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Iraq

A Case Study in Nation Building

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Abstract

This essay examines Iraq as a case study in nation-building. The purpose is to give the reader a thorough understanding of what nation-building is, the situation in Iraq since the U.S. invasion, and how the two (nation-building and Iraq) go together. The theory for the empirical analysis is built upon the three concepts of ideological legitimation, social integration, and state-building. The roles of security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic well-being, and governance and participation and their relevance to the nation-building effort in Iraq are also explored. The thesis is divided into three main sections. The first section covers the most important elements involved in nation-building and provides a brief history of it since World War II. The second section gives a thorough overview of the Iraq conflict and the primary actors involved (United States, Shi'a Arab, Sunni Arab, and Kurds). The third section integrates the first two in order to provide an empirical case study of nation-building in Iraq. I then discuss my conclusions. The intended effect is to give the reader an understanding of the intricacies of the nation-building effort in Iraq, and open up debate for what the continuing nation-building effort there will require in order to be successful. The material used is composed of a large amount of literary, journal, and internet sources, the majority of which were written after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Key words: Iraq, nation-building, state-building, United States, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, George W. Bush, Democratization

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1 Introduction

What the United States is attempting to accomplish in Iraq is impressive, if not overwhelming. Yes, America has actively engaged in nation-building endeavors before. The reconstructions of a devastated West Germany and Japan in the wake of World War 2 still do not lie far outside the realm of the collective conscience. But in those two cases, the United States, along with the support of the international community, rebuilt two homogenous nations that were both weary of conflict and openly receptive to democratic change. Given the relative success of those two examples, it is likely that the Bush administration assumed that it could once again use the might of the United States to democratize another war-torn nation. So when the Bush administration chose to tread down a unilateralist path in its decision to invade and occupy Iraq, it is unlikely that it could imagine what it was getting itself into.

Before the war Colin Powell tried to dissuade George W. Bush by warning him, “you are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people; you will own all their hopes, aspirations, and problems. You’ll own it all” (Woodward: 2004, 150). After the end of major military operations, the United States found itself the owner of a shattered nation and the lives of 25 million people. It also found itself in the unenviable position of trying to promote and establish democracy through the barrel of a gun. They say that we reap what we sow, and the people of Iraq now find themselves victims of a United States that “devoted 9 months to planning the war but a mere 28 days planning the peace” (Brancati: 2004, 7).

As opposed to the examples of West Germany and Japan, Iraq is a nation that has always been characterized by internal conflict in the form of ethnic, religious, and cultural tensions. The nation of Iraq was not even created by the Iraqis themselves, but by the colonial powers in the early 20th century. Given this, these internal tensions were kept in check by the totalitarian rule of Saddam Hussein. But as soon as he was absolved of power and the state apparatus began to crumble, the true Iraq began to emerge. The chaos that we are now witness to in Iraq is a direct by-product of a nation that never really existed, and a population that was never meant to be a nation. The idea that Iraq can find its own way to democracy flies in the face of 80 years of history (Anderson & Stansfield: 2004: 213). So the United States is now attempting to rebuild and democratize a nation largely on its own, a nation that has never really known democracy, in a region devoid of democratic states, a nation that is both hostile to America and the idea of a democracy imposed upon it by a foreign power. Needless to say, the process of nation-building in Iraq is one of considerable difficulty.

1.1 Problem

The conflict in Iraq remains at the center of heated political debate. Is it an occupation motivated by imperial ambitions or a legitimate attempt to liberate an entire nation and establish a lasting democratic foothold in the region? Or perhaps a little bit of both? It seems as if it is difficult for many people to take both perspectives into account. So even if the conflict in Iraq was begun under rather unsubstantiated grounds, as it now stands Iraq is a nation in disarray struggling to establish that most elusive of all ideals, democracy. Regardless of whatever biases one has against American interests in the conflict, the fact remains that it is in the best interests of all involved to create a stable and democratic state free of the internal strife that has plagued it for decades. But this is no small undertaking.

Iraq is a nation torn apart by tensions between Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, and the Kurds. Further conflict is thrown into the mix in the form of a widespread resentment against an American/coalition presence that is no longer perceived as liberators but rather as an occupying force. Given all of these factors, Iraq provides a fascinating and multifaceted case study in which to research how a nation is rebuilt and (if possible) attempts to make the transition to democracy.

Fundamentally, the basic problems that will be explored within this essay are these: How do the principles of nation-building apply to the case of Iraq? What alternatives for nation-building have been undertaken and what others may be available? What are the problems and obstacles faced? What it will take to stabilize and democratize Iraq, and how it could be achieved? Iraq provides a substantial challenge to the realization of both aims, due in no small part to the wide range of actors and interests in the conflict. So perhaps the greatest challenge with establishing a new Iraq lies in creating a new democratic state where all actors are satisfied.

1.2 Theory

As the name implies, this essay is a case study of nation-building in Iraq. While there is not a nation-building *doctrine* in the strict military sense of the word, a pattern of 'best practice' has evolved over time (Hippel(2): 2004, 79). My thesis will build its foundation upon these principles of 'best practice'. Nation-building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a nation using the power of the state, and this process aims at the unification of the people or peoples within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run ("Nation"). According to Hippler (author of *Nation-Building*), there are three central elements of nation-building: ideological legitimation, social integration, and the development of a functional state apparatus (state-building). All of these will be discussed in depth.

In order to rebuild weak or failed states, there are also four distinct but interrelated series of tasks or "pillars" (according to Hamre & Sullivan, authors of "Toward Postconflict Reconstruction") that must be accomplished in order for nation-building to be successful. These are: security, justice and reconciliation,

social and economic well-being, and governance and participation. To varying extents, these four tasks are intertwined with the three central aspects characterized by Hippler. For this reason, they will not be dealt with specifically until the final section of the essay. As Kofi Annan has noted, “All these tasks—humanitarian, military, political, social, and economic—are interconnected, and we cannot expect lasting success in any of them unless we pursue all of them at once as part of a single coherent strategy” (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 92).

There are also the ethical aspects of nation-building that need to be taken into account. As Feldman (author of *What We Owe Iraq*) has made clear, “in the midst of all the heated, high-priority arguments about what policy would best serve U.S. interests in Iraq, it sometimes seems as though no one is asking what obligations we might have to the Iraqis whose government we deposed and whose country we occupied” (Feldman: 2004, 5). The ethical aspects of nation-building are critical to gaining a greater understanding of the conflict, because “nation-building is perhaps the most intrusive form of foreign intervention there is” (Dempsey: 2001, 59). The nature of the nation-builder’s obligation to the nation it is rebuilding will be interwoven at various points within the essay. The focus of this essay will be on the continuing nation-building effort that has been underway since the end of “major combat operations” (or the end of the formal war) in Iraq, and the foundation for the empirical analysis will be built upon the various principles, theories, and concepts endorsed by nation-building.

1.3 Method

The body of this essay consists of three main sections that complement and build upon each other. Since the thesis is primarily concerned about the ongoing project of nation-building in Iraq, the first section gives a thorough explanation of the term nation-building and all of the intricacies that it contains. Nation-building is an incredibly complex procedure. The core concepts and requirements that nation-building entails are discussed at length, so that the reader is able to possess a greater understanding of the term when it is applied to the case of Iraq later in the essay. In addition to this, the evolution of nation-building since the end of World War II is discussed, using both theoretical explanations and empirical examples of nation-building undertaken in the past. Iraq is the seventh major U.S.-led reconstruction effort in a decade (Phillips: 2005, 236), so there certainly is no shortage of examples to draw from.

