

Iraq: A New Way Forward

A report from *Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain* on the new strategy for Iraq and an alternative way forward for the region

Hizb ut-Tahrir (meaning The Party of Liberation) is a global Islamic political party that was established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder - the scholar, political thinker and judge in the Court of Appeals in al-Quds (Jerusalem), Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. Hizb ut-Tahrir's global leadership is currently headed by Ata' abu Rishta.

In the Muslim world, **Hizb ut-Tahrir** works at all levels of society to bring the Muslims back to living an Islamic way of life under the shade of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State following an exclusively political method.

Hizb ut-Tahrir adopts the methodology employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he established the first Islamic State in Madinah. The Prophet Muhammad limited his struggle for the establishment of the Islamic State to intellectual and political work. He established this Islamic state without resorting to violence. He worked to mobilise public opinion in favour of Islam and endeavoured to sway the political and intellectual elites of the time. Despite the persecution and boycott of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims, they never resorted to violence.

The party is therefore proactive in disseminating the Islamic intellectual and political thoughts widely in Muslim societies so as to challenge the existing status quo that exists there. The party presents Islam as a comprehensive way of life that is capable of managing the affairs of state and society, as well as expressing its views on political events and analyses them from an Islamic perspective. It disseminates its thoughts through discussion with the masses, study circles, lectures, seminars, leaflet distribution, publishing books and magazines and via the Internet, actively encouraging people to attend our demonstrations, marches and vigils.

In the West, **Hizb ut-Tahrir** works to cultivate a Muslim community that lives by Islam in thought and deed, adhering to the rules of Islam and preserving a strong Islamic identity. The party does not work in the West to change the system of government, but works within the boundaries of the system.

The party also works to project a positive image of Islam to Western society and engages in dialogue with Western thinkers, policymakers and academics. Western governments, under the banner of the War on Terror, are currently working to present Islam as an 'evil ideology'. At the heart of their campaign is the effort to malign the Islamic ideology as an alternative to Western liberal capitalism in the Muslim world. Because of this propaganda aspect to the War on Terror, Hizb ut-Tahrir works to develop opinion about Islam in the Western countries, as a belief, ideology and alternative for the Muslim world.

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Foreword

Karl Marx famously observed that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 by America and her allies however is no joke and has remarkable similarities with the British occupation of Iraq ninety years ago. The following quote is illustrative:

Proclamation... **“Our military operations have as their object, the defeat of the enemy and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators...”** (signed) F.S. Maude, Lieutenant-General, Commanding the British Forces in Iraq." ¹

Iraq in 2007 has seen destruction before, been 'liberated' before, been occupied before and yet the same cycle of invasion, dictatorship, occupation and war continue to ravage this unfortunate country. The war in Iraq is part of the wider war on terror, and yet, ironically for a war that claims to concern itself with ending terror, it has brought death and destruction to hundreds of thousands of people of Iraq and has fuelled terror throughout the world. If more troops were the solution for Iraq, as the president of the United States hopes, then the US would have won in Vietnam and the Soviet Union would have been victorious in Afghanistan. There is little doubt that the latest strategy pursued by the president of the United States like all the previous strategies conducted since March 2003 will fail and that Iraq will continue to suffer as a nation and as a people.

This is because the strategy was not just hopelessly executed, but it was hopelessly conceived. The neo-conservative analysis that the US has for too long chosen stability over democracy in the Arab world is obviously a fact. The endemic authoritarianism, corruption and economic stagnation of the Arab world in their minds had led to dissent and opposition being channelled through the mosques and underground political movements. This, the neo-conservatives believe, has led generations of Muslims to be brought up in repressed states, thus having to channel their frustrations through the mosques at America who they blame for being the external benefactor of their corrupt rulers. Denied of legitimate political means to enact change they turn to violence bordering on the nihilistic. Consequently to drain the swamp of radicalism, the neo-conservatives believe that the US should have ensured that democracy and freedom take firm root in the Arab world. Starting from an epicentre in Iraq, the neo-conservatives postulated that the winds of freedom would soon create instability for the mullahs in Iran (especially with a restless population yearning for change) as well as forcing Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf countries to also modernise their political systems. Once these countries were on board the democratic train, hold outs like Syria would either be isolated or if they made trouble, the US military could do the necessary. The neo-conservatives also cited the examples of Germany and Japan to prove their case as well as the fall of the Soviet Union which they believe took place without a bullet even being fired. However the narrative ignored some key factors:

1. Firstly, the analogy with Japan and Germany is misleading, as political circumstances were distinctly different sixty years ago. After WW2 for most parts of the world the US was still seen as a liberator, a country that had thrown off its own colonialist shackles and who sought in an idealistic fashion, freedom and self-determination for others. However the perception of the US in 1945 is not the same as its perception in 2004. As Suzanne Nossel writing in the 2004 spring edition of Foreign Affairs stated **“After WW2 most of the world viewed the US as a rightful victor over tyranny, today America is seen as an oppressor, hungry for oil and power.”** ²

2. Secondly, unlike in Germany and Japan, the people of Iraq did not believe that Saddam represented them and they did not see his defeat as their defeat. Saddam's secular Baathism remained confined to a minority clique and did not represent the values of the majority of Iraqis who are more characterised by their Islamic identity and heritage. This clearly explains why the insurgency has remained strong despite the capture, trial and execution of the former dictator.

3. Thirdly, the analogy with the fall of the Soviet Union also ignores some key differences. It was clear that the citizens of the former Soviet Union and her satellite countries in Eastern Europe looked up to the West as a beacon of liberty and economic opportunity. The capitalist bloc had long won the ideological battle for hearts and minds over its communist rival; this more than anything brought the Berlin wall down. However citizens of the Islamic world have a completely different perspective towards the West. Joshua Marshall writing in the Washington Monthly stated **"after 1989 the people of those (Eastern and Central Europe) nations felt grateful to the United States because we helped liberate them from their Russian colonial masters...The same is unlikely to happen if we help 'liberate' Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The tyrannies in these countries are home grown and the US government has supported them, rightly or wrongly, for decades even as we've ignored (in the eyes of Arabs) the plight of the Palestinians. Consequently, the citizens of these countries generally hate the United States and show strong sympathy for Islamic radicals."** ³

4. Fourthly, the selective application of liberal values has also caused a cataclysmic loss of confidence in the Western project. As Will Hutton, a British political commentator stated in 2004, **"The tally of core Western values and beliefs that we have allowed to become corrupted as we respond is lengthening by the week. Equality before the law, the presumption of innocence, the right to a fair trial - all have been seen as expedients to be put aside."** He goes on, **"We are undermining our own civilisation."** ⁴ Guantanamo Bay, the human rights abuses in Afghanistan and at Abu Ghraib and the rounding up of thousands under draconian legislation have all damaged the reputation of the US and her allies and led many to question the Machiavellian usage of Western values.

The failure of the neo-conservative project in Iraq gave ammunition to their ideological opponents in the realist camp, leading to a plethora of alternative strategies being suggested in late 2006. The most famous of these strategies was the Iraq Study Group (ISG) jointly chaired by former secretary of state James Baker and former congressman Lee Hamilton. They concluded that the existing status quo was not sustainable and nor could the US succeed with a permanent increase in troop numbers or a precipitous withdrawal. The ISG concluded two things - a redefined mission which shifted from defeating the insurgency to one which involved training Iraqi security forces and the need for the US to adopt a more aggressive diplomatic track, particularly with bordering nations such as Syria and Iran. However the ISG report, though rejecting the current status quo, still supported a major US footprint in Iraq and the region for years to come. Most media reports also wrongly concluded that the US President's address in January 2007, in which he increased the numbers of troops in Iraq, and his dismissal of direct diplomatic negotiations, was a wholesale rejection of the ISG report and a reaffirmation that Bush remained enthralled to the neo-conservative lobby, especially the American Enterprise Institute. On closer inspection this is not the case. For example, Steven Hadley the US national security adviser stated the following on January 29th 2007 in the Washington Post:

"The Baker-Hamilton report supports this conclusion. It said: "We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad ... if the U.S.

commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective." Our military commanders, and the president, have determined just that. Contrary to what some have suggested, reinforcing our military presence is not the strategy - it is a means to an end and part of a package of key strategic shifts that will fundamentally restructure our approach to achieving our objectives in Iraq.... The new strategy incorporates other essential elements of the Baker-Hamilton report, such as doubling the number of troops embedded with Iraqi forces, using benchmarks to help us and the Iraqis chart progress, and launching a renewed diplomatic effort to increase support for the Iraqi government and advance political reconciliation." ⁵

The increase in troops was both modest and certainly well below the numbers being asked for by prominent neo-conservatives, as well as by Republican Presidential contender John McCain. As Hadley notes, the US president has embraced the ISG suggestion of a stronger emphasis on training. Lastly, with respect to diplomacy with Iran and Syria this is not as simple as some in the media have claimed; it is clear that either through back channels or through third parties there have been discussions with both Syria and Iran. Indeed Israeli news reports have recently uncovered back channel negotiations between Israel and Syria and a number of members of the US Congress have recently visited Damascus. Indeed, both countries have in the past been helpful to US policies in the region, whether it be Syria's military support in the first Gulf War in 1991 or Iran's significant support of the US in removing its ideological enemies in Kabul and Baghdad. With the announcement by secretary of state Rice in February of meetings of Iraq's neighbours in March and April of 2007 which will include Syria and Iran, the covert discussions have now become overt.

Despite the new presidential announcement following the November elections, it is increasingly clear that neither the realists or neo-conservatives have a silver bullet for resolving the quagmire in Iraq; the current strategy remains more based on faith and hope than substantive actions. Day by day hundreds die, the violence remains endemic, electricity and clean water are scarce, millions flee and instability rages. Yet despite this debacle, a significant minority are now considering opening up a new front by engaging in a military strike on Iran. If this were to happen, the current turmoil in the Middle East would look positively benign.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

It was once said by Martin Luther King that **"When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind."** ⁶

What we present here is a reasoned perspective. Millions of people share our discontent with the war on Iraq and still hope at least to achieve some good from this terrible episode. Nevertheless, we conclude that there are root causes of the problem in Iraq that have not been fully debated and that there are solutions to the conflict if only those who have goodwill have the courage to act on them. The evidence for this is presented in the chapters that follow.

The US President recently failed to see the irony that millions of people can see when warning Iran that America will **"respond firmly"** if the country increases what he calls its **"interference"** in Iraq ⁷. The collective shaking of heads at Bush's latest faux pas is fashionable these days but often masks expressions of unexpected comic genius. Political commentators may, of course, differ in their analysis of Bush's seeming use of irony and so we have endeavoured to base our conclusions upon a more detailed study of the situation in Iraq.

Nevertheless, our conclusion is not a message of doom but of hope, because the politics of hope are not the sole preserve of Western style liberal secular democracy - a system that has failed to gain traction in Iraq or the wider region. Islam has an alternative system of government worthy of consideration called the Caliphate, which stands for a rule of law, representative government and accountability. Surface similarities notwithstanding, it is distinct from secular liberalism and so we present its main features in some detail in the final chapter.

We recommend a real end to the occupation of Iraq in order to allow the people of Iraq to realise once again the successful system of government that lasted for thirteen hundred years until Iraq was occupied by the British army in 1917. Iraq like the majority of the Middle East in modern times has faced the scourge of Western occupation ever since Napoleon landed in Egypt in 1799. Regardless of the century or decade, Western leaders have found some pretext to occupy the Middle East whether it be to attack the Ottoman caliphate, enhance commerce, act against the nationalisation of oil, deal with proxy leaders which have fallen out of favour or counter weapons of mass destruction. Added to this is the latest pretext - the need to referee Iraq's sectarian conflict, a conflict which most commentators agree has in fact been exacerbated since the invasion in 2003. Shia and Sunni have lived side by side in the Muslim world, mostly in harmony, for centuries; they hardly need outsiders with insidious agendas to tell them how to live together now. The idea that more chaos would exist if Western forces exited the country is another myth to file alongside the missing WMD, the Saddam-Al Qaeda connection and the view that Western forces would be greeted as liberators. Consequently if there is to be a real solution to the problems of the region and not a series of cosmetic gestures, it is our view that there have to be some decisive steps undertaken:

Step 1

All foreign military personnel stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and the wider region should be asked to leave immediately by their host countries

Instead of increasing the numbers of troops, the President of the United States should authorise the complete withdrawal of all US forces in Iraq. He should also withdraw all his other forces from the region, including those stationed in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the horn of Africa. Contrary to popular perception, the United States constitutes the largest militia in the state of Iraq with its official force of 153,500⁸ as well as tens of thousands of private contractors, special operations personnel and paramilitary assets⁷. Politicians in the US and the UK believe their occupation of the Muslim world have popular legitimacy. However, in fact an opinion poll cited by the Baker-Hamilton report showed that 61 per cent of Iraqis favour armed attacks on US and British forces. Of course it would be naïve not to recognise the US's vital interests in the region. However the Middle East is an autonomous region of the world with a rich history and a proud heritage and should not be considered Washington's private gas station. If America cannot control its addiction to foreign oil, it should at least end its addiction to foreign occupation.

Step 2

The West should stop material support of dictatorial leaders in the region

Instead of endlessly praising brutal dictators and tyrants in the region, the US, the UK and the EU should understand very clearly that failure to end their continued political and military support for dictatorial

leaders will inevitably have consequences for Western-Muslim relations. The Muslim world has seen a resurgence of Islam amongst all sections of society and a re-emergence of a strong religious identity in recent years. Arguing that the West does not discriminate against the Muslim world will be much harder if Western governments continue to support autocratic leaders whilst they jail, torture and murder tens of thousands of Muslims.

Step 3

The Muslim world should be left to decide its own political destiny without interference

The US and UK governments need to stop imposing by force a secular Western value system in the Muslim world. The idea that there are universal values is a myth which cannot be justified in the face of both contemporary societies and historical achievements. Though there may be surface similarities in shared aspirations, the idea that secular liberal values are the only means by which societies can progress equates to cultural imperialism. This 'Henry Ford' approach to civilisation in the Middle East, i.e. 'you can have any political system you want as long as it is Western', fails to acknowledge that many in the West are themselves questioning the vitality, sustainability and probity of their own democratic systems. After wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the brutality of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, many in the Muslim world are also challenging the West's claim to moral authority. The Muslim world has shown throughout its fourteen century history an alternative basis for a rich and open civilisation based on its own value construct and emanating from a different ideological source. Contemporary societies as diverse as China, Russia and large parts of Latin America currently have distinct social, economic and political models to those practiced in Western capitals. The Muslim world should therefore be allowed to develop its own political destiny free of interference and if this be one based on Islamic principles, then so be it. In a recent Gallup poll of ten mostly Muslim countries, the organisation found that in states such as Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan and Bangladesh, a majority of the people asked said Sharia, or Islamic law, should be the only source of legislation. In four other countries, a majority said Sharia must be a source of law, although not the only source. To argue for the imposition of the secular Western value model despite such overwhelming support for an Islamic state is just further evidence of an imperial mindset.

Step 4

The proceeds of the vast energy reserves should be used for the interests of all the people and not confined to the royal families, narrow elites and Western multinationals.

