[123] Ibid., 1.

discordant minorities.[124]"   The quintessential question arising out the current U.S. presence in Iraq is whether the country can re-establish and nurture a sense of nationalism strong enough to overcome its current internal divisions and rebuild a sovereign state. This chapter investigates the driving factors and motivations behind the two invasions into Iraq. It also examines the effects of the dissimilar geo-political environment on the British and American invasion and mandate attitudes.

A.   THE MAKINGS OF THE BRITISH MANDATE

The mandate system was created by the League of Nations in order to break from traditional imperialism which had been dominant in European foreign policy dating back to the seventeenth century.[125] This system was a new approach to colonial policy and was premised on eliminating the practice of annexation.[126] A liberal divergence from imperialism was consistent with post-World War I allied sentiment that "populations ought not to be bandied about without regard to their own wishes as if they were property."[127] President Woodrow Wilson voiced the same sentiment in his argument that the right to self-determination was one of the necessary conditions for international and domestic stability.[128] The British, in keeping with the trend of the day, agreed that a mandate system would meet the intent of self-determination, however not to the complete extent envisioned by Wilson. They approved of the League of Nation Covenant's Article 22 which articulated the necessity for a system of temporary mandates:

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[124] S. G. Vesey-Fitzgerald, "The Iraqi Treaty, 1930" *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, Vol. 17 (1931): 65.

[125] Toby Dodge, Inventing *Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 23.

[126] Ernest B. Haas, "The Reconciliation of Conflicting Colonial Policy Aims: Acceptance of the League of Nations Mandate System," *International Organization,* Vol. 6. No. 4 (November 1954): 521.

[127] Ibid., 522.

[128] Robert Belloni, "Rethinking 'National Building': The Contradictions of the Neo-Wilsonian Approach to Democracy Promotion," *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (Winter/Spring 2007). http://diplomacy.shu.edu/academics/journal/resources/journal_dip_pdfs/journal_of_diplomacy_vol8_no1/08-Belloni.pdf (accessed February 21, 2008).

> To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such people form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this covenant.[129]

Eventually, much of the former Ottoman territory was "mandated" to the French and British who promptly drew boundary lines created during the earlier Sykes-Picot agreement.

According to the Mandate system, the newly partitioned states would administer themselves under the tutelage of the Mandatory powers.[130] Although the French and British claimed only to be marginally involved in internal politics, the real power remained in the appointed "High Commissioners" who acted as representatives of foreign powers. In Iraq's case, the High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox was responsible for eventual military withdrawal of British troops, creation of a popularly approved constitution, and the establishment of provisional Arab government.[131] Sir Cox, along with the British administration, assumed the burden of the Iraqi tutelage and eventual state building.

As previously mentioned, President Wilson's notion of self-determination and his Fourteen Points had prompted the shift in French and English colonial policies.[132] The European powers sought to be perceived as "humanitarian liberators" of the Arabs from the oppression of the Ottomans.[133] When appealing for Iraqi political participation and cooperation, British General Stanley Maude implored "O people of Baghdad, remember that for 26 generations you suffered under strange tyrants…"[134] It was under the guise of

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[129] Keith D. Watenpaugh, "The Guiding Principles and the U.S. 'Mandate' for Iraq: 20th Century Colonialism and America's New Empire" (2003). http://logosonline.home.igc.org/watenpaugh_iraq.htm (accessed February 21, 2008).

[130] Ibid., 5.

[131] Phebe Marr, *A Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 3.

[132] Ibid., 3.

[133] Ibid., 3.

[134] Marr, 4.

helping the traumatized Mesopotamian state that the British found legitimacy in their occupation and Mandate. Despite administrative and semantic denial to the contrary, indication of British control and influence over Iraqi state was evident and resented by the inhabitants.

A. T. Wilson, with the assistance of British political officers, promptly eliminated the traditional Ottoman-styled municipal councils and replaced them with an imperial type system where order was maintained through local notables.[135] Wilson then initiated a plebiscite inquiring as to the desired future shape of state and constitution that the Iraqis desired. Although he claimed that results of this survey were inconclusive, Wilson reported a general Iraqi approval of British control.[136] He stated that the Iraqis favored "Englishmen speaking Arabic" over French or American administrators.[137] In fact, Iraqi merchants and traders preferred British rule over the Ottoman as it was more profitable for them.[138] Their previous Ottoman occupiers had often been unscrupulous and prone to marketplace cheating.

The actual results of the plebiscite found that a majority of the Iraqi favored division into three separate provinces, but there was not a popular consensus on which type of government or ruler the people wanted.[139] A *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah al-Sharazi and subsequent Iraqi uprising in 1920 contradicted the acquiescence as initially reported by Wilson. Eventually the British installed King Faisal as head of the nascent state. Despite being granted a monarch and sovereignty, British manipulation in Iraq was evident in a bogus referendum claiming 96% approval of King Fiasal by the population.[140]

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[135] Tripp, 37.

[136] Ibid.., 37.

[137] Judith S. Yaphe, "War and the Occupation in Iraq: What Went Wrong? What Could Go Right?" *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 57, No. 3 (Spring 2003): 387.