The second part of the essay gives a general overview of the Iraq conflict. Since the thesis is concerned with nation-building, the focus of this section is in brief upon the origin and development of the conflict. Much of the emphasis is placed upon the series of events that have transpired since the U.S. gained control of the country, with minimal space devoted to the events that happened before then. In addition to this, an analysis of the actors in the conflict is presented. I feel it is important that the reader have a thorough understanding of the different actors in the conflict, because without this the difficulties and obstacles

encountered by the nation-building effort in Iraq cannot be wholly understood. Given this, the focus of this section will be upon the United States, Shi'a Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds. Certainly there is a host of other internal and external actors in the conflict, but due to space issues they cannot all be discussed at length. The "terrorists" or insurgents are not discussed as a specific actor in the conflict for several reasons: they are largely composed of Sunnis (who are already discussed), they are anarchists without clear goals on nation-building in Iraq, and the space limitations within the paper.

The previous two sections mentioned provide a solid foundation and background for the emphasis of the paper, namely the nation-building phase of the conflict that has been ongoing since the end of the war. This section integrates the two previous sections and provides an empirical case study of nation-building in Iraq. What has been done, what existing plans are available, an evaluation of the two aforementioned aspects, as well as further options available for nation-building are discussed at length. Much of the empirical analysis is built upon the nation-building concepts characterized by Hippler ("Three Key Elements") as well as Hamre & Sullivan ("The Four Pillars") and how they apply to the case of Iraq. What it will take to stabilize and democratize Iraq and how it could be achieved is covered. A brief discussion about the Iraqi constitution is also included. Finally, I offer my conclusions and discuss them.

1.4 Material

Fortunately, I am able to draw upon a wide variety of sources for my thesis. Several of the books that I am using were written by previous senior advisers to the coalition provisional authority in Iraq. Among these authors are Diamond, Feldman, and Phillips. Due to their expertise in the realm of political science, as well as first-hand experiences with the nation-building effort in Iraq, I was able to gain a more thorough understanding of what is happening there. The book written by Hippler also helped to establish much of the theoretical foundation for my paper. The book by Anderson & Standfield was particularly helpful for the Shi'a Arab, Sunni Arab, and Kurd sections of "The Iraq Conflict" section. I will also be using a large number of research articles gathered from the ELIN system at Lund University. These articles compromise a large amount of divergent viewpoints on how stability and possibly even democracy can be achieved in Iraq. Several research articles were taken from the Journal of Democracy website, and these will be used primarily for the first section of the essay (nation-building). A number of internet websites other less-formal sources are also used when needed.

2 Nation-Building

So what is nation-building exactly? At its most fundamental level, it is the construction or reconstruction of nation using the power of the state, typically in the wake of a devastating conflict. Nation building entails “both the formation and establishment of the new state itself as a political entity and the processes of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement, and a sense of national identity among the people” (Etzioni: 2004). The goal is a stable state that can ultimately become a nation. This is usually a slow process that requires an extended transitional period of rule—or the extensive support of—the international community (Diamond: 2005, 23). Over the years (nation-building has) signified an effort to construct a government that may or may not be democratic, but preferably is stable (Hippler: 2000, 96). At the very least, “the objective of nation-building ought to be the creation of reasonably legitimate, reasonably liberal democracies” (Feldman: 2004, 8). But the democratization element of nation-building does not usually appear until later in the process. This is because “in order to have a democratic state, a country must first have a state” (Diamond: 2005, 23). Given this, nation-building should first make a goal of “providing and enhancing not only social and economic well-being and governance and the rule of law but also other elements of justice and reconciliation and, very centrally, security (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 89). So basically, “nation-building opens up democratic potential, but not necessarily the door to actual democracy” (Hippler: 2005, 11).

Many are often led to believe that nation-building is typically only concerned with transforming a country so that it can become economically viable and competitive on the world market. But this is only one facet of the equation. Nation-building is not principally about economic reconstruction; rather, it is about political transformation (Vidal: 2003). This falls in line with the concept of nation-building as defined by Hippler. According to Hippler, “nation-building is on one hand a process of sociopolitical development, and on the other hand it can be a political objective as well as a strategy for reaching specific political objectives (Hippler: 2005, 6). As he points out, these two definitions of nation-building can be viewed as being descriptive or analytical versus the normative-strategic (respectively). Both of these definitions will be vital to understanding the entire process, because you cannot have one without the other. “A nation is widely understood to be a community invested in a state”, and the concepts mentioned below reflect as much (Etzioni: 2004). Given this, there are certain key elements in every nation-building endeavor that are vital to making the process work. These are ideological legitimation, social integration, and state-building.

2.1 Three Key Elements

2.1.1 Ideological Legitimation

The first of these elements is the concept of an integrative ideology (or ideological legitimation). What this fundamentally entails is enabling the citizens of said nation to come to regard themselves as some kind of collective identity. Self-awareness as a nation, in other words. “This is a sociocultural structuring and integration process leading to shared characteristics of identity, values, and goals. It is not the homogeneity of these characteristics that is relevant, rather the recognition of heterogeneity and facilitating inclusion” (Hopp & Kloke-Lesch: 2005, 140). In the case of Iraq, the nation is composed of Sunni Muslims, Shi’a Muslims, and Kurds. But until they all come to regard themselves under a primary national identity as “Iraqi”, while at the same time holding their respective ethnic, religious, or cultural identities as Sunni, Shi’a, or Kurdish as secondary, a successful and stable state is unlikely to be achieved. As long as the primary identity and loyalty lies with the tribe, clan or an ethnic or ethnoreligious group and the ‘national’ identity level remains subordinate or missing, a nation-state will continue to be precarious (Hippler:2005, 8). This is why “the United States has failed to install viable democracies in Somalia, Haiti and Afghanistan, because all three countries are divided ethnically, socio-economically or tribally” (Vidal: 2003). This leads us to the next aspect of nation-building.

2.1.2 Social Integration

The second prerequisite for a successful nation-building process involves the integration of a society from the loosely associated groups that existed previously (social integration) (Hippler: 2005, 8). What this means is establishing an ongoing dialogue between the different groups rather than within them. All groups must be involved in all aspects of society, because the exclusion of any one group will only lead to further problems. As Hippler points out, this also serves a practical purpose. Nation-building needs a ‘national’ infrastructure, with things such as transport and communication structures, the development of a ‘national economy’ from regional or local economic areas, and a nationwide mass media for establishing a national political and cultural discourse (Ibid: 9). A civil society, in other words. These assets must be accessible to all groups of the population and be used by them for transactions and communication (Hopp & Kloke-Lesch: 2005, 140). In addition to this, an “active and open participation of civil society in the formulation of the country's government and its policies” is crucial (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 92). The importance of democratic values, of the civic culture and civil society that develop and sustain them, the importance of increasing social, political, and economic equality, and of human development, rather than just

economic development or state-building, are key in any successful strategy for long-term democratic nation-building (Stephenson: 2005). The difficulties of achieving the aforementioned goals are compounded by the interference of disenfranchised groups (as we have been witness to with the ongoing insurgency in Iraq). If civil society does not exist, then people who are faced with the collapse of the autocratic government will deal with their justifiable fear of what happens next by looking to form new associations to protect them (Feldman: 2004, 73).

2.1.3 State-Building

The third component of nation-building (as characterized by Hippler) is the development of a functional state apparatus that can actually control its national territory (state-building) (Hippler: 2005, 9). A state is more properly the governmental apparatus by which a nation rules itself (Stephenson: 2005). This can only really happen if the two previous aims have been achieved (ideological legitimation and social integration). Citizens are much more likely to become a part of the state security apparatus (through the armed forces, police, etc.) if they feel that they are part of the 'nation' and civil society. A key concept in nation-building is providing security for the citizens of said nation. After all, before a state "can become a democratic state, it must become a state, which establishes a monopoly over the means of violence" (Diamond: 2005, 316). Violence also undermines the political transition by making people too frightened to participate in the political process (Phillips: 2005, 228). Security is absolutely vital to the nation-building process. All other aspects of nation-building flow from it, and if it falters or fails, the nation-building project will certainly fail, too (Feldman: 2004, 72). After this, other aspects of nation-building can begin, such as the establishment of a stable economy, legal system, and administrative apparatus.

