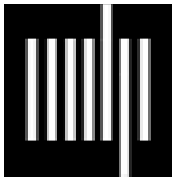

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Constructing a Democratic Iraq

Challenges and Opportunities

Daniel Byman

Now that the United States and its allies have toppled Saddam Hussein's regime, the knotty question of Iraq's future government is rising to the fore. Although the Bush administration, nongovernmental organization officials, and exiled Iraqis disagree on interim measures for governing Iraq, there is a surprising consensus on the eventual nature of Iraq's government: Almost all parties believe that Iraq must have a democratic, and highly federal, government.[1] President George W. Bush declared that "all Iraqis must have a voice in the new government, and all citizens must have their rights protected."[2] Zalmay Khalilzad, who was the special presidential envoy and ambassador at large for Free Iraqis, called for "a broad-based representative and democratic government" in a post-Saddam Iraq.[3]

Indeed the Bush administration's vision for democracy extends beyond Iraq. Richard Perle, an influential strategist with close ties to the administration,

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1. The Bush administration plans for U.S. military and civilian officials to initially make the important decisions regarding Iraq in consultation with, but not under the direction of, leading Iraqis. During the interim period, a U.S. military commander would work with a civilian administrator. Nongovernmental organizations such as the International Crisis Group have criticized such an approach, calling for a greater UN role in the interim. Many Iraqis demand that authority be passed over to them almost immediately. For a representative review of the options, see Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "U.S. to Appoint Council in Iraq," *Washington Post,* June 2, 2003, p. A1; International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," March 25, 2003, pp. 21–32; Charles Recknagel, "Iraq: Exiled Opposition Demands Key Post-Hussein Role," http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/02/27022003173401.asp; "Bush OKs 'Interim Authority' for Post-Saddam Iraq," *New York Times,* March 15, 2003, p. A1; and David E. Sanger, "White House Approves a Plan to Administer a Postwar Iraq," *New York Times,* March 15, 2003, p. A11. See also Center for Strategic and International Studies, "A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq," Washington, D.C., January 2003, pp. 18–20.
2. George W. Bush, remarks before the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., February 27, 2003, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.org.
3. Zalmay Khalilzad, "The Future of Iraq Policy," remarks at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., October 5, 2002, available at http://www.wadinet.de.

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contends that it is plausible that "Saddam's replacement by a decent Iraqi regime would open the way to a far more stable and peaceful region." Former Director of Central Intelligence James Woolsey similarly claims, "This could be a golden opportunity to begin to change the face of the Arab world."[4]

Yet skeptics abound. Alina Romanowski, a senior U.S. government civilian official working on the Middle East, contends that "Iraq presents as unpromising a breeding ground for democracy as any in the world."[5] Chris Sanders, a Middle East specialist, notes that "there isn't a society in Iraq to turn into a democracy."[6] Skeptics argue that Iraq has too many fractures, and too few important preconditions such as a strong civil society, for democracy to blossom.

Despite these risks, the temptation to pursue democracy once Iraq has stabilized is considerable. If Iraq successfully democratized, it would be more likely to pursue peace with its neighbors and to avoid repression at home. Iraq's people would receive a reprieve from a brutal dictatorship, more than a decade of sanctions, and repeated wars.[7] Perhaps the best argument for a democratic Iraq is that the alternatives are worse. Widespread repression, civil war, massive refugee flows, or other calamities might occur if Iraq does not gain a stable and decent government.[8]

A democratic Iraq may be ideal, but is it possible? This question touches on some of the most fundamental issues in political science, such as the necessary conditions for democracy,[9] the impact of deep divisions among communities,[10]

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4. Quoted in James Fallows, "The Fifty-first State? The Inevitable Aftermath of Victory in Iraq," *Atlantic Monthly*, November 2002, pp. 53–64. Perle is quoted on p. 55, and Woolsey on p. 64.
5. Quoted in Barbara Slavin, "Iraq a Harsh Climate to Try to Grow Democracy," *USA Today*, November 12, 2002, p. A20.
6. Quoted in Fallows, "The Fifty-first State?" p. 64.
7. For an insightful work into Iraq's dictatorship, see Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For a balanced review of the impact of sanctions, see Amatzia Baram, "The Effects of Iraqi Sanctions: Statistical Pitfalls and Responsibility," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 194–223. For a series of U.S. government human rights overviews, see http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/iraq/humanrights.htm.
8. For my arguments on why the United States should support democracy in Iraq and a more detailed description of the type of government that should be backed, see Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Democracy in Iraq?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 119–136.
9. See, for instance, Robert J. Barro, "Determinants of Democracy," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 107, No. 6, Pt. 2 (December 1999), pp. 158–183; Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Seymour Martin Lipset, Kyoung-Ryung Seong, and John Charles Torres, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy," *International Social Science Journal*, No. 45 (May 1993), pp. 155–175.
10. There is a vast and growing literature on the political impact of communal divisions. Leading works include Robert Bates, "Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics in

and the contributions that outsiders can make in imposing a political order that locals have failed to create for themselves.[11]

This article focuses on the feasibility of installing a democratic government in Iraq now that Saddam is gone and suggests ways to increase the chances that pluralism will take root. It seeks to answer the following questions: What problems are inherent to democratization in divided societies such as Iraq? What are the strengths and limits of a federal solution to Iraq's problems? What risks are likely during Iraq's transition to democracy? What challenges specific to Iraq will further complicate matters? How can (and should) the United States and other intervening powers influence democratization? These concerns—though of immediate policy interest—are in essence social science problems, and existing scholarship can shed considerable light on them.

This article concludes that, if Iraq does not receive massive help from the United States and other powers, a range of problems will make democracy hard to establish. Challenges that may arise include a weak government that engenders security fears, a lack of a cohesive identity to unify Iraq's different communities, a risk of meddling from Iran and Turkey, bellicose elites who pursue adventurism abroad and whip up tension at home, a poorly organized political leadership, and a lack of a history of democracy.

There is, however, a silver lining in this cloud. Most of the barriers to democracy in a post-Saddam Iraq are related directly or indirectly to security, and the United States and other occupying powers can provide this security if they are willing to deploy considerable forces to Iraq for years. In particular, intervening powers can help quell internal unrest and deter adventurism from neighboring powers. The intervening powers can also influence Iraqi elites and make them less bellicose, particularly if they are willing to commit to a sustained military presence in the country.[12] Thus, democratizing Iraq is feasible, if difficult, as long as intervening powers are willing to stay the course.

Contemporary Africa," in Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola, eds., *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985), pp. 457–484; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 4 (Spring 1996), pp. 136–175; John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War,'" *International Security,* Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp. 42–70; and Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

11. For a review of intervention issues, see Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization,* Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 335–364; and Michael E. Brown, ed., *The International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

12. For a description of the tasks that occupying military forces will face in Iraq, see Daniel Byman, "Building the New Iraq: The Role of Intervening Forces," *Survival,* Vol. 45, No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 1–16.

In making these arguments, this article explores social science theory to identify concerns that a democratizing Iraq would face. In the first section, the potential advantages of democracy in general are briefly reviewed. Problems with majority-rule systems in divided societies such as Iraq's are described in the second section. The third section reviews a common solution to majority-rule problems—a high degree of federalism—and notes its weaknesses. The fourth section then identifies another set of problems common to regimes in transition to democracy. The fifth section assesses the extent to which the problems of divided societies, federalism, and transitional democracies would apply to Iraq and identifies additional problems specific to Iraq that would further complicate democratization. The following section then examines the factors that the United States or other occupying powers can influence, and notes the ones that will remain. Because a strong and lasting U.S. role is necessary for democratization to succeed in Iraq, the article concludes by discussing the demands that a sustained commitment would place on the United States.