[138] Sami Zubdaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq." *International Journal of Middle East Studies¸* Vol. 34, No. 2 (2002): 206.

[139] Yaphe, 387..

[140] Tripp, 49.

The Iraqi people, as well as some British officials, were not deceived by the Mandate and its disguise of indirect rule. British imperial tendencies were transparent through various policy decisions. Control of the military was primarily in the hands of the British and internal security was often executed by the colonial troops or their proxies, the Assyrians.[141] Economic and political institutions including trade decisions, foreign policies, and tariffs were placed under the auspices the British administration while civil society duties were doled out to the locals.[142] A blatant signal of British authority was codified in the 1922 Cairo Conference Treaty which cited the requirement for the Iraqi king to give deference to the British on all fiscal policies.[143] This treaty also required Iraq to pay half of the costs of British occupation and the salaries of the officials "advising" the new government.[144] British manipulation took a significantly more heavy-handed stance during latter Royal Air Force campaigns against the Iraqis. Despite the Mandate system admonishments, the British were not letting the Iraqis "run their own show."

Discontent of intrusive British policies in Iraq was also evident at home in England. The more experienced Middle East advisors, including T.E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell, warned that Arab nationalism was too embedded within the region to allow for traditional imperialist administration.[145] This new school of thought, referred to as the "Anglo-Egyptian school," supported a non-intrusive advisement of Arab state growth.[146] Gertrude Bell opined that the British administrators should "Give them [the Arab governments] responsibility and make them settle their own affairs and they'll do it every time and a thousand times better than we can."[147] This way of thinking was in direct contrast to the A. T. Wilson administration's and Mandate's direct interference in Iraqi affairs.

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[141] Watenpaugh, 5.

[142] Ibid., 5.

[143] Marr, 38.

[144] Watenpaugh, 5.

[145] Haas, 527.

[146] Ibid., 527.

[147] Ibid., 527.

Although the language of the League of Nation's Mandates did not allude to overt colonialism, the evidence was visible and the mandate system could be perceived as a form of "neo-colonialism." In all fairness, Percy Cox, A.T. Wilson and the British colonial office were merely acting out the Western Orientalist sentiment of the day. European states assumed that they, not the Arabs, knew the best path of advancement for the Middle East. The British were especially resolute in this opinion as expressed by a Gertrude Bell in an apparent contradiction to earlier Anglo-Egyptian school beliefs. She qualified the Orientals and Iraqis as "like a very old child…he is not practical in our acceptance of the world, any more than a child is practical, and his utility is not ours."[148] Despite the Wilsonian-based intentions of the League of Nations, the mandates resulted in truly being "colonialism in drag."[149] European powers had assumed the region needed their tutelage and more importantly, they saw the strategic gains to be had. The ideological legitimacy and altruistic earnestness of the mandate could not disguise the colonial-minded motivations of the Western powers and of Britain in particular.

B.   REALISM TO "REALISTIC WILSONIANISM": THE U.S. IN IRAQ[150]

The American rationale for invading and remaining in Iraq had similar tones of ideological legitimacy and sincerity. The United States initiated a pre-emptive war under two premises: 1) the realist goal of obtaining domestic security against international terrorism and 2) the pseudo-idealist notion of achieving regional and international stability through the establishment of democracy and freedom.

Given the absence of another spectacular terrorist attack within the United States, it can be assumed that the Iraq War and the overall Global War on Terrorism were partially successful in meeting the first goal. However, the U.S.' second objective of establishing a stable liberal democracy in Iraq has obviously proven to be a much more difficult task. This is because the principles behind seeking security are more universally comprehensible than the sometimes hazy ideology driving democratic liberalization.

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[148]Dodge, 64.

[149] Watenpaugh, 1.

[150] Fukuyama, 2.

In a historic rarity, the United States found itself domestically vulnerable following the terrorist attacks of 9-11. This vulnerability prompted a drastic reevaluation of American counterterrorism policies which had previously been more defense-centric.[151] Departing from the common adage that "the best offense is a good defense," the Bush administration sought to instead seek out and eliminate the threat. In a speech to West Point cadets shortly after 9-11, President Bush announced his pre-emptive strategy, "Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives."[152] This offense-minded approach would latter be articulated in the September 2002 National Security Strategy.

American military action into Afghanistan was a strategic response to the 9/11 attacks as it was commonly known that the region was home to terror training camps and a general feeding ground for violent-minded Islamic radicals. Estimates state that since the 1980s, there had been 50,000 to 100,000 militants trained in Afghani terror camps.[153] According to British and Pakistani sources, the U.S. had already began planning for a mid-October military action against the Taliban administration in July 2001, two months prior to 9/11.[154] The aggressive military campaign in Afghanistan was initially successful and the U.S. administration quickly turned to phase two of its Global War on Terrorism—the invasion of Iraq.[155]

The Iraq invasion spurred a myriad of controversies concerning its justifications. Much of the American population is probably still unclear as the real reasons behind the invasion. As George Packer wrote his book "Assassins Gate" the Iraq invasion has "something to with September 11. But what exactly?"[156] Proponents of the invasion

[151] Richard H. Schultz and Andreas Vogt, "It's a War! Fighting Post-11 September Global Terrorism Through the Doctrine of Pre-Emption," *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 15, No. 1 (March 2003): 3.