2.2 Other Factors

Another facet of nation-building is transitional justice. This is essential to realizing all three aspects characterized by Hippler, because it is difficult for a divided nation to come together until it has dealt with past injustices between the different groups. Oftentimes the nations being rebuilt were under the rule of an oppressive or corrupt regime, and it is important to bring the greatest perpetrators of criminal acts to justice. This is needed for a variety of reasons. The goal is to hold accountable the perpetrators of human rights violations so that victims believe that justice prevails (Phillips: 2005, 234). It is difficult for a nation to move towards the future when it has yet to deal with its past. The intended effect is to address and deal with the underlying causes of conflict within a society, and with that break the circle of violence that often characterizes such conflicts. Not only do these procedures prevent the recurrence of conflict, they also provide a valuable forum for individuals and communities to feel a sense of closure and to

begin healing old wounds (Flournoy & Pan: 2002). So until indigenous capabilities can be reconstituted, an interim criminal-justice system is just a stopgap measure and must not replace efforts by local actors (Phillips: 2005, 234). The ultimate goal of any nation-building effort should be “an impartial and accountable legal system for the future, in particular, creating an effective law enforcement apparatus, an open judicial system, fair laws, and a humane corrections system” (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 91).

Another important factor in nation-building efforts is a broad amount of international support. The three aforementioned aspects of nation-building characterized by Hippler are much more likely to come to fruition when they are supported by the international community. In particular, external actors are especially valuable in mediating a dialogue between the different groups in the social integration phase. Hippler’s third component (state-building) is also much easier to bring about when coupled with the economic, military, and political support of the international community. Multilateral nation-building is more complex and time-consuming but considerably less expensive (Vidal: 2003). If the cost burden is eased for the external actors pushing the nation-building effort forward, they are more likely to see it through. This is important because nation-building efforts take at least 5 years, but usually end up being much longer. All actors involved also need to share a unity of purpose for the nation-building effort, because “incoherence and competition among outside actors can destroy a local government and society” (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 93). Indeed, “burden-sharing and unity of command are the twin pillars of successful nation-building” (Phillips: 2005, 226). The five international communities that require coordination are nongovernmental organizations, donors/governments, multilateral organizations, militaries, and, significantly, the private sector (Hippel: 2000, 110). Their ultimate goals should be “humanitarian relief, transitional security, rule of law, infrastructure reconstruction, economic development, and the political transition” (Phillips: 2005, 226). The NGOs can usually provide humanitarian support, governments provide the resources and manpower, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations can serve to organize the international community, militaries ensure security (without which nation-building is impossible), and the private sector can offer employment which keeps the economy from becoming stagnant. Privatization of former state-owned industries also stimulates jobs and develops a tax base (Ibid: 232). This leads us to the role of economic reconstruction in nation-building.

Economic reconstruction is essential to nation-building and comes after security has been established. In relation to Hippler, economic reconstruction is intertwined with the state-building phase, and by providing employment contributes to the building of a national infrastructure and civil society, both of which are vital to the social integration phase. Judging by past examples, “the level of a country’s economic development had proved to be one of the best predictors of a durable democracy” (Diamond: 2005, 19). However, there is a difference between economic development and economic reconstruction in the context of nation-building. Economic reconstruction assumes that there was a well-functioning economy, but that some catastrophic event undermined it and the

economy must be put back on its feet (Etzioni: 2004). This is opposed to economic development, which refers to “building a modern economy where none previously existed” (Ibid). Obviously, economic reconstruction is the much easier option for the nation-builder, but which task is undertaken (reconstruction or development) depends entirely on the country in question. But if the case is economic reconstruction, it is much more likely that the nation-building effort will be successful because most of the factors of a stable economy were already in place. Money also needs to find its way into the local economy, so “contracts to rebuild utilities, roads, and bridges should give preference to local firms and contractors that meet local hiring quotas” (Phillips: 2005, 232). Given this, in nation-building efforts it is vital to get the economy back online as soon as possible.

2.3 Nation-Building Post-WW II through Today

The character of nation-building has changed over time. In the initial years after the end of World War 2 and throughout the Cold War, nation-building by the the United States was primarily concerned with creating buffer states that could stem the tide of communism. This was widely termed as ‘democratization’. In the cases of Germany and Japan, “it stood for demilitarization (and denazification in Germany), establishment of democratic institutions, and reeducation of the entire country's population” (Hippel: 2000, 95). Part of the reason that these two nation-building efforts were successful was because “the United States mobilized extraordinary resources to transform America's war-time enemies, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, into liberal democracies” (Dempsey: 2001, 59). But in reality, “it was far less important that Germany and Japan be democratic than that they be capitalist and rich” (Feldman: 2004, 7). These two cases owe much of their success to the fact that most of the facets of the state (economy, governmental structure, national identity, civil society, security, etc.) were already in place, albeit deteriorated. These two nations (along with South Korea) present perhaps the most successful and extensive examples of nation-building ever seen.

Unfortunately, later (U.S.-led) efforts in places such as Vietnam, Lebanon, El Salvador, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq have met with mixed results. The relative failures of these nation-building efforts is largely due to the international community’s tendency “to settle for the dampening of violence, not to devote to nation-building the resources or time that would be needed for it to succeed” (Ibid: 19). Nation-building cannot be a half-hearted endeavor, and unless the external actor is committed to devoting a lion’s share of its resources to making the nation-building effort work, it is doubtful that a complete transformation can be achieved. The aforementioned nations also encountered difficulties because “most of the needed elements (as mentioned above in regards to Germany and Japan) were never in place or only in a very

rudimentary amount” (Etzioni: 2004). In the end it is all but impossible to create a nation out of a hollow state structure.

During the Cold War the goal of nation-building was not so much as to completely rebuild a nation’s infrastructure, but rather to make a state stable enough to act as a counterweight against communism. During the cold war the US and the Soviet Union each - and, in some cases, both - propped up weak states for geopolitical reasons; but denied such support, these and other states disintegrated (Vidal: 2003). Part of the reason for such disintegration was the fact that the external actors “focused on the creation of state allegiance rather than on the creation of states themselves” (Dempsey: 2001, 60). During the Cold War period, “the objective was to create nations that would, by a complex combination of external pressure and the financial self-interest of elites, take our (America’s) side in a global war and be useful to us in it” (Feldman: 2004, 8). But after the end of the Cold War, the aim of nation-building began to change.

Once communism had been defeated and the Soviet Union was no longer perceived as a threat, the United States altered both the nature and purpose of its nation-building efforts. As mentioned earlier, the goal of nation-building had now become the creation of reasonably legitimate, reasonably liberal democracies. In turn, this was meant to enhance international peace and security (not to mention open up further markets to free-market capitalism). For much of the 1990’s, nation-building was carried out under the guise of ‘democracy promotion’. This was a somewhat altruistic effort on behalf of the United States and its allies that in the end served to “justify eight years of interventionist foreign policy” (Dempsey: 2001, 62). Various efforts to transform failed states into democratic allies were undertaken in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia (among others). In the case of Somalia the nation-building effort ended in disaster when the U.S. suffered military casualties and promptly put an end to the nation-building ‘experiment’ there. After this incident, the somewhat idealistic nature of nation-building and the U.S.’s responsibility to democratize the world began to be called into question. For example, (Somalia’s) “failure hindered any massive reaction in the next major humanitarian crisis in Africa, in Rwanda” (Hippel: 2000, 96).