The Virtues of Democracy

President Bush and other U.S. policymakers' preference for democracy over other forms of government is well founded—as long as democracy can be successfully established.[13] If Iraq's mutually hostile ethnic communities or contending interest groups gain a voice in government, they may be able to resolve their differences peacefully through the political system rather than resort to war. Many Québecois, Catalans, and Scots (among others) seek their own states, a greater share of government resources, more autonomy, and assurances that their distinct cultures will flourish. In many ways, their ambitions mirror those of Iraq's Kurds and Shi'a Muslims. Yet in general, violence by ethnic groups in Western democracies is extremely rare despite the often-contentious nature of political debates in these countries. As a result, many scholars are optimistic about democracy's potential for keeping the peace among different ethnic groups. Sammy Smooha and Theodore Hanf typify this sentiment when they argue, "Liberal democracy fosters civility, a common domain of values, institutions, and identity, at the expense of communalism. It equates nationalism with citizenship and the state with civil society. All

13. The classic work on democracy and its limits remains Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989). See also Daniel Byman, *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflict* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 125–153.

citizens, irrespective of their national or ethnic origin, are considered equal nationals."[14]

Democratic systems, when successfully institutionalized, give ethnic group members the opportunity to select the political elite, attain economic success, or capture status positions. Political participation thus defuses ethnic violence driven by a hope for status—a key source of ethnic conflict. Individuals and groups can use the electoral system to gain official support and respect for their communal institutions, such as language and holidays, by voting in sympathetic candidates and withholding support from chauvinists.[15]

Democracy can be particularly effective at satisfying the desires of aspiring elites, another potential source of conflict.[16] When people use the ballot box rather than the gun to gain power, would-be leaders are better off seeking power through peaceful mobilization than through war. Moreover, participatory systems create jobs and status positions for local elites.

If the electoral system is properly designed, it can also foster ethnic moderation, leaving firebrands isolated and out of power.[17] Working with elected officials from rival communities can help a group maintain an electoral coalition, pass contentious legislation, or protect group prerogatives. Successful cooperation in turn aids future relations, demonstrating that groups can work together and that they share common interests.[18]

Democracy's greatest advantage for the United States, however, may be in

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14. Sammy Smooha and Theodore Hanf, "The Diverse Modes of Conflict-Regulation in Deeply Divided Societies," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 33, Nos. 1–2 (January 1992), p. 33.

15. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 167–176; and Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 7–10.

16. Michael Brown notes, "Elite-level forces are often the proximate causes of internal conflicts." See "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict," in Brown, *The International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict*, p. 583.

17. For the best description of this process, see Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 395–440; Donald L. Horowitz, "Making Moderation Pay," in Joseph V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (New York: Lexington, 1991), pp. 451–476; and Richard Stubbs, "Malaysia: Avoiding Ethnic Strife in Deeply Divided Societies," in ibid., p. 287. The example these authors draw on is Malaysia, which has successfully overcome tension between Malays, ethnic Chinese, and ethnic Indians. Malaysia uses an integrative model that relies on electoral incentives to foster cooperation.

18. Participation, under rarer circumstances, can also satisfy the ambitions of hegemonic groups. When one group controls the state—or can easily control the state if its privileged position is threatened—a chief hegemonic ambition is secured. Thus, when a democratic system ensures one group's control over decisionmaking, that group can reduce conflict stemming from hegemonic concerns. In these circumstances, a less democratic state can prove more effective in keeping the peace than a fairer system, which would allow any group to have unimpeded access to political power.

making the Persian Gulf region more pacific. Since the British withdrawal from the gulf more than thirty years ago, war and revolution have plagued the region. Mature democracies are far less likely to fight each other, suggesting that peace may be more likely in a democratic future.[19] It is important to note, however, that Iran's democracy is limited at best, while the gulf states remain in essence family-run autocracies, despite recent moves toward power sharing.[20] Thus the finding that democracies seldom war with each other may be of limited relevance to the gulf today, though the installation of a democracy in Iraq might be a positive first step toward a broader, regionwide peace.

The Dangers of Democracy in Divided Societies

Although democracy has lots of theoretical advantages, many do not accrue in societies divided along racial, ethnic, or religious lines. The biggest problem is the numerically larger group's use of elections and other legitimate democratic forms to ensure its dominance—a tyranny of the majority. Liberal democracy relies on the expectation of an ever-changing majority to avoid such tyranny. Different coalitions of individuals, unified temporarily on the basis of shared political goals, economic interest, social concerns, and other factors, unite and divide, ensuring that all voices are eventually heard—or at least have the potential to be heard. Majority rule works when the majority changes from election to election, as it does frequently in the United States and other Western democracies. In divided societies, however, voting blocs are more rigid, and majorities are less likely to change. The largest ethnic group may never lose power, because ethnic group members often vote as a bloc. Liberal democracy, in such circumstances, produces illiberal results.[21]

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19. The democratic peace argument was most definitively laid out in Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 80, No. 4 (September 1986), pp. 1151–1169. See also Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Princples for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

20. In the last decade, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, and Qatar have made significant advances in power sharing; other states, including Saudi Arabia, have taken small steps. Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble, "Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization," in Brynen, Korany, and Noble, eds., *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World,* Vol. 1: *Theoretical Perspectives* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 3–28. See also Geneive Abdo, "Iran's Generation of Outsiders," *Washington Quarterly,* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Autumn 2001), pp. 163–171.

21. For more on this concept, see Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracies," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 76, No. 6 (November/December 1997), pp. 22–43; and Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semiauthoritarianism* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

This problem plagued democracy even before its modern commencement. As James Madison famously wrote in 1787, "Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority."[22] For Madison, the solution to this problem was to be found in the cross-cutting identities of American citizens and the expansion of the electorate so that it would be harder for a single common interest to unite people to the exclusion of other concerns. Yet in divided societies, such cross-cutting identities are, by definition, lacking. In essence, identities are "hardened" by past conflicts and tragedies. Individuals identify primarily along one line such as ethnicity, making it difficult for other identities such as class or narrow political interests to create political alliances that cross groups.[23]

Democratic elections can exacerbate this process. As Donald Horowitz notes: "By appealing to electorates in ethnic terms, by making ethnic demands on government, and by bolstering the influence of ethnically chauvinist elements within each group, parties that begin by merely mirroring ethnic divisions help to deepen and extend them."[24] Similarly, Jack Snyder contends that a common mistake is for outsiders to back elections before other institutions and norms essential for the functioning of democracy are established.[25]

Not surprisingly, minorities often fight democratization because they fear that majority rule would install in power a permanent elected majority that would never allow the minority a voice in decisionmaking. In the former Soviet republic of Georgia, democratization produced war by causing minority fears of majority tyranny. The minority Abkhaz feared that their distinct cultures would be overrun by a power-monopolizing Georgian majority. Hence they opted for violent resistance when Georgian nationalists appeared poised to win elections. The experiences of Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland teach the

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22. James Madison, "The Same Subject Continued: The Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection," November 23, 1787, *The Federalist Papers,* as found on http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fed_10.html.
23. See Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," p. 137; and Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), pp. 23–36.
24. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* p. 291.
25. Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and National Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 316–320.

same lesson. In Sri Lanka the majority Sinhalese long monopolized power at the expense of the minority Tamils, provoking the bloody Tiger rebellion. In Northern Ireland the Protestant majority monopolized power at the expense of the Catholic minority from 1922 to 1969, fostering violent Catholic nationalism.[26] All these countries were "democratic" in that elections were held, but illiberal in that certain groups were effectively shut out of power.

Iraq too is at risk for a tyranny of the majority. Iraq's Shi'a community, which comprises more than 60 percent of the total population, might use free elections to transform its current exclusion from power to one of total dominance. Currently, Shi'a opposition leaders call for democracy, but it is not clear whether they are implicitly demanding Shi'a control over Iraq.[27] Sunni Arabs, and perhaps Iraqi Kurds, might oppose a majority rule–based system in fear of this dominance.

