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MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES

**THE NEW AMERICAN WAY OF WAR:
UNSUITABLE FOR WINNING THE PEACE IN POST-WAR IRAQ**

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ABSTRACT

US conventional war-fighting was transformed after Gulf War I by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), producing a smaller yet potent force structure capable of Rapid Domination through the simultaneous application of precision firepower across the battlefield. The US used this “New American Way of War” (N-AWOW) in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with brilliant success during the combat operations. However, the N-AWOW has proved much less successful in securing the peace in post-war Iraq. The major problem encountered during the stability phase was the failure to establish immediate security and public order. Unchecked looting grew into the ongoing insurgency, producing a steady trickle of US and Iraqi casualties, while by May 2004 the Iraqi population was increasingly resentful of the Coalition military presence.

This paper contends that problems in the post-war phase are attributable to features of the N-AWOW that negatively influenced planning and execution of the initial stability operations up until December 2004. The N-AWOW is fundamentally un-conducive to counterinsurgency warfare or post-war stabilization operations because it emphasizes conventional war fighting, Rapid Dominance, and precision air power in place of large ground forces. This results in a low troop to population ratio, which is inadequate for post-war security. The firepower of the N-AWOW also makes insurgency worse over time because it alienates the local population. The technological, rather than human focus, in the N-AWOW contributes to the neglect of local political and social factors that undermine the legitimacy of the occupation authority.

KEY WORDS: American Way of War, counter-insurgency; post-war Iraq; stabilization operations; nation building; peacekeeping operations; power projection; foreign policy; transformation.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The New American Way of War

Starting from the end of World War II the US approach to war has been dominated by conventional firepower. This traditional or “Old American Way of War” was demonstrated by the massive onslaught of air and armoured firepower during the Gulf War of 1991.¹ Since then, US conventional war-fighting has been transformed by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), producing a force structure that is much smaller yet potent due its ability to produce “Shock and Awe” through the rapid and simultaneous application of precision firepower across the battlefield.² Successfully field testing its “New American Way of War” (N-AWOW) in Afghanistan in 2001 with brilliant results,³ the US decided to apply the N-AWOW again in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), commencing combat operations in Iraq on 20 March 2003.⁴

The combat phase of OIF was impressive considering the speed with which it was concluded despite being outnumbered three to one by Iraqi forces.⁵ The Coalition forces quickly secured the oil fields and Basra and by 1 April were racing on towards Baghdad.

¹ Max Boot, “The New American Way of War,” *Foreign Affairs* 82:4 (July/August 2003), 41.

² John A. Gentry. “Doomed to Fail: America’s Blind Faith in Military Technology,” *Parameters* (Winter 2002-2003), 88-103.

Micheal Codner, “An Initial Assessment of the Combat Phase,” in *War in Iraq: Combat and Consequence* Edited by Jonathan Eyal, The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Whitehall Paper 59, 14, 18.

³ Michael O’Hanlon, “A Flawed Masterpiece,” *Foreign Affairs*, 00157120, May/June 2002, Vol 81, Issue 3, 1.

⁴ Bob Woodward, “Plan of Attack,” Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 2004, 5.

⁵ Boot 2003, 44. Although degraded by years of sanctions, the Iraqi forces numbered more than 450, 000 troops including paramilitary units, the Republican Guard, and the Special Republican Guard. With a maximum of 100, 000 Coalition troops, the Coalition faced a 3:1 numerical disadvantage.

On 7 April the US 3rd Infantry Division and First Marine Division sliced into Baghdad and on 9 April the giant statue of Saddam was toppled, signalling the capture of Baghdad and the end of Saddam Hussein's regime. It took a few more days for Special Forces and the US Airborne Brigade to finish mopping up the north, but by 14 April, the occupation of the entire country was complete.⁶

Key Aspects of the Stabilization Phase

The fact that the N-AWOW proved so stunningly successful during the combat phase in Iraq makes its failure to secure the peace during the post-conflict phase all that more apparent. Although Iraqis gained freedom with the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, they did not gain order and security. The major problem encountered during the stability phase was the failure to establish immediate security and public order. Looting began almost immediately and went unchecked for almost three-weeks. By the time it began to abate, the insurgency had started. The first bomb to kill more than one person exploded in August 2003 and other attacks followed in quick succession, such as the 19 August truck bomb that killed UN Special Representative Sergio Viera de Mello.⁷ Primary targets included moderate Iraqi political figures, Coalition troops, and Iraqi police recruits. The violence continued to escalate and by the summer of 2005, there was an average of ten soldiers and policemen being killed every day.⁸ Cumulative Coalition losses reached 2000 dead, by November 2005, compared to 161 Coalition dead for the

⁶ Boot 2003, 46-48.

⁷ John Keegan, "The Iraq War: With a New Postscript," Vintage, Canada, 2005, 207.

⁸ James Fallows, "Why Iraq Has No Army," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston Dec 2005, 60, 66.

invasion.⁹ Meanwhile, Iraqi civilian deaths are estimated at approximately 35,000 and climbing inexorably at the average rate of 36 per day.¹⁰

The vital battle for “hearts and minds” did not go well. Although the Coalition forces were initially welcomed as liberators, by May 2004 the population was increasingly resentful of the foreign military presence.¹¹ Most Shiites and Kurds now accept the US presence as positive, but forty-seven percent of Iraqis, mostly Sunnis, still approve of ongoing attacks against US-led forces.¹² The US sponsored interim government suffered from a “legitimacy gap” due to mistrust of US motives and the failure to provide reliable basic services such as security, sanitation, and even electricity.¹³ In contrast, the insurgents gained legitimacy as resisters of a foreign occupation while they inflicted increasingly greater punishment on the Coalition, the new Iraqi government, and Iraqi security forces.¹⁴

⁹ “Iraqi Coalition Casualty Count,” Internet: <http://icasualties.org/oif/>, accessed 7 April 2006. As of 7 April 2006, Coalition losses had surpassed 2500 and had begun to decline slightly in relation to Iraqi deaths.

¹⁰ “Iraqi Body Count Project Database,” Internet: <http://www.iraqbodycount.net/>, accessed 7 April 2006. See also Associated Press, “President Bush Thinks There are 30,000 Iraqi Dead,” 10 March 2006, Internet: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11763834/>, accessed 7 April 2006.

¹¹ Dyer, Gwynne. “Future Tense: The Coming World Order,” McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, ON, 2004, 20. Dyer cites a May 2004 poll that revealed that only 2% of Arab Iraqis still saw the Americans as liberators while 92% saw them as occupiers. A year previously, the Iraqi opinion had been almost evenly divided. Another poll showed that 57% wanted Coalition forces to leave immediately.

¹² Richard Johnson, “Liberation, Interrupted: Three years after U.S. forces raced into Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein, the country teeters on the edge of civil war,” *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, March 18, 2006, A7.

¹³ Ibid, A7 and Jason Vest, “Willful Ignorance: How the Pentagon sent the army to Iraq without a counterinsurgency doctrine,” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July/August 2005, 46, 47.

¹⁴ Bard E. O’Neill, “Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare,” Brassey’s Inc., Dulles, Virginia, 1990, 81-82.

The security problems challenged an overstretched Coalition, a problem worsened by the failure to obtain any significant contribution of international troops, especially from Muslim countries, which would have eased not only the US burden but also the perception of foreign occupation. Although a large number of insurgents were killed, this seemed to bring no appreciable success in dampening the growing insurgency.¹⁵

Most of the major problems encountered with the insurgency can be attributed to choices made during the planning phase or the first year and a half of the occupation.¹⁶ Therefore, this paper will focus on the planning and execution of the stability operations up until December 2004.

This paper does not intend to criticize the decision to launch the invasion, or add to the debate on whether or how to exit Iraq. Rather, it will examine the impact of the N-AWOW on the success of the occupation, particularly in securing the peace and public

¹⁵ Dyer 2004, 15-16, 20-21. A number of large scale urban assaults were fought in April and August 2004 using heavy firepower.

Pape, Robert A. "Dying to Win," Random House, New York, 2005, 82, 245. US forces killed an average of 2000 insurgents per month in 2004 but estimated numbers of insurgents and their active supporters continued to grow exponentially, reaching 100,000 by 2005.

See also Fallows 2005 68. The average kill ratio is 50 insurgents killed for every US soldier lost.

¹⁶ Diamond, Larry. "Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq," Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2005, 280-281.

Fallows 2005, 60, 63.

David Reiff, "Blueprint for a mess," *New York Times Magazine*, 2 November 2003, 33, 58.

Richard Cobbold, "Introduction to War in Iraq: Combat and Consequence," The Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall Paper 59, 2003, 4.