It is clear that for there to be real economic empowerment for the citizens of the Middle East, the cartel of ruling families, corrupt elites and Western multinationals must be broken up. The proceeds of the region's vast oil and gas reserves belong to the citizens of the regions and should be spent on alleviating poverty, building schools, universities and hospitals and developing core infrastructure of transport, communications and agriculture. The current misuse of the proceeds of oil and gas amongst a narrow elite is directly linked to ensuring the short term survival of these unrepresentative regimes. Allowing Western multinationals to gain valuable contracts and buying weapon systems to provide jobs to tens of thousands in Western cities may boost the regime's security in the short term and aid Western economies but does nothing for the longer term security for all citizens. This new energy industrial complex is as pernicious as the Military Industrial complex that has existed for decades in Washington and London.

Step 5

In the context of ensuring long term stability to the region, Israel's annexation of Palestine in 1948 should not be recognised. However the rights of Jews, Christians, Muslims and others should be protected

Until it is recognised that the annexation of Palestinian land in 1948 was not just illegal but heralded the ethnic destruction of lives, property and lands of millions of Palestinians, the so-called imposed 'peace process' will not work and instability in the region will remain. If the Zionist regime that governs in Tel Aviv has a right to Palestine, a region it annexed in 1948, then Argentina had a right to invade the Falkland Islands in 1982. Yet Britain sent an armada of naval ships across the globe to reassert British sovereignty. Today Palestinians are asked to recognise this illegal annexation, yet David Ben-Gurion the first Israeli Prime Minister admitted.

"If I were an Arab leader I would never accept the existence of Israel. This is only natural. We took their land. True, God promised it to us, but what does it matter to them? There was anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was it their fault? They only see one thing: we came and took their land." ⁹

The major powers cannot have one rule for 'Israel' and another for everyone else. The myth that Jews and Muslims cannot live together in security under an Islamic state is rebutted by history, not just historically in Palestine and Andalusia, but can be seen most vividly after the Spanish Inquisition in the era of the Ottoman Caliphate. Imposing an unjust solution on the Palestinians as advocated by the quartet does nothing to enhance long term stability or security in the region.

Step 6

Violence targeted at innocent non-combatants can never be justified whether carried out by individuals or states

It should be made clear that regardless of the provocation, it is never justified to target or murder innocent non-combatants whether this is done by individuals in New York or London or by states on a massive scale in Fallujah, Beirut, Vietnam and Hiroshima. Claiming a unique sense of victimhood whether it be by the neo-conservatives after the tragedy of 9-11 or some Muslim groups in response to a nihilistic Western foreign policy over the last fifty years is not a justification for the killing of innocent civilians.

Step 7

Having double standards over nuclear power is neither sustainable nor congruent with long term security

The idea that Iran should be denied a nuclear weapons programme in the future has no basis of legitimacy especially as India and Israel, both declared nuclear states, have not even signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Of course Western states are not concerned about Israel or India's nuclear arsenal; no one in their wildest dreams can envisage an Israeli or Indian Prime Minister launching a nuclear attack on Washington or London, though plenty exactly envision this scenario with the Iranians. Ignoring the fact that Iran has no intercontinental ballistic missiles, the problem with this rationale is that plenty of people in the Muslim world and countries like Venezuela, China and North Korea feel more threatened by the United States and her allies than they do by a nuclear Iran. In a recent University of Maryland poll, 68 per cent of Muslims in the Middle East cited the US and Israel as nations they felt most threatened by. Millions of people do literally wake up in Damascus, Amman and Cairo more worried about what could emanate from Washington and Tel Aviv than what might come from Tehran.

As the US has demonstrated, withdrawal from international treaties such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is always balanced against changing national interests. Iran is surrounded by 150,000 US troops on one border and 35,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan on the other. She is also repeatedly threatened by a nuclear Israel. Deterrence and mutually assured destruction were key cornerstones of the cold war security system bringing balance to international relations. Asking Iran to give up a future nuclear program would have been like the Soviet Union asking West Germany to remove its American nuclear bases, on the pretext that their presence threatened international peace and stability. In addition, the West repeatedly states that Iran should adhere to the NPT while ignoring the provisions itself. Article 6 states that nuclear weapons states should seek to actively disarm their own programmes, however both the US and the UK have announced that they are actually modernising their arsenals. The head of the IAEA highlighted this contradiction in a recent interview with the Financial Times; **“When you see here in the UK the programme for modernising Trident, which basically gets the UK far into the 21st century with a nuclear deterrent, it is difficult then for us to turn around and tell everybody else that nuclear deterrents are really no good for you.”** ¹⁰ Of course, in an ideal world no state would have access to the world's worst weapons, but in an ideal world countries would not have huge conventional armies or spend more on defence than they spend looking after the poor in the aftermath of a hurricane.

As history has demonstrated in this troubled region, there are no easy options and no guarantees of success. We believe the above steps are a viable blueprint in breaking the deadlock and bringing new hope to the region and stability and security to the rest of the world. However what is abundantly clear in the Middle East is that "staying the course" or trying again what has failed in the past, is not an acceptable strategy. Redeploying American forces from Iraq to Kuwait or the wider region for instance would be merely a cosmetic move. Unless the scourge of foreign occupation ends the region will continue to remain in the dysfunctional state it currently is. Once foreign occupation is ended, the region can then independently tackle the innumerable other challenges it faces head on. Thomas Ricks, the Washington Post's senior Pentagon correspondent, in his book *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* gives this view, **“President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 ultimately may come to be seen as one of the most profligate actions in the history of American foreign policy.”** ¹¹ We cannot but humbly agree.

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Chapter 1. The Real Problem is Occupation

"I think all foreigners should stop interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq."¹

Paul Wolfowitz, Baghdad, 21 July 2003

"There is no justification for Iran or any other country interfering in Iraq..."²

Tony Blair, Downing Street, 6 October 2005

The US and her allies told the world that Iraq must be invaded because of its weapons of mass destruction. They were wrong. Then they said that they had removed an evil dictator to bring stability to Iraq, yet they continued their support of brutal tyrants around the Muslim world and brought misery to Iraq worse than under any evil dictator. Now, we are told that foreign troops must stay in Iraq because otherwise it will collapse into chaos. Finally, we are told that the failure to bring peace and stability to Iraq owes nothing to the foreign occupation, which has brought over 650,000 civilians deaths to the people of Iraq, but is because insufficient troops were sent.

Prime Minister Blair said **"If the worry of people is the presence of the multinational force, it is the violence that keeps us here. It is peace that will allow us to go."**³ In November 2006, he said, **"The reason you have a problem in Iraq is that there are people deliberately trying to give us a problem."**⁴ He also recently said, **"The violence is why the troops are there."**⁵

Blair often argues that it is now redundant to argue whether the invasion and occupation was right or wrong - instead, he argues, having brought down Saddam, there is an obligation to establish a stable and democratic Iraq. The presumption here is that if an illegal course of action is pursued for long enough, the criminal status of the perpetrators is no longer a matter of concern. This means that if Saddam Hussein had managed to stay in Kuwait for 12 months or so, the US and Britain would have argued against throwing him out.

The assumption behind the latest 'surge' in US troops into Iraq is that more occupation will solve the problems of Iraq and beyond. However, the hidden premise of this position is that British and American troops must by definition be a blessing to any nation they occupy. We are led to believe that Western soldiers are so competent that, wherever they go, only good can result. It is inconceivable that they could increase instability and violence or that their departure might alleviate it. This arrogant assumption runs through every argument about Iraq presented by the US and her allies. It is the last shred of imperialist illusion, held even by many who opposed the invasion. It is encapsulated in the incoherent proposition that in Iraq we must "finish what we started".

The Tradition of Occupation, Intervention and Regime Change

The occupation of Iraq cannot be considered to be an isolated action by the US and Britain to merely remove an "evil dictator". It must be seen within centuries old traditions of occupation, intervention and regime change by Britain and the USA.

Almost 90 years ago, the British commander Lieutenant General Stanley Maude issued a proclamation **to the people of Baghdad, whose city his forces had just occupied. "Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. Your wealth has been stripped**

of you by unjust men... The people of Baghdad shall flourish under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws,"⁶ he said. He went on to say, "...your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage."⁷ Within three years, over 10,000 had died in a national Iraqi uprising against the British rulers, who gassed and bombed the insurgents. On the eve of 2003's invasion of Iraq, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins echoed Maude in a speech to British troops. **"We go to liberate, not to conquer"**⁸, he told them.

However, British and American rule over the Middle East has historically been shaped by conquest and characterised by a cruelty that is all too familiar to the people of Iraq. In 1919 Iraq faced the aerial spectre of mustard gas and today US and British warplanes continue where their ancestors left off, applying the 'Bomber' Harris maxim of dropping **"a bomb in every village that speaks out of turn"**⁹. Winston Churchill encouraged the use of mustard gas and sanctioned British pilots mowing down Iraqi women and children as they fled from their homes for not having paid their taxes¹⁰. Churchill acknowledged the savage rapacity of Western colonialism in Iraq when he said, **"there is no doubt that we are a very cruel people"**¹¹.

The historian Mark Curtis has calculated that Britain "is complicit in the deaths of around 10 million people since 1945, in conflicts or covert operations where Britain has played a direct role or where it has strongly supported aggression by allies, especially the US"¹². Declassified government files reveal a whole series of largely unreported British policies, for example British support for the 1963 killings in Iraq that brought Saddam's Ba'ath party to power and the British arming of the Baghdad regimes' brutal aggression against the Kurds throughout the 1960s¹³.

Syria, Iran, Oman and Egypt are among other governments targeted by America and Britain in the last half century. By invading Iraq, Bush and Blair were simply continuing the Western tradition of promoting regime change.

Newton's Third Law

Students of physics will need no reminding that every action generates a reaction. If you keep kicking somebody, they will eventually kick you back. If you occupy other people's land, even though you remove the "evil dictator" who you armed for decades in the process, they will resist the occupation.

Bush and Blair almost seem aggrieved that any of the local population would be minded to defend their land against "shock and awe" tactics. After all, it is almost as if the people of the Muslim world have no right to resist the occupation of their land. It is their role to be "liberated" by Messrs Bush and Blair, and to be grateful for it. They are meant to have a largely passive role in the "new world order".

It has become obvious, even to Bush and Blair, that the justifications of WMD and removing a dictator have become widely discredited. As a result, it is now argued that the occupation must continue, as the conflict in Iraq is now part of the "war on terror". We are told that if the West were to leave then the "insurgents" and "terrorists" in Iraq would have won a major victory. As a result of this narrative, Bush and Blair have continuously tried to deny that there is any homegrown resistance to their brutal occupation. There has been a necessity on their part to portray resistance to occupation by ordinary Iraqis as some sort of "foreign Jihadist import".

President Bush, in his address to the American nation on 28 June 2005, said, **"Iraq is the latest battlefield in this war [on terror]. Many terrorists who kill innocent men, women, and children on the streets of Baghdad are followers of the same murderous ideology that took the lives of our citizens in New York, in Washington, and Pennsylvania. There is only one course of action against them: to defeat them abroad before they attack us at home."**¹⁴ This propaganda actually disguises the fact that American and British soldiers are themselves agents of violence, fuelling violence by their presence in Iraq. Would Bush and Blair have talked of the Soviet Union merely seeking to "halt the spread of violence" in Afghanistan in the 1980s?

In March 2003, Blair argued, **"Of course, I understand that, if there is conflict, there will be civilian casualties. That, I am afraid, is in the nature of any conflict, but we will do our best to minimise them. However, I point out to my honourable friend that civilian casualties in Iraq are occurring every day as a result of the rule of Saddam Hussein. He will be responsible for many, many more deaths even in one year than we will be in any conflict."**¹⁵

However, the true reality is that it is the occupation that has brought death and destruction to Iraq on a scale unimaginable even under Saddam's rule. Over 650,000 civilians are dead as a result of the decision to invade Iraq and as a direct result of the occupation¹⁶. Over 1.5 million Iraqis are estimated to have lost or fled their homes¹⁷. In 2006 alone the occupation generated 365,000 internally-displaced refugees¹⁸. Tens of thousands of other Iraqis, **"a third of Iraq's professional class"**¹⁹, are now fleeing into exile in Jordan, Syria, Iran, the Gulf States, Turkey and Europe. Are we supposed to believe that the American military presence, which precipitated both the resistance and the civil war and pioneered new ways of torture at Abu Ghraib, is protecting, let alone respecting, Iraqi lives?

Blair and Bush want to evade responsibility for the situation that has evolved in Iraq over the past four years. The plain fact is that Bush and Blair invaded Iraq in March 2003 and took great pleasure in unleashing "shock and awe" on Iraq. The carnage and bloodshed in Iraq since then has flowed from this action and the political leaders who initiated this action cannot evade responsibility for it. Had they not invaded and occupied Iraq, the carnage would not have happened. Zalmay Khalilzad, the present US Ambassador to Baghdad, said recently that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime had **"opened a Pandora's Box of volatile ethnic and sectarian tensions"** ²⁰. It is Bush and Blair who opened the Pandora's Box and they are responsible for the afflictions that have come out of it.

In addition, under the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, by occupying Iraq Bush and Blair assumed a duty of care for every Iraqi civilian. Article 27 of the Convention says: **"Protected persons ... shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity."** ²¹ So, those who sent their armies cannot evade responsibility for civilian deaths by saying **"we didn't kill all those Iraqi civilians, it was a criminal minority that did it"**. By occupying Iraq, they took on the responsibility for protecting civilians against **"all acts of violence or threats thereof"** from whatever source, and they have failed to do so.

Even senior military figures have admitted that it is the occupation that is exacerbating the situation on the ground. In late 2006, the head of the British Army, Sir Richard Dannatt, said that the presence of UK armed forces in Iraq **"exacerbates the security problems"** and they should **"get out some time soon"**²². He added that the British army should **"get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems"**. He went on to say, **"We are in a Muslim country and**

Muslims' views of foreigners in their country are quite clear...As a foreigner, you can be welcomed by being invited into a country, but we weren't invited, certainly by those in Iraq at the time. Let's face it, the military campaign we fought in 2003 effectively kicked the door in."

Democratic Congressman John Murtha, a Vietnam veteran with a long career in the US Marine Corps and a supporter of the military in Congress since he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1974, has bluntly said that the "insurgency" is a consequence of the US military presence. He said, **"Our troops have become the primary target of the insurgency. They are united against US forces and we have become a catalyst for violence...A poll recently conducted shows that over 80 % of Iraqis are strongly opposed to the presence of coalition troops, and about 45 % of the Iraqi population believe attacks against American troops are justified. I believe we need to turn Iraq over to the Iraqis."** ²³ Murtha quotes the then US commander in Iraq, General George Casey, and his boss, the then head of CENTCOM, General John Abizaid, expressing similar sentiments to Congress in September 2005. According to Murtha, Casey said on this occasion: **"...the perception of occupation in Iraq is a major driving force behind the insurgency."** ²⁴ Abizaid said: **"Reducing the size and visibility of the coalition forces in Iraq is a part of our counterinsurgency strategy."** ²⁵

Bush and Blair now argue that the majority of the violence is not targeted against the occupying forces but against Iraqis themselves. However, previous studies have suggested that as much as 90 per cent of bombs were targeted at the American occupation forces ²⁶. A Pentagon report to the US Congress revealed that more than 60 per cent of attacks of all kinds on US and foreign troops, Iraqi security forces, civilians or infrastructure were directed against US and Iraqi government targets ²⁷. Civilians were the targets of just 15 per cent of attacks, although they did constitute the majority of the victims of the violence. A senior US Defense Department official, speaking anonymously, was quoted as saying: **"The insurgency has gotten worse by almost all measures, with insurgent attacks at historically high levels. The insurgency has more public support and is demonstrably more capable in numbers of people active and in its ability to direct violence than at any point in time."** ²⁸. The New York Times also reported that **"An analysis of the 1,666 bombs that exploded in July [2006] shows that 70 per cent were directed against the American-led military force, according to a spokesman for the military command in Baghdad. Twenty percent struck Iraqi security forces, up from 9 per cent in 2005. And 10 percent of the blasts struck civilians, twice the rate from last year."**²⁹

Bush may now argue that the failure to stem the violence is a consequence of inadequate numbers of troops, but he cites no evidence to prove this claim. Indeed, foreign troops have been a magnet for violence. When American commanders in Iraq have shifted thousands of soldiers from outlying provinces to Baghdad to allegedly combat increased violence in the Iraqi capital, the net effect has only been further violence.