The Promise and Risks of a Federal Alternative

Concerned Iraqis and U.S. policymakers are well aware of the dangers of democracy in divided societies. To reduce the danger, almost all the plans introduced or supported so far by the United States for Iraq's eventual government stress a large degree of decentralization, the participation of all of Iraq's communities in decisionmaking, and binding guarantees of local community rights.[28] Iraqi opposition leaders who were active in exile explicitly advocate a federal form of democracy, where considerable power is given to political units below the level of the central government.[29] Many Iraqi Kurds and Arabs

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26. Patrick Brogan, *The Fighting Never Stopped: A Comprehensive Guide to World Conflicts since 1945* (New York: Vintage, 1990), pp. 227–234.
27. Some Shi'a groups clearly grasp the need for minority rights as part of democracy. For a review of one Shi'a group's position, see http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/iraq/shia02a.htm. How well this concept is endorsed throughout the community is unclear. See International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," p. 24.
28. "A 'Federal System'" with Leaders Chosen by the People," Reuters, April 16, 2003; Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, "How to Build a Democratic Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (May/June 2003), pp. 37–39; Center for Strategic and International Studies, "A Wiser Peace," p. 20; and Khalilzad, "The Future of Iraq Policy." A Council on Foreign Relations working group called for creating a federal system that did not emphasize ethnicity as a framework for Iraq's future. See Council on Foreign Relations, "Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq" (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003), p. 3. The council's recommendation, however, explicitly rejects basing power sharing on ethnicity or sect and instead calls for it to be designed according to a federal system, where region is the basis of political organization.
29. Vicki Silverman, "Scholar Says Iraq Could Be 'A Force for Democracy' in the Middle East," October 8, 2002, http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/iraq/text/1008kanan.htm. Kanan Makiya, a leading Iraqi intellectual, noted that this federal form could be based on ethnicity or territory.

inside Iraq also are discussing a federal form of democracy to replace Saddam's regime.[30] Even Iraqi Shi'as, who might benefit from a majority-rule system, have called for adopting a federal structure that allows Shi'as the right to administer their own religious shrines, publish their own religious texts, celebrate Shi'a holidays, and otherwise freely practice their religion.[31]

In theory, federalism and other arrangements that guarantee minority rights reduce incentives for conflict by giving minority groups and their leaders more power with respect to fundamental concerns such as education, taxation, and law and order.[32] Community leaders gain important positions in the local government, thus satisfying their desire for power and influence.[33] At the national level, all important communities have a voice, and smaller communities usually have disproportionate representation.[34] In addition, firm guarantees of

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The U.S. Department of State has explored plans that use Iraq's eighteen provinces as the basis for a federal system. Charles Recknagel, "Iraq: Opposition Groups Want a Federal State But Have Yet to Agree on Form," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 5, 2002, available at http://www.rferl.org. The U.S-backed Iraqi opposition has called for Iraq's future government to have "full representation of all groups and communities within the population, including Sunnis, Shias, Kurds, Christians and all other minorities." See the statement on the Iraqi National Congress website at http://www.inc.org.uk/English/inc/inc.htm.

30. See International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," p. 23; and Michael Rubin, "What Do Iraqis Think About Life after Hussein?" *New York Times,* August 11, 2002, p. A15. Barham Salih, the prime minister of the Kurdish region under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has openly endorsed a federal solution. Interview with Salih on *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,* March 12, 2003. For a review of Kurdish attitudes toward federalism and autonomy, see International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict."

31. Recknagel, "Iraq: Opposition Groups Want a Federal State."

32. Federalism is traditionally defined as a political system where each level has one or more areas of supreme jurisdiction. See Steve L. Solnick, "Federalism and State-building," in Andrew Reynolds, ed., *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 174. For a review of federalism, see William H. Riker, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964); and James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in the Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Federal systems share similarities with so-called consociational democracies. Arend Lijphart has identified four relevant characteristics of consociational democracy: a grand coalition of the political leadership of all significant segments of society; a mutual veto that requires agreement among leaders; proportional representation of major groups in decisionmaking bodies and the civil service; and a high degree of subnational autonomy. Inherent to a consociational system is a weak central government. Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 22–29; and Arend Lijphart, "Majority Rule in Theory and Practice: The Tenacity of a Flawed Paradigm," *International Social Science Journal,* No. 129 (August 1991), pp. 482–493. Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Switzerland all are examples of consociational successes. Failures of consociationalism include Cyprus (from 1960 to 1963, ending in civil war), Lebanon, and Nigeria, which ended in military rule.

33. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* p. 622.

34. John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Introduction: The Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic

minority rights over language and religion can defuse one of the biggest causes of ethnic conflict: a majority that seeks to impose its will on other groups.[35]

Yet federalism is not a panacea. Even if many Iraqis are satisfied, inevitably some leaders and perhaps larger communities will not be content. Grievances may include too few government positions for a particular community, too low a level of autonomy, a lack of control over local oil wealth, or other concerns.

These complaints can be found in many societies, but they are particularly alarming for federal systems. A federal system faces difficulty in ending communal security concerns or cracking down on bellicose elites because the central government is too weak. At its heart, federalism strengthens local communities at the expense of the national government. When local groups control local government, enjoy their own revenues, and otherwise have their own institutions, they are better able to organize—a key factor that determines their ability to resist the central government should conflict develop.[36] Federal democracy is especially fragile when outside powers menace a country. The federal regime will probably lack a strong army, as this would be a threat to local communities.[37]

Lebanon's experience is instructive. In 1943 Lebanese elites worked with French colonial authorities to broker the so-called National Pact, which divided power among Lebanon's major communities.[38] Under the country's National Pact government, the Lebanese army would not and could not control the country because Christian leaders kept it weak, fearing that a strong army could be used by Muslims (who quickly became Lebanon's majority) to dominate the country. When the Palestinians first came to Lebanon in force after being expelled from Jordan, Lebanese leaders could not agree to commit

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Conflict," in McGarry and O'Leary, eds., *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 33.

35. Byman, *Keeping the Peace*, pp. 29–34. Many of the issues that would be decided between groups at a national level are, with a high degree of federalism, decided within a group at the local level—thus defusing interethnic conflict. See Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 618–619.

36. Byman, *Keeping the Peace*, p. 39.

37. See Abraham Ashkenasi, "Socio-Ethnic Conflict and Paramilitary Organization in the Near East," in Peter H. Merkl, ed., *Political Violence and Terror: Motifs and Motivations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 314.

38. The agreement ensured that the republic's president would be a Maronite Christian, its prime minister a Sunni Muslim, its speaker of parliament a Shi'a Muslim, and his deputy a Greek Orthodox Christian. Of the seventy-seven parliamentary seats, forty-two were to be allocated to Christians. Thus the Christians, particularly the Maronites, were assured a dominant role. Of the thirty-five Muslim seats, Sunnis received sixteen; Shi'as fourteen; and the Druze five.

the army in the south for fear of polarization.[39] Because the state offered no hope of stopping the Palestinians, the Maronites and the Shi'as took the situation into their own hands.[40] The constant Israeli attacks further undermined the central government, reducing its credibility as the protector of order in the eyes of Lebanon's communities.[41] The government was not able to stop communal leaders from organizing militias or otherwise spreading their hostile messages. The high level of communal autonomy granted for more mundane issues prevented the government from stopping communal leaders from organizing or from spreading their messages.

Power-sharing systems that allow local groups to have their own schools and religious institutions also magnify the salience of communal identity, making it harder to create cross-cutting ties or build a shared identity.[42] As Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis note, power sharing can reify contending groups, encouraging political mobilization along ethnic lines.[43] In Lebanon political agreements that divided power among communal groups suffered from this weakness, discouraging any sentiment of being "Lebanese" and elevating the salience of ethnic identity. As Augustus Richard Norton notes, in contemporary Lebanon "one's life chances are shaped by the accident of being born a Sunni Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Maronite Christian, Shiite Muslim

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39. Robert Fiske, *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (London: Andrew Deutsch, 1990), p. 26.

40. Security concerns played a major, if not leading, role in causing the Lebanese civil war. The presence of Palestinians mobilized and alarmed all parties, creating a new security threat that made compromise difficult and, as time went on, polarized Lebanese politics. The Maronites in particular saw the Palestinians as intruders and foreigners; they were concerned that the armed Palestinians would support the Lebanese Muslims and strip the Christians of their power. The Lebanese government was aware of the problem. Quoted in Don Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1990), p. 29. The Palestinian problem worsened after "Black September" in 1970, when the Palestinian Liberation Organization shifted its base from Jordan to Lebanon. See Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970–1985* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985).

41. Before 1967 the Palestinian presence in Lebanon numbered around 180,000; by 1969 it had risen to 235,000; and by 1982 the number had leaped to 375,000. Between 1968 and 1974, Israeli violations of Lebanese territory averaged 1.4 incidents a day. By 1974 Israel was regularly patrolling Lebanon and bombing PLO camps, with the government of Lebanon powerless to stop it. Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival,* pp. 61–67; and Dilip Hiro, *Lebanon: Fire and Embers* (New York: St. Martin's, 1992), p. 18.