David Hendrickson and Robert Tucker, "Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War," *U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute Report*, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, December 2005, v-vii. Hendrickson and Tucker go further than most and argue that the US may have lacked the resources to ever solve the problems encountered in Iraq.

order. It contends that key attributes of the N-AWOW make it unsuitable for winning the peace and fighting an insurgency within the context of post-war Iraq. While some unique Iraqi factors such as its fractious socio-demographic composition make its governance as a unified nation state a huge challenge for anyone,¹⁷ this paper examines how attributes of the N-AWOW tended to worsen these local factors. Similarly, decisions uniquely ascribed to Central Command (CENTCOM) commanders and key members of the current US administration are examined in terms of how they were biased by the New American Way of War.

Overall, the N-AWOW negatively influenced decisions because it is fundamentally un-conducive to counterinsurgency warfare or post-war stabilization operations. The N-AWOW emphasizes precision air power in place of large ground forces, but the resulting troop to population ratios are inadequate for providing security, giving rise to disorder, lawlessness, and incipient insurgency.¹⁸ Despite its precision, the firepower of the N-AWOW makes insurgency worse over time because it alienates the local population, the true centre of gravity. In the words of Mao Tse-Tung, “The richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people.”¹⁹

¹⁷ O’Neill, 65. In Iraq, a relatively high tolerance for violence and a negative attitude towards western interference in Arab affairs makes it easier for insurgent groups to obtain popular support.

Dyer, Gwynne. “Ignorant Armies: Sliding into War in Iraq,” McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, ON, 2003, 147-149, 161-163. Iraq is populated by three main groups, the Kurds, Sunnis, and Shias, who share neither a religious tradition, common language, nor even a consensus on pan-Arab nationalism.

¹⁸ James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, And Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, “America’s Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq,” RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2003, 165-166.

¹⁹ Mao Tse Tung as quoted in O’Neill 31. The importance of popular support is acknowledged by government campaigns to “win the hearts and minds of the people.” Popular support is the strategic centre of gravity for both the insurgents and the ruling forces.

Of the many factors that affect the success of a counterinsurgency campaign, the response of the ruling authority is the most decisive factor because without a proper and determined counterinsurgency strategy, the government cannot win.²⁰ Despite that, the US lacked a counterinsurgency doctrine until 2004. Further, due to the importance of popular support, effective counterinsurgency requires a thorough understanding of the attendant political, economic, and social issues,²¹ something that is lacking in the N-AWOW.²² These factors are critical because insurgent terrorism is purposeful, rather than mindless violence.²³ Insurgents have specific political goals and follow a two-fold strategy: erode government strength and will through terrorism and guerrilla warfare and demonstrate to the people that the government is unable to maintain effective control and provide protection.²⁴

Chapter 2 provides background on the N-AWOW. Based on historical examples, Chapter 3 refines the assessment factors that will be used in Chapter 4 to analyze how the N-AWOW affected the outcome of the counterinsurgency in Iraq. The following section

²⁰ O' Neill, 26, 37.

²¹ Roger Trinquier, "Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency," Translated from the French by Daniel Lee, Praeger, New York, 1964, 5-8.

O' Neill viii, 11, 13, 17, 70. Terms like insurgency, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and revolutionary war are often used interchangeably as aspects of what America calls low-intensity conflict, unconventional warfare, or Operations Other Than War (OOTW). An "insurgency" is as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling or occupying authorities by use of politics, information, and violence to destroy or change the basis of legitimacy of the ruling authorities, seeking to replace it with their own. Insurgents typically use terrorism or guerrilla warfare as their method of war. "Terrorism" is violence that is directed primarily against non-combatants (usually unarmed civilians) rather than against military or police targets, while guerrilla warfare is characterized by mobile hit and run tactics in order to harass military or police targets. Within the context of a post-conflict situation, counterinsurgency implies stabilization or "nation building" operations.

²² Vest 41, 46, 47.

²³ Pape, 81.

²⁴ O' Neill 24, 25, 70.

provides background on the socio-political goals of the insurgents, an understanding of which is necessary for devising a sound counter-strategy.

Socio-Political Goals of the Insurgents

Historically, Iraq has been held together with a combination of force and calculated incentives, within the context of historical domination by the Sunni minority that traces back to the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ After World War I, British rule perpetuated Sunni dominance of the military, government, and business, a trend which continued after independence with the Ba'ath Party,²⁶ which brought Saddam Hussein to power in 1979.²⁷ With the fall of Saddam's regime in April 2003, the Kurds and Shiites sensed it was time to push for their own goals, while the Sunnis were committed to preserving the power they enjoyed under Saddam Hussein.²⁸

Therefore, it is no surprise that the major insurgent group is organized around the former Ba'ath party that is trying to preserve the elite status it had enjoyed under Saddam Hussein. During the combat phase, the *Feyadeen*, rather than the regular army, provided most of the resistance. Composed of Ba'ath loyalists, militiamen with personal loyalty to

²⁵ Dyer 2003, 149. Although a minority with only twenty-five percent of the population, Sunni domination traces its roots to Ottoman rulers that preferred to recruit their local troops and administrators from the Sunni Arabs living around Baghdad and just north of it.

Keegan, 9-14. The Ottomans provided incentives for the Kurds and Shias to accept their rule by granting semi-autonomy and religious freedom, and by capitalizing on tribal leaders.

²⁶ Keegan, 26. After World War I, the British unified Iraq as single state but found it easiest to perpetuate the tendency to recruit Sunni Arabs for local rulers. Independence was gained in 1932.

²⁷ Keegan 35-51. Revolutionary nationalists, dominated by Sunni military elites overthrew the monarchy in 1958, with support from the Ba'ath party. A series of coups followed, culminating in the Ba'ath party assuming firm control in 1968 under Ahmad al-Bakr, who sponsored Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Muslim, first as director of security, then as Vice President. Saddam Hussein continued to develop the Ba'ath party as an instrument of state power, drawing inspiration from Nazi and Stalinist models.

²⁸ Keegan 207. After Saddam's defeat in 1991 Gulf War, the US encouraged Shias and Kurds to revolt but they were ruthlessly put down by the Sunnis who had stayed loyal to Saddam.

Saddam Hussein, and some foreign extremists from Algeria, Syria, and other Muslim countries, this group forms the core of the Ba'athist Preservationist Insurgency.²⁹ It was joined by members of the former regular military and police units when these were disbanded in May 2003. This group is motivated by desire to preserve its status, anger over lost employment, fear of being dominated by the Shiite majority, and by Arab and Iraqi nationalism.³⁰

The other major group consists of Islamic extremists like al-Qaeda or Ansar al-Islam. These “traditionalist” insurgents seek to displace the pluralistic political system with a traditional theocracy rooted in strict Islamic values.³¹ They are also motivated by Arab nationalism expressed as the desire to expel foreign military powers from Iraq and the rest of the Middle East.³²

²⁹ O' Neill 17.

³⁰ O' Neill 50. Keegan 205, 207-208.

³¹ Dyer 2003, 13. O' Neill 50. Keegan 205, 207-208.

³² Pape, 21. Besides the major groups mentioned above, Shiite militias associated with various political parties were also a factor until they agreed to demobilize in late 2004.

CHAPTER 2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR

INTRODUCTION

It is well established that each country has its own style of warfare that is influenced by its society, its geography, its political system, its comparative strengths, and its historical success in using its style of war. For example, Sir Julian Corbett noted that Great Britain, as a sea power, has historically focused on a ‘maritime’ strategy while Germany, as a continental power, has historically focused on a ‘land-centric’ way of war.³³

A country’s way of war is an expansive concept that is closest to doctrine³⁴ in that it provides a framework for how things are best done, including planning, training, equipping, and employing a force, but also includes those intangible, persistent, and characteristic biases that consistently influence the strategy and decision making at every step of war.³⁵ A “way of war” includes policies, culture, attitudes, and priorities that characterize the mode of thinking and acting. It spans all of the levels of war from the tactical to the strategic and includes the impact of the technology and international and domestic public opinion.³⁶ A way of war evolves over time with the impact of the conflict

³³ Thomas G. Mahnken, “The American Way of War in the Twenty-first Century.” In Efraim Inbar, Ed., *Democracies and Small Wars*, Frank Cass and Company Limited, London, 2003, pp. 73.

³⁴ Doctrine refers to the documented methods of warfare that have proved successful in the past. Doctrine forms the basis for planning, equipping, training, and employing forces.

³⁵ Strategy: a plan or particular set of ways and means for achieving national objectives. At the operational level strategy is reflected in campaign plans designed to achieve strategic goals by linking them to tactical objectives.

³⁶ Robert Swain, “Filling the Void: The Operational Art and the U.S. Army,” in *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War*, Praeger, London, 1996, 147-148.

environment, technology, culture, lessons learned, and tends to be reinforced by historical success.

The term, “American Way of War” (AWOW) was first coined by military historian Russell Weigley in his 1973 book by the same name.³⁷ The US has fought a wide variety of conflicts, all of which have influenced the development of the AWOW. Three threads of the AWOW have emerged from this historical evolution.

The first thread emphasizes conventional high intensity combat and evolved through the two World Wars, the Korean War, and the 1991 Gulf War (Gulf War I). It is characterized by strategies of annihilation, overwhelming firepower, technological dominance, dominant air power, and minimal US or coalition casualties, as exemplified by the Gulf War of 1991.³⁸ This thread is called the Old American Way of War (O-AWOW).