The need to establish democratic states favorable to U.S. interests became especially urgent given the rapid ascent of terrorism during the last decade. In this respect nation-building had now become a form of conflict prevention. It is no great secret that failed states are often breeding grounds for terrorism. Indeed, “the breakdown of the state can cause economic, social, and political development to fail, give rise to major humanitarian disasters, destabilize entire regions and even turn them into sources of transnational terrorism” (Hippler: 2005, 4). Given this, it is in the interests of the external actors to ensure that any nation-building efforts be seen through to completion. As Feldman describes it, “our objective must be to build stable, legitimate states whose own citizens will not seek to destroy us” (Feldman: 2004, 8). Which leads us to the United State’s latest nation-building endeavour, Iraq.

3 The Iraq Conflict

The widespread chaos that is still so prevalent in Iraq is largely a direct consequence of inadequate U.S. planning for post-conflict reconstruction before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The general consensus within U.S. policy-making circles before the war was that an armed conflict and subsequent transition to democracy in Iraq would be a relatively quick and painless process. At the time, this line of thinking was understandable. Iraq was a third world country ruled by a ruthless, yet mostly inept, dictator. During Saddam's rule, Iraq went from being one of the most prosperous countries in the Middle East to one of the most despondent. The Iran-Iraq war, followed by the first Gulf War, left Iraq's infrastructure in ruins, and the following 10 years of extremely harsh sanctions coupled with persistent U.S. bombings served to cripple Iraq even further. It was believed that such a weakened state would provide an easy target for another U.S.-led nation-building endeavor.

The plan was that the U.S. would roll into Iraq, remove Saddam from power, and install a U.S.-friendly ruler (or puppet-regime) in his place, while at the same time keeping the state-structure largely intact. Iraq would be up and running again in no time, and the U.S. would have secured a strategic foothold in a hostile Middle-East region, along with control over Iraq's vast oil reserves (the world's second largest after Saudi Arabia), and gained another victory in the global "war on terror". This new, "liberated" Iraq would become a "beacon of democracy" that would set the standard for the rest of the Middle East, a region completely devoid of democratic examples. However, this was not to be. The Bush administration was ideologically blinded and so focused on winning the war and "regime change" in Iraq that it failed to foresee and plan for the seemingly endless difficulties that would arise once Saddam was removed from power.

Saddam was a tyrant, there is no doubt about that, but his totalitarian, centralized rule was quite effective in keeping the tensions inherent amongst the three primary groups in Iraq (Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, and Kurds) under wraps. Saddam's heavy-handed rule was the glue that held the internally divided nation of Iraq together, and when he fell from power the infrastructure of the state collapsed along with him. The floodgates had been opened, so to speak, and long-simmering tensions between the three groups were finally allowed to run amock. So when the U.S. finally reached Baghdad, it found itself in the position of forceful occupier rather than passive liberator, unwillingly pushed into that role because any other alternative would likely result in civil war between the various groups. The U.S. is now faced with the daunting task of rebuilding a nation that is still struggling to find its identity, hostile towards the U.S. and alien to the very idea of democracy. Added to this are the serious weaknesses of social and political integration mechanisms and the disastrous situation in the economic,

social, security and infrastructure domains, which are giving rise to understandable dissatisfaction and considerable potential for conflict (Hippler: 2005, 87). In order to give the reader a deeper understanding of the conflict and some of the inherent difficulties faced by nation-building in Iraq, I will now provide a synopsis of the four primary actors in the conflict, namely the United States, the Shi'a Arabs, the Sunni Arabs, and the Kurds.

3.1 The United States

The role of the United States in post-Saddam Iraq has been the topic of much contention. Given that it was primarily the U.S. (along with the aid of a “coalition of the willing”) that decided to invade and occupy Iraq; the postconflict-reconstruction effort there has been dictated almost entirely by U.S. policymakers. Not surprisingly, this is where much of the debate has arisen. One of the fundamental tenets of nation-building is the idea that it is ultimately up to the nation itself (in this case Iraq) whether the nation-building effort succeeds or not. Nation-building and the establishment of democracy are rarely successful if they are done by force. Democracy requires the consent of the governed and cannot be forced onto an unwilling nation (Anderson & Stansfield: 2004, 189). Nation-building should primarily be an internal process that is supported with the least amount of intervention needed by an external force. The external actor should act as a mediator and form of stability until the nation is strong enough to stand on its own again and in time make the transition to sovereignty and, hopefully, democracy. But in the case of Iraq, the role of the U.S. has been nearly all-encompassing. From the beginning, the war was “hasty and and largely unilateral, without international authorization, and without support of much of the world” (Diamond: 2005, 280). We have already learned that an important factor in nation-building efforts is a broad amount of international support. So when the U.S. decided to undertake both the war and the reconstruction effort on largely on its own, it was placing an enormous burden on itself as well as doing a colossal disservice to the Iraqi people.

From day one, the U.S. in essence “took over” Iraq and told them what kind of government they were going to have, what their constitution would look like, basically how they were supposed to run their country. The United States adopted a “we-know-best” approach, which was out-of-touch ideologically with the actual situation as well as the interests of the Iraqi people as a whole. Attempts at really giving the Iraqis a say in the formation of Iraq’s state structure, constitution, and policy making were by and large superficial at best. The current government in Iraq is still perceived by many as being a U.S. instrument under the cover of Iraqi representation. The U.S. “never listened carefully to the Iraqi people, or to the figures in the country that they respected...(from the beginning) the U.S. established (itself) as an occupying power in every respect so that (it) would face a dedicated, violent resistance—without enough troops to cope” (Ibid: 290). This line of thinking was largely a by-product of those running the show, namely the

Bush Administration. Naturally, this created a large amount of resentment amongst the Iraqi people towards both the U.S. and its true intentions for Iraq.

Another mistake the U.S. made that had severe repercussions for the nation-building effort in Iraq is the fact that throughout most of the conflict, the U.S. did not have enough troops “on the ground” in order to provide security and stability once Saddam’s regime had fallen. This occurred for a variety of reasons. The first being that the reconstruction effort, and ultimately the trajectory of the conflict, was dictated by the Defense Department (Pentagon) rather than the State Department. This was to have grave consequences, because prior to the start of the war the State Department had devoted vast resources to planning for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq. Once the Pentagon assumed control (due to pressure from those inside the Bush administration), almost all of these resources were cast aside, which resulted in the U.S. more or less blindly surging into Iraq with no real plan to secure the peace. (Donald) “Rumsfeld’s plan to go into Iraq with a relatively light force of about 150,000 coalition troops, despite warnings of U.S. Army and outside experts on postconflict reconstruction that—whatever the needs of the war itself—securing the peace would require a force two to three times that size” (Ibid: 281). So what ended up happening is that as soon as the regime collapsed (and the state infrastructure and security apparatus along with it), chaos and anarchy spread throughout Iraq because the U.S. had only devoted enough resources to winning the war, but not the peace. As mentioned earlier, the foundation that all nation-building efforts are built upon is a state that can provide security for its citizens. All other aspects of nation-building flow from it (security), and if it falters or fails, the nation-building project will certainly fail, too (Feldman: 2004, 72). So this inability to provide reliable security for the Iraqi people is one of the primary reasons that the ongoing nation-building effort has been so difficult. It is all but impossible to get the state apparatus back on line if violence continues to be widespread.

Another grave mistake that the U.S. made was when it dismantled much of the state apparatus, primarily through its “De-Ba’athification” process. In an effort to purge Iraq of those associated with the previous regime, the U.S. ended up dismantling the Iraqi Army as well as effectively firing well over 120,000 others from their government-affiliated jobs (as will be discussed in the “The Sunni Arabs” section). This was another blunder on behalf of the Pentagon that made a bad situation even worse. This wound up alienating and marginalizing a whole section of the country—the best organized and best armed—until a series of readjustments that were, again, too little, too late (Diamond: 2005, 290). Not only was the U.S. left with most of the burden of maintaining law and order in Iraq, but it also had added further recruits to the insurgency that could have ended up helping to stabilize Iraq, had they been able to keep their jobs.