42. For different perspectives on nation building, see Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

43. Jack L. Snyder and Robert Jervis, "Civil War and the Security Dilemma," in Walter and Snyder, *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention,* p. 19.

or belonging to one of the 15 recognized confessions that comprise Lebanese society."[44]

Secessionism also becomes more feasible with federalism. The growth of local identities diminishes the sense of national unity, reducing the bonds between the regions and the metropole. In addition, because the state is weak, groups find it easier to take up arms successfully.[45]

A federal system may prove particularly unstable if it is based on ethnicity rather than on region. After independence in 1960, Nigeria had three administrative units, each of which was dominated by a communal group (the Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba). Each group used its control over regional institutions in its battle for control over the central government. This led to the underrepresentation of other minorities and contributed to the 1967–70 Biafra war. The subsequent constitution, however, divided the main groups among nineteen states, fostering competition within ethnic communities and leading to alliances across groups. As a result, mutually antagonistic blocs did not form.[46] In Iraq, however, the Kurds see federalism as a means to ensure their communal rights and want Kurdish-populated areas to be under Kurdish control.[47]

When the system is based explicitly on ethnicity, disputes over borders between communities also may contribute to internal strife. In theory, it is straightforward to say that local communities should have the right to a high degree of autonomy. But where does the community begin? In northeast India, for example, disputes over demarcation lines have led to ethnic tension and at times violence.[48] Such questions are particularly painful in divided societies, where past conflicts or forced expulsions have led to land transfers that are not accepted by all communities.

The Perils of Transitions

Iraq's potential problems go beyond federalism to the process of democratization itself. Democratization can foster social peace, but unrest, strife,

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44. Augustus Richard Norton, "Lebanon's Malaise," *Survival,* Vol. 42, No. 2 (Winter 2000–2001), p. 35.
45. Federal systems that offer other incentives to secessionist leaders stand a better chance of survival. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* p. 628.
46. Horowitz, "Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers," pp. 122–124.
47. International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: What's Next for the Kurds?" *Middle East Report,* March 19, 2003, p. 15.
48. James Manor, "Making Federalism Work," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (July 1998), pp. 21–35.

and even outright war often occur during attempted transitions to democracy. Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have found a disturbing correlation between democratizing states and international war. They contend that democratizing states are approximately twice as likely as established democracies or autocracies to engage in war.[49] This correlation is a caution for those who enthuse that the establishment of democracy would lead to a more peaceful region.

In addition to an increased risk of international strife, social scientists have found a strong correlation between the transition to democracy and instability.[50] Several recent outbreaks of violence, including those in Azerbaijan-Armenia, Georgia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, stemmed in part from attempts at democratization in ethnically divided societies. Thus the transition from an interim government to a truly democratic one may be susceptible to increased instability.

One reason that democratization unleashes conflict is that elites can easily manipulate democratic freedoms, particularly when democratic institutions are weak.[51] As Madison noted, "Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires."[52] Chauvinists in almost every country, if freed from authoritarian constraints, exploit the media and the right to assemble freely, using these opportunities to mobilize their followers. Indeed, a necessary condition for elite competition—the political space to express views and mobilize followers—is created by democratization.[53]

Communal leaders also often oppose the institutionalization of a democratic system. Because the very act of participation can imply acceptance of the system's legitimacy, radicals within one group often oppose the idea of elections and cooperation with other groups. In Northern Ireland the Provisional Irish

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49. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Dangers of War," *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), p. 5. For criticisms, see Michael D. Ward and Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Democratizing for Peace," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 92, No. 1 (March 1998), pp. 51–61. For a broader work on consolidating democracy, see Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner, Yun-Han Chu, and Hung-Mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
50. Daniel C. Esty, Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Marc Levy, Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Pamela T. Surko, and Alan N. Unger, *State Failure Task Force Report, Phase II: Findings* (McLean, Va.: Science Applications International Corporation, 1998), pp. 19–22.
51. See James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 88, No. 4 (September 1994), pp. 577–592.
52. Madison, "The Same Subject Continued."
53. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence.*

Republican Army long opposed electoral participation, arguing that it was tantamount to submission.[54] When radicals boycotted elections, those who participated risked being labeled traitors.

In a divided society, losing power poses grave risks. Losers in elections may end up dead, not simply removed from office. Fearing a tyranny of a majority, or simply punishment for past abuses, existing elites may try to disrupt or preempt elections. In 1993 and 1994, the international community pushed for greater pluralism in Rwanda, posing a threat to chauvinistic Hutu elites who dominated the country. Rather than accept a more open system, these elites raised the specter of a Tutsi threat, creating the conditions for the subsequent genocide.[55]

Democratization also raises the possibility of secession. The former Yugoslavia is perhaps the most painful example of how increased power sharing can spiral into secession and conflict. Similarly, the Chechen experience illustrates the risk that radicalized groups will exploit democratic freedoms to promote separatism. When given the right to assemble and speak freely, Chechen leaders rejected any ties to Moscow—a position that triggered brutal Russian crackdowns in which tens of thousands of Chechens and Russians were killed.[56]

Groups are particularly fearful of their security during democratic transitions. Building institutions depends on creating mutual expectations of cooperation and nonaggression,[57] but these benign images take time, and peace, to develop. Moreover, regardless of the stakes involved or the desire of the parties for peace, successfully implementing a settlement involving democracy is difficult because combatants fear for their own security.[58] The freedoms inherent in true democracy, such as the right to assemble and to speak freely, facilitate ethnic mobilization and raise security fears. Thus, even when democratic

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54. Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), p. 197.
55. Alan Kuperman, "The Other Lesson of Rwanda: Mediators Sometimes Do More Damage Than Good," *SAIS Review,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter–Spring 1996), pp. 221–240. See also Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), pp. 82–83.
56. See V.P. Gagnon Jr., "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security,* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 130–166; and Stuart Kaufman, "The Irresistible Force and the Imperceptible Object: The Yugoslav Breakup and Western Policy," *Security Studies,* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Winter 1994–1995), pp. 281–329. On the brighter side, the Czechoslovak experience demonstrates how a democratic system can peacefully accommodate secessionism.
57. Snyder and Jervis, "Civil War and the Security Dilemma," p. 19.
58. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement"; and James D. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict," in David A. Lake and Donald Rothschild, eds., *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 107–126.

institutions are established to keep the peace, often they are not sustained because of security fears. For example, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola refused to lay down its arms after signing the Lusaka accords in 1994, in part because it feared revenge by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which controlled the government. Similarly, despite the existence of a democratic compromise to end Lebanon's civil war, peace did not return to this country until 1990, when Syria moved in to ensure order (and secure its own control). Before then, even a small armed community could, and did, spoil several cease-fires.[59]

Because of these problems, democratization often founders during the transition. Minority mistrust, dominant group resentment, and the elite exploitation of freedoms all contribute to ethnic tension and, frequently, to ethnic strife. Conflict is particularly likely when a government is weak—a common problem during any political transition—and cannot deter chauvinists, suppress radicals, or ensure that political bargains are kept.[60] Thus when tension is high, democratization is often impractical because it cannot be implemented.

Some degree of security helps power-sharing systems develop in the first place. In Lebanon the National Pact was forged in 1943, during a time when France was keeping order, thus ensuring security for the communities while cooperation gradually took root—peace lasted for thirty years before collapsing. Almost fifty years later in 1991, limited power-sharing again occurred after Syria forcibly suppressed all opposition and imposed a government along the lines of the Ta'if accord.[61]

Challenges Facing Iraq

A range of problems are likely to bedevil any deeply divided society that is democratizing using a federal system. Iraq's particular problems further complicate the picture (see Table 1).

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59. See Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 5–53.

60. In essence, this is a "commitment problem" as outlined by James Fearon. He argues that unless a third party can guarantee an agreement, ethnic groups wonder whether they will be exploited in the future. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict."

61. The Ta'if accord formed the basis for revising Lebanon's National Pact–based government. The new structure followed the old one in many ways, though power was significantly redistributed among Lebanon's communities. In essence, Syria has acted as a brutal Leviathan, using its troops and intelligence service to enforce order and prevent any unrest. Though elite militancy along ethnic lines has been stifled, this is in large part due to the surety of punishment rather than any increased goodwill on the part of leaders. Norton, "Lebanon's Malaise," p. 45.

Table 1. An Overview of Challenges to a Democratic Iraq.

Challenge	Problem for Federal Systems in Divided Societies	Problem for Transitional Regimes	Preexisting Problem for Iraq
Security fears from a weak government	X	X	
Lack of a cohesive identity	X		X
Internal border disputes	X		X
Regime vulnerability to outside meddling	X		X
Elites pursuing military adventurism		X	X
Elites whipping up communal tension to gain power or secede		X	X
Elite fears of losing power and a refusal to democratize	X	X	X
Lack of a democratic tradition			X
No organized democratic opposition			X

NOTE: An "X" means that the problem is either one that is present in Iraq or one to which the political system will prove particularly prone. The lack of an "X" does *not* mean that the particular problem cannot or will not exist.