A newer style of war emerged from reforms made after the Gulf War. It continues the emphasis on high intensity combat, but overwhelming firepower has given way to surgical firepower, and technology and casualty aversion have increased in importance. It leverages technology, air power, simultaneity, and speed to achieve rapid dominance with a smaller ground force. Although it retains its conventional combat focus, it integrates special and psychological operations as supporting arms, and may utilize local

³⁷ Cited by Boot 41.

³⁸ Boot 2003, 41 and Stephen J. Cimbala, “The American Way of War,” Chapter 8 in *America’s Armed Forces: A Handbook of Current and Future Capabilities*, Edited by Sam C. Sarkesian and Robert E. Connor, Jr., Greenwood Press, London, 215.

proxy armies to do the bulk of the ground fighting, as was the case in Afghanistan. Also used in Iraq in 2003, it is called the New American Way of War (N-AWOW).³⁹

Besides these conventional modes, there is an alternative thread that results from America's "rich tradition of fighting small wars and insurgencies,"⁴⁰ beginning with the American Revolution.⁴¹ Peace keeping, peace enforcement, stabilization, humanitarian assistance, nation building, and counterinsurgency operations fit this category,⁴² and the ground-based interventions in Somalia and Haiti, and the post-combat phases of Bosnia, and Kosovo, are examples of this Alternative American Way of War (A-AWOW).⁴³

This chapter describes the evolution of the three threads, particularly the emergence of the N-AWOW as the dominant approach. The A-AWOW has tended to be a separate thread that has not been fully accepted by the mainstream of US military thought. In the following description, all characteristics apply to all three threads unless otherwise noted.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF THE O- AND N-AWOW

At the grand strategic level, the O- and N-AWOW are characterized by the tendency to pursue far reaching goals with a moral overtone, periodic episodes of unilateralism, and a direct, rather than indirect, approach.

³⁹ Boot 2003, 55.

⁴⁰ Mahnken 75.

⁴¹ Frank G. Hoffman, "Small Wars Revisited: The United States and Nontraditional Wars," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 6, December 2005, 913.

⁴² The most inclusive term is stabilization which implies nation building and peace enforcement within the context of a post-war scenario.

⁴³ Mahnken 74. Bosnia and Kosovo also contained significant air campaigns that were more illustrative of the New American Way of War. Similarly, Vietnam was a mixture of the Old and Alternative American Ways of War.

Far Reaching Moral Goals and Idealism

The US has a strong historic preference for waging war for far-reaching political objectives,⁴⁴ beginning with the Civil War, when President Lincoln and General Grant sought to utterly defeat the Confederates.⁴⁵ Associated with this is a preference for taking the moral high ground in political disputes,⁴⁶ an aspect of the AWOW that traces back to the Revolutionary War which created the US. It envisions America remaking the world in “our own image of freedom, connectivity, and the rule of law,”⁴⁷ and it borders at times on naïve idealism.⁴⁸

Far reaching political objectives have been married with great moral purpose since World War I, when General Pershing fought for unconditional surrender of Imperial Germany, and President Wilson sought to “make the world safe for democracy.”⁴⁹ In World War II, President F.D. Roosevelt and his commanders fought for unconditional surrender and the overthrow of the Nazi and Imperial Japanese regimes,

⁴⁴ Mahnken, 74.

Frederick Downey and Steven Metz. “The American Political Culture and Strategic Planning,” *Parameters*, September 1988, 39.

Jeffrey Record, “Dark Victory: America’s Second War against Iraq,” Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MA, 2004, 64, 66-68, 131.

⁴⁵ Mahnken, 74.

⁴⁶ Cimbala, 215.

⁴⁷ Barnett, Thomas, P.M. “The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century,” G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 2004, Barnett, 329.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Eyal, “Europe and the United States: An End to Illusions,” in *War in Iraq: Combat and Consequence*, Edited by Jonathan Eyal, The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Whitehall Paper 59, 28-54. This tendency to justify war in great moral terms is called the Wilsonian tradition.

⁴⁹ Mahnken 74.

while in Korea, General MacArthur fought for total victory over the communists.⁵⁰ Similarly, the most popular explanation for US defeat in Vietnam holds that the US military would have won the war if not for civilians that constrained them to fight for limited goals.

This trend continues with the current war on terror as the United States seeks to promote freedom and “defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants.”⁵¹ According to Thomas Barnett, the N-AWOW still needs that moral justification: “We need to be liberators, not mere protectors of the status quo. Our wars need to expand the good, not simply check the evil.”⁵² The events of 9/11 provided impetus to clarify the moral purpose behind the N-AWOW: the fight against global terrorism by bringing countries into the global community and economy. The far reaching political objective of the current Bush administration is exporting security and the American ideals of democracy and liberal markets⁵³ to the Persian Gulf and bringing about lasting change for Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.⁵⁴ Additionally, a tendency to demonize the enemy emerges as an outgrowth of the fight for far reaching political objectives.⁵⁵ Examples

⁵⁰ Mahnken 74.

⁵¹ United States President George W. Bush, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” Washington, D.C., The White House, September 2002, 1-2.

This far reaching goal continues in the updated *National Security Strategy* of March 2006, 9.

⁵² Barnett 329.

⁵³ *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 1-2.

⁵⁴ Barnett 328-329.

Daniel Neep, “Echoes of War: Implications for State, Society and Democracy in the Middle East,” in *War in Iraq: Combat and Consequence*, Edited by Jonathan Eyal, The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Whitehall Paper 59, 42-54.

⁵⁵ Mahnken, 75.

include President George H.W. Bush's comparison of Saddam Hussein to Hitler, or his use of the term, 'Axis of Evil.'⁵⁶

Unilateralism

“Unilateralism,” is a foreign policy term that refers to “independent, autonomous, self-directed, sovereign, and unilateral control over a state's security and economic affairs.”⁵⁷

While the opposite of unilateralism is multilateralism, these descriptors are usually applied to an actual policy that tends to fall in the spectrum between the two poles, ranging from purely unilateral, to bilateral, to multiple bilateral, to coalitional, to à la carte multilateralism, to purely multilateral.⁵⁸ The US has tended to operate in the middle of the spectrum using bilateral, multiple bilateral, coalitional, and even à la carte multilateral approaches, depending on the situation, but its status as sole superpower since the end of the Cold War has naturally shifted it toward the unilateral pole, i.e., mostly multiple bilateral and coalitional approaches.⁵⁹

The tendency for unilateralism has always been exacerbated by concerns over putting US troops under multilateral command. “The commitment of US combat forces under the command of any other governments, even under the umbrella of an

⁵⁶ President George W. Bush, “State of the Union Speech: The Axis of Evil,” Excerpt cited in *The Iraq War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions*, Edited by Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf, Touchstone Books, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003, 250-252.

⁵⁷ Frank P. Harvey, “Dispelling the Myth of Multilateral Security after 11 September and the Implications for Canada,” in David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer, Eds. *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*, Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2003, 200.

Larousse Universal Illustrated International Dictionary, McGraw-Hill International, 965, defines “unilateral” as an adjective describing an action or decision taken by one side or party only.

⁵⁸ Harvey, 202.

⁵⁹ Cimbala, 244. Harvey 202.

international organization, creates potential problems of operational integrity and political accountability.”⁶⁰ The US avoided these problems in the Korean War and the Gulf War of 1991 because, although authorized by the United Nations, they were essentially US-designed and directed military campaigns. The UN resolution justifying the US action during the first Gulf War was useful because it provided legal cover. It made it easier to get congressional approval and encouraged Arab members to join and stay with the coalition, while encouraging Israel to stay out of the fight.⁶¹ Therefore, the United States saw multilateral institutions like the United Nations as useful within the O-AWOW, but only to a point, because complete subordination to UN approval would have required an unacceptable sacrifice in the use of American power.⁶²

The N-AWOW continues this trend, but makes little attempt at persuasion, emphasizing that “if you disagree, we don’t need you anyway.”⁶³ Hence, coalitions of the willing take precedence over formal alliances and international institutions like the UN in the N-AWOW, especially since 9/11.

The events of 9/11 raised the spectre of mass death and destruction through terrorist attack. To deal with this threat, particularly Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in the hands of rogue states or terrorists, the doctrine of pre-emption is now part of the N-AWOW. Pre-emption is a form of extended self-defence, whereby threats to the United States in the form of terrorism or the possession of weapons of mass destruction by hostile regimes may be countered by pre-emptive military action. Pre-emption is

⁶⁰ Cimbala, 217-218, 222, 231.

⁶¹ Cimbala, 236

⁶² Eyal 40-41.

⁶³ Eyal, 33.

likely to be a durable feature of the N-AWOW due to the perceived risk of inaction.⁶⁴

The desire for pre-emption reinforces the unilateral characteristic since it assumes a rapid response to threats rather than taking the time to build a broad multilateral support.