[152] Joshua Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 293, No. 1 (January/February 2004): 4.

[153] Schultz, 12.

[154] George Arney, "US Planned Attack on Taleban," *BBC*, September 18, 2001. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1550366.stm (accessed February 23, 2008).

[155] Shultz, 25.

[156] George Packer, *The Assassins Gate* (New York: Farr, Strauss and Giroux, 2005), 46.

claimed that it was the next logical step in securing the U.S. against Al-Qaeda and other terrorist threats. Opponents of the war claimed that it was simply an opportunistic attempt by the U.S. to increase hegemonic power over Middle East oil resources. Although the control for oil justification seems viable, it was not wholly applicable as the primary reason for the invasion. Prior to the war, the U.S. already had significant access to huge oil deposits in the Gulf and in Saudi Arabia and its oil interests were not under any real threat.[157]

Besides secure access to oil, another possible justification for the war was the prevention of Saddam Hussein from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The American people reeling from the 9/11 attacks were deeply suspicious of Saddam Hussein and favored military action against his regime. An April 2002 Pew Research Center poll estimated that 69 percent of Americans supported a military campaign to overthrow Saddam.[158] Moreover, the perception of Iraqi threat was bi-partisan and a majority of both Democrat and Republican officials agreed that actions must be taken. Senator Hillary Clinton stated her support for the Senate Joint Resolution 45 which authorized use of armed forces against Iraq, "I have concluded, after careful and serious consideration, that a vote for the resolution best serves the security of our nation."[159]

Despite United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix's assurances of Iraqi cooperation and eleventh hour efforts by the Iraqis to appeal against military actions, the U.S. administration doggedly supported the argument that only a pre-emptive war with Iraq would reconcile the danger of WMDs. In an February 2003 interview, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, stated that "America has long since decided to attack Iraq and nothing Iraq could do would prevent it."[160] American military leadership also saw

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[157] Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Beyond the Realist Theories: 'Neo-Conservatism' and the American Invasion of Iraq," *International Studies Perspectives,* Vol. 7 (2006): 287.

[158] Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House 2002), xxiii.

[159] Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Support of a Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq" (Senate floor speech, Washington D.C., October 22, 2002).

[160] William R. Polk, *Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation* (New York: Harpers Collins Publishers, 2005), 164.

the proverbial writing on the wall. U.S. Army Lt. General David McKeirnan stated that "I think from last fall [2002] we knew it was a question of just when, not if."[161]

The preparation for an Iraq invasion had its dissent within the Bush administration. The Bush administration was divided into two camps, one side led by former Secretary of State Colin Powell, argued for a more diplomatic approach of containment.[162] The pro-invasion and regime change camp, led by Donald Rumsfeld and Vice-President Cheney discounted the containment approach as ineffective.[163] Shortly before the initial U.S. invasion, political scientists John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt wrote an article making a very strong argument for "vigilant containment" while stating that a preventative Iraq war would lack "compelling strategic rationale."[164] Rumsfeld and Cheney overruled the containment policy and claimed that the possibility of a "nuclear-armed Saddam" was too risky.[165] This turning point from containment and deterrence to offensive measures gave rise to aggressive moralism found in the "Bush Doctrine" and its neo-conservative tenets.[166]

President Bush transitioned from his realist goals of self-protection to the neo-conservative notion of the promotion of democracy by citing that the two ideas were interconnected: "I believe we have a responsibility to promote freedom that is as solemn as the responsibility is to protecting the American people, because the two go hand-in-hand."[167] In a sense, neo-conservatism resembled 'Wilsonianism with teeth' or as Francis Fukuyama referred to it, "realistic Wilsonianism."[168] After sensing that the realist justification for the Iraq invasion was losing popular support both home and

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[161] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 67.

[162] Schultz, 24.

[163] Ibid., 24.

[164] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy,* Issue 134 (January/February 2003): 58-59.

[165] Schultz, 24.

[166] Barry Gewen, "Why Are We In Iraq? A Realpolitik Perspective," *World Policy Journal,* Vol. 24, No. 3 (Fall 2007):15.

[167] Ibid., 15.

[168] Fukuyama, 2.

abroad (exacerbated by the absence of WMDs in Iraq), the administration's new rallying call was the spread of democracy to Iraq and the Middle East.

The administration's new tactic of benevolent state-building was in contrast to President Bush Sr. and Clinton's non-intervention policies in the Middle East. In fact, years earlier as Secretary of Defense for Bush Sr., Dick Cheney had strongly advocated against regime change in Iraq:

> Once you've got Baghdad, it's not clear what you do with it. It's not clear what kind of government you would put in place of the one that's currently there now. Is it going to be a Shia regime, a Sunni regime or a Kurdish regime? Or one that tilts toward the Baathists, or one that tilts toward the Islamic fundamentalists? How much credibility is that government going to have if it's set up by the United States military when it's there? How long does the United States military have to stay to protect the people that sign on for that government, and what happens to it once we leave?[169]

A decade later, Mr. Cheney would be a key architect in the neo-conservative project of democratizing Iraq. The reversal in U.S. foreign policy strategy leads to the question of what caused this shift in ideology and policy.