What occupation?

Will a "surge" in troops do anything, given that the majority of foreign troops spend their time and effort protecting themselves?

There is a strong case for the view that the USA is not actually "occupying" Iraq in the usual sense of the word. US soldiers are not moving around Iraq at will and in reality the occupation cut and ran from Iraq in the course of 2004. This was when the Americans and their allies abandoned the policing of towns

and cities and retreated bruised to more than 100 fortified bases. Movement between these bases can only be by air or heavily armoured convoy. It appears that the role of the occupiers is confined to roadblocks, occasional patrols and defending the Green Zone and airports. Some commentators have observed that ninety per cent of its time and effort goes on its own protection and logistics. American counter-insurgency takes the form of wrecking villages from the air, as with Fallujah twice since 2003. In Basra, Britain's contribution to law and order included flattening the chief police station. It appears that the only way in which more American troops might assert any control is "denying ground to the enemy" by laying waste to it.

Withdraw from the Middle East

There is an assumption that the values of the West are universal and the US and Britain wrongly assume that if Western governments just engage a bit better then they are destined to win "hearts and minds" in the Muslim world. This is despite a wealth of evidence suggesting that the battle for "hearts and minds" has been lost and that there is strong support in the Muslim world for Islam, not Western secularism. Recent election results in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and the Gulf indicate the strong support for Islamic based parties. In addition to this The Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan in 2005 published a survey, which cited that they believed their societies as compared to the West had stronger values of tradition, religion and family and were less fraught with social problems³⁰. They also cited that two thirds of respondents in Jordan, Egypt and Palestine believed that the Sharia should be the only source of legislation while one third believed it should be a source, while in Lebanon and Syria these figures were reversed. Very few people carried the view that the Sharia should have no role in governance.

The importance of a long term military presence in the Middle East is a central pillar of Western policy. Michael O'Hanlon from the Brookings Institute told the House Armed Services Committee, "**The region that Iraq inhabits is so critical to US interests that we cannot just go in, remove Saddam, and leave the clean-up to others... Iraq, unlike Afghanistan, is located in the heartland of Arabia, a region whose stability is a critical US interest**"³¹.

In 1997, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and other senior figures, mostly oil industry executives, created the Project for the New American Century, a lobby group demanding "regime change" in Iraq. In a 1998 letter to President Clinton, they called for the removal of Saddam from power ³². In a letter to Newt Gingrich, then Speaker of the House, they wrote that "**we should establish and maintain a strong US military presence in the region, and be prepared to use that force to protect our vital interests [sic] in the Gulf - and, if necessary, to help remove Saddam from power**"³³.

The US military has developed a ten-year plan for "deep storage" of munitions and equipment in at least six countries in the Middle East and Central Asia to prepare for regional war contingencies³⁴. The plans, revealed in March 2006 contracting documents, call for the continued storage of everything from packaged meals ready to eat (MREs) to missiles in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman, as well as the establishment of two new storage hubs, one in a classified Middle Eastern country "West" of Saudi Arabia ("Site 23") and the other in a yet to be decided "central Asian state."

In April 2003 the New York Times reported, "**The U.S. is planning a long-term military relationship with the emerging government of Iraq, one that would grant the Pentagon access to military bases and project American influence into the heart of the unsettled region**" ³⁵. In March 2004, the Chicago

Tribune reported that the US military was constructing 14 bases "designed to last for years"³⁶. Since September 11th 2001 the US has established thirteen bases in nine countries ringing Afghanistan and the Gulf ³⁷. US military advisers and forces have been sent to the Philippines, Nepal, Georgia, Djibouti (for use in Yemen) and Sudan (for action in Somalia). The United States currently has bases in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cuba, Diego Garcia, Djibouti, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Guam, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Qatar, South Korea, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom amongst others ³⁸. History has shown that in general, once a US base is established, it becomes quite permanent.

The long term establishment of foreign military installations in the Middle East - to support dictatorships, control the strategic assets of the region, secure interests and prevent an independent leadership from emerging - has been the pillar of Western policy. In 1903, British Foreign Secretary Lord Landsdowne warned Russia and Germany that the British would **"regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal."** ³⁹ Almost 80 years later, US President Carter proclaimed, **"Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."** ⁴⁰

Any discussion of withdrawal from only Iraq will not serve to end the legacy of Western colonialism in the Middle East. For the long term stability of the region it is essential that foreign troops withdraw from the entire region, for their meddling has led to almost a century of tyrannical rule, brutal occupation and instability.

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Chapter 2 The Myth of the Shia Sunni Divide

The belief that Sunni-Shia disagreements are a source of continuous conflict in the Muslim world is widely touted by numerous commentators keen to argue their centrality to Muslim politics. From the bloody sectarian battles in Iraq, the treatment of Shia in Saudi Arabia to the explosive images of violent feuds in Pakistan, many are quick to proclaim that the Muslim world is suffering at the hands of a very serious sectarian problem that stems from the existence of the Shia and Sunni body.

New Statesman magazine recently described this conflict as the "**greatest cause of strife across the Arab world**", but didn't stop there, saying it was the, "**greatest conflict to face the world**" ¹ In the context of Iraq, Western commentators and politicians have repeatedly portrayed the conflict as a Sunni-Shia fracture and the cause of its colossal blood-bath, a fault-line so serious that it threatens Iraq's very unity.

On this assumption - that Sunni-Shia sectarianism lies at the heart of Iraq's current conflict - a huge amount of effort has been spent understanding the history, theology and politics of the Shia and Sunni disagreement. The fact that such a conflict and its extent is unprecedented in Iraq's history and follows the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 appears to be lost on most commentators. So too has the fact that Iraq is an occupied country with over 160,000 foreign troops on its soil who have been the subject of both Sunni and Shia attacks, often in collaboration.

Despite this, claims are repeatedly made that the conflict in Iraq is sectarian and that the hundreds of thousands of foreign troops must stay to help bring order. The fragility of such claims, particularly the latter, is becoming commonly acknowledged but the belief still persists amongst many that the real problem in Iraq is now Sunni-Shia sectarianism. An assessment of such claims, particularly in the context of a holistic picture of Iraq's current situation and history, is long overdue.

Challenging the myths

The Sunni-Shia disagreement is poorly understood in the West and has subsequently been falsely used to characterise numerous conflicts. Whilst some commentators are calling for a greater understanding of their disagreement to better understand what is happening in Iraq, a greater awareness of the dispute and its history would demonstrate the opposite: that the factor driving the current levels of violence in Iraq has less to do with the Sunni-Shia divide and more to do with occupation. A glimpse into the background is sufficient to highlight this and destroy countless myths, some of which have come from lazy analogies that impose the terms of the Catholic-Protestant Northern Ireland conflict on the Sunni-Shia disagreement.

Without repeating the details of the difference between Sunni and Shia - volumes of which can be found elsewhere - it is sufficient to say that it is theological and stems from a dispute over the immediate succession of the Prophet Mohammed. The politics of this theological disagreement is confined largely only to the beginning of Islamic history when those whom the Shia believed were the Prophet's rightful successors (Imams) were alive and in a position to contest leadership of the Islamic world.

However, since the last of these Imams (the twelfth) lived in the second century of Islamic history (and subsequently went into prolonged hiding according to the Shia), this left no legitimate Shia leader for the subsequent expanse of Islamic history (twelve centuries to date) and therefore no candidate for ruling. As a result, most Shia have considered themselves in a period of 'waiting' for the return of the twelfth

Imam and have remained largely politically passive in the interim, residing under and alongside Sunnis. Historically, the only considerable departure from this stance was the emergence of Safawid rule in Persia in the sixteenth century. While the Safawids had a number of hostile encounters with the Ottoman State, most Shia rejected the legitimacy of Safawid rule on theological grounds.

As a result, the Shia population has historically been well dispersed throughout the Muslim world, concentrated in Iran only because of Safawid policies to relocate Shia. There is strong communal mixing and inter-marriages between Shia and Sunni throughout the Muslim world with even Saddam Hussein's family having Shia branches. In this demographic context, the current level and type of communal violence between Sunni and Shia is unprecedented. According to Fred Halliday, Professor of international relations at the London School of Economics, the **“actual and direct conflict between Sunni and Shi'a...has until recently been remarkable by its absence”** ².

From a theological perspective, both Sunni and Shia have fiercely disagreed while recognising that the theology of each lies within the framework of Islam. In this way the Sunni-Shia disagreement is not unique, as many other disagreements exist within and between various schools of Islamic thought. It is interesting to note that even during conflicts in early Islamic history that involved the Shia, prominent Sunnis - most notably the founder of the first and largest Sunni school of thought, Imam Abu Hanifa - supported Shia resistance against the then rulers, as the conflict was regarded as a campaign for justice between oppressive rulers and oppressed subjects following the excesses of some Umayyad rulers.

On the theme of thought and theology, both Shia and Sunni thought stands in opposition to the influence of Western liberal secularism in the Muslim world and promotes the pre-eminence of an Islamic political system. Ayatollah Khomeini stated that: **“...the separation of religion from politics and the demand that Islamic scholars should not intervene in social and political affairs have been formulated and propagated by the imperialists; it is only the irreligious who repeat them”** ³. Works by Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir as-Sadr and Ayatollah Khomeini, eminent Shia Marjah, demonstrate that prominent schools of Shia thought now call for the establishment of an Islamic political order in the final Imam's absence; an intellectual trend driven by shrinking Islamic rule from the nineteenth century and its replacement by imported systems from the West.

Both Sunni and Shia communities have stood in resolute opposition to occupation and foreign control, demonstrated by the indigenous insurgencies against British troops in Iraq in the early twentieth century, particularly between 1918 and 1919. Of these, three anti-colonial movements are of particular note, as is their make-up. In Najaf, the Jamiyat an-Nahda al-Islamiyyah (The League of the Islamic Awakening) and the Jamiya al Wataniyyah al Islamiyyah (The Muslim National League) were formed with the object of organising and mobilising the population for major resistance and in Baghdad a coalition of Shia merchants, Sunni teachers and civil servants, Sunni and Shia religious scholars and Iraqi officers formed the Haras al-Istiqlal (The Guardians of Independence). Additionally, Ath Thawra al Iraqiyya al Kubra, or the Great Iraqi Revolution (as the 1920 rebellion is called), was fought by Sunni and Shia, brought together in a common effort, following the fatwa by Imam Shirazi, the grand scholar of Karbala, which stipulated that a Jihad must be fought against the British.

In all, the theological, political and historical background of the Sunni-Shia disagreement and of the two communities does not sufficiently explain the current violence or its extent. Suicide missions targeted at each other's communities and sacrificing life to target the other sect appear a historically unprecedented escalation of the dispute. Alone, these differences cannot account for the chaos in Iraq, therefore calling into question the description of the conflict in Iraq as purely Sunni-Shia religious sectarianism.

What does the violence really target?

Further evidence of deficiencies in such explanations are highlighted by the response of both Sunni and Shia to the bombings of the Mosque in Samarra in late February 2006, an act of incredible provocation against the Shia in Iraq. The al-Askari mosque in Samarra is held in tremendous veneration by the global Shia community. It is adjacent to the site from where the Shia believe the twelfth Imam went into hiding and the burial site of the tenth and eleventh Imams and the mother of the twelfth Imam. The site has been revered by Shia for over a thousand years. Following the bombings, Western media outlets predicted that large-scale sectarian conflict and Sunni blood-letting would soon follow.

However, it never happened. Instead, as Sami Ramadani, a dissident from Saddam's Iraq and senior lecturer at London's Metropolitan University, notes: **"None of the mostly spontaneous protest marches were directed at Sunni mosques"** but that instead **"near the bombed shrine itself, local Sunnis joined the city's minority Shias to denounce the occupation and accuse it of sharing responsibility for the outrage."** He goes on to highlight that it was not **"Sunni religious symbols that hundreds of thousands of angry marchers protesting at the bombing of the shrine have targeted, but US flags. The slogan that united them on Wednesday was: 'Kalla, kalla Amrica, kalla kalla lill-irhab' - no to America, no to terrorism. The Shia clerics most listened to by young militants swiftly blamed the occupation for the bombing...Moqtada al-Sadr; Nasrallah, leader of Hizbullah in Lebanon; Ayatollah Khalisi, leader of the Iraqi National Foundation Congress; and Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's spiritual leader. Along with Grand Ayatollah Sistani, they also declared it a grave 'sin' to attack Sunnis - as did all the Sunni clerics about attacks on Shias."** ⁴ Similarly, Sunnis were quick to express their solidarity with Shias in a series of demonstrations in Samarra and elsewhere.

It is not the case that attacks were not perpetrated on Sunni mosques; some were, by masked gunmen, but not nearly to the scale the West's Sunni-Shia narrative predicted. The huge demonstrations blamed the US not Sunnis.

Even Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul Mehdi hinted that the United States might have been responsible for the bombing of the Golden Mosque, **"especially since occupation forces did not comply with curfew orders imposed by the Iraqi government."** At the time he added, **"Evidence indicates that the occupation may be trying to undermine and weaken the Iraqi government."**⁵

The events that followed the historically unprecedented attack on the al-Askari mosque therefore expose the myth that the conflict in Iraq is principally Sunni-Shia violence, as both Sunni and Shia leaders engaged in acts of solidarity and went out of their way not to blame each other. Moqtada al-Sadr for example stressed: **"My message to the Iraqi people is to stand united and bonded, and not to fall into the Western trap. The West is trying to divide the Iraqi people."** ⁶ It also demonstrates the true fault line of the conflict in Iraq: the overriding hostility is towards the US occupation rather than rival sects.

This has been the case since the onset of the occupation. The largest mass demonstration reportedly in Iraq's history took place shortly after the fall of Baghdad, with estimates of four million people assembling in Karbala as part of the commemorations on the day of Ashura. According to Sami Ramadani, the rallying cries were **"No to America, no to Saddam' and 'No to the occupation' - a chant that has been repeated at many mass rallies since."**⁷

A recent poll conducted for WorldPublicOpinion.org by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland has made many observations regarding Iraqi perceptions of the conflict ⁸. Of particular note:

- o An overwhelming majority of those polled believed that the US military presence in Iraq is provoking more conflict than it is preventing.
- o If the United States made a commitment to withdraw, a majority believed that this would strengthen the Iraqi government.
- o Support for attacks on US-led forces grew to a majority position (six in ten).
- o Support for these attacks, the pollsters concluded, appeared to be related to a widespread perception, held by all ethnic groups, that the US government plans to have permanent military bases in Iraq.