The Direct Approach

A third tendency of the AWOW at the strategic level is to prefer the direct over the indirect approach.⁶⁵ The US military has frequently chosen to close with and destroy the enemy as soon as possible. For example, during World War II, the US preferred to invade continental Europe as soon as possible while the British preferred an indirect strategy of slowly encircling the Axis while allowing the Soviet forces to attrite German forces.⁶⁶ A natural consequence of the direct approach is the tendency to see a military solution as the quickest way to eliminate a problem to US security.⁶⁷ This tendency to use military force has been amplified by two factors: the overwhelming conventional supremacy of the American military since the end of the Cold War and the Pentagon's dominance relative to the State Department, a legacy of McNamara's successful effort to make the Secretary of Defense the most powerful of cabinet departments.⁶⁸

Public Influence and Casualty Aversion

The impact of the American public is usually decisive, whether it is a conventional war, a peace enforcement mission or nation building operation. It is widely perceived that one

⁶⁴ *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 1-3.

⁶⁵ Eyal 28-29.

⁶⁶ Mahnken, 75.

⁶⁷ Eyal, 29.

⁶⁸ Cimbala, 224.

factor contributing to the American defeat in Vietnam was the loss of public support as the war dragged on with no decisive victory in the face of mounting casualties. There are four aspects of public support that are important: the relative worth of the political goals in the eyes of the public; aversion to casualties; the apparent success and duration of the campaign; and whether it is necessary to mobilize significant reserves after the campaign has already begun.

First, the political goals for military intervention are usually justified to the public in appealing moral terms like the “need to export ‘democracy’ or ‘justice’...coupled with a search for instant, miraculous solutions.”⁶⁹ Media campaigns, coupled with Presidential speeches, are usually important for increasing the apparent value of the political goals in the eyes of the US public.⁷⁰

Second, the US public is adverse to casualties, especially if the political goals do not appear to be clearly vital to America’s interest.⁷¹ This casualty aversion is deeply rooted in American history and culture. Americans have always valued the individual over the state and have tended to capitalize on technology or firepower to minimize casualties in battle.⁷² The level of public aversion appears to be dependent not only on the perceived worth of the goals, but also on the apparent success and duration of the campaign. Experience in Korea, Vietnam, Beirut (1983), and Somalia (1992-1994) suggest that public support increases with success, but falls off when the military

⁶⁹ Eyal, 30.

⁷⁰ Jeffrey Record, “Collapsed Countries, Casualty Dread, and the New American Way of War,” *Parameters* 32:2 (Summer 2002), 8.

⁷¹ Mahnken 75. Cimbala 244.

⁷² Record 2002, 1, 6-8.

campaign is less successful or more extended or costly in lives.⁷³ Public intolerance for heavy American casualties was a major reason for withdrawing from Vietnam. Similarly, public controversy over peace enforcement operations in Somalia led to a decision to withdraw before the mission could be completed. The Somalia intervention did not seem vital to American security, therefore the casualty tolerance was low, and public opinion turned decisively against the operation after only eighteen US Rangers were killed, resulting in a US decision to withdraw and subsequent mission failure.

In contrast to Somalia, the quick decisive victory in the 1991 Gulf War caused initially ambivalent public support to soar. Thus, in order to maintain solid public support the AWOW seeks to win quick decisive victory with minimal casualties.⁷⁴

Third, for limited wars, the American public tends to oppose the large-scale mobilization of forces, such as imposing the draft or activating the National Guard.⁷⁵ These measures raise the cost of the war in the eyes of the public since they have a wider impact on most communities than the deployment of standing forces. The public is particularly concerned about adding troops after a war has been underway, wondering if this means the war is going badly.

Public influence is important for all three threads of the AWOW, but particularly for the N-AWOW, reflecting the impact of increasing media attention and the impact of global media such as the internet. The role of the media in catering to the American public is best exemplified by the tendency since Afghanistan (2001) to embed the media

⁷³ Cimbala, 215, 221, 232, 234, 239. See Record 2002, 1, 6-8.

⁷⁴ Mahnken 77.

⁷⁵ Cimbala, 227.

with combat units.⁷⁶ This is part of the American military's information campaign to build public and maintain support, a task that is easier if the political objectives can be linked to the "war on terror."⁷⁷

The American public has had a heightened perception of the terrorist threat since 9/11, resulting in strong support for the "war on terror".⁷⁸ In this context, Afghanistan was seen as only the start of a series of military operations, with widespread US public belief in a link between terrorism, Saddam Hussein, and the unfinished business of the first Gulf War.⁷⁹ The American public tends to associate this terrorism with Islamist extremists like al-Qaeda, leading to a heightened fear of Islamic fundamentalism in general.⁸⁰

In summary, as part of the N-AWOW, the American public is generally receptive to military operations in support of the war on terror, including operations in Iraq, but it will want to see quick results with minimal casualties.⁸¹

Quick Decisive Victory through Overwhelming Force

US conventional supremacy has combined with casualty aversion to lead to "quick decisive victory through overwhelming firepower" as another characteristic of the O- and

⁷⁶ Barnett, 329-331.

⁷⁷ Eyal 29, 33.

⁷⁸ Graeme Smith, "Crisis in Iraq: World Opinion, Little Popular Support for War Outside U.S.," *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada), March 20, 2003, 1.

⁷⁹ Dyer 2004, 173.

⁸⁰ Neep. 41, 43, 52.

⁸¹ Record 2004, *Dark Victory* 99.

N-AWOW.⁸² Analysts often ascribe this characteristic to the Powell Doctrine⁸³, which arose out of a published article by the Chairman of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, in 1992.⁸⁴ The Powell Doctrine is a refinement of the earlier Weinberger Doctrine, which provides guidelines for when to use American military force as a result of lessons learned in Vietnam.⁸⁵ Recognizing the American public's aversion to casualties and long wars with indecisive results, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger argued in 1984 for sufficient military force to ensure success, saying "Americans like their military operations to be quick, cheap, and above all, clearly victorious."⁸⁶ In his 1992 article, Powell did not insist on overwhelming force, but he did emphasize that "we should win and win decisively...[and] we should see our objective clearly, then achieve it swiftly and efficiently,"⁸⁷ recognizing that the support of the American public support could otherwise be lost.⁸⁸ However, in practice, General Powell used overwhelming force to neutralize the Panamanian Defence Forces in 1989 "with one massive blow,"⁸⁹

⁸² Mahnken, 76.

⁸³ Wikipedia, "Powell Doctrine of Overwhelming Force," http://eu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Powell_Doctrine accessed 1 April 2006. ; Also Mahnken 76.

⁸⁴ Powell, Colin. "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," in *Foreign Affairs*, 71 (Winter 1992/1993), 32-45.

⁸⁵ Michael Handel, "The Weinberger Doctrine," Appendix B to *The Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, Frank Cass, Portland, Oregon, 1996, 185. The Weinberger Doctrine was first articulated on 28 November 1984 by Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger.

⁸⁶ Weinberger is quoted in Handel, 199. See also Handel 192 and 197, and Michael Handel, http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/mil/html/mh_057800_weinbergerdo.htm Accessed 1 April 2006.

⁸⁷ Powell, 40.

⁸⁸ Mahnken, 76.

⁸⁹ Micheal R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, "The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf," Little, Brown and Company, New York, 1995, 145. See also Wikipedia, "Operation Just Cause," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Just_Cause accessed 1 April 2006.

and instructed his planners to use overwhelming force and leave no possibility of failure in Gulf War I.⁹⁰ After the war, he explained, “Anybody who has the ability to generate overwhelming force should do so.”⁹¹

Overwhelming force can be achieved through a combination of superior numbers, technology, or firepower. At the operational level, firepower is often seen as the primary way to achieve decisive results while saving US lives. The US Army Doctrine, FM 100-5, still preaches annihilation of the enemy’s army via close integration of air and land power.⁹²

Annihilation through superior force has been a feature of the conventional threads of the AWOW since World War II.⁹³ The first Gulf War continued as a classic case of annihilation warfare: decisive air strikes against Iraqi command and control systems and military equipment before a short ground campaign based on “strategic flanking movements.”⁹⁴ Max Boot argues that these movements exemplified attrition, rather than manoeuvre, because US fire-power was so heavy that the assault simply would have rolled over anything in its path.⁹⁵ Gulf War I showed the direct approach made possible by the firepower and technology of the O-AWOW.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 145, 153.

⁹¹ Ibid 154. The common interpretation of “overwhelming force” as a part of the Powell doctrine has less to do with the 1992 article than with the prior actions of Powell himself as CJCS

⁹² Swain, 157. The US Army calls this AirLand Battle Concept.

⁹³ Cimbala, 243.

⁹⁴ Cimbala, 243.