A possible answer is found the new operating environment that the 9/11 attacks created. Following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. was quickly and effectively asserting itself as a hegemon in a uni-polar international system. The 9/11 terror attacks created a resistant entity against which the U.S. was finally forced to act. The U.S. reaction consisted of the willingness to engage hostile forces. It also consisted of promoting the idea of American "exceptionalism" which is characterized as the adherence to the mission of expanding the American notions of freedom and democracy.[170]

American exceptionalism resembles the British Mandate sentiment that the Iraqis, and the Middle East, needed and welcomed guidance from external actors in the development of their political and social institutions. Like its British Mandate

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[169] Patrick E. Tyler, "After the War; U.S. Juggling Iraq Policy," *The New York Times* (April 13, 1991). http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE2DE1E3FF930A25757C0A967958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=2 (accessed March 5, 2008).

[170] Nuruzzaman, 249.

predecessors, the U.S. occupation assumed that post-Saddam Iraq would need and want the tutelage of the American government in order to re-establish the state. However, the democratic state-building mechanisms that the U.S. utilized in Iraq differ from the artificially emplaced government that the British introduced. The U.S. also calculated that an American-style democracy would dovetail into its goal of regional stability and security. In simpler terms, U.S. policy in Iraq evolved from realist notions of self-protection to the ideology of expansion of democratic freedom in order to achieve international peace and stability. Iraq would be a test case sample in the Middle East where the U.S. would discover if the notion of rebuilding states as liberal democracy would truly bring about stability and peace.

IV. "WORLD TIME" EFFECTS ON THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ

In addition to the ideological inconsistencies of the British and American invasions, the actual global environments in which they occurred are vastly different. This chapter focuses on the divergences between the British and American Iraq experiences in the context of "world time" progression and will analyze how these differences shaped subsequent state building processes. The chapter's "world time" analysis of the two countries Iraq experiences will ultimately lead to the thesis conclusion in which the importance and implications of the contrasts between the British and American involvement in Iraq will be explained in the context of successful state building.

Theda Skocpol wrote that "With state/societies as the units of analysis, limited generalizations about similar, recurrent national developments can be formulated. But, even as this is done, attention should be paid to the effects of historical orderings and world historical changes."[171] These "historical orderings" and changes make up the concept of "world time," or an intersection between state/societal development and international historical progression. Skocpol's reference to "world time" is relevant to the British/American scenarios in Iraq. Although Skocpol's application of world time deals primarily with social revolutions, the concept can apply to state formation as well. In the case of the Iraq, two major aspects of world time effecting the British and American Iraq experiences include: 1) historical eras and global trajectories and 2) existent state institutions.

A. HISTORICAL ERAS AND GLOBAL TRAJECTORIES

The global arena and historical eras in which the two invasions took place is vastly different in nature. Unlike the American ascension to global dominance following the Cold War, the dominance of international power did fall to one country alone in the

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[171] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions, A Comparative Analysis of France, Russian and China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 23.

aftermath of World War I. Two of the major powerbrokers of the time, the British and the Russian, were involved in "The Great Game" where each country was determined to hold and exert power in Central Asian and other parts of the world. At the same time, the British were contending with French power plays in the Middle East resulting in the secretive Sykes-Picot Agreement. The British were unquestionably feeling threats to their role as a key international player and could no "longer assume that Britain's influence would prevail outside Europe."[172] Prior to its Iraq invasion, the U.S. had the luxury of operating in an international environment where it was the sole global power. Unlike the Mandate era British, the U.S had no other international contenders. At that point, China was still in the beginning stages of its meteoric economic resurgence and international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union lacked the political and economic strength to counter the U.S.

During the pre-Mandate era, the British had actively pursued colonial ventures in all parts of the globe. Asia, in particular India, was one of Britain's more profitable undertakings. The trade agreement between the two countries provided Great Britain with a favorable export balance and investment opportunities.[173] The British also had established markets in its "white dominions" of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.[174] Throughout World War I, the British increasingly focused their attention on the Middle East and Iraq due to oil interests. Although the post-World War I international relations scene eschewed outright colonialism, the power holders among the European states and Russia did not completely abandon imperial tendencies. The British pursued global expansion out of two considerations: 1) "acquisition of enemy territories might serve as useful counters at a later stage," and 2) "territories overseas were seen to be of intrinsic strategic importance, both in the sense of providing bases, troops and resources."[175]

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[172] Phillip Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism – British and American Approaches in Asia and Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 24.

[173] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990* (London: Longman, 1993), 175.

[174] Ibid., 110.

[175] Darby, 87-88.