The fault line along which the hostility is directed therefore appears to be the occupation. The occupation is perceived as the biggest problem facing the future of Iraq, as polls such as PIPA demonstrate, together with its meddling in Iraq's internal affairs and perceptions of provoking civil conflict, which are not without foundation.

Exploitation

In reporting the conflict in Iraq and debating its cause, the US involvement is often conveniently excised from the discussion by Western media outlets. It is no secret that the West, in particular European colonial powers, has a history of exploiting differences to further their own ambitions.

In a recent interview on Australian television, Middle East reporter Robert Fisk, said, "**...certainly, somebody at the moment is trying to provoke a civil war in Iraq. Someone wants a civil war. Some form of militias and death squads want a civil war. There never has been a civil war in Iraq. The real question I ask myself is: who are these people who are trying to provoke the civil war? Now the Americans will say it's Al Qaeda, it's the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do, the occupation authorities... We need to look at this story in a different light. That narrative that we're getting - that there are death squads and that the Iraqis are all going to kill each other, the idea that the whole society is going to commit mass suicide - is not possible, it's not logical. There is something else going on in Iraq.**"⁹

A RAND corporation report published in late 2004 titled "U.S. Strategy in the Muslim World After 9/11" explicitly advocates exploiting Sunni-Shia differences, as well as other differences, to achieve US interests in the region. The report was conducted on behalf of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air and Space Operations, US Air Force. It states that one of its primary objectives was to "**identify the key cleavages and fault lines among sectarian, ethnic, regional, and national lines and to assess how these cleavages generate challenges and opportunities for the United States.**"¹⁰ In this context, it refers to the fact that the Shia represent some 15% of the world's Muslim population and, it asserts, are politically excluded from all but Iran. As a result it suggests "**The United States may have an opportunity to align its policy with Shi'ite groups, who aspire to have more participation in government and greater freedoms of political and religious expression**". If successful, the report asserts that this "**may create a foundation for a stable U.S. position in the Middle East.**" The report also advocates utilising other fractures in the Muslim world such as the division between Arab and non-Arab Muslims and divisions based on tribe, ethnicity and clan. It is not inconceivable therefore that such differences be exploited where relevant to further US long term involvement in the Muslim world.

There is also the suggestion that trained assassination squads have been employed by the US to break the back of the insurgency in Iraq, starting from the unrest in Fallujah. Newsweek magazine, who first broke the story, referred to talk of a 'Salvador Option', US trained death-squads, the name being a reference to a scheme initiated under the Carter Administration and subsequently pursued by the Reagan Administration, that funded and supported 'nationalist' paramilitary forces who hunted down and assassinated rebel leaders and their supporters in El Salvador. According to Newsweek: **“one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shia militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions.”** ¹¹

Following the article in Newsweek, US Congressman Denis Kucinich wrote to Donald Rumsfeld saying: “According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon conservatives wanted to resurrect the Salvadoran program in Iraq because they believed that despite the incredible cost in human lives and human rights, it was successful in eradicating guerrillas” and that “about one year before the Newsweek report on the 'Salvador Option,' it was reported in the American Prospect magazine on January 1, 2004 that part of \$3 billion of the \$87 billion Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill to fund operations in Iraq, signed into law on November 6, 2003, was designated for the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. According to the Prospect article, experts predicted that creation of this paramilitary unit would **'lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists'**” and **“News reports over the past 10 months strongly suggest that the U.S. has trained and supported highly organized Iraqi commando brigades, and that some of those brigades have operated as death squads, abducting and assassinating thousands of Iraqis.”** ¹²

The story received no official confirmation but the episode demonstrated that Pentagon officials were willing to entertain options that involved exploiting the situation in Iraq through training and arming squads to strike at elements in Iraq to suit US interests and that many questions remain unanswered around US training and funding in Iraq.

However, not only is exploitation of such differences possible through funding and arming rival factions, but also through the language used to report the conflict to aggravate the sense of difference between the two communities. For example, although media commentators were keen to coin Saddam's rule as a Sunni minority targeting a Shia majority, whose persecution for which they were now making amends, that distinction was irrelevant to life under his tyranny. Saddam was a secular Baathist rather than a Sunni and his brutality targeted anyone who stood to threaten or undermine him, whether Sunni or Shia, or anything else. The death from torture of Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Al-Badri Al-Samaraai, the first high profile killing by Saddam (a Sunni), and Mohammed Baqr as-Sadr, a very prominent Shia marjah, are cases in point - but there are scores of Sunni and Shia tortured and killed whose names will never be known. The popular depiction of the conflict as a sectarian one acts to divert attention away from the seismic shift in Iraq and the region brought about by the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Although the popular story is one of mindless Shia and Sunni cyclically targeting each other, the truth is that the onset of the occupation has triggered violence principally targeted against the foreign occupation. However, the language has been repeatedly construed to suggest a Sunni-Shia conflict from the very start of the conflict.

Over simplifications

The tiresome reporting of the conflict in Sunni-Shia terms is increasingly acknowledged as an oversimplification of the fault lines in Iraq.

The latest report for the National Intelligence Estimates, the first published since 2004, with input from the CIA, Defence Intelligence Agency and sixteen other US spy agencies, concludes that the violence in Iraq is directed in at least four ways. It states: **“The Intelligence Community judges that the term 'civil war' does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq, which includes extensive Shia-on-Shia violence, al-Qa'ida and Sunni insurgent attacks on Coalition forces, and widespread criminally motivated violence.”** ¹³ Robert Gates, Donald Rumsfeld's successor, has also alluded to the same, **“I believe that there are essentially four wars going on in Iraq. One is Shia on Shia...the second is sectarian conflict...third is insurgency...and fourth is al-Qa'ida”**¹⁴. Clearly, Shia on Shia violence, criminal violence and insurgency attacks cannot be explained in Sunni-Shia terms; such an explanation is patently false.

The numerous battle lines that have emerged in Iraq point to an underlying issue that not only threatens further violence but also the long term stability of the country. The collapse of Iraq's political, administrative and security functions - in sum, the subsequent failure of Iraq as a functioning state - that followed the US invasion has underpinned much of the subsequent chaos and violence.

The US not only invaded Iraq and removed Saddam but also dismembered Iraq as a functioning state. In the vacuum that followed, the visible absence of basic state infrastructure such as the police and security personnel allowed, initially, small scale looting and other low level crime to go unpunished, and established an anarchy that escalated to serious violent crime including hostage taking for ransoms taking root. As the security situation deteriorated, communities began to seek security in alternative security structures, such that nearly every political faction and community within Iraq now employs its own militia.

With no credible or functioning political or judicial process in Iraq, a lawless situation prevails in which one can expect any type of human disagreement to escalate and spill over into violent conflict, driven by the most primitive needs for survival and security. Rather than the belief that the US invasion unleashed underlying sectarian and ethnic tensions, the truth is that it unleashed lawlessness and insecurity by destroying the institutions that supported law and order. Iraq is now a failed state in which anarchy prevails and a society that supports all levels of violence for a multitude of reasons, from petty to political.

The US Occupation must end for stability in Iraq

Even if we were to ignore all of the above and accept the narrative that the problem in Iraq is sectarianism, we must scrutinise the claim that the US and Britain must stay to resolve it. Can the US and UK with their credibility and reputation amongst Iraqis and in the wider Muslim world be in any position to solve the problem? All the polls of Iraqis point to the opposite. As occupiers accused of provoking violence as well as selectively supporting militias, the answer is a resolute no.

As the target of an ongoing and entrenched insurgency, one that is agnostic to ethnic or religious lines, US troops in Iraq are preoccupied with protecting themselves. This has incapacitated their ability to protect Iraqi lives, let alone act as brokers amongst conflicting factions. More US troops will likewise end

up only increasing the burden of protecting US troops against insurgency and find their capabilities will not extend far beyond the Green Zone.

This credibility problem doesn't simply arise from characterisations of George Bush's inability to grasp the complexity of the situation or his reputation as inept amongst non-American audiences. Iraq and the Muslim world have a long history of Western involvement all of which has been to the detriment of the region's inhabitants. It is impossible to act as an honest peace broker or to resolve a conflict if mistrusted by all parties, suspected of ulterior motives and accused of harbouring devious intentions. The US and the British stand accused of bringing chaos to Iraq, inadvertently controlling the country's key assets and planning to establish a long term and substantial military presence in Iraq. In the PIPA poll referred to previously, the majority of Iraqis polled (seven in ten) want US led forces to commit to withdraw within a year.

Conclusion

It is important to challenge the mythical battle lines that media outlets are eager to broadcast, who fail to understand the Muslim world and as a result wrongly distil the conflict for their audiences. Shia and Sunni have no difference in their opposition to the occupation or to the influence of Western secular liberalism in the Muslim world; both stand in opposition to the foreign infused chaos in Iraq. US involvement in Iraq has acted only to bring chaos and instability to the country and the region and is an ongoing impediment to progress.

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Chapter 3 Why Western states have lost the moral legitimacy to stay in the region

A constant theme that many Western commentators and politicians cite for invading and remaining in Iraq was the intention to advance freedom, liberty and democracy. White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer stated, **"The only interest the United States has in the region is furthering the cause of peace and stability, not in [Iraq's] ability to generate oil."** ¹

Of course the moral basis is a useful pretext to defend the occupation of Iraq because the alternative - that the war was predominantly fought for strategic and economic gain - is obviously too unpalatable for the ordinary person. However, the evidence of both how the Iraq war was incepted and how it has been executed should lead to a fundamental reappraisal of the insidious factors that shape modern Western foreign policy

Lies From the Outset

Tony Blair stated in 2003 **"...this is what our intelligence services are telling us... that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, we know they were there before, but the Iraqis are now trying to conceal those...So, we're faced with a situation where, I mean, here am I as Prime Minister, this is the evidence that's coming to me day in, day out, and I think it would just be wrong of us and irresponsible of me not to act on that."** ²

Yet Lord Butler the former cabinet secretary who conducted an inquiry into the pre-war intelligence in 2004, in a House of Lords debate accused Mr Blair of being **"disingenuous"** about his pre-war statements. He said **"The UK intelligence community told him on August 23, 2002, that 'we know little about Iraq's chemical and biological weapons work since late 1988'. The Prime Minister did not tell us that. He told Parliament only just over a month later that the picture painted by our intelligence services was extensive, detailed and authoritative. Those words could not have been justified by the material which the intelligence community provided to him"** ³

It is now well known that there were never any weapons of mass destruction and that a dossier was massaged to give an impression of a worse threat than there actually was. Furthermore, statements linking Iraq to the war on terror such as those made by George W Bush prior to the war have now been ridiculed; **"When I speak about the war on terror, I not only talk about al Qaeda, I talk about Iraq - - because, after all, Saddam Hussein has got weapons of mass destruction and he's used them. Saddam Hussein is used to deceiving the world and he continues to do so. Saddam Hussein has got ties to terrorist networks. Saddam Hussein is a danger, and that's why he will be disarmed -- one way or the other."** ⁴

Addicted to Oil?

It is not unduly sceptical or cynical, nor to be a conspiracy theorist, to examine the role of oil in the war calculation. Evidence to suggest that oil was an important factor was apparent from the initial invasion. James A. Paul from the Global Policy Forum stated **"US-UK forces invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003, seizing the major oilfields and refineries almost immediately. When coalition forces later entered Baghdad, they set a protective cordon around the Oil Ministry, while leaving all other institutions unguarded, allowing looting and burning of other government ministries, hospitals and cultural institutions."** ⁵

The fact that the Oil Ministry was the only building to receive protection from US forces at the time of the invasion and during the looting in 2003, whilst the looting of hospitals, schools and other government ministries was allowed to continue, could, no doubt have been justified by saying that the most valuable resource for the Iraqi masses had to be protected for them because it was “their” oil and would consequently be used to rebuild the nation. Yet, by late July 2005 a new draft of the constitution appeared and gone were the provisions for protecting Iraqi oil for the Iraqi people as stated by Herbert Docena in Foreign Policy in Focus: **"Also gone was the provision affirming the Iraqi people's collective ownership of Iraq's oil and other natural resources and obliging the state to protect and safeguard them. Instead, a new article lays the legal ground for selling off Iraq's oil."** ⁶

Even the much-lauded Baker-Hamilton report in 2006 stated very clearly that a new oil law was urgently needed for foreign investment. This is in effect a Production Service Agreement (PSA). In Iraq's case, PSAs are nothing more than a license to pilfer. PSAs are normally only used in countries where oil production costs are high and exploration prospects are risky; not in countries like Iraq with proven oil fields and low extraction costs. None of Iraq's oil-rich neighbours allows PSAs. The Bush Administration's relentless pressure on Iraq to pass an oil law that encourages PSAs is no more than the tactics of the schoolyard bully taking money from the weak and the vulnerable. Socrates famously said that **"All wars are fought for money"** ⁷ and nothing in this campaign suggests otherwise.

The Iraqi cabinet under severe pressure from the occupying force finally approved a new oil law in late February, which is set to give foreign oil companies the long-term contracts and a robust legal framework they have been asking for. Early indications are that the draft law specifies that up to two-thirds of Iraq's known reserves would be developed by multinationals, under contracts lasting for over 30 years. Under the production-sharing agreements provided for in the draft law, companies will not come under the jurisdiction of Iraqi courts in the event of a dispute, nor to the general auditor. According to the Observer newspaper, British Foreign Office minister Kim Howells has admitted that the British government has discussed the wording of the Iraqi law with Britain's oil giants. No wonder Hasan Jumah Awwad al-Asadi, leader of the country's oil workers' union warned in February: **'History will not forgive those who play recklessly with the wealth and destiny of a people.'**

Financial Mismanagement

The 'moral authority' of the occupying forces can perhaps be best summed up in the following quote from Paul Bremer's financial adviser, retired Admiral David Oliver, who in an interview with the BBC World Service, when asked what had happened to \$8.8bn of Iraqi money replied: **"I have no idea. I can't tell you whether or not the money went to the right things or didn't - nor do I actually think it's important."** When pressed about the disappearance of the money he quite adamantly stated **"Of their money. Billions of dollars of their money, yeah I understand. I'm saying what difference does it make?"** ⁸

Furthermore, the privatisation and exploitation that has occurred since the occupation has been grotesque. The campaigns director for the charity War on Want John Hilary commented: **"There are genuine worries that the Government is trying to privatise the Iraq conflict. The occupation of Iraq has allowed British mercenaries to reap huge profits. But the government has failed to enact laws to punish their human rights abuses, including firing on Iraqi civilians."** ⁹

There have been examples of companies that made huge profits from mercenary activity, under the euphemism of private security concerns. John Hilary mentioned security firms collectively making \$100bn a year mainly from Iraq and Afghanistan, with British firms among some of the top earners. In terms of private firms benefiting from reconstruction, The Guardian in December 2003 reported that, **"US army estimates that of the \$87bn (£50.2bn) earmarked this year for the broader Iraqi campaign, including central Asia and Afghanistan, one third of that, nearly \$30bn, will be spent on contracts to private companies."** ¹⁰