SECURITY FEARS FROM A WEAK GOVERNMENT

A democratic, federal Iraq would risk chaos and warlordism. During Saddam's rule, force kept Iraq at peace, if the term peace can be used to describe a regime that killed hundreds of thousands of its citizens and displaced even more. Saddam had organized his security forces, and to a lesser extent Iraqi society, by keeping different points of power—tribal, ethnic, and personal—in contention.[62] Now that the lid is lifted, the Iraqi cauldron may bubble over into violence.[63]

Because of the potential for strife, security fears are high in today's Iraq. The past Sunni atrocities against Kurds and Shi'as (as well as less-publicized past conflicts involving Iraq's rival tribes, its Turkmen community, and other groups) has laid the groundwork for security fears among Iraq's various groups.[64] Simple vengeance, powerfully revealed when the 1991 Persian Gulf War almost toppled Saddam's regime, may also lead to widespread violence.

The problem of guaranteeing security is even more profound given the actions of occupying forces to ensure justice. Those individuals most able to provide security—Iraq's Sunni community, particularly the tribes and families that were tied to Iraq's security forces—are also the most hostile to the United States and the most implicated in human rights abuses.[65] Saddam in essence made sure that all Iraqi elites supported or at least were implicated in his regime's atrocities.[66] Already, U.S. administrators have vacillated on whether to include senior Ba'ath Party officials in the reconstruction effort. Thus a decision to remove past Iraqi elites (or "de-Ba'athize" the country) may result in a security vacuum.

Taken together, these security-related problems would leave the Iraqi people

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62. For a review of how Saddam stayed in power, see Amatzia Baram, *Building toward Crises: Saddam Husayn's Strategy for Survival* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998); and Regis Matlak, "Inside Saddam's Grip," *National Security Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 1–28. For an excellent overview of how Saddam and other Middle East regimes stopped military coups, see James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security,* Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 131–165.

63. Phebe Marr, Iraq specialist, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, August 1, 2002.

64. See Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985); and Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).

65. For a review of Iraq's security and intelligence apparatuses under Saddam, see Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis," *Middle East Review of International Affairs,* Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2002), pp. 1–13. See also Matlak, "Inside Saddam's Grip."

66. Marr, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

vulnerable to demagogues' preaching. Iraqis lack protection, and the country's history gives them good reason to fear not only one another but also neighboring states' meddling.

LACK OF A COHESIVE IDENTITY

Iraq is a religiously and ethnically diverse nation, with at best a limited sense of national unity. Although most Iraqis are Arabs, approximately 20 percent of the population is Kurdish; another 5 percent are Turkmen, Assyrian, or members of other minority groups. Iraq's population is predominantly Muslim, divided between Shi'as (60–65 percent) and Sunnis (32 percent).[67] Shi'as dominate Iraq's south, and most Kurds live in the north. That said, there are numerous areas of overlap, particularly around Baghdad where millions of Shi'as and Sunnis live.

Despite having a long history as a civilization—and a once-vibrant middle class—Iraqis do not have a strong identity as a nation: British colonialists created modern Iraq, and under colonial rule the country never gained a strong identity. In 1933 Iraq's first ruler, King Faisal I, lamented: "There is still . . . no Iraqi people but unimaginable masses of human beings, devoid of any patriotic idea, imbued with religious traditions and absurdities, connected by no common tie, giving ear to evil, prone to anarchy, and perpetually ready to rise against any government whatever."[68]

Faisal's lament holds true for Iraq today. "Iraqi" identity is weaker than in past generations. Saddam's divide-and-rule policies kept Iraqis at each other's throats, and thus away from his own. Iraq's Kurdish and Arab communities have a bitter past, with the Kurds suffering genocidal levels of slaughter. Iraq's Sunni Arab leadership also killed, jailed, or otherwise brutally repressed members of Iraq's Shi'a community, fostering bitter relations.[69] In addition to brutalizing Iraq's Kurds and Shi'as, Saddam's regime deliberately played up tribal identities, even at times inventing new tribes.[70] Iraqi Shi'as are also slowly developing a more cohesive identity of their own.[71] For the past decade, Iraq's

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67. *CIA World Factbook, 2002,* http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html#People.
68. Quoted in Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq,* p. 25.
69. Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
70. Marr, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Saddam's regime produced an "official" guide to Iraq's tribes and distributed largesse accordingly. The only tribes listed in the register were those that supported Saddam's regime. International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," p. 6, n. 22.
71. Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq.*

Kurds have enjoyed de facto autonomy in the north under U.S. protection, strengthening their separate communal identity.[72]

Tribal identities further fracture ethnic and sectarian ones, with neither the Shi'as nor the Kurds presenting a united front. Kurdish warlords have fought one another even when Baghdad directly threatened them. Kurdish factions did not hesitate to cooperate with Iran or with Saddam's regime, despite past slaughter, if it suited their immediate interests. Some Shi'a tribes worked closely with the regime. Within the Sunni core, strong tribal and family identities were exploited by Saddam to stay in power.[73]

There may be a tendency to overstate the fault lines within Iraq's population. For example, tribes were a force in Iraqi politics (and a divisive force at that) because Saddam purposely empowered them as a pillar of his regime and turned them against one another. The majority of Iraqis, however, maintain a tribal affiliation in name only and would be unlikely to follow the orders of a tribal sheikh unless the country were in chaos and there were no other forms of security other than to seek protection from their tribe. Many tribes also span ethnic groups and religious sects, creating a form of pluralism. Many younger Kurds identify primarily with the Kurdish nationalist movement, not with tribes.[74]

The existence of several competing identities poses two related challenges. First, it is difficult to determine which identity to reward with a share of power. Should a Shi'a tribal member, for example, be rewarded by tribe or by sect?[75] Second, the existence of multiple identities may allow rival elites to play on identities that are not politically rewarded to undermine the new government's organizing principle.

A federal system based on ethnic or religious divisions would worsen this identity crisis. By emphasizing ethnicity, religion, tribe, or any other feature, the new regime would make an "Iraqi" identity less rewarding. Individuals

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72. David Lawrence, "Iraqi Kurds Enjoy a De Facto State," *Christian Science Monitor,* May 3, 2000, p. 6. See also Francis J. Ricciardone, "An American Diplomat's Perspectives on Kurds in the Global Arena," remarks made at American University, Washington, D.C., April 17, 2000. For a broader overview of the Kurds in northern Iraq, see David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996).
73. Baram, *Building toward Crises,* pp. 3–32.
74. International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: What's Next for the Kurds?" p. 12.
75. David D. Laitin has shown that the British colonial rulers' choice of which identity to reward strengthened previously weak identities and otherwise dramatically altered supposedly immutable identities. Laitin, "Hegemony and Religious Conflict," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 285–316.

would have a disincentive to identify along national lines, and common vehicles of nation building, such as education in a common language and a shared history, could not be employed.[76]

INTERNAL BORDER DISPUTES

Disputes over communal borders within Iraq may also raise security fears. Several parts of Iraq were once dominated by one group but now have a mixed population or are controlled by another. For example, the Kurds are considering declaring the city of Kirkuk as their capital. The city once was predominantly Kurdish, but Saddam's regime sent numerous Arabs to settle there.[77]

Ethnic enclaves, which Barry Posen describes as a key factor contributing to ethnic security concerns, also pose a problem.[78] Areas of overlap among Iraq's majority communities may lead some to pursue irredentist policies, while others "cleanse" areas of rival communities because they fear for their safety. In addition, the high potential for outside meddling may exacerbate concerns linked to these communal enclaves.