⁹⁵ Boot 2003, 41-42. Generals Stonewall Jackson and George S. Patton always favoured manoeuvre to costly frontal assaults but their type has been rare.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEW AMERICAN WAY OF WAR

Science and Technology over Human Element in Warfare

Technology as a major influence on the N-AWOW has its roots in the O-AWOW during World War II when it culminated in the development of the super bomber and the atomic bomb. The US military has used technology consistently since in order to counter greater Soviet pact numbers with a qualitative edge. Technology brought mixed results in Vietnam, but during the 1991 Gulf War, it helped the US achieve quick victory while minimizing casualties. This success helped accelerate the trend to technical dominance, particularly with respect to stealth, precision, and information technology, yielding what has been called a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The RMA influenced the US Department of Defense in its goals to transform the US military, particularly to better capitalize on the advances of the information age.⁹⁶

The N-AWOW continues to emphasize a scientific, rather human, view of war, in which perfect knowledge of the battle space seems attainable if only one can obtain enough data. Network Centric Warfare (NCW), an aspect of the RMA,⁹⁷ is a theory proposing that shared situational awareness made possible by recent advances in information technology will allow Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) systems to gather all the information troops need to “see” the battle space, feed it to thousands of linked computers, and have it “delivered” to any soldier that needs it as a

⁹⁶ Elinor C. Sloan, “The Revolution in Military Affairs,” McGill-Queen’s University Press, Kingston, 2002, 33, 53-54. The RMA emerged in the 1990s. For a historical evolution of the RMA see also 25, 27, and 29.

⁹⁷ Sloan, 6-7, 15.

visual display, whenever needed in real time.⁹⁸ US forces would get and process data more quickly than their adversaries, getting inside their decision cycle.⁹⁹ This would enable US commanders to make better decisions than their enemies, assuring victory through the “near-simultaneous paralysis and destruction of enemy forces, war-making capability and information networks throughout the depth of the theatre.”¹⁰⁰

NCW facilitates knowledge, rapidity, brilliance, and control, the four core capabilities of the emerging theory of Rapid Dominance, or “Shock and Awe,” as it is popularly known. In Rapid Dominance, the aim is to influence the adversary’s will by psychologically shocking and unnerving, or by physically denying or destroying, leaving no doubt as to the US forces capability to dominate and apply force. Shock and Awe shifts the emphasis from “overwhelming force” to “potent force” delivered with simultaneity, rapidity, and precision,¹⁰¹ reflecting a refinement of Powell Doctrine. As emerging features of the N-AWOW, rapid dominance, NCW, and the RMA allow commanders to deliver potent force with much smaller ground forces than in the past.¹⁰²

The knowledge pillar of Rapid Dominance theory requires expert human and cultural awareness of the adversary. However, within the context of *Joint Vision 2010*¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Gentry, 89.

⁹⁹ LCol David S. Fadok, “John Boyd and John Warden: Airpower’s Quest for Strategic Paralysis,” Chapter 10 in *Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, ed. Col. Phillip S. Meilinger, Maxwell AFB, AL, Air University Press, 1997, 364-368.

¹⁰⁰ Gentry, 89.

¹⁰¹ Harlan Ullman and James P. Wade, “Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance,” National Defense University Press, Washington, DC, 1996, 7, 16-17, 26.

¹⁰² Barnett, 327. See also Sloan, 12.

¹⁰³ U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Vision 2010,” Washington, DC, 13, 16. Internet: <http://www.dtic.mil/jv2010/jvpub.htm> accessed, 5 April 2006.

and 2020,¹⁰⁴ the US military emphasizes information superiority with a technological rather than human focus, with the result that troops rarely make preparations to acquire background knowledge and understanding of local political, cultural, and social factors before they deploy into theatre.¹⁰⁵

Emphasis on Air Power over Ground Power in the New American Way of War

Air power has been a prominent part of the O-AWOW since World War II, but its overwhelming success during the 1991 Gulf War made it even more so.¹⁰⁶ Since then, casualty aversion and high technology have led to a preference in the N-AWO for air power to achieve objectives without incurring logistical burden or the risk of casualties represented by large ground forces, as was illustrated by Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2001). Associated with air power is the increasing importance of “precision engagement”, as confirmed by *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020*.¹⁰⁷ The use of precision guided munitions (PGMs) has grown exponentially during the last ten years reaching 57% of total air to ground weapons employed in Afghanistan in 2001.¹⁰⁸ Airpower theorists hope that precision weapons will allow US forces to achieve Rapid Dominance through focussed firepower, while minimizing collateral damage.¹⁰⁹ Within the context

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, “Joint Vision 2020,” Washington, DC, 8. Internet: <http://www.dtic.mil/jointvision/jv2020a.pdf>, accessed 5 April 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Gentry 89, 96-97.

¹⁰⁶ Mahnken, 75, 79-80. Record 2002, 9, 11. The growing effectiveness of US air power as evidenced in Gulf War I (1991), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001) seem to promise a new American way of war that can achieve strategic results without significant casualties.

¹⁰⁷ Gentry 2002, 90. *Joint Vision 2010*, 1, 11-12, 18-19, 21; *Joint Vision 2020*, 2-3, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Mahnken, 80. During the first Gulf War 8% of the air delivered weapons were precision guided, in Kosovo, 35%, and in Afghanistan, 57%.

¹⁰⁹ Barnett, 329-331.

of the N-AWOW, it is believed that precision air power will allow US forces to prevail in combat with much smaller ground forces than in the past. The ground forces will be reduced in size even further if proxy armies are available, as in Afghanistan in 2001.¹¹⁰

No Emphasis on Nation Building in the N-AWOW

Nation building was a major aspect of the O-AWOW immediately after World War II, when US commanders functioned as governors,¹¹¹ and fulfilled a major number of civil-military functions (CIMIC).¹¹² Since then, however, the military has been squeamish about non-military roles, especially after Vietnam. Also, the time required for nation building runs counter to the dictates of the Powell Doctrine: quick decisive victory through overwhelming firepower followed by a speedy withdrawal.¹¹³

EMERGENCE OF THE ALTERNATIVE -AWOW

The A-AWOW has distant roots in the American Revolution and marked the US approach to foreign policy prior to World War I. It disappeared during the World Wars,¹¹⁴ only to re-emerge in the 1960s in response to Soviet attempts to spread communism via proxy wars of national liberation throughout the Third World.¹¹⁵ This

¹¹⁰ Record 2002, 12.

¹¹¹ D.M. Giangreco and Robert E. Griffin, "Airbridge to Berlin: the Berlin Crisis of 1948, its Origins and Aftermath," Presidio Press, Novato, California, 1988, 1-88. General Lucius Clay was US Governor in the US sector of occupied Germany while General Douglas MacArthur fulfilled a similar function in US occupied Japan.

¹¹² Dobbins et al. xiii, xix, xxii, and Table S1.

¹¹³ Cimbala, 244. See also Grant T. Hammond, "Myths of the Gulf War: Some 'lessons' not learn," Royal Air Force Air Power Review 3, (Summer 2000) 63-70. Hammond suggests it is debatable whether a quick victory in Iraq in 1991 did in fact achieve desirable results in the long run.

¹¹⁴ Hoffman, 2005, 915.

¹¹⁵ Cimbala, 227-228.

way of war emphasized “special” and “psychological operations”, counterinsurgency, and nation building, but according to Stephen Cimbala, only the special operations fringe, such as the Green Berets, committed themselves to their precepts. “The more traditional arms of service lacked serious interest in special operations and regarded their counterinsurgency brethren with undisguised distaste.”¹¹⁶ As a result, the A-AWOW remained as a separate low priority thread of the overall AWOW, even though some wars contained a mixture of both conventional and alternative warfare. Vietnam, for instance, started with a counterinsurgency focus by special operations forces, but the demands for more troops drew in conventionally minded forces that subsequently dominated the rest of the war.¹¹⁷

The US military has remained suspicious of the A-AWOW because it associates the defeat in Vietnam with protracted counterinsurgency. Although there was a brief renewal of interest in covert counterinsurgency operations in Latin America during the Reagan era, mainstream funding and intellectual effort went towards high technology designed to for conventional high intensity battle.¹¹⁸ Even Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki’s plans to transform the Army into a lighter more mobile force, essentially envisioned a conventionally focused lethal force¹¹⁹ characterized by the high technology

¹¹⁶ Cimbala, 227-228.

¹¹⁷ Record 2002, 12. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan 2001 contains elements of both the N- and A-AWOW, but the overall approach is dominated by the former.

¹¹⁸ Cimbala, 228-229.