In 2003, Halliburton's Pentagon contracts increased from \$900 million to \$3.9 billion, a jump of almost 700%. The company has a further \$8 billion in contracts for Iraqi rebuilding and Pentagon logistics work in hand and that figure could hit \$18 billion if it exercises all of its options. Lockheed Martin (\$21.9 billion), Boeing (\$17.3 billion) and Northrop Grumman (\$16.6) billion split \$50 billion in Pentagon contracts between them in 2003. ¹¹

Sadistic Abuse and Torture by Occupying Forces

Perhaps the most vivid example of the violation of moral principles was the catastrophe at Abu Ghraib prison. These pictures have become the metaphor for the war and have damaged the West, which now faces a difficulty defining itself without first presenting a picture of what the West is not: an alien, uncivilised world where torture and abuse are commonplace. What the pictures from Abu Ghraib have done is to dent the purity of that reassuringly simple perception. What has heightened the discomfort is the irony that the torture in Abu Ghraib occurred as part of the war on terror- presented as a war between good and evil, yet the pictures were evil personified. In George Orwell's Animal Farm the pigs who revolted against their former master assumed the very same character: **'The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.'** ¹²

The Muslim world perceives that a deep rooted problem of the West is that it lacks a clear moral philosophy to underpin its stated ideals. Expediency, while effective in getting quick results, is a sorry basis for a US political order with visions of world leadership. The result of this hubris is a deep rooted perception amongst Muslims that the West is hypocritical in applying its ideals harshly on Muslims while acting contrary to those ideals itself. Michael Howard, former leader of the Conservative Party, aptly remarked that when the West tried to advocate 'Western values' it would, **"provoke hollow laughter in the Arab world."** ¹³

To make matters worse, what has happened in Abu Ghraib is part of what increasingly seems to have been a clear policy of abuse for the sake of expediency. On CNN's 'Late Edition' with Wolf Blitzer, Senator Joseph Lieberman, a member of the Armed Services Committee said, in relation to the interrogation of suspected terrorists for information that might save lives, **"I don't think there are many Americans who would say we shouldn't use whatever means are necessary to extract that information."** ¹⁴ In addition, White House counsel Alberto Gonzales wrote a memo saying he believed the war on terror, **"renders obsolete Geneva's [the Geneva Conventions'] strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions."** ¹⁵ The New Yorker article, by Seymour Hersh¹⁶, claimed that in the war against terrorism, Rumsfeld set up a highly secret programme to gather information from 'high-value' targets about al-Qaida through interrogations, capture and killings. The tactics of so-called 'torture lite' and sexual intimidation were introduced for their effectiveness after lessons learned from Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan's notorious Bagram

detention facility. The ICRC and Human Rights Watch, to name just two organisations, had been complaining for at least a year before the torture scandal became public and yet nothing was done about it. The fact that the US guards at Abu Ghraib seemed to be enjoying their work too much should take nothing away from the fact that they claim that they were acting under orders and their belief that softening up the prisoners was actually serving their country well by helping to provide vital intelligence in the war against terror. By selling their own humanity in Abu Ghraib and elsewhere they made a truly Faustian pact.

Violating the Same Values that they Seek to Spread

The argument that the war was to spread freedom does not hold. The relationship with Libya was painted as a diplomatic breakthrough for progress in the Middle East and was thought to have a direct correlation to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. While the situation might have suited both Britain and Libya's requirement for short term political gain, it has done little to further the kind of values that Mr Blair espouses constantly in his speeches. For instance the despotic Gaddafi regime is perhaps now more emboldened than it was before the relationship. Amnesty International reports that **“despite having set abolition of the death penalty as a goal for Libyan society, capital punishment remains prescribed, and continues to be carried out for a large number of offences including the peaceful exercise of political activities.”** ¹⁷

Another recent example of the relationship with unsavoury dictators is the Euro Fighter deal with Saudi Arabia. To drop the Serious Fraud Office investigation is evidence of corruption at the highest level and the selective application of the rule of law, running contrary to Tony Blair's frequent espousal of Western values to the Muslim world.

It is no wonder dictatorial regimes from Africa to Uzbekistan have welcomed the British government's decision in ending the SFO investigation. By putting interests in front of core values, the moral bankruptcy of the Iraq project is exposed. Tony Blair stated the following when defending the SFO decision. **“Our relationship with Saudi Arabia is vitally important for our country in terms of counter-terrorism, in terms of the broader Middle East, in terms of helping in respect of Israel and Palestine. That strategic interest comes first.”** ¹⁸

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Chapter 4 Iran and the Nuclear Myth

A crisis in the Middle East. A tyrannical Muslim country is accused of breaking international agreements regarding alleged weapons of mass destruction. An opposition in exile makes sensational claims. Intrusive international inspections are sought and denials are repeated. Like a bad old Western it has some new characters, but the plot is all too familiar. All we await is the British Government to issue a dossier and Hans Blix to emerge from retirement and the storyline will almost be complete. Yet ignoring the caricatures, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that sometime this year we may witness another violent conflict in the Persian Gulf; this time in Iran.

Despite the increasing entropy in Iraq and Afghanistan the issue of Iran has risen to the top of the agenda and speculation is now ubiquitous as to how the administration will attempt to curtail the nuclear ambitions of Tehran. It has become accepted wisdom in the West that coaxing Iran away from its nuclear fixation would help to promote regional peace and stability and bolster the integrity of international agreements. However few people in the Muslim world share these sentiments. People cite what they see as hypocritical double standards and an aggressive Western foreign policy doctrine, which seeks to maintain a de facto nuclear monopoly. This chapter therefore seeks to address some key issues surrounding the often one-sided debate about Iran and her nuclear ambitions. Specifically it aims to answer the following:

1. What obligations does the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) place on nations?
2. Is Iran's acquiring of nuclear weapons really a threat to international peace and stability, or a necessary step in her building a credible deterrent?
3. Must a country be a Western style liberal democracy in order to qualify for membership of the nuclear club?

Obligations under the NPT

Formally known as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the NPT was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. The treaty defined Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) as those who had manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to January 1st 1967. By this criterion the nuclear club was limited forever to the United States, UK, France, China and the Soviet Union (and its successor state Russia). By mere coincidence these same nations hold veto power as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Most countries in the world are signatories to the NPT, however there are four important exceptions: India, Pakistan, Israel and now North Korea, which recently withdrew from the treaty. While the initial duration of the treaty was 25 years, it was extended indefinitely in 1995¹. As a way of obtaining an indefinite extension, the NWS agreed to a package of non-binding principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the instigation of a five yearly review conference. In 2000, the first review set key goals and targets in its closing document, in the form of 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament². Most commentators believe however that despite the progress of the last thirty-five years, the NPT currently faces an unprecedented crisis. Thomas Graham, a former Special Representative of the (US) President for Arms Control, Non-proliferation and Disarmament says,

“If the possession of a nuclear arsenal retains its high political value to NPT nuclear-weapon states, particularly the United States, the ability to persuade states not to acquire these weapons may diminish. Add to that the withdrawal of North Korea from the NPT in 2003 and its likely

acquisition of at least several nuclear weapons; the increasingly suspect Iranian nuclear program; and the disclosure of an illegal secret network of nuclear technology supply headed by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the “father” of the Pakistani program; and many are saying that the NPT is broken and must be fixed or, worse, is irrelevant. Heightening these concerns about the NPT is the threat of international terrorism and the possibility that terrorists may somehow come into possession of a nuclear weapon and actually use it against a large city somewhere. The NPT regime appears fragile, and many fear for its long-term viability.” ³

Why Western Nations continue to flout the NPT

Iran's stated programme of enriching uranium, which it has agreed to suspend unilaterally, is specifically allowed under the provisions of the treaty, though of course a nuclear weapons programme would not be. Consequently while we hear a great deal from Western leaders on how various nations such as Iran are violating the provisions of the NPT through unproved covert means, very little is said about their own obligations under Article VI of the aforementioned treaty. Article VI states very clearly what these obligations are,

"Each of the Parties to the treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." ¹

Some Western commentators argue that the five recognised nuclear states are not contravening the NPT by not instigating unilateral nuclear disarmament. They claim that there is no moral equivalence between their actions and those of Iran. Other experts in the field consider that this view serves to dent the authority of the NPT. Richard Butler, the former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, said that Americans do not appreciate the level of resentment that WMD apartheid has built. **"My attempts to have Americans enter into discussions about double standards have been an abject failure - even with highly educated and engaged people,"** Mr Butler said. He went on to say that, **"I sometimes felt I was speaking to them in Martian, so deep is their inability to understand."** ⁴

While America and Britain cite Article 1 of the NPT continuously to condemn Iran, they pay lip service to their own commitments under Article VI. The clearest illustration of this double standard is the US government's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) ⁵. Drawn up by the Pentagon and sent to the US Congress on December 31st 2001 ⁵, the document does not even mention the term disarmament. The NPR clearly advocates a permanent doctrine in which the use of nuclear weapons is an inherent component; a clear violation of Article VI of the NPT. The NPR originally commissioned by Congress went way beyond the congressional mandate in the wake of the attacks of 9-11 by developing a strategic posture for the twenty-first century. The NPR establishes a new triad comprised of offensive strike systems (both nuclear and non-nuclear), defences (both active and passive) and a revitalised defence infrastructure to provide new capabilities in a timely fashion to meet emerging threats. The addition of more active defences means that the US is no longer as dependent on offensive strike forces to provide deterrence as it was during the Cold War. Following the Cold War, the NPR shifts planning for America's strategic forces from the threat-based approach of the Cold War to a capabilities-based approach; a broader array of capabilities are needed to dissuade states from undertaking political, military or technological courses of action that would threaten the security of the US and her allies. The NPR contains the following elements ⁵

1. A “new mix” of nuclear, non-nuclear and defensive capabilities “is required for the diverse set of potential adversaries and unexpected threats the United States may confront in the coming decades.” (p 7)
2. US military forces themselves, including nuclear forces will now be used to “dissuade adversaries from undertaking military programs or operations that could threaten US interests or those of allies and friends.” (p.9)
3. Nuclear capabilities also assure the US public that the United States will not be subject to coercion based on a false perception of US weakness among potential adversaries (p.12)
4. Nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack (for example deep underground bunkers or bio-weapon facilities). (p.12-13)
5. In setting requirements for nuclear strike capabilities, distinctions can be made among the contingencies for which the United States must be prepared. Contingencies can be categorised as immediate, potential or unexpected. North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya are among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential or unexpected contingencies. All have longstanding hostility towards the United States and its security partners. (p.16)
6. The United States will retain an inactive stockpile of nuclear weapons. (p. 32)
7. There are several nuclear weapons options that might provide important advantages for enhancing the nation's deterrence posture; possible options are modifications to existing weapons to provide additional yield flexibility in the stockpile and improved earth penetrating weapons (EPWs) to counter the use by potential adversaries of hardened and deeply buried facilities. (p. 34-35)
8. Today's nuclear arsenal continues to reflect its Cold War origin, characterised by moderate delivery accuracy, limited earth penetrator capability, high-yield warheads, silo and sea-based ballistic missiles with multiple independent re-entry vehicles, and limited retargeting capability. New capabilities must be devoted to defeat emerging threats such as hard and deeply buried targets (HDBT), to find and attack mobile, relocatable targets, to defeat chemical or biological agents and to improve accuracy and limit collateral damage. (p. 46)
9. The United States has not conducted nuclear tests since 1992 and supports the continued observance of the testing moratorium. While the United States is making every effort to maintain the stockpile without additional nuclear testing, this may not be possible for the indefinite future. (p. 55)

The NPR outlines the possible use of nuclear weapons not only against Russia and China, but also non-nuclear states such as Iran, Syria and Libya. The strategic aim of developing a new generation of low yield nuclear weapons that can be used to bomb underground facilities as a first use tactical weapon also pushes the nuclear envelope yet further. Retired Admiral Robert R Monroe stated that, **“to have a more effective deterrent against rogue states and terrorist groups, we need a new generation of nuclear weapons”** ⁶.

The UK has also not taken any significant steps to eliminate its nuclear weapons (currently around 200 operational warheads), despite its obligations, in fact both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have recently affirmed their support for a replacement for Trident once it reaches the end of its useful life. This commitment to a replacement for Trident inevitably clashes with Britain's claimed support of the NPT. Tony Blair claims that tackling weapons of mass destruction is one of the key objectives of British foreign policy, but it seems the UK's own nuclear arsenal is not part of that agenda.

Iranian nuclear weapons: a threat to global peace or a legitimate deterrent?

One doesn't have to be an expert in international relations to understand why Iran, labelled a member of the axis of evil, surrounded by US forces and an aggressive nuclear Israel, would want to join the WMD premier league. Contrary to the claims of many in the West, this would not be to intimidate or actually attack states in the region and beyond, but as a reasonable defence and deterrent against future US and Israeli aggression or nuclear blackmail. This is the same rationale that was used to justify NATO possession of nuclear weapons in the Cold War when faced with the threat of the Soviet Union, despite some, such as the UK Labour Party, who were then calling for Britain to unilaterally disarm. The irony is that those who today support multilateral disarmament as a nuclear doctrine want Iran to unilaterally disarm in the first instance, a policy they have comprehensively rejected for themselves.

While America's nuclear posture review contemplates using nuclear weapons against Iran as well as increasing the number of scenarios in which the use of nuclear weapons would be permitted, the US expects Iran not to pursue its own programme despite pre-emption being the core of the US's National Security Strategy published in 2002; is this really a viable proposition? At the end of the first Gulf War, India's Chief of Staff was asked what lessons he had learned from observing the conflict. His revealing response was, **"Don't fight the Americans without nuclear weapons."** ⁷

Is it only democracies that can be trusted with nuclear weapons?

In view of all this, what could or should prevent Iran from seeking to acquire a nuclear arsenal, something it can do legally by exiting the NPT with ninety days notice? It is a sovereign country, and as a sovereign country it should have the right to devote its resources to whatever it felt would most enhance its national interests. Iran surely should not have to 'meet a global test or require a permission slip' from the international community to defend her homeland. In Britain there is a constant debate on whether too much of this nation's power has been given to the EU, yet Britain has maintained its independent defence and foreign policy. It is contradictory for Western states like Britain, who guard their sovereignty so jealously to insist that Iran follow international dictates without complaint.

However the position towards countries like Iran is often justified with the argument that, whatever the faults and double standards involved in nuclear proliferation issues, there is no moral equivalence between tin pot third world dictatorships and first world democracies. It is claimed that in democracies the rule of law, political accountability, a healthy civil society and a free media provide the necessary checks and balances to prevent irrational policies. As George Bush and Tony Blair have repeatedly stated, **"democracies don't fight other democracies"** ⁸. However ignoring the fact that Israel attacked Lebanon last summer, many commentators echo this line; John Sheldon, of the Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, wrote the following in a letter to The Times,

"Moral equivalency also falls down when we compare the command and control arrangements of the NPT-recognised nuclear states to Iran's. In a country where foreign policymaking is akin to reading tea leaves, we all have good reason to fear a nuclear armed Iran." ⁹

Sheldon's doctrine is more or less along the lines that 'no democracy equals no nukes'; a reiteration of the standard argument that a full and functioning democracy should be a pre-condition for getting the bomb. However it is hard to see how these standards apply to the regimes in Beijing and Moscow; the first is not a full democracy and the other is barely functioning. While it is the case that Western

democracies do not fight wars against each other any more, they have and do engage in brutal military campaigns. Democracy wasn't able to prevent mass killing in Japan, Vietnam, Algeria and modern-day Fallujah, where the use of force was disproportionate and at times involved the use of WMD. With utilitarianism as their philosophical heartbeat, the value that democracies place on human life is often prone to fluctuation and commercial Benthamite calculations. This is clearly the case in Iraq where the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom can rattle off statistics about voter turnout numbers but have no clue about that little matter of how many Iraqi civilians have been killed since March 2003.