Sensing the strategic importance in holding territories in the Middle East, other Western and European powers sought to exert influence in the region. Following its World War I experience, the U.S. realized that they could no longer afford to be disinterested outsiders. Moreover, the possibility of another global conflict underscored the importance of cultivating America as a key international player. The European states were particularly attuned to the growing inevitability of another global conflict. Lingering international tensions resulted from unresolved World War I issues and Germany's insistence on maintaining its status as a global power. Adding to the Allies' consternation was the fact that Germany was also rapidly increasing its military expenditures and war-making capabilities. These fears about "an uncertain world order" were also coupled with declining domestic economies among the European states.[176]

Like Britain, France took considerable interest in the Middle East for strategic and economic purposes. Prior to World War I, the British and French had a de facto Middle East power sharing agreement, the *Entente Cordiale*, in which the British secured Egypt and France had the run of Morocco.[177] Besides the economic benefits of maintaining Middle East interests, the Anglo-French agreement also served as a bulwark against growing German influence and power.[178] French regional influence increased following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the French were reaping financial gains from former Ottoman holdings in Syria. Eventually the British and French Middle East policies coalesced into the Sykes-Picot Treaty which effectively gave the two countries primary control over the region.

Despite a virtual Anglo-French monopoly of power in the Middle East, other state actors were actively pursuing interests within the region. Italy had a significant troop presence in Libya which would grow exponentially as World War II loomed. The Russian navy maintained a visible presence in the Persian Gulf.[179] The Russians also had considerable influence in northern Persia and had developed considerable economic

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[176] Darby, 60.

[177] Jukka Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914-1920* (London: Althone Press, 1969), 1.

[178] Ibid., 1.

[179] Ibid., 3.

ties with the Persian government.[180]   Because of the close proximity of interests in Mesopotamia and Persia, the British and Russians carefully avoided conflict through acknowledgment of each other's rights in the region.[181]   Nonetheless, there was "almost constant interference by the two rivals over the Persian economy" and continual jockeying for regional influence.[182]   Meanwhile, the Americans were concerned about access to the Suez Canal and regional oil production. At the same time, the Germans were very interested in keeping up with their European counterparts in the international arena. Although the Germans did not overtly display interest in the Middle East, they were very involved with Ottoman "financial affairs, infrastructure development, and military preparedness."[183]   This close and potentially dangerous relationship worried the other European states.

The confluence of international interests in the Middle East during the Mandate was a reflection of the post World War I global struggle for power. The 1919 Paris Peace Conference and following San Remo and Cairo Conference illustrated how the current powers to be, such as the Britain, France, Italy, the U.S., Germany and Russia were locked in a tense competition for international economic and political legitimacy. Regardless of the various Middle East agreements and treaties aimed at divvying up the former Ottoman holdings and stabilizing the region, the resultant uncertainty affected the world climate as a whole.[184]

Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the international arena had far fewer dominate political actors than during post-World War I era. Unlike the mandate period British, the U.S. had no political or economic equals. U.S. power was unrivaled and unprecedented as no state "in the modern era had ever enjoyed such a dominant global position."[185] Russia had been crippled by its Cold War efforts and was struggling to rebuild. Japan's

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[180] Emory C. Bogle, *The Modern Middle East: From Imperialism to Freedom, 1800-1958* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 60.

[181] Ibid., 53, 61.

[182] Ibid., xix

[183] Ibid., 61.

[184] Ibid., 122.

[185] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory – Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 270.

once promising technological boom and enthusiastic entrance into the global economy had faltered. China was in the beginning of its surprising economic surge. Although the European Union (EU) was a decade old, its economic and political clout was still developing. The EU's GDP ranked third compared to the U.S. and NAFTA in 2003 and had not reached its current status of viable global competitor.[186] American global dominance had evolved from its Cold War position of "superpower" to a more prevailing assignment as an international "hyperpower."[187]

America's international position was the primary catalyst for its unilateral action in the Global War on Terrorism and Iraq invasion. Prior to the invasion, U.S. dominance had been for the most part accepted by the international community due to the U.S. history of restraint and commitments to international institutions such as NATO and the World Trade Organization.[188] The domestic vulnerability caused by 9/11 attacks spurred the U.S. to largely abandon the international institutions that had once restrained unlimited U.S. actions. This domestic insecurity encouraged the U.S.to increase its hegemony and expand its security umbrella with or without help or approval. The U.S. reasoned that "friends were politically necessary but military problematic" and as such decided to "fight the war in Afghanistan on its own terms" with or without a coalition.[189] Further unilateral actions continued as the U.S. shaped plans to invade Iraq. Despite disapproval by key members of the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. pushed forward with plans to attack and overthrow Saddam. U.S. action despite a recognized international consensus further highlights the unilateral manner of the America's initial occupation of Iraq—a distinct departure from the British Mandate occupation and its supervision by the League of Nations

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[186] "European Union 2003 Prosperity Rankings", Global Britain Briefing Note No. 35 (November 2004): 2.

[187] Robert S. Litwak, "The Imperial Republic after 9/11," *Wilson Quarterly,* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer 2002): 76.

[188] Ikenberry, 271.