¹¹⁹ Mahnken, 81. Shinseki’s October 1999 specific goal is to deploy a 5,000 man brigade anywhere in the world within 96 hours. He designated two test brigades in Fort Lewis, Washington to explore new concepts and organizations. They have been equipped with the light armoured Stryker wheeled fighting vehicle rather than M1A1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley fighting vehicles. These vehicles should be very useful in small wars.

of the RMA.¹²⁰ American war fighting is thus presently dominated by the N-AWOW that emphasizes conventional operations abiding by the mantra of “get in quick, win decisively using ‘Shock and Awe’, and leave as soon as possible before there is a chance to get mired in a protracted Vietnam type conflict.”¹²¹

Nation building, counterinsurgency, and human factors like the culture, social structure, and psychology of the host population are important factors of the A-AWOW, but the scant attention paid to these issues by most of the US military cannot offset the dominance of firepower, airpower and technology inherent in the N-AWOW. Although it has borrowed some “alterative” characteristics like psychological and special operations, the N-AWOW still focuses on conventional battle and the A-AWOW remains the concern of only the special operations fringe of the US Military.¹²²

Because of the Vietnam experience, the public tends to be suspicious of the A-AWOW because the goals often seem to be non-vital yet this type of war requires a long commitment in the face of uncertain progress.¹²³

AWOW SUMMARY

This chapter has described how the conventionally oriented N-AWOW emerged from the technological transformations to the O-AWOW after the 1991 Gulf War. As the descriptive summary in Table 2.1 shows, the new approach has much in common with the old way, such as the emphasis on far reaching goals heavily influenced by American values and political ideology, particularly freedom, democracy and liberal markets.

¹²⁰ Boot 2003, 42. 54.

¹²¹ Mahnken, 81.

¹²² Cimbala, 248. Barnett, 329-331.

¹²³ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 65.

Supremacy in conventional power since the end of the Cold War means that the N-AWOW prefers a unilateral approach to foreign policy, expressed as “coalitions of the willing,” a tendency which is reinforced by the doctrine of pre-emption.

The O- and N-AWOW have tended to emphasize military or kinetic power over diplomatic or economic power, a reflection of US strength in conventional power.

The support of the public is crucial for all three threads, but the requirement for extended operations for non-vital goals without any appearance of decisive victory means that the mainstream of the US military and public tend to be more suspicious of the A-AWOW than the O- or N-AWOW.

The overwhelming force of the O-AWOW has given way to precision firepower in the N-AWOW. Further, the technology and airpower of the N-AWOW are used to reduce the size of ground forces compared to the O-AWOW.

The A-AWOW has lent certain attributes like psychological and special operations but remains separate from dominant N-AWOW and its conventional focus. As a result, there is no great overall emphasis within US war-fighting on nation building, stabilization operations, or counterinsurgency.

CHARACTERISTIC	O-AWOW	N-AWOW	A-AWOW	NOTES
Far reaching political objectives, influenced by American values	X	X	X	Nation building is realistically a substantive or far-reaching goal.
Fighting for non-vital goals			X	The A-AWOW tends to emphasize secondary or tertiary goals, not directly related to US vital interests.
Tendency to Demonize Adversary	X	X		
Unilateralism	X (Slight)	X (Emphasized)		The recent shift to unilateralism is associated with US sole superpower status.
Direct Approach Emphasizing Military Firepower	X	X		
Military Force is De-emphasized in Relation to Politics, Sociology, Economics, Reconstruction, and Intelligence.			X	
Conventional Combat	X	X		
Un-Conventional Combat or Special Operations Forces	Special Forces like the Green Berets in World War II tended to be employed primarily in high intensity to assault particularly difficult targets.	Special Operations including psychological operations within the context of supporting an overall conventional campaign.	X	
Overwhelming Firepower with Large Ground Forces	X			
Surgical Firepower with Small Ground Forces or Local Proxy Armies		X	X (Lesser extent than N-AWOW)	
Public Support: Quick Decisive Victory with Minimum Casualties	X (High Casualties Tolerated for Vital Defence in WWI and II)	X (Empha-sized by the success of the 1991 Gulf War)	X (Public Suspicion)	The public was largely unaware of the covert alterative missions in Latin America in the 1980s.
Casualty Aversion and Emphasis on Force Protection	X	X	X	
Continued Next Page...				

CHARACTERISTIC	O-AWOW	N-AWOW	A-AWOW	NOTES
Technological vs Human Focus	X	X		A-AWOW uses technology but the focus is on political, social, cultural, psychological factors and relationships with the local people and leaders.
Dominant Airpower	X	X (Small Ground Forces supported by technology and air power)		A-AWOW may use airpower but it is not the focus.
Net-work Centric Warfare		X	X Note	Network Centric Warfare does not necessarily have to be technically oriented; it just has been mostly interpreted that way by US military culture.
Shock and Awe/Rapid Dominance		X		
Technical Information Dominance		X		
Human-Oriented Knowledge of the Adversary's Mind including Cultural, Social, and Political Factors in the Adversary's Society			X	
Emphasis on Nation Building or Stabilization including Civil-Military Affairs, Occupation, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction	X (Disappeared after Vietnam)		X (Overall emphasis suffers due to domination of the N-AWOW)	
Emphasis on Peace Keeping and Enforcement Ground Forces			X	The O-, and N-AWOW assume conventional forces can do peacekeeping and enforcement without any special training. They do not <i>emphasize</i> these roles.
Counterinsurgency			X	

Table 2. 1: Summary Description of the Three Threads of the American Way of War.

CHAPTER 3 – REFINEMENT OF AWOW EVALUATION CRITERIA

The previous chapter described over twenty separate features of the Old, New, and Alternative threads of the AWOW that were summarized in Table 2.1. It would be difficult to analyze so many criteria in post-war Iraq. Therefore, this chapter groups the criteria into six key features of the N-AWOW that will facilitate the detailed analysis. As a preliminary test of the validity of this selection, the criteria are analyzed for their applicability to nation building and counterinsurgency, using historical examples up to and including Afghanistan 2001. A seventh feature comprised of “overconfidence and lack of counterinsurgency doctrine” emerges from the analysis as a key characteristic.

A1. Far Reaching Political Objectives, Influenced by American Values

The N-AWOW has tended to emphasize far reaching goals with moral and ideological overtones, such as spreading American values like freedom, democracy, and liberal market economies. This characteristic creates two challenges for American involvement in low-intensity conflicts. First, the Weinberger-Powell doctrines are based on the lack of historical success in committing long-term resources to altruistic missions that did not contain some element of vital strategic economic or security interest, as evidenced by experience in Vietnam, Beirut (1984), Somalia, and Rwanda.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Handel, 185-187, 199, 201, 202. Powell, 39. Powell refers to the US Marines’ experience in Lebanon in 1983, when they were inserted into a complex civil war situation with vague political direction and no clear vital security interest for the US. A suicide bomber attack resulted in the death of 241 US personnel and subsequent withdrawal from the region.

See also Melvin R. Laird, “Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2005, Vol. 84 Issue 6, 22-23.

Second, while the American public may not see the vital interest, the locally based insurgents are able to appeal to nationalism and a large supply of potential recruits. Groups like al-Qaeda made very effective use in Somalia and Afghanistan of the natural desire to expel foreign invaders, referring on its web-site to America's occupation of Afghanistan and the installation of Hamid Karzai as an example of the US's "veiled colonialism," or indirect rule of the country.¹²⁵ Insurgents use religious differences to build active popular support by portraying the US as a religiously motivated aggressor seeking to transform Muslim societies.¹²⁶ Therefore, the far reaching transformational goals of the US facilitate their efforts to create fear that the West is an "aggressive purveyor of its foreign values" forcing modernism upon Muslims.¹²⁷

A2. Unilateralism and Unilateral Decision Making

Unilateralism may make it more difficult to build a broadly based coalition, which may have negative implications for burden sharing and for building legitimacy. A RAND Corporation study of the historical role of the US in post-conflict stabilization from Germany to the present confirms that nation building is expensive in time and resources, which makes it important to share the burden through a multilateral approach. Attempts in Somalia and Haiti to unilaterally lead, man, and conduct initial operations and then turn it over to a wider UN-led force have not been as successful as approaches that have

¹²⁵ Pape, 118. See also Pape 52. Most of al-Qaeda's members come from Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia, places with large deployments of US troops.

¹²⁶ Pape 117.

¹²⁷ Dyer 2004, 48, 50, 77, 161-164. The US goals for Afghanistan were as follows: eliminate al-Qaeda, de-Talibanize the country, bring the victorious northern warlords under control, establish security, law and order, build a democratic government, national police force and army, feed and clothe the population, bring the millions of refugees back, rebuild the infrastructure, and put it on a path to brighter prospects.

invited much broader participation from the start. Multilateral approaches have a greater likelihood of producing more “thoroughgoing transformations and greater regional reconciliation than can unilateral efforts.”¹²⁸

A3. Direct Strategy Emphasizing Military Fire Power

The emphasis on fire-power within the N-AWOW is a natural outgrowth of US conventional supremacy and the desire to achieve decisive victory while saving US lives. However, Vietnam showed that firepower can be counter-productive in a counter-insurgency campaign where heavy use of artillery and air power failed to cut the communist insurgents off from their base of popular support. Conversely, it is now known that the heavy collateral damage resulting from heavy fire-power actually increased support for the insurgency, contributing ultimately to the US defeat.¹²⁹ Despite this lesson, the US Army Doctrine, FM 100-5, still preaches annihilation of the enemy’s army via close integration of air and land power.¹³⁰

In low intensity conflicts like Panama (1989) or Kosovo (1999), US fire-power contributed to lop-sided kill ratios that adversaries used to depict the US as a “bully”. The US faced a similar challenge in Afghanistan.¹³¹

A4. Public Support: Quick Decisive Victory with Minimum Casualties

This aspect of the N-AWOW may have a negative impact on successful counterinsurgency within the context of post-conflict nation building for three reasons.