As it stands now, the U.S. is continuing to maintain a significant military presence in Iraq. Indeed, without the presence of the U.S. it is likely that Iraq would plunge into a state of civil war, despite the progress being made towards democratic institutions and the reconstruction of the state apparatus. The U.S. is also continuing to serve as a mediator between the different groups in Iraq, a role

that is crucial given the longstanding conflicts between the Shi'a Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds.

3.2 The Shi'a Arabs

Unlike labels such as "Kurd" or "Arab" which denote a particular ethnic/cultural identity, Shi'ism and Shi'a are neither sociological, political, nor cultural classifications (Anderson & Stansfield: 2004, 119). Rather, they refer to a set of Islamic religious beliefs. The aforementioned definition also applies to Sunni Islam. The fundamental schism between Sunni and Shi'a Islam goes all the way back to A.D. 632, when Mohammed died and there was a dispute between the two groups over how to choose a successor. Needless to say, the dispute was never resolved, nearly 1,400 years of conflict ensued, and tensions between the two groups are still present today. But rather than just being a religious dispute, the current conflict in Iraq between the two groups is intertwined with political motivations, which means that there is even more at stake, both for Iraq and the surrounding region. Indeed, "attempts to now resolve it's (the schism) political manifestations would threaten the current regional status quo and alter the political landscape of the Middle East out of all recognition" (Ibid).

It was the Shi'a Arabs who found themselves in the contradictory position of being the repressed majority under Saddam's rule. Despite the fact that they constitute the majority of Iraq's population (60%), they were politically marginalized from the state apparatus during the 35 years the Ba'ath (primarily Sunni) party controlled Iraq. In addition to this, Saddam's regime committed numerous atrocities against the Shi'a people, with the intended effect of keeping them weakened enough so that they would not unite and use their overwhelming numbers to revolt and remove Saddam from power. However, this extended oppression of the Shi'a over the years has "politicized the Shi'a to a level that may prove impossible to ignore in the post-Saddam Iraq" (Ibid: 118). This has been most apparent amongst the religiously inspired Shi'a parties in Iraq, because "although their political organizations had been hit heavily and severely by the dictatorship, (they) still existed in exile (and underground to a lesser degree)" (Hippler: 2005, 85). This is opposed to the secular Shi'a Arabs, who were "extensively disorganized and virtually incapable of political action" (Ibid: 85). Now that the Sunni minority no longer dominates the Iraqi political arena, it is the Shi'a majority that is finally seeing the balance of power lean in its favor. Iraq may become the first major Shi'a-led Arab country in the predominantly Sunni-governed Middle East -- a change whose potential consequences are still unclear (Mite: 2003).

A promising factor for the establishment of a stable nation in Iraq is the fact that the Shi'a Arabs consider themselves Iraqi nationalists. They are Iraqi first and Shi'a second, and their ethnicity as Arabs is perhaps the defining feature of the Shi'a, along with their acceptance and association with the Iraqi state (Anderson

& Stansfield: 2004, 136). This is consistent with the ideological legitimation aspect mentioned by Hippler, where an integrative ideology is essential for successful nation-building. If the other two groups (Sunni and Kurds) would regard themselves as Iraqi first (as the Shi'a do) it would be a huge step in the right direction for a stable Iraq.

3.3 The Sunni Arabs

When Saddam Hussein, himself a Sunni, was removed from power the Sunni Muslims saw their domination over Iraqi politics come to an end. Even before the rise of the Ba'ath party, the Sunnis held a monopoly of the positions of power within the region dating back some 1,500 years. The domination of the state has often been the result of competition within the Sunni, rather than between the Sunni and the Shi'a (Ibid: 140). So it is needless to say that the ascent of the majority Shi'a within the Iraqi political arena since the collapse of the Ba'ath regime has resulted in a large amount of resentment amongst the Sunnis. This resentment has manifested itself in many forms, the most distressing being the insurgency that is continuing to disrupt the ongoing nation-building effort in Iraq. Many Sunnis are hostile to the concept of a democratic Iraq, because it would likely relegate them to second-tier status due to their smaller numbers (they constitute around 15% of Iraq's population).

Adding further to the Sunni hardship in a post-Saddam Iraq was the fact that "this group of the population was fragmented, without leadership and politically almost impotent, which intensified the feeling of helplessness even even further (Hippler: 2005, 85). After the fall of the regime, many Sunnis were also left without any form of employment. This was primarily due to the "De-Ba'athification" process, which dismissed all Iraqis in the top three levels of management at every government ministry and government-affiliated institution, which resulted in over 120,000 Iraqis losing their jobs (Phillips: 2005, 145). The Iraqi army was also dismantled in its entirety, which effectively crippled Iraq's state structure by removing almost all experienced and qualified personnel and added some 350,000 disgruntled soldiers to the ranks of the unemployed (Anderson & Stansfeld: 2004, 227). This further marginalized the Sunnis, and ended up creating new recruits for the insurgency. As mentioned earlier in the "nation-building" section, when civil society does not exist, people who are faced with the collapse of the autocratic government will deal with their justifiable fear of what happens next by looking to form new associations to protect them. Hence the insurgency.

Another point of contention amongst the Sunnis is that a federalist, much less democratic, Iraq would leave the Shi'a Muslims (primarily situated in the south) and the Kurds (primarily in the north) with control over the vast oil reserves in their respective regions. The greatest amount of Sunnis is concentrated in the so-called "Sunni triangle" in central Iraq, a region that has strategic significance but lacks natural resources, namely oil. So it is plain to see that a federalist and more

democratic Iraq would not only politically marginalize the Sunnis, but leave them without the lion's share of Iraq's natural resources.

Another problem is that, unlike the Shi'a, the Sunnis have always considered themselves Sunni first and Iraqi second. Up until the U.S. occupation, this has worked out quite well for them. Under the monarchy, governance was dominated by the Sunni middle and upper classes; under the republic, by lower-middle-class Sunnis; and under the Ba'ath regime, by Sunnis (mainly Tikritis) from the bottom tier of society (Anderson & Stansfield: 2004, 139). In a sense, the Sunnis *were* Iraq, and reaped the benefits of placing tribal ties and internal interests over that of the Iraqi nation as a whole (which would require them to integrate the Shi'a and the Kurds).

Drawing from Hippler, we can see why it is so difficult for the Sunnis to be willing participants in the ongoing nation-building effort. Continued Sunni dominance was always internally perceived both as beneficial and a tool for survival. The loyalty has always lied with the tribe, clan, ethnic or ethnoreligious group rather than the 'national' identity (as opposed to the concept of an integrative ideology). Throughout their political dominance, the Sunni have been hostile to the idea of social integration (by excluding the Kurds and Shi'a from participation in the state), because it was never in their interests. The ongoing dialogue has always been within the Sunni rather than between the Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurds, which is the polar opposite to the concept of social integration so vital for nation-building. The Sunnis have always excluded the Shi'a and Kurds from nearly all aspects of society, and now they are reaping what they have sown. This is because in a truly representative democratic government in Iraq, where political power accurately reflects population size, the Sunnis would be reduced to a position of political subservience not just in relation to the Shi'a but also with respect to the Kurds (Ibid: 152). It is also doubtful how friendly a Shi'a, and to a lesser extent, Kurd dominated government would be towards a Sunni minority that has oppressed them for centuries. So it becomes fairly clear why the Sunni are so resistant to the concept of a democratic Iraq, and why they continue to fight to hold on to the last vestiges of Sunni power.