[189] Michael Cox, "American Power Before and After 11 September: Dizzy with Success?" *International Affairs,* Vol. 78, No. 2 (2002): 272.

B.   A FRACTURED MESOPOTAMIA VERSUS A MONOLITHIC IRAQ

Following their World War victory, the British and French formed partnerships and executed treaties in order to counter German and Russian aspirations in the Middle East.   The 1920 San Remo Conference produced one of the most definitive and troublesome Middle East power sharing agreements. Britain and France consented to a partial declaration of independence for Mesopotamia and Palestine. The former Ottoman territories fell under the tutelage or mandate of the European states. The arbitrary nature of the mandate's territorial divide created wildly mixed and contentious populations while virtually ensuring continued regional confusion and political uncertainty. Regional borders were drawn up without regard to historic or cultural considerations. Singular ethnicities soon found themselves divided by artificial state borders. The Kurds were victims of this phenomenon as their former tribal lands were annexed by Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, the drafting of new borders forced formerly distinct populations to fall under one state identity – an example being the Assyrians, Turkmen and Kurds in northern Iraq. These artificial boundaries and amalgamation of separate populations intensified turmoil within the new states in and the region as a whole.[190]

Besides the arbitrary nature of state creation, the absence of efficient political systems plagued the former Ottoman territories. The artificially created states lacked identity and solid frameworks for creating capable institutions. Although the Ottomans maintained de facto administration over its provinces, the breadth of the empire precluded any firmly established political system at the state level. Instead, the empire's tradition of "non-intervention" was shored up by local leadership and decentralized rule.[191] Any real rule exerted by the Ottoman Empire in Mesopotamia existed only on the provincial level under the supervision of *mamluks*.[192] In addition to the sheer size of the empire, the Ottoman's laissez faire style of administration stemmed from its attitude that its provinces and their populations existed only for the enrichment of empire. The

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[190] Marvin E. Gettleman and Stuart Scharr, *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 134.

[191] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq, The Search for National Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 14.

[192] Tripp, 9.

result of the hands off approach to administration ultimately meant that the British Mandate Mesopotamia was a fractured state with no real central government or innate ability for self rule.

The amalgamation of Mesopotamia's disparate populations and the lack of solid political institutions created an unstable environment that was entirely unsuited for state building. Although the mandate establishment of Iraq created a supposed "central state apparatus," any exercise of central authority was limited at best.[193] This was because authority had been formerly vested at local level where there was no continuity in rule or political leadership. Political authority that had been held by sheiks or urban administrators was constantly changing but it stayed intact despite the establishment of a central state.[194] Additionally, community order was also maintained by religious clerics who were not always recognized by the state apparatus.

After being given the mandate by the League of Nations, the British quickly realized the difficulty of applying a central power to the fractured state. They were unsure about the political future of Iraq and what manner of rule or administration they would exercise. Mesopotamia's history of aloof provincial administration and local tribal rule did not allow for a quick implementation of self governance. Sir Earnest Dowson, a land tenure expert dispatched to Baghdad by the British observed that "It is evident that for several preceding centuries the officers of the Central Government were not in a position to exercise any systematic control over the large areas of the country…while the effective local and social units were tribes or sections of tribes."[195] The newly dubbed "Iraqis" were dubious about what sort of government should lead the new state or who should rule it. After a hastily administered plebiscite "confirmed" Iraqi approval of British administration and King Faisal was inserted as monarch, the reach and capacity of a central government was still very much in question. This was because of a lack of perceived legitimacy by the Iraqi as they did not know their new government. In fact, the

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[193] Christine Moss Helms, *Iraq-Eastern Flank of the Arab World* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1984), 43.

[194] Ibid., 43.

[195] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 52.

former Mesopotamians were unsure who exactly they as the new "Iraqis" were or what their state represented. Following his coronation as Iraq's first monarch, King Faisal lamented that:

> In Iraq there is still—and I say this with a heart full of sorrow—no Iraqi people but unimaginable masses of human beings, devoid of any patriotic ideal, imbued with religious traditions and absurdities, connected by no common ties, giving ear to evil, prone to anarchy, and perpetually ready to rise against any government whatsoever.[196]

The absence of a stable political community following the Iraq's inception proved to be continuing problem for the fledgling state throughout the course of the Mandate and following the British withdrawal from the country. Despite his lack of native Iraqi credentials, King Faisal was able to maintain a semblance of order in the state and eventually earn approval from the population. Unfortunately, King Faisal's son and successor, Ghazi, was unable to continue his father's tradition of leadership. King Ghazi's ineptness resulted in the political demise of the monarchy.[197] The years subsequent King Ghazi's rule were fraught with continual power struggles between political elites made up of former Ottoman-trained officers. These elites often ruled for mere months before being supplanted by one of their peers.[198] Eventually wide scale public disaffection for the politicians gave way to equally destabilizing bouts of military coups.[199] In the end, Iraq's central government was unable to maintain long periods of constructive rule or legitimacy.