REGIME VULNERABILITY TO OUTSIDE MEDDLING

The new government may also be vulnerable to Iraq's predatory neighbors, which have a history of meddling and could seize on any weakness to protect their interests. Turkey may intervene to ensure that Iraq's Kurds remain weak and do not seek to support Kurdish insurgents in Turkey itself.[79] Ankara in the past sent several thousand troops to Iraq to fight its own Kurdish insurgency.[80] Iran may champion its partisans within Iraq's Shi'a community, either by providing them with armed support from Iraqi dissidents residing in Iran or by

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76. For the importance of education as a tool for nation building, see Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
77. Recknagel, "Iraq: Opposition Groups Want a Federal State."
78. Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival,* Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 1993), p. 32. For additional works on the security dilemma, see James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization,* Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 379–444; and Badredine Arfi, "Ethnic Fear: The Social Construction of Insecurity," *Security Studies,* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn 1998), pp. 151–203. Fearon also argues that "nested" minority groups—groups that are minorities locally but have a majority kin to draw on across borders or elsewhere—are at greater risk of conflict. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict."
79. Turkey has made statements that it may intervene militarily to protect the Turkmen minority from Kurdish control. Iran too has opposed Kurdish efforts to gain more autonomy through federalism in Iraq. Recknagel, "Iraq: Opposition Groups Want a Federal State."
80. Daniel Williams, "Turkey Negotiates Role in War," *Washington Post,* October 22, 2002, p. 22.

covertly working with Iraqi Shi'a leaders. Iran supports the resistance group the Supreme Council for the Islamic Republic of Iraq, and has armed and trained several thousand Iraqi exiles. (Iran also may be galvanized by a U.S. or Western military presence on its border and the possibility of a pro-Western regime in Baghdad.) Even Saudi Arabia or Jordan may support a particular faction or leader to increase its influence.[81]

The perception of outside meddling may cause problems even if the reality is gentler. Different communities may organize in response to, or in support of, perceived meddling, even when little exists.

ELITES PURSUING MILITARY ADVENTURISM

Iraq's aggression toward its neighbors did not begin with Saddam's regime and may not end now that it has fallen. Iraq menaced Kuwait in 1961, only to be deterred by a British buildup.[82] Hostility toward Kuwait appears widespread in some leadership circles. Sunni Iraqis' long-standing enthusiasm for pan-Arabism suggests that anti-Israel efforts would also be widely supported. Hostilities may also commence against Iran or Turkey if these countries send their own forces into Iraq or support insurgents. Thus, would-be leaders who try to build support through a diversionary war (or crisis) against Kuwait or by aiding radical Palestinians may gain support.[83]

ELITES WHIPPING UP COMMUNAL TENSION TO GAIN POWER OR SECEDE

An even greater risk is that chauvinistic leaders might use their newfound freedoms to stir up hatred against their neighbors—a problem that Iraq's divisions and a weak federal government could exacerbate. Kurdish groups have regularly fought one another, even during times when they were engaged in conflict with Baghdad or under U.S. protection. Elites might beat the drums of war to gain power locally. Former Ba'athists seeking to develop new bona fides may be particularly attracted to chauvinism.

Some groups, particularly the Kurds, might take advantage of the state's weakness to press for secession.[84] After the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq's Kurdish population enjoyed an almost twelve-year reprieve from the Iraqi state. Although

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81. For a discussion of Iran's use of the "Shi'a card," see Graham Fuller, *The "Center of the Universe": The Geopolitics of Iran* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991).
82. Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, pp. 180–181.
83. The classic exposition of the diversionary war thesis is found in Jack Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1988), pp. 653–673.
84. In general, Kurds appear to aspire to their own state but recognize that it is not politically possible. For a review of Kurdish attitudes toward secessionism, see International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," pp. 10–12.

Kurdish leaders profess only a desire for autonomy, Iraq's neighbors and many Iraqis believe that this would be only a first step toward secession. Even though many Iraqi Arabs would agree to considerable Kurdish autonomy, Kurds view any promises with suspicion, as past guarantees from Baghdad have been quickly discarded.[85] Ironically, Kurdish nationalists may find themselves worse off if the post-Saddam governance structure returns control of northern Iraq to Baghdad.[86] This may prompt renewed fighting among the Kurds (as leaders try to ensure their continued control) or between the Kurds and Baghdad (as a new regime seeks to exert its authority in Kurdish-controlled areas). In such circumstances, disgruntled Kurdish leaders may press for secession, playing on past atrocities and opposition to control from Baghdad.

At the very least, Kurdish leaders will seek to regain lost territory. Saddam's regime expelled thousands of Kurds from strategic areas and bulldozed hundreds of villages. As Kurds fled or were killed, the regime encouraged "Arabization": offering financial rewards to Arabs who settled in what were traditionally Kurdish areas. Local Kurdish leaders have already called for Arabs to leave under pain of attack.[87]

ELITE FEARS OF LOSING POWER AND A REFUSAL TO DEMOCRATIZE

Iraq's elites who flourished under Saddam may violently oppose democratization, as it will probably lead them to lose power. A "de-Ba'athification" policy is desirable in principle, but it is also risky: Saddam's cronies controlled the army and security services, and merely purging or killing a few of his closest henchmen will not change this. As noted above, many of these leaders are implicated in Saddam's crimes and thus rightfully fear revenge. Saddam also played on Sunni fears of losing power, emphasizing that other communities will bloodily assert themselves if they do. Saddam's rhetoric was not hollow. The brutal killing of many Ba'ath Party members in the 1991 uprisings in southern Iraq might be a harbinger for Sunni elites and other Ba'ath officials if they lose power completely. Should ethnic or tribal tension heat up, even those

85. Ibid., p. 16.
86. Olivier Roy, senior researcher, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, "Post-Saddam Iraq," remarks to the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., n.d. Between the two gulf wars, different Kurdish factions divided revenue from smuggling oil and other goods through Turkey, which was a source of dispute during the mid-1990s. The end of Saddam's regime obviates the need for smuggling and changes the local power balance.
87. David Rohde, "If War Hits, Kurds See Way to Grab Old Lands," *New York Times,* March 14, 2003, p. A13.

leaders with little blood on their hands might have reason to fear for their safety.

LACK OF A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION

Scholars have found a strong correlation between a history of democracy in the past and the successful installation of a democracy in the future.[88] Although every successful democracy at one point was an autocracy of sorts or a colony, having a past experience with power sharing does make it more likely that a successive attempt will succeed. The recent democratic turnarounds in Latin America and Eastern Europe suggest how populations experienced with democracy are better able to develop it.

Iraq, unfortunately, has had at best a weak parliament in its past, as it alternated from a traditional monarchy to autocracies based on populism and military power.[89] Nor has Iraq had a tradition of power sharing even at a local level.[90] Saddam's rule, far more brutal than any in Iraq's recent history, has probably only further undermined any lingering memories of past power sharing. Power resided largely in a "shadow state" of family, tribe, and clan.[92] Iraq thus has no civil society, and few robust institutions, on which to build its democracy.

NO ORGANIZED DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION

Iraq's fractious opposition groups were united only in their hatred of Saddam: Their constant bickering bodes poorly for their ability to unite Iraq now that he is gone. Iraq lacks a Charles de Gaulle, a Nelson Mandela, or even a Corazon Aquino who can serve as a symbol of unity for a new democratic government. Although the Iraqi National Congress exists as an umbrella group to unite the various external factions, it appears to have little strength inside Iraq itself. Many of Iraq's main factions did not coordinate their actions with the Iraqi National Congress and have at times not participated in its meetings, despite Washington's blandishments. As Anthony Cordesman notes, "The opposition

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88. Huntington, *The Third Wave,* pp. 270–271.
89. Dawisha and Dawisha disagree with this point, arguing that Iraq's pre-1958 experience included vibrant opposition parties and a relatively independent press. Dawisha and Dawisha, "How to Build a Democratic Iraq," p. 37.
90. I would like to thank Chris Wohlforth for bringing the importance of the local level to my attention. At best, local power in Iraq was oligarchic or tribal. In the latter case, tribal politics often contained the notion of consultation, but were nevertheless a far cry from modern democratic institutions.
91. International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," p. 4.

outside Iraq is almost as divided, weak, and irrelevant as the White Russians in the 1920s."[92] The International Crisis Group, after conducting interviews in Iraq, concluded that the external opposition had little respect or support inside Iraq itself.[93] The lack of a strong opposition will make installing a new government much harder.[94]

THE BRIGHT SIDE

All is not doom and gloom for a democratic Iraq. The various statistics that scholars look to as possible indicators of the success of democracy also suggest that Iraq has a reasonably good set of "building blocks" to make the transition successfully.[95] As Table 2 indicates, in key categories such as per capita income, literacy, and urbanization, Iraq is comparable to a large number of other states that have made (or are making) a successful transition from autocracy to democracy such as Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Kenya.

Iraq also may have economic advantages over other fledgling democracies. Adam Przeworski points out that new democratic institutions are often introduced at a time of economic crisis, making it more challenging for them to survive.[96] Iraq, as its oil wealth is developed, may enjoy an economic boom in the coming decade.[97] Even a massive increase in Iraq's oil wealth, however, will not enable the country to flourish economically if its debt is not forgiven and if broader economic reform is not undertaken.