3.4 The Kurds

As it now stands, the Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the Middle East without their own country. Ever since the inception of the Iraqi state, the Kurds have always viewed themselves as outsiders, and have done everything within their power over the years to maintain the relative autonomy that they have achieved. One of the reasons for this outsider status is the fact that the Kurds are ethnically different than the Arabs to the south. They speak their own language and have their own distinct culture. Even though the Kurds might share common religious beliefs with their Arab neighbours (around 75% are Sunni Muslims, and 15% are Shi'a Muslims), the tribal, clan, ethnic or ethnoreligious ties between the two groups (Kurd and Arab) are largely absent. Another factor that has reinforced

this outsider status is Kurdish nationalism. As opposed to the Shi'a Arabs, who have always thought of themselves as Iraqi first and Shi'a second; and the Sunni Arabs, who regard themselves as Sunni first; "the Kurds identify themselves as being "Kurdish" and then, maybe, "Iraqi" and certainly not "Arab" (Ibid: 155). Taken from Hippler's perspective, this tendency to label themselves as Kurdish first and Iraqi second poses considerable problems to the ideological legitimation phase of nation-building. How can Iraq expect to become a unified nation when its second largest group (the Kurds make up around 20% of Iraq's population) is seeking to preserve autonomy and possibly even establish their own nation (even though the latter is unlikely)? There is a huge leaning among the Kurdish population and its parties in favour of independence from Iraq, though this is not demanded publicly for pragmatic reasons (Hippler: 2005, 86). The fact that Kurdish area of Iraq is also closed in by three hostile "neighbors" (the Arabs to the south, Iran to the east, and Turkey to the north) has served to further isolate the Kurds and emboldened their push for autonomy.

The Kurds have perhaps been the biggest proponents of a federalist Iraq. Much like the Shi'a Arabs, the Kurds have always been politically marginalized within the Iraqi state. A federalist system would allow them to have an influence in the Iraqi state, while at the same time let them maintain a regional government, military force, and with that control over the oil fields around Kirkuk. And since the political power in a federalist system is decentralized, it would also likely prevent the recurrence of Kurdish oppression by the Iraqi state (which has happened many times in the past). As it stands now, Iraqi Kurdistan is divided into two parts (one governed by Baghdad and the other by the Kurds themselves). The Kurdish-governed part has become a so-called "safe haven". It "is now a decade-old example of what can happen throughout the rest of Iraq. The liberated part of Iraqi Kurdistan has become a refuge for all Iraqis seeking freedom and democracy" (O'Leary: 2002, 6). Some successes of the Kurdish model: the Kurds have governed their own region; held a multiparty democratic election and several rounds of local elections; developed increasingly sophisticated institutions of government embracing legislative, executive, and judicial functions; and dealt with the international community as representatives of their own region independent of Baghdad (Anderson & Stansfield: 2004, 157). Given all this, the chaos now prevalent in the rest of Iraq is largely absent in the Kurdish-governed area of Kurdistan. Perhaps the greatest problem now facing the Kurds in the new Iraq is this: Do they really want to give up all that they have achieved in order to legitimize and "fit into" a new Iraqi state that might not be suited to their interests?

4 Nation Building and Iraq

I have already described the fundamental aspects involved in the nation-building process, as well as given a general overview over the current conflict in Iraq and the primary actors involved. What this section will set out to do is integrate the two in order to present Iraq as an empirical case study in nation-building. The ultimate goal is to give the reader an understanding of the conflict in Iraq from a nation-building perspective. In addition to this, the concepts inherent in nation-building also allow us to examine what it would take for Iraq to be rebuilt as a nation. What has been done, what existing plans are available, an evaluation of the two aforementioned aspects, as well as further options available for nation-building will be discussed. In order to begin this section I will discuss the three fundamental aspects characterized by Hippler -- ideological legitimation, social integration, and state-building – and how they relate to the case of Iraq.

4.1 Three Key Elements and Iraq

4.1.1 Ideological Legitimation

The task of ideological legitimation in Iraq has been daunting, but not impossible. This is because in Iraq “national identity is weak in the face of rival religious or ethnic loyalties” (Smith: 2004, 130). As stated earlier, this process involves having the citizens of a nation coming to regard themselves as some sort of collective, national identity that transcends the association with the tribe, clan, ethnic or ethno-religious group. A positive sign for the development of an Iraqi nationalism is the fact that “the majority of Iraqis maintain a tribal affiliation in name only and would be unlikely to follow the orders of a tribal sheikh unless the country were in chaos and there were no other forms of security other than to seek protection from their tribe. Many tribes also span ethnic groups and religious sects, creating a form of pluralism” (Byman: 2003, 65). Unfortunately, in the initial period after the U.S. invasion, the country *was* in chaos, which resulted in large amounts of Iraqis staying with their tribe. Fortunately, as the security situation has gradually improved, this tribal loyalty has begun to shift towards a national consciousness. The fact remains that “Iraqi identity, however much it may be a product of colonial circumstance, remains a durable force” (Feldman: 2004, 45). However durable it may be, the Iraqi identity remains conflicted. Its

reestablishment as something other than “loyalty” to Saddam and an association with the Ba’athist regime will take time.

However, one can “note that the specific national identities of Arab countries, almost all of them colonial products in one sense or another, today seem to have more weight than does the more general “Arab” identity associated with anti-colonial Pan-Arabism” (Ibid). This also holds true for Iraq. If utilized correctly, “Iraqi nationalism (can be) a strong and vibrant force, as well as a benign one that unites the nation and gears segmented demands to inclusion while refining participatory mechanisms” (Jabar: 2004). This might perhaps be most apparent in the voting process. This is because “voting makes sense only after national unity has been established, only when the people lining up at the ballot boxes see themselves as national brothers. Voting is a consequence of national unity, not a cause” (Fitzpatrick: 2005). One reason to suspect that nation building may succeed in Iraq is that, at least outside of Kurdistan, an Iraqi identity already exists there (Feldman: 2004, 46). This Iraqi identity is embraced to different extents amongst the Sunni and Shi’a Arabs. The Shi’a have much to gain from being a part of an Iraqi national identity, while the Sunnis are beginning to realize that within the new order it is more beneficial to identify themselves as Iraqi and participate, rather than continue to resist and further marginalize themselves.

4.1.2 Social Integration

Now this brings us to the concept of social integration. This is intertwined with the ideological legitimation phase mentioned earlier, because they both contribute to the development of a national identity. In Iraq social integration is especially crucial, due to the longstanding history of division amongst the Shi’a, Sunni, and Kurds. If any one group is left out of the nation-building process and the developing civil society, it is unlikely that stability will be achieved. This is especially important for the Sunni Arabs. Most independent analysts of Iraq believe that the nation will not be stable—and the insurgency will not diminish—until the political concerns of the Sunni Arab minority are addressed (Diamond: 2005, 322). The Bush administration’s policy is not to negotiate with terrorists, but given the ongoing violence, some dialogue could be beneficial. If Iraq is to become a democracy in the next few years, negotiations must take place with many of the groups that are waging or supporting the insurgency (Ibid). The hope is that these marginalized groups would realize that political participation, rather than violence, is the best means to achieve their goals.