In contrast to Mandate era fractious state, the Iraq that the U.S. invaded was an authoritarian, one-party state under the heavy handed administration of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath party. The Hussein regime traced its roots back to the 1968 Ba'ath overthrow of the Abdul Rahman Arif government. Hussein captured and monopolized power with help from his Tikriti kinsmen. The Tikritis were able to successfully project

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[196] Reeva S. Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars – The Creation and Implementation of Nationalist Ideology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 3.

[197] William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 205.

[198] Ibid., 206.

[199] Ibid., 207.

political influence through Ba'ath party movement and strategies.[200]   Eventually, the Tikritis occupied almost every key position in government which subsequently allowed Hussein to emerge as "the real force behind the regime."[201]

Hussein arrived onto the political scene from a humble and violently criminal background. His ascendency to power was marked with the brutal elimination of rivals and rampant cronyism. Unlike his predecessors, Hussein was extremely successful in maintaining his power and influence throughout the state in the long term. He was aided by beneficial economic strategies, Iraq-Iran War nationalism, and perhaps most importantly, his force of character. Hussein's previous experiences as government dissenter and political prisoner shaped his leadership style and manner of rule. He was distrustful of almost everybody, secretive and overbearingly cruel. He used his political cut-throat tactics to pounce upon the presidency after he marginalized President al-Bakr. Upon assuming power, Hussein instituted powerful and lethal internal security (Amn) and intelligence (Mukhabarat) organizations.[202] These secret enforcement agencies, in addition to the aid of his kinfolk and military clout, made the new dictator arguably the most powerful ruler in Iraq history.

In the same abrupt manner, the Ba'ath party rose from being a once banned power to the sole power holding organization in Iraqi politics. Like Hussein, the Ba'ath party managed to extend its ideals and policies into "all aspects of Iraqi society to include labor unions, student federations and women's groups."[203] By the late 1970's, the Ba'ath party had become so engrained in the state that it was impossible to discern between the party and the state identities.[204]   After seizing the monopoly of power, the Ba'athists maintained a grasp on the one-party state by successfully implementing various revenue producing policies. The Ba'ath espoused a unique socialist platform that heavily favored

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[200] Cleveland, 397.

[201] Ibid., 397.

[202] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear – The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 12.

[203] Cleveland, 397.

[204] Ibid., 397.

the public sector but made some allowance for private enterprises.[205] This divergence from typical "Russian Socialism" was described by Ba'ath founder Michel Aflaq as "Arab Socialism" which intertwined economic nationalism with political nationalism.[206] The Ba'ath party's decision to nationalize Iraqi oil production was crucial in setting up further beneficial economic policies. Nationalization of the oil industry resulted in huge increases of revenues in the mid-1970s. More importantly, the decision to nationalize resulted in unemployment reduction, free health care, and fully subsidized university education.[207] The wide scale social benefits provided by the Ba'ath party translated into public acceptance and concreted the party's and Hussein's hold on power.

Hussein and the Ba'athists maintained an iron hold over the country despite the numerous political and economic catastrophes that befell Iraq during the late 1990's. With the exception of the Kurds, the Iran-Iraq War bolstered nationalism against the "Persian" threat. Moreover, the vast military build-up in response to the Iranian threat also strengthened Hussein's hold on power. Even the debilitating military defeat and economic downfall courtesy of the first Gulf War did not weaken the central government's legitimacy or power. Unlike the British occupation of a fragmented Mesopotamia, the U.S. invaded a stable, albeit authoritarian state, which had one of the region's most established administration and political power base.

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[205] Cleveland, 398.

[206] Khalil, 251.

[207] Cleveland, 400.

V. CONCLUSION

Iraq's political and social dynamics and have changed substantially during the course of research and writing for this thesis. Iraq is no longer in danger of becoming a failed state, but rather has improved its status to a "fragile state."[208] Although controversy exists about its actual causal factors, most Americans concede that the 2007 "Surge" has been a success. Incidences of sectarian violence have diminished, Al-Qaeda in Iraq has reportedly been decimated and American casualties have plummeted. There are considerable signs of economic progress as Iraq and China closed on a $3 billion oil deal and the Royal Dutch Shell oil company has re-opened its Baghdad offices.[209] Continued high oil prices have also brought in significant amounts of revenue, although the Iraqi government has been accused of not properly utilizing its new found wealth. Signs of increased security are evident as coalition forces hand over towns, cities and even entire provinces to their Iraqi Army counterparts. The U.S. administration has forecasted a withdrawal of eight thousand troops in early 2009. Moreover, the U.S. and Iraqi governments are steadily working towards a troop withdrawal timeline or "time horizon."

Despite these political and military achievements, Iraq is still far from a complete success story. Coalition commander, General Patraeus, cautioned that although military success in Iraq was evident, significant political and economic progress was still to be had. In his farewell letter to the troops, the general reinforced his concern for the future of Iraq, "Our tasks in Iraq are far from complete and hard work and tough fights lie ahead…"[210] Iraq's internal security and overarching national identity are still tenuous aspirations. Meanwhile Iraq's central government is working hard to increase its

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[208] Stephen Biddle and Kenneth Pollack, "How to Leave a Stable Iraq – Building on Progress." *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 87, No. 5 (September/October 2008): 50.