The principle of equality of influence forms the bedrock of democracy and yet it is not apparent in today's corporate-dominated Western states. Britain went to war in Iraq not at the behest of the majority of ordinary citizens, but due to a much smaller group who believed that the war was essential in bringing political change and a new paradigm to the Middle East. In that sense, Blair's policy was no more representative, legitimate or wise than the decisions taken by the leaders in Iran. The fact that Blair can be freely criticised by opposition politicians and the free press had little effect on how the Iraq policy was formulated or how it has been implemented on the ground. Accountability to an electorate at a future election is no safeguard against an incorrect or reckless decision being carried out now, as policies such as the Iraq invasion are often irreversible and may have security consequences far sooner than any future election. From Bernie Ecclestone to Lakshmi Mittal, or Lord Sainsbury to Rupert Murdoch, it is clear that the rich and powerful have far more say in the running of Britain than the general populace. Decision-making at the highest levels in London, Washington or Paris is therefore not significantly more representative than it is in Tehran.

It is manifestly true that open and intellectually vibrant societies should make better decisions than societies that are less open, due to the vigorous debate that can challenge erroneous opinions and expose the facts. This should lead us to conclude that shaping public opinion in Western societies, and hence winning a mandate for policy, requires a higher standard of proof than in closed, oppressive Iran. However, in a world where there has never been so much information available it is a paradox of globalisation that there is still such an unprecedented paucity of understanding and wisdom. The United States is considered as the world's most open society, yet there are still significant numbers of Americans who believe sincerely that Saddam Hussein was behind the events of 9-11 and many others who believe that WMDs were actually found in Iraq. However the intellectual malaise is not confined to ordinary citizenry.

It was also reported recently that even in the US Congress, most lawmakers do not bother to read the legislation that they are passing - neither do any of their officials or staff. Instead, more often than not, members of Congress rely on summaries prepared by the bill's authors or by special interest groups whose judgment they trust. Rep. Brian Baird, (D-Wash) writing in the Washington Post recently penned an Op-Ed titled "**We Need to Read the Bills.**"¹⁰ The op-ed at first glance reads like something emanating from Michael Moore, yet it systematically and in a serious fashion highlights a notable gap between what most people think is a painstaking and deliberative legislative process in Congress and what actually happens. Baird's op-ed was in response to a particularly embarrassing episode, in which an anonymous individual inserted a provision into a large spending bill that was passed, allowing congressional staff to examine any individual American's income tax returns. The lack of legislative deliberation and scrutiny is not unique to the United States, as the passing of section 23 the 2001 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act illustrated in the United Kingdom. A piece of legislation which allowed the detention without trial for foreign nationals and which now the House of Lords calls unlawful,

disproportionate, discriminatory and in fundamental breach of the European Convention on Human Rights was passed by both houses in less than two months in 2001.

The decision to invade Iraq and the vision of a new Middle East paradigm were therefore not the machinations of millions of people living in South Dakota, Alabama or Missouri or even the 535 elected members of Congress, but the machinations of a small coterie of neo-conservatives largely based in Washington DC. Thanks to their numerous corporate sponsors, a largely misinformed public and allies in the media, they enjoy unprecedented influence in the current administration. Their brand of right wing politics is coupled with a fervour; yet this small group frightens as many people as the Iranian leadership purportedly do. Ron Suskind noted the following about this group in the New York Times magazine,

“In the summer of 2002, after I had written an article in Esquire that the White House didn't like, about Bush's former communications director, Karen Hughes, I had a meeting with a senior adviser to Bush. He expressed the White House's displeasure, and then he told me something that at the time I didn't fully comprehend -- but which I now believe gets to the very heart of the Bush presidency. "The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community,' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.' I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'”¹¹

Is it any wonder after reading that approach to foreign policy that so many people are more concerned with Washington than Tehran.

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Chapter 5 Why more Troops won't solve the problem in Iraq

George W Bush's decision to send extra troops to Iraq has created much discussion and frustration at the perceived new direction of the Iraq policy. Characterised as the great “surge”, the deployment's mission is stability, through quelling the resistance and buying time for concrete political progress to be made in Iraq. Around 21,500¹ extra troops are to be deployed to Iraq with around 18,000¹ going to Baghdad alone over the next few months. The American administration is outwardly confident that this change of tack will bring about the desired results.

The goal behind this “augmentation” is something the Bush administration wishes it had achieved long ago, which is to stabilise the country, especially Baghdad. They hope that the daring and watertight counter insurgency measures the troops will employ will have an aura of permanency, and will drive out dissenting factions from troublesome areas. By showing that this can be achieved the administration will then have a platform to advance politically in Iraq, and also create a face-saving exit strategy while pointing to the largely stable streets of Baghdad.

Taking into account the recent discussions on troop numbers one would think that this is the first time that American troop levels have reached these dizzy heights. However, looking back we find that at the point of “Major Combat Operations in Iraq have Ended” in May 2003, US troop levels in Iraq were 146,300¹ and they reached a peak of 154,000¹ in November 2005. Prior to the increase about 132,000¹ US troops were present in Iraq, so with the surge the total number will eventually reach 153,500¹, i.e. roughly equivalent to the number in November 2005. The question arises then, if 154,000 troops could not stabilise Iraq in November 2005 why is there such optimism from the American administration that the same number can do so now?

The Bush administration's response to this is that the surge is part of a change in strategy, not just an increase in numbers. The chief proponent of this strategy change is Lt Gen David Petraeus, the much-vaunted commander of the 101st airborne division, whose previous stints in Iraq have endeared him to the president as a “winner of hearts and minds” and a “water walker”¹ who fully understands the many facets of counter insurgency or asymmetric warfare. After all he did write the book on it. The Counterinsurgency Field Manual, published in 2006, is now the standard US military guide for counterinsurgency warfighting. The manual has been lavishly praised as an outstanding blueprint for the successful implementation of a new kind of asymmetric warfare. However, on first reading, it is completely apparent that the manual places emphasis on how to get the job done right, not on how to do it speedily. This is in stark contrast to the goals of the Bush administration, which want clear positive results relatively quickly for the sake of political expediency on Capitol Hill. Ironically, one of the men who helped Petraeus draw up the manual expresses the dichotomy of the situation quite aptly, **“We finished the counterinsurgency manual just as Iraq has descended into civil war, and we really don't have a manual for that.”**¹

Many counter insurgency campaigns waged over the last two to three hundred years have been spectacular failures, regardless of who carried them out. Traditionally, insurgencies were seen as complimentary forces added to a more conventional fighting force, which would take the fight to the enemy after the insurgency had significantly battered away at it. This was clear in Vietnam, where the Viet Cong provided the resistance element, which the North Vietnamese army later followed. However, in recent conflicts there is often no regular fighting force waiting in the wings. What has happened in Iraq is that American forces have constantly been worn down by the use of small-scale attacks. These

attacks may not have engaged strategic targets, or caused major political upheaval in Iraq, but they have damaged, maybe irreversibly, the morale of the occupying forces. Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart ² writes about this in the second edition of his book *Strategy: The Indirect Approach* stating, “**a popular insurgency has an inherent advantage over any occupying force.**” He uses the French occupation of Spain in the Napoleonic era as an example of an insurgency that used tactics without significant strategic gains to demoralise the enemy, whereby the occupying force lost its will to fight on. In Iraq, the resistance seeks to weaken the morale of the occupying troops, and the citizens of the occupying nation, to such a degree that the deployed forces will be withdrawn. It is a simple strategy of repeated small-scale attacks that sap the will of the occupier to continue the fight.

In the Counterinsurgency Field manual, Petraeus devotes much attention to the British campaign in Malaya as a model of a successful counterinsurgency. The assumption is that the British campaign in Malaya in the 1950's is a shining example of a successful counterinsurgency campaign, key elements of which can be applied to campaigns in the 21st century.

A much-admired tactic in the British strategy in Malaya was the implementation of the so-called “**Briggs Plan**” ². Almost the entire Chinese population of 400,000 to 500,000 were forced from their homes and were resettled into some 400 heavily guarded barbed-wire villages. They were deprived of all civil rights, and they endured great physical and emotional abuse. One journalist described how the British police routinely resorted to brutality, “**every Chinese was a bandit or a potential bandit**” ³ the intention of the Briggs Plan was to placate and remove as an obstacle a sympathetic population for the resistance. This technique of “draining the swamp to catch the fish” is not new as a counterinsurgency technique. Also it must be mentioned here that this is not the first time the British campaign in Malaya has been held up as an example for American Generals to follow. The Americans used the Briggs Plan as the model for the “**Strategic Hamlet Program**” ⁴ in Vietnam, where villagers were herded into secure compounds. In order to aid this resettlement, farmers' fields were sprayed with chemical herbicides to destroy crops, and villages that did not move were systematically bombed to speed things along. This was all to remove the support base for the Viet Cong. Needless to say this did little to win hearts and minds in Vietnam.

Examining the counterinsurgency technique of draining the swamp in the Iraqi context makes obvious its limitations. During the Malaya conflict the resistance was centred on the MRLA, which was predominantly Chinese in makeup, so the section of population that may have had sympathies with the insurgents was quite clearly defined. If we look at the corresponding picture in Iraq there is no clearly identifiable group of the population, which can be resettled in this manner successfully. Notwithstanding the fact the very thought of resettling an equivalent share of the Iraqi population in today's political and security climate is perhaps something that not even Lt Gen Petraeus would contemplate too enthusiastically. The Malaya conflict involved up to a maximum of 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops against a peak of about 7-8,000 communist guerrillas that is 5 soldiers for every insurgent. Even when using the post-surge troop levels for Lt Gen Petraeus and the lowest estimate of insurgent numbers the maths clearly does not work out.

Also, the results of the Malaya campaign were not as conclusive as Lt Gen Petraeus may like to think. The resistance was not so much defeated militarily but conceded to a natural conclusion, the birth of an independent Malaya in 1957 under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. This removed the *raison d'être* of the MRLA resistance - fighting colonial rule. Had independence not been achieved then the resistance would undoubtedly have continued, as was evidenced by the fact that it actually grew stronger when negotiations failed between the MRLA and the British towards the end of the conflict.

Repressive laws, alienation of the indigenous population and forcible detention, not peace and progress, were the primary legacy of the British to Malaya. This legacy, and the oft-quoted “successful” counterinsurgency operations that helped to underwrite it, hardly seem like an appropriate model for restoring stability in today's Iraq.

To this day, the Vietnam War provides a powerful reminder of how limited American operational reach and military effectiveness is, especially against insurgencies. At its peak the U.S. had 536,1005 personnel in 1968 in Vietnam with a total of 58,1695 fatalities in the entire conflict. In Vietnam the U.S. strategy focused on exterminating insurgents at any costs. Hauntingly similar to what has been carried out in Iraq so far. The notion of hearts and minds was simply not on the chart in Vietnam. This strategy ultimately failed, but still continues in the mindset of the U.S. military, as Iraq ground commander General Thomas Metz stated bluntly, **"I don't think we will put much energy into trying the old saying, 'Win the hearts and minds.' I don't look at it as one of the metrics of success."** ⁶

The strange thing about the Vietnam conflict was that the United States and its ARVN allies won almost every single major tactical engagement with the North Vietnamese forces, inflicting heavy losses on the communists (1 million+ casualties), yet the cost of victory was so high in the American psyche (50,000+ American casualties) that public opinion came to see the whole campaign as a catastrophe and not worth the cost to its citizens. In exorcising the ghost of the Vietnam conflict Lt Gen Petraeus perceived that the British Campaign in Malaya, which was led by a force of 35,000, succeeded in having the measure of the resistance.

Perhaps a closer look at the 1979 Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan provides a useful comparison for the present crisis in Iraq. Both campaigns opened in a similar fashion, with the initial resistance being overcome quickly. If anything the Soviet invasion was far smoother because of their ties to the then incumbent Afghan regime. The Red Army troop numbers reached a peak of around 120,000 ⁷, but were as low as 50,000 ⁷ at the onset of the campaign. Like the US army in Iraq, the Red Army failed to stem the insurgency and suffered extensive losses, about 15,000 ⁷ fatalities. A remarkable fact is that although the numbers of fatalities in the Soviet campaign were only around a quarter of the American losses in Vietnam, the political ramifications were much greater.

The structure of the resistance in Afghanistan was fractured and consisted to a great extent of tribal and religious factions, as is the case in present day Iraq. Nevertheless, the Soviets could not capitalise on this to quell the insurgency, notwithstanding the fact that Soviet tactics displaced almost a third of the 17 million ⁸ population of Afghanistan. So perhaps a more important lesson to learn from the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan is that even having a dependable client regime, which has no coherent local opposition, is no guarantee of a successful occupation, a lesson to which the present occupying forces in Iraq should pay heed.

Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr mentions in his now famous article “How to win in Iraq” in Foreign Affairs September 2005, that **“Winning will require a new approach to counterinsurgency, one that focuses on providing security to Iraqis rather than hunting down insurgents. And it will take at least a decade.”** ⁹ This may sound charitable and designed to win the “hearts and mind” battle, yet it lacks credibility. For instance in order to implement “protecting or providing security to the inhabitants of Iraq” an overwhelming use of manpower is required as defined by the counterinsurgency manual. One soldier is needed for every 50 inhabitants, with a population the size of Baghdad (around 6 million) that equates to 120,000 troops just for Baghdad alone, staggering numbers that US forces cannot achieve.

After all the analysis and discussion surrounding counterinsurgency tactics it boils down to one basic truism, what has given the Iraqi resistance its moral legitimacy? It is true that there are a multitude of reasons from Arab Nationalist to Shia radicals flaming the fires of the resistance, but it is also true that all these different facets have as their basis - regardless of their religious or political affiliation - revulsion of any foreign occupying force,. This is quite neatly summed up in the writings of a Times correspondent during the British post- World War I occupation of Iraq. On the 23rd November 1919 he wrote, **“From the political point of view we are asking the Arab to exchange his pride and independence for a little Western civilisation.”** ¹¹

Has there and will there ever be a successful counterinsurgency when the wishes of the people are so clearly against the occupying force? Perhaps the answer lies in the definition of the word “occupying force”. Hearts and Minds may well be a convenient phrase from which to legitimise foreign occupation, but it does little to achieve the lofty goals that it prescribes in present day Iraq, or anywhere else for that matter.

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Chapter 6 The West's poor track record in Nation Building

The introduction of democracy has become axiomatic to discussion of how the developing world, and especially the Islamic world, will provide stability and prosperity for its suffering millions. For this reason it is obvious that the outcome of the invasion of Iraq will play a central role in discussion of world politics for a long time to come. This chapter will examine the reasoning and justification of those who have called for the USA and other Western powers to spread democracy around the globe, whether by peaceful or martial means, and attempt to analyse how strong these claims are.

The deterioration of Iraq, in all spheres of life, has been truly horrendous, with new depths seemingly plumbed each day. Thousands die each month, at the hands of different factions, and at the hands of the occupying forces. The complete absence of security and respect for the sanctity of life has convinced even the most ardent supporters of the invasion that life is worse for Iraqis now than it was under the brutal, ruthless regime of Saddam Hussein.