The term “civil society” is meant “to identify nonstate organizations, not excluding political parties or religious groups, who set out to achieve various goals through coordinated, nonviolent action and advocacy” (Feldman: 2004, 73). These groups—neither governmental and nor private—check the power of the state, engage citizens in public life, and develop ties that are not simply ethnic or religious (Plotz: 2003). As mentioned earlier, the various aspects of civil society, such as transport, communication, a national economy, and a nationwide mass media, also contribute to the development of a national infrastructure (in addition

to a national identity). There is a civil society emerging in Iraq, and, with luck, it could become a development of the occupation period that Americans will look back on with some sense of accomplishment (Diamond: 2005, 332). This is in stark contrast to the totalitarian era of Saddam, when civil society was more or less nonexistent. One needs to keep in mind that the term ‘civil society’ is different than that of ‘civil administration’, because in Iraq “there is a relatively advanced and functioning civil administration covering large parts of the country” (Dobbins: 2003, 184)

But if the occupation is to succeed in creating a milieu in which democracy can flourish, the occupiers will need to figure out how to nurture the right kind of civil society—that is, moderate and nonreligious groups that can compete with the rising power of the mosques (Plotz: 2003). Civil society and the voting process are also intertwined. If elections are held too soon, all the power is concentrated in the hands of the political parties rather than the civil society. Later elections leave more space for the growth of a pluralistic society where all kinds of institutions—not merely political parties—serve a variety of social functions and compete for citizens’ attention (Ibid). The goal of nation-building, then, is to produce conditions suitable for democratic elections without initially holding such elections (Feldman: 2004, 94). But the emergence of a civil society (in Iraq) has been stunted by the continuing violence and insecurity, and by economic hardship, recovery from which is slowed by violence (Diamond: 2005, 332). This leads us to another central component of nation-building, the development of a functional state apparatus (state-building).

4.1.3 State-Building

One of the central reasons that the nation-building effort in Iraq has been so difficult is because “Washington was mostly responsible for turning an all-powerful and oppressive state into a failed state” (Hippler: 2005, 96). When Saddam’s regime was toppled, the infrastructure of the state crumbled along with it. Perhaps most distressingly, the state security apparatus ceased to exist, and the coalition forces were left with the task of reconstructing it from the ground up. A functional state apparatus implies that the corresponding society has constituted itself as a political society, which corresponds to the two processes outlined above (ideological legitimation and social integration), especially in the formation of a common society with its own self-awareness (Ibid: 9). The other two aspects (ideological legitimation and social integration) have taken so long to come to fruition because for too long the ongoing violence and insecurity in Iraq made the people too frightened to participate in the political process. Why would someone choose to vote if they were fearful of being blown up by a suicide bomber at the voting booth? Murders, kidnappings, and bombings are still common against those who are seen as collaborating in any way with the coalition forces, whether they are interpreters, political figures, or new Iraqi police recruits. The role of the nation-builder is, in the first instance, to impose security by constituting a power large enough to prevent civil war or anarchy, and strong enough to enforce its will

throughout the country (Feldman: 2004, 72). Due to a deficit in the amount of coalition forces, the establishment of security in Iraq has left much to be desired. As said (several times) before, all other aspects of nation-building flow from it (security), and if it falters or fails, the nation-building project will certainly fail, too. Despite the ongoing violence and precarious security situation, “a general feeling has evolved in Iraq that institutional and peaceful politics is the better course to retrieve Iraqi sovereignty” (Jabar: 2004). This has been evidenced by the recent participation of increasing numbers of Sunnis in the voting process. In the election in January 2005, when a 10-month interim government was chosen, Sunni Arabs either supported their leaders' call for a boycott or were too frightened by insurgent threats to vote (Karouny: 2005). This resulted in the Sunnis being even further under-represented in the new Iraqi government. As a result, large numbers of Sunnis turned out for both the constitutional referendum vote in October as well as the December vote, which elected a government with a four-year mandate.

4.2 The Four Pillars and Iraq

4.2.1 Security

I will now discuss the four ‘pillars’ of nation-building (security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic well-being, and governance and participation) and how these have thus far been integrated into the nation-building effort in Iraq. First, there is security, which is the foundation of the state-building phase mentioned above. It is already known that the number of troops and the general security situation in Iraq is still lacking in many respects. The current amount of 160,000 American troops is far short of what is needed (estimates have reached as high as two or three times that many). But what have the coalition forces and the Iraqis done to improve the security situation? As it stands now, “there is an obligation for American or international troops to remain until they can be replaced by Iraq security forces under the command of the democratic state” (Feldman: 2004, 81). In order to train these forces, “international actors must deploy thousands of armed international police to monitor, train, mentor, and even substitute for indigenous forces until the creation of a domestic police force” (Diamond: 2005, 306). The importance of international cooperation and constabulary forces in achieving this cannot be stressed enough. While maintaining unity of command, different countries should assume distinct roles: creating the army, training police, strengthening the justice sector, supporting disarmament, and combating crime (Phillips: 2005, 230). Even though there is a large domestic outcry in the United States to “bring the troops home”, this request is largely unrealistic if Iraq is to become a sovereign and independent state. Were the coalition forces to leave now, it is likely that Iraq would plunge into a state of anarchy and civil war, with the region dominated by an Iran-backed Shi’a nucleus. It would also leave Iraq

unable to defend itself against external enemies (Iran, Syria, and Turkey), and the nation-building effort would largely be in vain. The real question should not be how soon (the U.S.) can leave, but how fast and how much to share power with Iraqis and the international community while retaining enough power to oversee an enduring transition to democracy (Vidal: 2003). Realizing the error of the De-Ba'athification process, the coalition forces have begun to reinstitute a large number of the Iraqi armed forces. The plan is that as the amount of coalition forces decrease, the amount of Iraqi armed forces will increase exponentially, thereby creating a balanced transition. Nevertheless, "until the (Iraqi) government can consistently back its legal commands with force, it exercises sovereignty only in a very limited way" (Feldman: 2004, 127).

4.2.2 Justice and Reconciliation

The next pillar that I will discuss is justice and reconciliation, which is synonymous with the transitional justice facet mentioned earlier. This seeks to prosecute those who have committed atrocities, to deter future crimes, and to create conditions of peace through reconciliation (Phillips: 2005, 234). Perhaps the most visible example of this concept in action in Iraq is the trial of Saddam Hussein. "The Saddam trial could prove a national cleansing, a turning point toward a new Iraq of law and respect for human rights, and a warning to other authoritarians in the region. If mishandled, the prosecution of Saddam could turn him into an unlikely martyr" (Hanley: 2003). The fact that the coalition forces as well as the Iraqi government are trying Saddam through a legal and democratic process (rather than outright executing him or extraditing him to the U.S.) goes a long way to show that both the U.S. and the Iraqi government are serious about establishing rule of law in Iraq. His trial is effective in showing that "holding individuals accountable not only obviates collective guilt but also prevents a witch hunt and the continued cycle of violence" (Phillips: 2005, 234). As a positive sign of the importance of local actors over an interim criminal-justice system, "Hussein and other senior Baath leaders (are being) tried by a five-member tribunal of Iraqi judges, with a nine-member appeals tribunal that (will) review any verdict and sentence" (LeVine: 2005). It is crucial that a figurehead such as Saddam (and his co-defendants) receive a fair trial, because he can be used as an example to show the Iraqi people that a democratic judiciary system is effective and that in the new Iraq, nobody is above the law (even it's former ruler). Another "important adjunct to this process will be the peaceful resolution of conflicts over property between victims of Saddam Hussein and his beneficiaries" (Dobbins: 2003, 206).

The De-Ba'athification process was also an example of the coalition forces attempting "the dismantling of state structures responsible for human rights abuses" although they largely missed the mark when it came to "retaining those that can play a constructive role in creating conditions for natural reconciliation" (Phillips: 2005, 234). The coalition attempt to achieve transitional justice through De-Ba'athification backfired to an extent because the Sunnis were "disproportionately affected by the De-Ba'athification campaign, as well as

feeling victimized and humiliated by the occupation, the destruction of Fallujah, and the disbandment of the Iraqi Army” (Diamond: 2005, 322). Evidently the learn-as-you-go style of nation-building employed by the U.S.-led coalition forces still has many lessons to learn before it can effectively stabilize and possibly democratize Iraq.