[209] Sam Dagher, "Shell Oil Opens Office in Baghdad After 36-Year Absence" *New York Times,* September 18, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/world/middleeast/23iraq.html (accessed September 22, 2008).

[210] Michael Gordon, "Patraeus's Final Letter to the Troops." *New York Times,* September 22, 2008, http://baghdadbureau.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/14/petraeuss-final-letter-to-the-troops/?hp (accessed September 22, 2008).

legitimacy and expand its authority. Despite its efforts, shortcomings in the Iraqi government powers and the lack of a unified Iraqi identity are evident. In September 2008, Pesh Merga and Iraqi security forces engaged in an uneasy standoff in the predominately Kurdish city of Khanaqin. Moreover, the Kurdish question is one that still plagues the central government and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The fledgling government is also struggling with its capacity to spend its oil revenue on reconstruction, employment, and health care projects.

In a recent Foreign Affairs article, Stephen Biddle and Kenneth M. Pollack write that even as stability in Iraq increases, the country risks becoming "an ordinary Arab state."[211] This designation is not desirable given the "poor political and economic record" of the states in that region.[212] The lack of overall political and economic successes among Arab states is in part due to the colonial legacies and Western interference over the past two centuries. Historical events including the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the San Remo Conference, and the Mandates have all played crucial roles in shaping the political and economic dynamics of the region. As outlined in this thesis, the British Mandate in Iraq directly influenced state institutions for decades. In the same manner, the U.S. will have an indelible mark on future Iraqi institutions. This thesis has shown however, that the British and American experiences in Iraq were significantly different and thus their impacts will differ as well.

The principal argument of this thesis has been premised on several historical contrasts between the two experiences in Iraq. These contrasting factors play key roles in Iraqi state formation and resulting political and social legacies. The imperialist driven ideology behind the British Mandate differs sharply to the U.S. motivation of self security through stability and promotion of democracy. The countries' ideological motivations directly influenced the follow on legacy of rule in Iraq in both eras. The Mandate left behind an artificially installed monarch who was still closely tied to British political and economic policies. Although Iraq was technically a newly formed and independent state, ineffective governing institutions virtually guaranteed domestic

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[211] Biddle, 54.

[212] Ibid., 54.

turmoil and non-democratic rule. On the other hand, fortified by its democratic ideology, the U.S. presence Iraq, when it ends, should foster a more stable and representative government.

The "world time" difference between the British and American invasions also supports the argument that their follow-on experiences in Iraq are substantially dissimilar. The British's uncertain status in a multi-polar world influenced its manipulation of power of the Middle East and in Iraq. The British occupation in Iraq reflected the desire to maintain a role as a player along with its European, Russian and even American counterparts. The international conventions of time, along with Wilsonian liberalism and self determination, reshaped the global environment and Western state building enterprises. The British and the French were ever mindful of the competing interests in the region and did not build states that would become stable and enduring. Rather, the former colonial powers built weak, dependent states virtually ensuring European influence and manipulation in the region.

In contrast to the British Mandate era's multi-polar environment, the American invasion and subsequent involvement in Iraq occurred while the U.S. was arguably still the global hegemon. The invasion took place in absence of complete United Nations consent. Despite the contributions of the "coalition of the willing," U.S. forces made up the bulk of military and political power during the occupation. Unlike their British Mandate counterparts, the American architects of Iraq state building attempted to set up an Iraqi state which it could eventually extract itself from—both physically and financially.

Finally, the Iraq which the British encountered was a former Ottoman territory lacking a strong central government. Additionally, the Ottoman administration had been relatively lax and allowed rule to be decentralized throughout a series of *mamluks,* tribal sheiks, and clerics. This meant that the British had a dual task of creating a central government as well as recreating an "Iraqi" people. On the other hand, the U.S. invaded an Iraq which had a strong government capable of exerting its power and authority over the entire state. The Iraqi people, although still harboring sectarian and cultural discord, still held strong nationalist tendencies—as evidenced by the Iran-Iraq War. Although the

U.S. chose not to utilize the established institutions (i.e., Ba'ath party, Iraqi Army) in its attempt to rebuild the state, use of these firmly entrenched foundations could have considerably reshaped the Iraqi rebuilding and reconstruction effort.

The purpose of this thesis has not been to excuse the shortcomings in the U.S. invasion and state-building endeavor. Rather, the intent was to explain that a direct comparison between the British and American experiences in Iraq, while tempting, is not wholly accurate. To paraphrase Mark Twain, history does not always repeat itself—but sometimes it rhymes. The study of these contrasting factors and scrutiny of the "world time" concept would be useful for any future state-building missions that the U.S. may undertake. An ideal solution would be to look at the British Mandate and U.S. lessons learned and compound them with global trajectories and existent institutional considerations. As for Iraqi state-building, the motivating ideology and the global environment surrounding the U.S. involvement in Iraq may likely lead better institutional legacies than that of the British Mandate and thus a more stable Iraq.

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