However, such commentators still insist that the responsibility for such carnage lies squarely on the shoulders of the murderers who bomb markets and kidnap civilians. The neo-conservatives who were the greatest supporters of the war, do not blame the ideals of the Bush administration for the situation in Iraq. Rather they call for the resolve needed to accomplish the mission, which is defeating radical Islam in Iraq. If they do fault the handling of the war, it is because they consider the administration has been too timid, not too radical.

For the neo-conservatives, the democratisation of Iraq was central to their call for war, while WMDs were to some extent a secondary issue, since they did not believe that Saddam's regime could challenge America militarily. They thought that the conflict would bring about an Iraq that could function as a beacon state for the rest of the Middle East, or that the mere overthrow of the Hussein regime would itself inspire uprisings against the corrupt despots of the region. As far as they were concerned, it went against American interests to continue to work with these regimes, as these states support the growth of 'Islamic terror'. Such support could be direct, in terms of funding, logistics and training, both military and ideological; or it could be through displacement, because as these regimes crush dissent and monopolise economic activity, the frustration that builds can only be expressed in anti-West, anti-American sentiment. Such views were expressed by Charles Krauthammer, a columnist for the Washington Post and one of the leading conservative commentators in the United States. In his essay entitled Democratic Realism he stated, **“There is not a single, remotely plausible, alternative strategy for attacking the monster behind 9/11. It's not Osama bin Laden; it is the cauldron of political oppression, religious intolerance, and social ruin in the Arab-Islamic world-oppression transmuted and deflected by regimes with no legitimacy into virulent, murderous anti-Americanism. It's not one man; it is a condition.”**¹

Furthermore, the war hawks claimed to have two exemplary models of stable democracies that emerged successfully from a prolonged period of U.S. occupation: Germany and Japan. According to Krauthammer, it is essential that the U.S. engage in serious efforts to introduce democratic values and government when, as today in the Islamic world, her security depends on such action. Previously this had been the case elsewhere, **“Establishing civilized, decent, non-belligerent, pro-Western polities in Afghanistan and Iraq and ultimately their key neighbours would, like the flipping of Germany and Japan in the 1940s, change the strategic balance in the fight against Arab-Islamic radicalism.”**²

The neo-conservative believed and still believe that the US has to take robust measures to ensure the spread of her values around the globe, and not only because those values, democracy, liberty, free markets and so on, are worth exporting to the world. They also argue that producing stable, responsible states through the application of such values is in America's national interests. As expressed by Krauthammer, **“The spread of democracy is not just an end but a means, an indispensable means for securing American interests. The reason is simple. Democracies are inherently more friendly to the United States, less belligerent to their neighbors, and generally more inclined to peace.”** ³

The situation in Iraq has proved considerably worse than even the most pessimistic forecasters expected. The neo-conservatives have turned their fire, when necessary, on the administration of the peace following the initial conflict with the Saddam regime. They point to the insufficient troop levels and the decision to disband the Iraqi army as key factors that have led to many of the major setbacks, such as the escalation of the insurgency and the slow pace of reconstruction. However the idea that by overcoming procedural and tactical errors the US can achieve the same outcome in Iraq as it did in Japan and Germany ignores the absence of key factors that had a significant impact on the success of democratic institutions and processes in those two countries.

The success of Japan and Germany in moving on from militaristic, racist ideologies to prosperous, liberal democracies appears to lie in a number of factors that are absent in many societies around the world, and thus it is unlikely that the same results could be produced as easily elsewhere.

Firstly, the militaristic ideologies that led Germany and Japan to war and conquest were based on the idea that each nation was superior to all others in the world. The vision of a thousand-year Reich had captured the imagination of a large section of the German public, which motivated hundreds of thousands of them to work towards the aims of Nazism. The people were thus confident of continuing victories against their adversaries. In Japan, militarism had fused with Shinto Buddhism to give the people confidence in victory under their divine Emperor. Part of that belief structure was that Japan had divine protection from invasion and defeat. Thus when these countries suffered humiliating and comprehensive defeat at the hands of 'inferior' nations, this proved to the vast majority of people in each society the falsehood of those ideologies. Thus in the post-war period, while people may have felt they were being treated unfairly under the occupation, no-one was prepared to fight to restore the previous system. Since militarist nationalism had only brought failure, there was also a genuine desire for new ideas about how to run society.

In Iraq, or other countries that the U.S. may have in its sights, the regime is oppressive, relying on fear to keep the people down. While the people may be happy to get rid of such tyrannies, it doesn't necessarily mean that they will question their own values or consider that the fall of the regime represents the failure of their own ideas. Thus it should not be expected that the people would automatically turn to their occupier for instruction on how to build society's institutions anew. With the case of Iraq, Baathism as a political philosophy may have had the support at one time of Arab nationalists, but under Saddam, the sole purpose of the party and its thoughts was the preservation of Saddam and his clan. So there is no reason to expect that the millions of people, in Iraq and elsewhere in the region, who reject what they see as decadent Western values that clash with Islam, would rush to embrace American or Western values because of the fall of the regime.

Secondly, since both Germany and Japan had developed some democratic institutions and political organisations prior to the war, there was a precedent to refer back to in the post-war period. Many of the

politicians involved in the post-war period in both countries had been active in the twenties and thirties, so they could return their countries to prior modes of political activity, rather than introducing democracy from first principles. In Iraq, there isn't a body of experienced politicians or parties who can be drawn upon for the same purpose, nor are there prior modes of democratic government to be referred back to for guidance.

Thirdly, Germany and Japan were able to move to democracy from militarist nationalism because it was a change in the mechanisms of achieving prosperity for the nation, not in the goal itself. Both Germany and Japan were mono-ethnic societies who defined their political objectives on the basis of achieving the dominance of their people over all others. For both states, in order to maintain great-power status they needed access to the raw materials and labour of neighbouring lands. Their military leaderships were not an isolated group who had no connection to their wider society, but rather they carried out their policies, however criminal, in the name of their people. Proficiency in all fields was sought to fulfil this higher aim of national destiny. After defeat, it was clear to the elite in both countries that alliance with America was the best way to rebuild their societies and regain their vitality, though this time economic and not military power was the key. This was especially so because of the start of the Cold War and the threat of Communism. Thus the political class moved en masse from one set of values and institutions to another, but the sense of purpose and societal cohesion returned in the aftermath of war.

For multi-ethnic societies such as Iraq, which are the norm outside Europe, democracy doesn't necessarily offer the same continuity. While in mono-ethnic societies, it is clear whose interests the state must serve, in states with more than one ethnic group, things are more ambiguous. In mono-ethnic democracies, politicians campaign on the basis of their abilities and policies, and they are chosen largely for these reasons. Since the electorate and the political class share a common identity, it is usually not necessary for this to feature in electioneering. However in multi-ethnic societies, the interests of the ethnic group are not always identical with the interests of the state or society as whole, so ethnic rivalry is given a role in national life through the ballot box.

For politicians in a multi-ethnic society, playing on identity politics is an expedient way to garner electoral support. By claiming that he can guarantee the interests of his ethnic group against others who are considered adversaries, the politician guarantees himself a relatively loyal support base. By appealing to real or imagined grievances held by one group against another, political parties who claim to represent their people can maintain support even when their policies do not match their manifestos. It is not surprising therefore that political activity in US-occupied Iraq quickly took on a sectarian character as political actors have attempted to show that they can represent the best interests of their particular community.

One of the ironies of the Bush presidency is the way that his foreign policy approach in power has developed in complete opposition to his stated positions as a presidential candidate. During his campaign against Gore in 2000, Bush and his campaign team claimed that he would take a fresh approach to relations with the rest of the world, often leaning towards isolationism. In particular, they charged that the USA had wasted valuable political capital during the Clinton years with nation building ventures that had secured few results.

Considering the record that nation-building has achieved over the past years, it is not surprising that there was widespread scepticism about further American attempts to reshape another nation's political identity.

Following the Bosnian War, that country's governmental institutions were completely redesigned under the supervision of the international community. Even now, more than ten years after the end of the conflict, the UN High representative still retains wide powers to dismiss officials in government. At the same time, deep divisions remain in the society, which have not been healed by the artificial process of institution building. Kosovo also remains a failing state, eight years after the intervention most industry remains closed. According to the World Bank report in 2006 economic growth has weakened (from 21.2% in 2000 to -1.5% in 2005) in line with declining donor resources. The industrial sector of the economy remains weak and the electric power supply remains unreliable, acting as a key constraint. Unemployment continues to be pervasive, and is particularly problematic among young people. Poverty is widespread, but shallow. Approximately 37 percent of the population live in poverty (below €1.42 per day); and 15 percent in extreme poverty (€0.93 per day). However, most of the poor are close to the thresholds that classify them as such. In fact the only material success appears to be the establishment from scratch of the largest overseas US military base since Vietnam which is conveniently located close to a number of vital oil pipelines and energy corridors.

East Timor, which has received almost unanimous support from the international institutions since Indonesian forces withdrew in 1999, has been scarred by major political disturbance. In 2006, longstanding tensions between Timorese from different regions on the island erupted into violence between different factions of the police and the armed forces. At the height of the disturbances armed gangs roamed the streets of the capital and thousands of civilians fled the country. The Prime Minister was forced to resign after evidences emerged of death squads operating under his orders.

Closer to home, America's record of invading the troubled nation of Haiti to install or remove governments should have indicated the difficulties awaiting the US in Iraq. After all, Haiti has a population of 8 million, one-third of Iraq's (prior to the 2003 invasion). In addition, Haiti has had long exposure to the Western values that supposedly enabled Germany and Japan to rise from the ashes of World War II as reformed nations. Nevertheless, 3 years after the last US intervention in 2004, the country still suffers from political violence and a lack of security.

Looking at these recent cases, all comparatively small countries, it is incredible that anyone would dare dream that even modest results could be achieved in Iraq, let alone remaking the country into a model for the entire Muslim world.

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Chapter 7 An Islamic Alternative - Separating Fact From Myth

An Islamic Way Forward - Separating Fact from Myth

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7.0 Introduction

For decades Iraq was under a Western backed Baathist dictatorship. Since the invasion in 2003 an army of occupation has asserted that the US will decide the future of Iraq: the form of government which has been chosen for that future is in accordance with the political philosophy of the people of the US. Others may argue and spin that millions have voted in an election. However, if one applies the electoral standard that the United States used towards the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon, or that have been used in Northern Ireland whilst paramilitary organisations operate, the only conclusion could be that the occupier will set the political parameters of the election, and hence the government. Hence there can be no doubt that the government of Iraq is tainted as a proxy government and not one that reflects the political vision of the people.

But the political philosophy of the people of Iraq, their historical experience and current aspirations cannot be disregarded. Iraq will sadly remain in turmoil, like her neighbours, until its people are allowed to truly take their destiny in their own hands - and Islam is the natural ideology to define this destiny because Islam is the root political philosophy of the people of Iraq and has been so for thirteen centuries.

For those who have not sensed the overwhelming desire in the Arab and Muslim world for an Islamic system there is good empirical evidence for this in the public domain. In the 2004 Zogby poll those surveyed in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE said the clergy should play a greater role in their political systems and as many as 47% of Egyptians supported a greater role for the clergy ¹. Were Islam to gain ascendancy, what would the future Iraq look like?

Our proposal for an alternative form of government, one that the people of Iraq must be allowed to

choose for themselves, has a historical precedent of success. This is the Khilafah ruling system - known more commonly in the West as the Caliphate. It was formally abolished after thirteen hundred years of rule in 1924, following the British occupation of modern day Turkey and the installation by coup of a secular movement into the heart of Turkish politics. The result was that Turkey, where the capital of the Khilafah latterly had resided, along with the whole of the Middle East suffered lasting disintegration and instability with attendant ethnic and sectarian violence. The brooding discontent caused by unnatural and despotic governments, including some that are formally considered democratic, are the subject of daily report.

The Caliphate is associated in the minds of the world's one billion Muslims with positive things. It laid the model principles for governance under the Prophet and his first four successors. It is associated with justice, a flourishing culture and civilisation, technological advancement and societal harmony. It is the hope and aspiration of the majority and the political mission of Islamic organisations in the decades since its demise - the overwhelming majority of which were political and non-violent in the methodology. Despite this, it has become an increasingly maligned term since the onset of Bush and Blair's war on terror. Bush said, when referring to people that share the ideology of Al Qaeda **"They hope to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call caliphate, where all would be ruled according to their hateful ideology."** ² Tony Blair has also weighed in, when after the 7/7 attacks on London he said that Britain must confront - **"an evil ideology"**, defining this as **"their barbaric ideas."** These included: **"the establishment of effectively Taliban States and Shari'ah law in the Arab world en route to one Caliphate of all Muslim nations."** ³

Thanks to blanket statements such as these, in the United States the Caliphate has been the topic of much ill-informed debate. In the UK, a speech by Conservative leader, David Cameron, has gone even further by stating that **"those who seek a sharia state...are, in many ways, the mirror image of the BNP."** ⁴ The statement was not exclusive to the idea, proposed by no one, that Britain should be the site of the Islamic state. Rather, it is consistent with Blair's judgement that to call for such a state is beyond the pale of political discourse in the modern world.

So the question remains, how can there be such a gap between the neo-conservative and liberal imperialist views expressed in Britain and the United States of America, and the views of one billion Muslims who inherently see the Caliphate as a means of goodness and stability? Some may answer this by arguing that an independent government in the Islamic world - not beholden to corporate interests, political influence, personal incentives and a financial dependency - would end the economic and political exploitation of that part of the world. Hence, those who favour the continued colonisation of the Muslim world would malign such a Caliphate and oppose its re-establishment.

Whilst this may be true, it is not the whole picture. There is a profound ignorance about the type of government that a Caliphate would be and numerous misconceptions about those things that are discussed. Our aim is to inform by a brief overview of this distinct system of government and to redress some of the misinformation. The description is not exhaustive, but an introduction.

7.1 Khilafah

Iraq's multi-ethnic population comprising many sects lived generally in peace under the Khilafah ruling system for thirteen hundred years until the British invasion of 1917. From that time until now, Iraq has suffered the results of colonial and neo-colonial rule and interference. The return of the Khilafah is the

only viable alternative for remoulding Iraq's now fragmented peoples back into a coherent society. The details of this system of ruling that follow are taken from "The Ruling System of Islam" ⁵ by Taqiuddin an-Nabhani but are consistent with other famous works written on the subject of Islamic governance, for example by Al Mawardi. ⁶

7.1.1 An overview of the Khilafah system of ruling

The Khilafah is a political system from the ideology of Islam that enshrines: the rule of law, representative government, accountability by the people through an independent judiciary and the principle of representative consultation. It is government built upon a concept of citizenship regardless of ethnicity, gender or creed and is totally opposed to the oppression of any religious or ethnic grouping.

The highest executive post is the post of Khalifah who appoints ministers without portfolio to assist in ruling and governors (*Walīs*) for the various regions. The legislative sources are the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. While differences of interpretation of these sources can occur, as with any legislative sources, the particular interpretation adopted by the Khalifah must be justified before an independent judiciary, which has the power to remove him from his post should he flagrantly deviate from the boundaries of credible legal interpretation (*ijtihad*) or the terms of his contract with the citizens of the state. The Khalifah is appointed by the people and hereditary rule by supposed divine right is forbidden. Consultation is one of the pillars of ruling and is best served by the establishment of representative councils composed of men and women from all religions and ethnic groupings within the state.