4.2.3 Social and Economic Well-Being

The third pillar of successful nation-building is social and economic well-being. This process is almost impossible to get off the ground without a large amount of international support. This pillar “addresses fundamental societal and economic needs, in particular, providing emergency relief, restoring essential services to the population in areas such as health and education, laying the foundation for a viable economy (economic reconstruction, mentioned earlier), and initiating an inclusive and sustainable development program” (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 91). “The first six months of the post-combat period, a time frame generally recognized as being critical for laying the foundations for a stable and democratic future” was the period that the United States committed its most grievous errors (Hippel(2): 2004, 79). From the beginning this process in Iraq was severely disabled because the U.S. chose to wage both the war and the reconstruction effort unilaterally (for the most part).

This lack of manpower and resources was to have disastrous effects. The most obvious consequence was the horrible security situation, which crippled both humanitarian and reconstruction efforts. Electricity grids could not be revived, oil facilities could not be repaired, reconstruction jobs could not be commissioned, supplies could not be delivered, civil society could not organize, and a transition to democracy could not move forward (Diamond: 2005, 291). The slow speed and incompetence in rebuilding Iraqi infrastructure and the heavy-handed military occupation taxed the patience of the population with foreign troops and policies and dramatically reduced U.S. credibility (Hippler: 2005, 96). The De-Ba’athification process also put well over 120,000 Iraqis out of a job with no severance pay, including teachers, policemen, doctors, lawyers, etc., all of whom could contribute to the Iraq’s social and economic well-being. This also included the dismantling of the 350,000-man Iraqi army. Due to this much of the reconstruction effort was done by the U.S. military, but “military systems and personnel are not trained or equipped to engage in the transition from relief to rehabilitation and then to reconstruction” (Phillips: 2005, 230).

Another mistake the U.S. made was giving almost all of the reconstruction contracts to private (mostly U.S.) contractors rather than local Iraqi contractors and firms. This resulted in a slow and ineffective reconstruction process that funneled money away from the local economy and into the pockets of well-connected U.S. companies (such as Halliburton and Bechtel), and served to alienate the Iraqi people even further. In most respects, it seems as if the U.S. chose to ignore most of the fundamental lessons in nation-building it should have

learned over the years, much to the detriment of the Iraqi people. The social and economic well-being in Iraq has improved over time, but only to a limited extent.

4.2.4 Governance and Participation

The final pillar of nation-building that I will discuss in relation to Iraq is governance and participation. This pillar is concerned with “the need to create legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions and participatory processes, in particular, establishing a representative constitutional structure, strengthening public-sector management and administration, and ensuring participation of civil society in the formulation of the country’s government and its policies” (Hamre & Sullivan: 2002, 92). One of the greatest problems encountered in Iraq is that the interim Iraqi government elected in June of 2004 was viewed by most Iraqis as illegitimate. This is because it composed of mostly-exiled Iraqis (two-thirds carried foreign passports) that were appointed by the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), as opposed of being made up of representatives elected by the Iraqi people. So it was seen as a “puppet government” that did little more than put an Iraqi face on U.S.-policy. The interim government did “not have the power or the authority to change the interim constitution or even amend the Transitional Administrative Law” which reduced its role to “advice” and “consultation” (Deen: 2004). A far cry from sovereignty, this effectively reduced Iraq’s status to that of a client state.

However, On January 30, 2005, a majority of the Iraqi people voted in an election conducted by their transitional government which elected a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (“Iraq”). This assembly drafted the “new” Iraqi constitution, and under the constitution Iraq elected a 275-member permanent government in December 2005. It seemed as if the nation-builders in Iraq were finally doing some things right. By waiting to hold elections, the nation-builders in Iraq avoided “the international community’s desire to meet deadlines and address their domestic constituencies” which avoided “restoring to power the same leaders who fomented conflict in the first place”(Phillips: 2005, 233).

Remember that in the nation-building process elections are not an end-point, but rather a fork in the road. If done too soon, they often have opposite the intended effect. The Iraqi leaders of the transitional government (also) drew into the political system a wider range of relevant actors (Diamond: 2005, 320). Throughout the electoral process, many of the marginalized groups (primarily the Sunnis) increasingly used more peaceful and political means (such as boycotts and using democratic suggestions) to voice their concerns about the developing Iraqi government and constitution. Iraq ended up a federal state with a representative constitution, and with Islam as the national religion and foundation for the country’s laws. Under this democratic constitution, “the influence of the majority is restrained, and the rights of political and ethnic minorities are guaranteed”, which is essential to maintaining a stable and democratic state (Diamond: 2005, 317). Most importantly, the new Iraqi government is regarded by most Iraqis as well as many international governments as legitimate. However,

there is still a large amount of dissatisfaction within the Sunni Arab and secular Shiite communities. In December 2005, large amounts of protesters accused the elections of being rigged towards the main religious Shiite coalition (which was probably inevitable). The insurgency continues. Despite this, it seems as if Iraq slowly and painfully is moving towards “the desired outcome of nation-building (which) is a legitimate, democratic government that respects citizens’ equality and individual rights” (Feldman: 2004, 93). Even though the Iraqi people have ratified a new constitution and elected a legitimate government, the role of the nation-builder in Iraq is far from over. This is largely because until the new Iraqi government can actually enforce the laws that it has created on its own, the coalition forces will need to stay in Iraq indefinitely. The greatest challenge in the new Iraq still remains maintaining “a political bargain in which all major Iraqi groups feel they have a stake in the country’s political future” (Diamond: 2005, 335).

5 Conclusion

The intention of this essay was not to provide a step-by-step guide to rebuilding Iraq. Given that the nation-building effort there is still ongoing and its ultimate outcome still undetermined, too much speculative analysis on the future of Iraq would also end up being just that, speculation. Rather, the purpose was to see how the principles of nation-building could be and have been applied to the case of Iraq. After reading this paper, the reader should have a firm grasp of the core elements involved in nation-building, the Iraq conflict, as well as a thorough understanding of how the two are intertwined. The three central elements of nation-building characterized by Hippler (ideological legitimation, social integration, and state-building) have proven their relevance in the case of Iraq. In addition to these three concepts, the four pillars characterized by Hamre & Sullivan (security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic well-being, and governance and participation) have proven themselves complementary to the three aspects mentioned by Hippler. The impact of these seven facets on the outcome of the nation-building effort in Iraq cannot be critical, and the absence of any one aspect will certainly lead to failure. The core concepts involved in nation-building have also allowed us to see the shortcomings of the nation-building effort in Iraq by observing them in both theory and practice. By seeing ‘what went wrong’ in Iraq, the reader should now have an idea of what it would take for the nation-building effort there to be successful (which oftentimes has proven to be quite the opposite of what the nation-builders there have actually done). They say that history is doomed to repeat itself, but by learning the ‘hard way’ in Iraq, it is hoped that future U.S.-led nation-building efforts will not make the same mistakes. It is still unfortunate that the Iraqi people had to be the U.S. guinea pig.

There are also several key factors to stabilizing and hopefully democratizing Iraq that continue to resonate. The most vital is that the coalition forces cannot leave Iraq until the Iraqis themselves hold a monopoly on the use of force. Until the Iraqi government can actually enforce the rule of law on its own and defend itself from both internal and external enemies, the U.S. led-coalition is not only obligated to stay, it *must* stay. Another important factor is that the Sunnis *must* be brought further into the political process. Until they feel that they have a legitimate position and influence in the new Iraqi government, the insurgency will continue. In addition to this, both the coalition and Iraqi forces *must* find some way to stop the insurgency, because until the security situation is stabilized, the nation-building and democratization effort in Iraq will continue to be precarious. The newly-elected (Shi’a and Kurd dominated) Iraqi government *must* also continue to maintain some level of integrity and not fall to the temptation of enacting retribution towards the Sunni minority that oppressed them for so long. The list of factors needed to stabilize and democratize Iraq is long (much longer

than this one, surely). If the U.S. wanted to pick a place to undertake another nation-building effort, Iraq was certainly not the place to do it. Despite this, the slow and painful progress towards stability and democracy in Iraq continues, and it is in the best interests of all involved to see it through.

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