In any event, the Kurdish part of northern Iraq has already enjoyed noteworthy success, offering hope for the rest of the country. Kurdish areas have suffered tribal and factional infighting, hostile neighbors, economic dislocation, and other problems that might disrupt democracy. Nevertheless, power sharing still occurred. At local levels, elections have been free and competitive, there is considerable freedom of the press, basic civil liberties are secure, and the bureaucracies are responsive to popular concerns and surprisingly accountable. As Barham Salih, one of the Kurdish regional prime ministers notes, "If democracy can be introduced in Iraqi Kurdistan, traditionally the

92. Quoted in Fallows, "The Fifty-first State?" p. 60.
93. International Crisis Group, "Voices from the Iraqi Street," December 4, 2002, p. 9.
94. For a critique of the Iraqi opposition, see Daniel Byman, Kenneth Pollack, and Gideon Rose, "The Rollback Fantasy," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 78, No. 1 (January/February 1999), pp. 24–41.
95. See Barro, "Determinants of Democracy," pp. 158–183.
96. Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy,* p. 109.
97. Iraq's oil production before the war was approximately 2.5 million barrels per day. Production could increase more than 6 million barrels per day with sufficient investment in Iraq's oil infrastructure. See http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/iraq.html.

Table 2. Socioeconomic Indicators Linked to Democracy: Selected Countries.

Country	Positive Factors					Negative Factors	
	Per Capita Gross Domestic Product (U.S.$, purchasing power parity)	Basic Education (literacy: % of population 15 years of age and older)				Economic Inequality (Gini Index)	Urban Population (% of total)
		Total	Male	Female	Male-Female Gap		
Bangladesh	1,750	56.0	63.0	49.0	−14.0	33.6	22
Bolivia	2,600	83.1	90.5	76.0	−14.5	58.9	60
East Timor	500	48.0	NA	NA	NA	38.0	24
Egypt	3,700	51.4	63.6	38.8	−24.8	28.9	44
India	2,500	52.0	65.5	37.7	−27.8	37.8	27
Indonesia	3,000	83.8	89.6	78.0	−11.6	31.7	36
Iraq	**2,500**	**58.0**	**70.7**	**45.0**	**−25.7**	**NA (high)**	**75**
Jordan	4,200	86.6	93.4	79.4	−14.0	36.4	71
Kenya	1,000	78.1	86.3	70.0	−16.3	44.5	29
Mongolia	1,770	97.8	98.0	97.5	−0.5	33.2	61
Nigeria	840	57.1	67.3	47.3	−20.0	50.6	40
Panama	5,900	90.8	91.4	90.2	−1.2	48.5	55
Peru	4,800	88.3	94.5	83.0	−11.5	46.2	71
Philippines	4,000	94.6	95.0	94.3	−0.7	46.2	54
Romania	6,800	97.0	98.0	95.0	−3.0	30.5	55
Senegal	1,580	39.1	51.1	28.9	−22.2	41.3	44
Turkey	6,700	85.0	94.0	77.0	−17.0	41.5	69

SOURCES: For East Timor urban population, see World Bank, "East Timor at a Glance," April 29, 2002, http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Attachments/indicators/$File/ETataglance.pdf; for urban populations of other countries, see United Nations InfoNation, http://www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/index.asp; and for all other figures, see *CIA World Factbook, 2002,* http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html.

least politically developed part of Iraq, the prognosis for the rest of Iraq is good."[98]

Iraq is also the best endowed of any of the Arab states in terms of both its physical and societal attributes. Iraq has tremendous agricultural potential as well as oil wealth.[99] Prior to the Gulf War, it had probably the best educated, most secular, and most progressive population of all of the Arab states. For decades Iraq's large professional classes have furnished Baghdad with relatively efficient and skilled bureaucrats and technicians, and while many have been forced to drive taxis, they are still there, waiting to return to their prior occupations.[100]

Finally, as described in detail below, Iraq has an advantage in that its modern pluralistic system would be backed by the resources of the United States and its allies—hopefully, with the assistance of the United Nations and other international organizations that have proven instrumental in similar situations elsewhere around the world.

The Scope of External Influence

The above problems will not occur in a vacuum. Having toppled Saddam's regime through military force, the United States and its allies can have considerable influence over the various challenges to establishing democracy in Iraq. Table 3 reviews the challenges and notes those that outside powers can influence. These challenges loom large, but some can be dampened if the United States and other intervening forces take the following steps.

STEP ONE: ENSURE DOMESTIC SECURITY

The United States can greatly influence the security environment in a post-Saddam Iraq. As a result, security fears from a weak government can be off-

98. Quoted in Slavin, "Iraq a Harsh Climate to Try to Grow Democracy," p. A20.
99. Oil wealth, however, creates economic dynamics such as empowering the state over society that may hinder democracy. Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001), p. 356. For a broader treatment of the effect of oil wealth on Middle Eastern economies, see Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997).
100. Although Iraq's middle class has been economically devastated over the last twelve years, it still exists as a social and cultural force. However, Iraq's middle class is largely a creature of the state: It traditionally has consisted of civil servants and others receiving a government salary. International Crisis Group, "War in Iraq: Political Challenges after the Conflict," p. 9. Thus arguments that Iraq's middle class will greatly increase the chances for democracy may be overstated. For a discussion of how to augment the role of the middle class as a force for democracy, see Dawisha and Dawisha, "How to Build a Democratic Iraq," pp. 47–49.

Table 3. Intervening Forces' Influence over Challenges to Iraq's Democratization.

Challenge	Problem for Federal Systems in Divided Societies	Problem for Transitional Regimes	Preexisting Problem for Iraq
Security fears from a weak government	X	X	
Lack of a cohesive identity	X		X
Internal border disputes	X		X
Regime vulnerable to outside meddling	X		X
Elites pursuing military adventurism		X	X
Elites whipping up communal tension to gain power or secede	X	X	X
Elite fears of losing power and a refusal to democratize		X	
No history of a democratic tradition			X
No organized democratic opposition			X

NOTE: The United States and other intervening forces have a high degree of influence over challenges in bold; a modest influence over challenges in italics; and little or no influence over the remaining challenges.

set. This has a second-order impact of reducing elites' ability to generate conflict.

Outside forces can provide internal security, reducing ethnic security fears. As Barbara Walter's work has demonstrated, a credible outside power can help guarantee security to prevent a civil war settlement from collapsing. If troops are deployed quickly in response to small incidents, security fears may never spread, and pressure for secession will decline.[101]

To ensure security, a large and lasting U.S. and allied military presence is essential. Maintaining perhaps 100,000 high-quality troops with a strong mandate to act can calm the security concerns of Iraq's many communities.[102] A large troop presence can reassure Iraq's Shi'a and Kurdish communities that repression at the hands of Iraq's Sunni Arabs is at an end. Equally important, the presence of troops can reassure Iraq's Sunnis that the end of their dominance will not entail persecution and repression, decreasing their incentives to disrupt elections.

This troop presence must last for years: If there is a date certain for a U.S. exit, belligerent leaders will simply wait out the United States. In addition, foreign powers will also bide their time, waiting to meddle until U.S. forces depart.[103]

STEP TWO: DETER MEDDLING NEIGHBORS

Deterring Iran or Iraq's other neighbors is a more straightforward task. Tehran is highly concerned about the large U.S. military presence in Iraq and would prefer a pro-Iranian (or at least not hostile) regime in Baghdad. However, at

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101. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," pp. 339–340.

102. The size of forces may run as high as 100,000 even after the immediate postwar stabilization phase—and initially there will be no substitute for well-trained, NATO-quality troops. Although estimates of force levels in the coming years vary, the need to maintain order suggests that the total number may be more than 50,000 for several years, and much of that force will probably be composed of Americans. Using the standard "rule of thumb" of 1 soldier for every 500 people, it would require 48,000 peacekeepers. NATO, however, initially sent 60,000 troops to Bosnia to enforce the Dayton accords, even though the population was roughly a fifth the size of Iraq's and, equally important, Bosnia is far smaller than Iraq. See James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements for Stability Operations," *Parameters,* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter 1995–1996), pp. 59–69. Scott Feil calls for 75,000 troops, *excluding* coalition forces. See Feil, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, August 1, 2002. U.S. forces deployed in Kuwait, Turkey, and afloat could supplement U.S. forces in Iraq itself to slightly reduce the size of the footprint. In addition, there is far less of a need to deploy forces to the Kurdish north, which already has a functioning government independent of the current regime. However, some forces will be necessary to police Kurdish areas to avoid creating a perception that the Kurds have a privileged relationship with intervening forces.