While this system differs from Western liberal democracy in a number of ways, there are some surface similarities. It must however be realised that though Muslims in Iraq [and elsewhere] sometimes use the term democracy it is the Islamic concept of the rule of law, the right of the people to appoint their own leader and open accountable government that they aspire to. This has hitherto been denied them by the Western backed quisling regimes that have taken away all their political rights and whipped their backs. As an example the darker side of Egypt's façade of democracy is commented upon by Mona Makram-Ebeid, a prominent Egyptian politician and human-rights activist **"They [the government] always manage to get a hold of Islamist leaders and put them in jail, then release them when the elections are over."** Egypt's President Mubarak has won a majority in each of the four elections held since his appointment twenty five years ago - what helped him was that nobody dared to stand against him and if they did have the audacity to stand, as Ayman Nour did in the most recent elections, then they were jailed on trumped up charges.

The Middle East's experience of democracy to date is of a deceptive formality of elections, which serve only to rubber stamp dictatorial rule. Failure in the West, to realise this has led to frustration in the Muslim world, but perhaps explains why the Muslims of Iraq appear ungrateful to the West for removing Saddam Hussain and offering in his place Western style liberal secular democracy.

7.1.1.1 The rule of law

The arbitrary rule by the whim of self-appointed presidents and kings that has plagued Iraq and the whole Middle East is anathema to the principle of the rule of law within Islam's political system. The application of the law is in the hands of an independent judiciary that has a special section called the 'court of unjust acts' whose task is to investigate impropriety on the part of members of the executive against the people. As for individual wrongdoing - the Khalifah is subject to the same laws and penalties as the rest of the

people because he is not considered a sovereign over his subjects. The same cannot be said for the Queen of England - she is, constitutionally speaking, the law itself making it a logical impossibility for her to be subject and sovereign at the same time. Former US President Bill Clinton's tenure should remind everyone of the events that demonstrate how some men can be above the law in Western government - with or without a monarchy. We prefer that all the people, including the Khalifah, be subject to the law.

7.1.1.2 Representative government

The finer application of the concept of representation in government is a matter of considerable debate in Western political philosophy. The first political use of the concept is commonly referred back to Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century as referring to: **“one (legal) person acting on behalf of a group of people, as in the first and still the most influential discussion in political theory.”**⁷ The conceptual basis of the Khalifah is also considered one of representation, though the logic by which the concept arises is different to the path taken by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes' representative derives authority from an assumed human state of nature to become an absolute sovereign who predates law. The Khalifah is considered a representative of the people in the sense of implementing pre-existing societal rules that were addressed to the society as a collective whole but require embodiment in an authority tasked with implementation of these rules on behalf of the society.

The Khalifah is appointed to his position according to the will of the people. The process is called 'baya' [literally voluntary pledge] in Arabic and can assume many styles including voting by ticking a card, text messaging or email. The consultative (shura) assembly is the arm of state that will oversee the process whenever the position of Khalifah becomes vacant.

7.1.1.3 Accountable open government

Linked closely to the concept that the Khalifah is a representative of the people in adopting and implementing divine rules over the society is the concept of accountability. It is a right of the people to question or criticise the decisions of the ruler because he is a servant of the people ruling on their behalf. The widely quoted saying of the first Khalif Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq with which he began his rule encapsulates his perception of ruling as securing the rights of all people without distinction: *“by Allah, he that is weakest among you shall be in my sight the strongest, until I have vindicated for him his rights; but him that is strongest will I treat as the weakest, until he complies.”* The Khilafah system does not permit corporate interests to hijack government at the expense of the interests of the people that it is meant to serve.

7.1.1.4 Government looking after people's affairs

A fundamental role of government, the Khilafah, in Islam is to look after citizen's affairs, and solve their problems from an Islamic basis. Policy is care, and economic policy is the care for economic affairs based upon the study of the needs of individuals.

There are many aspects of this 'caring role' that Nabhani argued should be enshrined in a constitution. For example:

- 1 Every individual must have all his basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) guaranteed completely by the State.
- 2 Education at a primary and secondary level should be provided by the State for boys and girls,

men and women and for all citizens.

- 3 The State should provide free health care for all, not prevent the use of private medical services.
- 4 The State is responsible for looking after the security of all of its citizens, against any domestic or foreign threat.
- 5 The State should use public property on behalf of any of the citizens' interests. Resources such as oil, gas and other vital natural resources cannot be privatised due to the legal injunction from the saying of the Prophet: 'People are partners in three: water, green pastures and fire' (here 'fire' is understood to cover all fuel types).

7.2 The myths surrounding the Islamic Khilafah

The war on terror has transcended hunting out those responsible for the September 11th attacks on innocent civilians in America to a call for the elimination of all forms of political ruling that do not conform to the measure of secular liberal democracy. There is only one source for such divergence from the accepted dogma: Islam. To that end, many objections to the idea of Muslims ruling by a system from their own political philosophy have been raised in the West.

7.2.1 Islamic rule is not theocratic

Former US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spelt out his fears of a clerical theocracy in Iraq: **“how would we feel about an Iranian-type government with a few clerics running everything in the country, the answer is: That isn't going to happen.”** ⁸ A clerical priesthood running around giving “divine” injunctions in all aspects of human activity is not a feature of the Khilafah.

The Khilafah is a human state run by fallible and accountable human beings who implement laws, derived from what Muslims believe to be divine legislative sources, over societal interactions. Areas covered include; taxation, company and contract law, inheritance, marriage and divorce, how to treat prisoners of war, the rights of citizens, the duties of government and its structure and the penal code. The Khalifah himself is a citizen appointed to execute the role of leader by the other citizens and not a leader chosen by God.

Unlike the priestly authority of Europe's Dark Ages, Islam does not restrict knowledge to the religious realm. The Khilafah never tried to insist that people believe the world to be flat, and would never ban, as President Bush has done, stem-cell research, with its revolutionary potential for human healing.

We cannot help but wonder, however, about America's own theocratic aspirations if people like Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin say publicly that he sees the war on terrorism as a clash between Judeo-Christian values and Satan. Appearing in dress uniform before a religious group, Boykin said Islamic extremists hate the United States **"because we're a Christian nation, because our foundation and our roots are Judeo-Christians. ... And the enemy is a guy named Satan."** ⁹

7.2.2 Women in the Islamic state

Under the Khilafah system women had the franchise and participated in the political process from the very beginning of Islamic rule. Not only were women able to vote, but they were able to own property - the wife of the prophet Muhammed, Khadija, was in fact a wealthy businesswoman. The right of women to own property is a relatively recent concept in the West. Education is open to men and women and surely this is a necessity rather than a luxury. Women are, however, limited from holding the ruling posts

of Khalifah, Wazir or Wali. The limitation is not explained in terms of superiority or inferiority. In this respect the system does limit the political posts a woman can hold - both in practice and principle. That this limitation seems to so preoccupy those who attack the Islamic system is laughable. Other posts of seniority such as the judges, military, managerial, running universities, teaching in schools and civil service are open to women and men upon merit without distinction. Liberal secular democracies may theoretically offer equal access to these areas but in practice the results are so poor, they do not give any license to offer lectures on the woman's role in society.

It is understood that in this respect our concept is at variance with the doctrine of freedom as an absolute concept. It may be some comfort to reflect, however, that reality itself is at variance with freedom as an absolute concept. Whilst in principle the President of the US can be a woman there has never been a woman President. Even if one could emerge soon it is despite the fact that in a statistical sense there should be a fifty per cent chance at any given time.

The restrictions upon freedom that do exist in any society where people are free from the terror and insecurity that would result due to their neighbour's unrestrained enjoyment of their freedom, do not pose for us the paradoxical conundrum that they pose for societies that have abstracted the concept in absolute utopian terms.

Furthermore, everyone in the Khilafah - man or woman, Muslim or non Muslim, adult or child - is always afforded justice and rights, whereas responsibilities can differ in specific circumstances, depending on the nature of the role. Ruling is considered a responsibility and the absolute right of no man or woman.

Finally, we do believe in the right of women to walk the streets without the fear of rape, murder and abduction. We do believe in the right of women to receive equal pay for doing the same work as their male colleagues. We do believe in the right of women to gain employment and receive promotion, based upon merit, without having to show off their bodies and endure sexual innuendo and worse. We do believe that women should not be considered the property of any and every man who wishes to compare her to, and give her a score based upon, the images in promotional advertising and men's magazines. We do believe that men and women gain honour by their work, and that women have a special privilege in being the mothers of every nation and for that they deserve special regard.

7.2.3 The Islamic state will heal ethnic and sectarian tensions

It is claimed that Islamic rule cannot work because it does not gather competing ethnicities and sects and place them into a shared platform or parliament from which to rule. There are fears of sectarianism in Iraq based upon a Sunni-Shia divide and it is claimed that Iraqis need a secular government to safeguard them against a struggle for domination by one group over the other. This assumption is the most dangerous assumption in the case of Iraq. It is exactly the competing petty interests of different groupings that will sow the seeds of civil strife for years, if not decades, to come. What is needed in Iraq is a unifying force, and a potent one at that.

Western style democracy is doomed to failure in Iraq because of the ethnic and sectarian tensions that have been greatly exacerbated by Saddam Hussein's repressive policies and now subsequently by the policy of the occupying forces. These tensions are too great for a system based upon majority rule when people adhere so strongly to sectarian or racial agendas. In this respect, minorities, who have experienced the harshest repression, have very great fears.

That being said, the majority of the people of Iraq believe in Islam, and Islam alone has proven the only force capable of unifying Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen's and others. It was Kurdish fighters under the command of the Kurdish leader, Saladin, who played the pivotal role in aiding Arabs in Palestine and Syria against the European armies of the crusades. Those Arabs were Muslims, Christians and Jews and the banner they fought under was the banner of the Islamic Khilafah whose justice they believed in regardless of religious affiliation. T. W. Arnold wrote about inter-ethnic relations and the treatment of non-Muslims who lived under the Ottoman Khilafah: **"though the Greeks were numerically superior to the Turks in all the European provinces of the empire, the religious toleration thus granted them, and the protection of life and property they enjoyed, soon reconciled them to prefer the domination of the Sultan to that of any Christian power."** ¹⁰

Not only is the Khilafah a state for all ethnicities, but also its leadership is not restricted to Arab, Kurd, Turk or other. In fact, the last period of Islamic rule was the Ottoman period, during which Turks ruled Arabs, and there was no disparity in the concept of Turks ruling Arabs until the ill-fated Western concept of the nation state was brought into the imagination of Arabs, Turks and others during the nineteenth century. The objective of ethnic propaganda was to sow seeds of destruction into the Islamic state that was then an obstacle to further colonisation by the European powers in three continents. Sadly, the destructive notion of racial superiority combined with political weakness during the last decades of the Ottoman Khilafah were effective in precipitating the final demise of the once powerful Islamic state. The people of the Middle East are still suffering from the effects of this pernicious racialism and no Western style governments in the region have proved a match to contain it.

If the people of Iraq were to choose the Khilafah form of government it could readily heal the wounds of ethnic hurt because it is blind to the racial distinctions of ethnicity and it could deal with sectarian differences because it is by nature tolerant to faith of whichever brand - even to faith in no faith. The bond that binds the people of the Khilafah is the bond of citizenship - the other option is years of turmoil and strife akin to those bloody years of strife in Northern Ireland or Lebanon.

Sadly, one cannot help but suspect that all this is well known to those who prosecuted the war on Iraq. Certainly, as we see now that Iraq's people are becoming distracted into fighting each other, politically and militarily, it is all the more easy for US diplomats at the American embassy to get on with their shady business of manipulating the growing tragedy which is Iraq for the sake of other interests.

7.2.4 The Khilafah system dates back to the 7th century so how could it work today?

There are four reasons for an argument such as this.

First, is the incorrect analogy between things, such as computers, which become outdated by better models, and thoughts that are simply judged to be correct or not regardless of their age. Nothing is detracted from the idea of democracy by observing that it can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, while computers are considered ancient, and obsolete, within the space of a few years. From this point of view it is irrelevant how old the ruling system is, and if modernity were a criterion by itself then communism, which came after both Islam and secular liberal democracy, would have been worthy of universal acceptance.

Second, the seventh century is not considered a very enlightened era in European history. It was a time known as the dark ages. Nevertheless, it came after the far more advanced Roman civilisation fell,

ushering in a period of regression that lasted centuries. The dark ages of Europe were in fact running parallel to a golden age for other nations - most notably the adherents of Islam. The association of the seventh century with dark and backward times is, therefore, a purely regional matter.

Third, it is argued that laws may be good for the time they are made but that the reality changes with time making them irrelevant. Islam's legislation dealt with human relationships between people, which are largely fixed in nature. What does change are the tangible means of attaining their interests. When two parties enter into a contract, the legislation of the seventh century is not made redundant by the internet of the twenty first century because the legislation is not tied to the specific instance of the relationship in question. Where uncertainty does arrive, then Islam has established the principle of juristic reasoning (ijtihad) that enables the jurist to use his mind to derive new law based upon analogy and linkage of new realities such as human cloning for example, where existent concepts such as lineage and marriage are considered.

Fourth, the values and social mores of Western society are in a state of constant flux and what seems appropriate now was scandalous fifty years ago. Social mores and values within Islamic society are taken from the same source as the political philosophy of the Khilafah. This means that there is no disparity between morality and law to necessitate changing the law - both are tied to the same anchor.

7.2.5 Islam forbids Ruling by Police State

There is a huge assumption, given that the dictatorships in the Muslim world that seek to portray themselves as Islamic are authoritarian police states, that an Islamic state would be the same. This is utterly false. It is neither borne out in history nor in Islamic thought.

Nabhani argued in his book that the Khilafah would be violating Islamic principles if the governing authority became a 'force', citing that the example of regimes in Arab and Islamic countries exemplified how this would lead to harm and poor management of society, He added that the **"concepts and criteria [of society] would become the concepts and criteria of coercion, oppression and dominance, and not the concepts and criteria of looking after people's affairs. Ruling would then turn into an oppressive rule that knows nothing but terror, dominance, oppression, coercion and blood shedding."**

He cites the clear Islamic prohibitions on torture, abusive behaviour and spying amongst other things - as applied to the police, armed forces and security services as well as the general population - as a protection from such forceful rule. These, he argued should be constitutionally enshrined, as well as the Islamic injunction that every individual is innocent until proven guilty. This latter point would have to be manifest not only by the state, but by independent agencies within the state such as the media, unlike in the West where the media regularly report cases inferring guilt (though not openly stating it) before a verdict.

Similarly, he explained the clear Islamic injunctions to account the ruling authority in this same context, which maintains a healthy public debate and scrutiny about the executive.

7.3 The real solution for Iraq

The only solution capable of bringing peace and prosperity to Iraq is government by a representative of

its people, on behalf of its people, that is built upon the beliefs and political philosophy of its people. The only serious historical precedent is government based upon the Khilafah model that had ruled Iraq for thirteen centuries. President Bush did speak of another alternative for Iraq when he said that he was **"bringing back a 5,000-year-old civilisation"** ¹¹ - it seems that he would prefer to resurrect the bones of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar than consider the possibility of the people of Iraq opting for Islam.

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