103. Gideon Rose, "The Exit Strategy Delusion," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 77, No. 1 (January–February 1998), pp. 56–67.

least since Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death in 1989, Tehran has acted cautiously and tried to avoid provocations that might result in U.S. military action. After the 1991 Gulf War, Iran provided limited aid to its Iraqi coreligionists but did not send large numbers of Iranian-trained insurgents into Iraq, let alone Iranian troops. The presence of U.S. troops acts as a strong deterrent. Iran's military is in poor shape and would face difficulty conducting any large-scale operations in Iraq.[104]

Turkey is perhaps more likely to intervene, but here the U.S. calculus is more complex. The United States has tremendous influence over Turkey, both economically and because of their shared interests in the region.[105] Exploiting this influence, and pressing Kurds and others to respect Ankara's concerns, would reduce the likelihood of Turkish interference. Indeed Washington can even exploit Turkey's readiness to intervene to ensure that the Kurds do not press for secession. The United States can make it clear that it will not defend the Kurds if they try to secede, thus dampening their enthusiasm to strike out on their own.

STEP THREE: INFLUENCE ELITES

The third type of challenge that intervening forces can influence—though less decisively than the security environment—is elite based. In addition to decreasing popular susceptibility to chauvinistic and violent rhetoric by providing security, outside forces can discourage efforts by leaders to whip up hatred, whether at home or against foreigners, and strengthen the overall cohesiveness of Iraq's opposition.

Occupying forces can also help overcome the "commitment problem" that often generates and perpetuates conflict, ensuring that political bargains are honored.[106] Most obviously, the U.S.-led occupation force can prevent the cancellation or disruption of elections. The United States can deny existing elites access to the security services to block elections and, if necessary, use force to remove losers from power. Stopping warmongering and chauvinism is more challenging, but there is still tremendous room for influence. By ensuring do-

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104. Daniel Byman, Shahram Chubin, Anousharavan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in a Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001); and Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition: Conventional Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), pp. 405–416.
105. See Zalmay Khalilzad, Ian O. Lesser, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Future of Western-Turkish Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000).
106. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict."

mestic security and deterring foreign aggression, the United Sates can make it far harder for leaders to play on fear to gain power. If necessary, U.S. and other intervening troops could also act as a police force, arresting or detaining firebrands who preach violence. In addition, the United States could disqualify bellicose elites from running for office, in effect narrowing the political space to include only moderate voices.[107] As these suggestions indicate, establishing democracy in occupied Iraq requires that U.S. and other occupying forces become involved in a host of local disputes as well as grand policy issues. Mistakes are inevitable.

Finally, the United States can help organize Iraqi politicians more effectively. Forging an interim government with some unity is possible even in fractious societies, as Afghanistan's recent experience demonstrates. Indeed the Iraqi National Congress was created and exists due to U.S. pressure and support.[108] The current U.S. occupation will greatly increase America's bargaining leverage. Making it clear to all groups that Washington will act as power broker in Iraq should be a powerful inducement to promote cooperation.

LIMITS TO EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

Outside powers, however, cannot affect all of the challenges that Iraq may face. Iraq's identity crisis is a problem beyond the scope of outside intervention, though it is one that external powers can worsen by playing up rival identities. Even long-term measures such as the creation of an education system that promotes "Iraqi" history may run into conflict with the design of a federal system that stresses and reifies parochial identities. Nor can the United States simply create a history of democracy out of whole cloth. Democratic habits will have to be learned from scratch rather than relearned. Both these problems are likely to pose serious challenges for the long-term health of democracy in Iraq.

Can the United States and Its Allies Stay the Course?

I have argued that intervening forces can maintain peace in Iraq and, over time, build a sustainable democracy. Capability, however, is not the same as willingness. Intervening forces face considerable demands, which will strain

107. In essence, the United States would be using the "control" model to preserve ethnic peace. See Ian Lustick, "Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control," *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (April 1979), pp. 324–344.
108. Judith Miller, "U.S. Faulted over Efforts to Unite Iraqi Dissidents," *New York Times*, October 3, 2002, p. A16.

the desire of their publics to sustain the burden of occupation over time. Already, several senior administration officials have called for the rapid departure of coalition forces from Iraq.[109] Although current language reflects a more indefinite commitment, senior administration officials have not made it clear that the occupation will last many years.

As noted above, the size of forces would be approximately 100,000 troops until security is established. For several years after that, smaller but still considerable forces would be required to deter hostile neighbors and calm any lingering security concerns. Leaders of the U.S. military have expressed discomfort with long-lasting missions in the Balkans, the Sinai, and elsewhere, and they may make similar arguments that bolstering peace in Iraq will require a decades-long occupation. And they have a point. NATO has had troops in Bosnia for eight years and in Kosovo for four: Although the size of the presence has fallen in both places, it is still considerable, and there is no end in sight.

A long-term deployment will strain the operating tempo of the involved militaries, particularly their armies, which will bear the brunt of the occupation. The pace may become unbearable if large-scale military action against North Korea or other adversaries is also undertaken. Special operations forces, civil affairs, and other units designed for liaising with local militaries and populations will be particularly burdened.

The picture is not all gloomy. The demands on the U.S. Air Force, long strained by policing two no-fly zones over Iraq, will diminish considerably. Demands on the U.S. Navy will also be limited.

Such an occupying force is likely to take casualties. Al-Qa'ida views the U.S. attack on Iraq as a modern form of imperialism. Although recent arrests suggest progress in combating al-Qa'ida, it remains a constant threat. Al-Qa'ida operatives are likely to infiltrate Iraq to conduct attacks and to recruit among Iraqis disillusioned or angered with the occupation.

If Iraqis welcome, or at least tolerate, occupying forces, then force protection will be far easier, as they will have support and intelligence from a sympathetic local population—the key to successful counterinsurgency.[110] But even under the best circumstances, some Western forces will die in Iraq. Over time this may weaken U.S. public support for the occupation. And populations in the

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109. Jonathan Weisman and Mike Allen, "Officials Argue for Fast U.S. Exit from Iraq," *Washington Post*, April 21, 2003, p. A1.

110. For a valuable recent work on this, see James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 79–90.

Middle East, if not necessarily Iraq, regard the U.S. impetus toward Iraqi democratization with skepticism at best.[111]

If anti-U.S. terrorism emerges as a problem in Iraq, it may hinder the effectiveness of the occupying forces, even if it does not weaken U.S. resolve. Intrusive force protection measures, such as fortress-like housing facilities or constant searches of Iraqi vehicles at checkpoints, will reinforce the image that the United States is an occupying power, not a partner in Iraq's quest for democracy and liberty. The U.S. response to terrorism may make previously sympathetic or apathetic Iraqis hostile to a continuing U.S. presence.

The financial sacrifices are also daunting. After several years of budget surpluses, the United States has again entered a period deficits.[112] Estimates of the cost of occupation vary widely: They depend on the level of forces required, the duration, the missions, the degree of allied participation, and other factors that are difficult to gauge in advance. However, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the costs of a postwar occupation range from $1 billion to $4 billion a month. Several estimates stretch higher than $100 billion.[113]

FINAL WORDS

To avoid tarnishing the military victory, the United States and its allies must ensure that their political plans for Iraq's future are robust. This requires educating the American public and developing a consensus among political leaders that a lengthy occupation is necessary. Leaders should make clear that casualties are likely and that the financial costs will be high: Glossing over the sacrifice may precipitate a sudden departure when the bill comes due later.

A failure of Iraq's democracy could prove a nightmare for the Iraqis, for the region, and for the United States. Civil war, massive refugee flows, and even renewed interstate fighting could return to this already unstable region. If the United States and its allies are not willing to bear the burden of occupation, the long-term strategic costs will be heavy.

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111. Marina Ottaway, "Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of U.S. Credibility," Working Paper No. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2003).

112. Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the President's Budgetary Proposals for Fiscal Year 2004,* Congress of the United States, March 2003, available at http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=4129&sequence=0.

113. Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Costs of a Potential Conflict with Iraq," September 2002, available at http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=3822&sequence=0.