¹²⁸ Dobbins et al., xxv.

¹²⁹ Mahnken, 77-78.

¹³⁰ Swain, 157.

¹³¹ Mahnken, 78.

First, the political goals of these kinds of operations tend to be of a less vital nature, which adversaries may exploit by targeting the American public directly with an information or terror campaign designed to drive a wedge between it and the government over the worth of the operation.¹³²

Second, although 9/11 heightened perception of the terrorist threat, resulting in strong support for the “war on terror,”¹³³ the American public will tend to want to see quick results with minimal casualties.¹³⁴ The N-AWOW seems to fill these expectations with the promise of victory without significant cost in lives,¹³⁵ but this promise is a chimera for counterinsurgency operations, which require long-term commitment.¹³⁶

Third, Jeffrey Record argues that American distaste for casualties has become so extreme that it is now a “casualty phobia” that places accomplishment of objectives second to the minimization of casualties. This was observed in Bosnia, Kosovo, and especially in Afghanistan where casualty phobia may have contributed significantly to the escape of senior Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden, because not enough US ground forces were directly involved.¹³⁷

¹³² Gentry 93-94. For example, Bosnian Muslims conducted an information campaign that portrayed them as innocent victims of Serb aggression during the Bosnian civil war of 1992-95, thus gaining US support for their side. Conversely, Milosevic’s Serbian regime waged an almost successful campaign to convince the public that their war against him was ill-advised and illegal.

¹³³ Graeme Smith, “Crisis in Iraq: World Opinion; Little Popular Support for War Outside US,” *Globe and Mail*, 29 March 2003, Toronto, CA, 1.

¹³⁴ Robert Tomes, “Schlock and Blah: Counter-insurgency Realities in a Rapid Dominance Era,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Volume 16, Number 1, 41.

¹³⁵ Record 2002, 19.

¹³⁶ Tomes, 41.

¹³⁷ Record 1, 6-8. Mahnken, 76.

The greatest tension between mission effectiveness and force protection occurs during the conduct of counterinsurgency operations because success requires close interaction with the population and hence exposure to the threat of ambush. At the same time, the limited and secondary nature of the objectives at times does not seem to justify the risk.¹³⁸

Unfortunately, the N-AWOW exacerbates this problem, as illustrated by *Joint Vision 2020's* emphasis on full-dimensional protection by using technological supremacy, sometimes at the expense of overall operational effectiveness.¹³⁹

The casualty phobia of the N-AWOW will likely result in lack of commitment, degraded military effectiveness, and emboldened enemies, as evidenced by Osama bin Laden's conclusions from Beirut and Somalia that it is possible for insurgents to expel a superpower from a national homeland.¹⁴⁰

A5. Technological vs Human Focus

The N-AWOW's emphasis on technical information places a premium on imagery and electromagnetic data rather than on human intelligence and analysis. Technological sensors cannot detect human emotions, intentions, popular support, and morale, but these human factors are particularly important in low-intensity conflicts.¹⁴¹

Technical sensors are also vulnerable to deception tactics that deny effective use of imagery, as Yugoslav forces effectively demonstrated in 1999, using false targets,

¹³⁸ Mahnken, 76.

¹³⁹ Gentry 2002, 90.

¹⁴⁰ Mahnken, 77.

¹⁴¹ Trinquier 5-8.

camouflage, and concealment. Similarly, the Taliban showed that dispersing forces among civilians in urban terrain is very effective, especially if strict avoidance of electronic communications is followed.¹⁴² It is clear that technologically obtained information can be constrained by adversary actions during war.

Technological information dominance does not sufficiently account for Clausewitz's "friction of war," nor does it give proper due to the moral, psychological, and emotional factors.¹⁴³ By de-emphasizing cultural and social factors, the N-AWOW emphasizes data over analysis,¹⁴⁴ a trend continued by *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020's* emphasis on technical information dominance.¹⁴⁵ US troops rarely educate themselves on the cultural, social, psychological, and political factors of the society in which they will be operating. This puts them at a crucial disadvantage for counterinsurgency operations which require that they analyze the political aims and tactics of the adversary.¹⁴⁶

Technical information dominance can be easily countered by an enemy that pursues a low-technology strategy that directly targets US political leaders and the public using mass media.¹⁴⁷ Al-Qaeda, for instance makes extremely effective use of the internet

¹⁴² Cimbala, 248.

¹⁴³ Carl von Clausewitz, "On War," Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1984, 119, 137, 148

¹⁴⁴ Gentry 89, 96-97.

¹⁴⁵ Gentry 90. In its fullest sense, the "manoeuvre warfare concept" requires out performing one's adversary in all domains: physical, informational, moral, political, etc. Dominant manoeuvre in a physical sense is not very helpful in stabilization, nation building, humanitarian relief, or peacekeeping operations.

¹⁴⁶ Frank G. Hoffman, "Small Wars Revisited: The United States and Nontraditional Wars," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 921.

¹⁴⁷ This technique was successfully employed by Mao against the Japanese in World War II and against the Chinese Nationalists after the war.

and maintains its own website.¹⁴⁸ Besides using the media, adversaries also counter attempts to get inside their decision cycle by deliberately slowing the timing of events (e.g., waging a protracted war of attrition).¹⁴⁹

Adversaries can also decentralize their operations and minimize real-time electronic communication as was done in Al-Qaeda's attack on 9 September 2001, making it difficult to detect and prevent. In contrast, the N-AWOW emphasizes command and control by power point briefings and requires huge Information Technology (IT) and communications resources to function.¹⁵⁰

Without a human focus, US technical information dominance does not translate into effectively useful information for counterinsurgency.¹⁵¹

A6. Emphasis on Air Over Ground Power

The N-AWOW leverages the precision firepower available in modern air power in order to achieve rapid dominance without large ground forces. Ullman and Wade, however, caution that rapid dominance or "Shock and Awe" may have some unknown limitations in counterinsurgency.¹⁵² In Vietnam, the US military consistently used its advantages in air power and air mobility to win tactical advantage against the Vietcong and North

¹⁴⁸ Gabriel Walman, "WWW.Terror.Net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet," The U.S. Institute of Peace, www.usip.org, 1. Internet, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr116.pdf>, accessed 17 April 2006.

¹⁴⁹ Tomes 41.

¹⁵⁰ Gentry 97.

¹⁵¹ Gentry, 89, 91, 99. Further, personnel are becoming conditioned to operate, psychologically and doctrinally, with their "electronic crutches". This could cause chaos in the event of outages, and the electronic devices are not as likely to be successful in low intensity operations.

¹⁵² Ullman and Wade 2.

Vietnamese Army, but this did not contribute to the operational and strategic successes needed to win that war.¹⁵³

The most crucial aspect of any nation's way of war is how effectively it contributes to the attainment of political objectives. But air power is limited in the type of strategic effects it can produce. It is vital during the combat phase, but offers only a supporting role during the post-combat stabilization phase. Although air power seemed successful in Kosovo, it did not achieve all of the political goals, and in the absence of ground troops, the NATO bombing actually accelerated ethnic cleansing rather than halting it.¹⁵⁴ Cimbala cautions that "In practice, as opposed to theory, the economies and social fabrics of Third World states may be so fragile that the "precision" possible in high technology warfare is irrelevant to those on the receiving end,"¹⁵⁵ particularly in dense urban environments where it can still cause collateral damage. In Afghanistan, such weapons caused many Afghan casualties, twice striking "well-marked Kabul facilities of the International Committee of the Red Cross."¹⁵⁶

Experience suggests that the most important task in a post-conflict insurgency situation is to provide security and order. This requires a large contribution of ground troops rather than a small force leveraged by air power.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Mahnken 78-79.

¹⁵⁴ Mahnken, 80-81.

¹⁵⁵ Cimbala, 245.

¹⁵⁶ Gentry 2002, 90.

¹⁵⁷ Dobbins et al. 165-166.

A7. Overconfidence and Lack of Counterinsurgency Doctrine

The N-AWOW is very effective for conventional war but falls short of what is required for the post-conflict stabilization phase. Although the spectacular results of the 1991 Gulf War seemed to vindicate US conventional supremacy,¹⁵⁸ John Gentry contends that the US military did not realize how this was invalidated by the new security environment.¹⁵⁹

The RMA influenced the DOD in its transformation endeavours after the 1991 Gulf War, producing in the N-AWOW a lighter yet potent “joint” force capable of delivering precision firepower integrated with special operations and proxy armies, as demonstrated in Afghanistan. However, true transformation implies that the security environment should be driving the change as much as technology does¹⁶⁰, especially since the future of warfare is in low-intensity conflict operations like peace enforcement, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism.¹⁶¹ The rise in internal strife during the 1990s supports the thesis that weak and failing states, rather than strong states, are likely to be the primary source of political instability in the new world order.¹⁶² This means that

¹⁵⁸ Cimbala, 229. Together with the collapse of the Soviet Union, this triumph led columnist Charles Krauthammer to celebrate the ‘unipolar moment’ in which the US now found itself.

Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Reconsidered,” *The National Interest*, No. 70, (Winter 2002-2003), 5.

¹⁵⁹ Gentry 90-93. Frank Hoffman makes a similar argument. See Hoffman, 933.

¹⁶⁰ Stephane Lefebvre, Michel Fortmann, and Thierry Gongora, “The Revolution in Military Affairs: Its Implications for Doctrine and Force Development Within the U.S. Army,” in *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War*, Praeger, London, 1996, 174.

¹⁶¹ Martin van Creveld, “The Transformation of War,” The Free Press, MacMillan, 1991, 20-21.

¹⁶² Cimbala, 238.

irregular wars within weak states, rather than conventional wars with regional superpowers, are likely to be the dominant form of warfare.¹⁶³

The new security environment suggests that low-intensity conflict should be a priority within the AWOW, especially for the Army and Marine Corps. Despite their rich history of fighting low intensity conflicts institutional interest in these missions is mixed, and the US has tended to approach them as scaled down conventional wars.¹⁶⁴

The N-AWOW that emerged after the 1991 Gulf War has continued the emphasis on conventional war-fighting.¹⁶⁵ Although the US fights conventional battles extremely well, its success in low intensity conflict has been “dismal.”¹⁶⁶ Even in the latest example, the N-AWOW resulted in a “flawed masterpiece” that allowed US forces to quickly topple the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, but let Osama bin Laden escape and warlords and insurgents regain control of the countryside.¹⁶⁷

The Afghanistan experience suggests that for the US, the transition to low-intensity conflict will often be via conventional war, implying that the N- and A-AWOW must be reconciled within a larger framework that gives adequate importance to both components and provides for a seamless transition between them.

¹⁶³ Cimbala, 232. 234-235. In 1992, Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, argued for a US force structure and contingency planning based on regional aggressors and the spread of weapons of mass destruction as the major priority. Countering terrorism, drug trafficking, peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian assistance mission were a secondary priority.

¹⁶⁴ Record 2002, 3.

¹⁶⁵ Mahnken, 74.

¹⁶⁶ Cimbala, 239. Mahnken, 81.

¹⁶⁷ Michael E. O’Hanlon, “A Flawed Masterpiece,” *Foreign Affairs*, 00157120, May/June 2002, Vol 81, Issue 3, 1. See also Hoffman, 923.

Purely military solutions rarely are effective in counterinsurgency situations, where success requires a holistic approach that integrates the political, psychological, social, governance, and civil affairs.¹⁶⁸ Within this context, the military goals may not be clearly linked with the broader political one,¹⁶⁹ as demonstrated in Vietnam, where the US Army realized it had won most of the battles but had lost the war because the battlefield victories did not contribute to America's strategic objectives.¹⁷⁰ Despite that realization, a sense of overconfidence in the N-AWOW is pervasive. Recent surveys of US military officers indicate that the vast majority of them are confident that new technology, doctrine, and force structure will give them dominance over any enemy, allowing the US to quickly achieve decisive victories with minimum casualties. This attitude of superiority had a negative impact during the Vietnam War and could produce a tendency to oversimplify the post-war stabilization phase.¹⁷¹

A1.	Far Reaching Political Objectives, Influenced by American Values
A2.	Unilateralism and Unilateral Decision Making
A3.	Direct Strategy Emphasizing Military Fire Power
A4.	Public Support: Quick Decisive Victory with Minimum Casualties
A5.	Technological vs Human Focus
A6.	Emphasis on Air- Over Ground Power (Small Ground Forces)
A7.	Overconfidence and Lack of Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Table 3.1: Criteria derived from historical low-intensity operations that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the N-AWOW in the counterinsurgency situation of post-war Iraq.

The conventional dominance of the N-AWOW has proven to be a problem in past low-intensity conflicts. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the criteria that will be used to

¹⁶⁸ Hoffman 928.

¹⁶⁹ Cimbala 215, 240.

¹⁷⁰ Swain, 162, 165.

¹⁷¹ Mahnken, 79-80.

evaluate the impact of the N-AWOW on the counterinsurgency in Iraq. Without a strong A-AWOW to guide it in post-war Iraq, one might expect that problems seen in other low-intensity conflicts will be repeated in the occupation of Iraq.

CHAPTER 4 – HOW THE N-AWOW FAILED IN POST-WAR IRAQ

INTRODUCTION TO POST-WAR PROBLEMS

The US had good intentions for post-war Iraq: maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq; improving visibly the quality of life of Iraqis; moving Iraqis toward developing democratic institutions; putting Iraqis quickly into positions of authority; and gaining the support of the Iraqi people and international community.¹⁷² To get to this end-state, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (OHRA) planned for delivering humanitarian relief, rebuilding the economy, re-establishing key civilian services such as food, water, electricity, and health care, and supporting the transition to an Iraqi-led authority. In terms of law and order, the OHRA planned to defeat and exploit intelligence from terrorists, dismantle WMD, and reform the Iraqi military and security services.¹⁷³ Unfortunately, the events on the ground in Iraq diverged significantly from expectations.

The major problem encountered during the stability phase was the failure to establish immediate security and public order. Looting began almost immediately and went unchecked for almost three-weeks. By the time it abated, the insurgency had started. The looting problem revealed that the Coalition did not have enough ground troops in Iraq to control the population. Related to the lack of Coalition troops was the decision to

¹⁷² Bob Woodward, “Plan of Attack: A Definitive Account of the Decision to Invade Iraq,” Simon and Schuster, New York, 2004, 328. On 4 March 2003, Douglas Feith, Undersecretary for Policy in the Pentagon briefed the President and NSC on these desired end-state and success indicators for post-war Iraq.

Tommy Franks, “American Soldier: General Tommy Franks,” with Malcom McConnell, Regan Books, 2004, 336, 340, 349.

¹⁷³ Woodward 328

disband the Iraqi army and police forces when they would have been most useful to provide order and security. Even today the reconstitution of an effective Iraqi security force still lags behind requirements.¹⁷⁴ The lack of ground forces is exacerbated by the failure of any significant contribution of international troops, especially from Muslim countries, to ease the burden on American forces.¹⁷⁵ A number of large scale urban assaults were fought in April and August 2003 using heavy firepower that killed many insurgents but seemed to bring no appreciable success in dampening the growing insurgency.¹⁷⁶ Meanwhile on the political side, America shifted from being perceived as a liberator to being perceived as an occupier, which generated popular support for the insurgency. Overall, there appeared to be no coherent strategy for how to deal with the stabilization phase.¹⁷⁷

As discussed in Chapter 1, the following analysis will focus on how the N-AWOW affected the planning and execution of counterinsurgency operations in post-war Iraq up to December 2004. There will necessarily be some overlap since several elements of the N-AWOW apply to some of the problems.

IMPACT OF THE N-AWOW ON PLANNING

Combat in Afghanistan had showed that the US could fight a quick war with small ground forces because of the ability to leverage special operations forces, technology, fire

¹⁷⁴ James Fallows, "Why Iraq Has No Army," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Dec 2005, 60-61.

¹⁷⁵ Dyer 2004, 252.

¹⁷⁶ Pape, 23, 93, 123, 241.

¹⁷⁷ Diamond, 271, 286, 291.

power, and air power.¹⁷⁸ The Commander of CENTCOM, General Franks, emphasized that he planned to continue with the same approach in order to avoid a drawn out build up of massive numbers of troops allowing for an attack to begin with less notice.¹⁷⁹

Although he planned five lines of operation for post-war issues, including using the CIA to obtain the support of opposition groups, humanitarian assistance, and civil-military operations to work with the population after the fighting, there was little effort assigned to stabilization tasks compared to decisive combat.¹⁸⁰

Military planners tended to focus on Saddam Hussein himself, on the presumed WMD, on reducing the size of the force, and on achieving it all within the quickest possible time.¹⁸¹ The focus on decisive combat and Saddam Hussein led to a good plan for his downfall, but not for his replacement. First, the force was adequate for the combat phase, given the presence of air power, but was totally inadequate for controlling the population and providing security after the regime collapsed. Second, there was an undue emphasis on speed. It worked beautifully for the combat phase, but in order for a force to deploy rapidly and then make the dash to Baghdad, it had to be small.¹⁸² Third, a lack of human intelligence conspired with a lack of cultural awareness, overconfidence, undue faith in technology, and a certain amount of ideological blindness to lead Franks and the Pentagon away from seriously considering security and potential insurgency as a

¹⁷⁸ Boot, 42. Franks, 322-323, 350. Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks thought flooding Afghanistan with large formations of conventional troops would be repeating Soviet mistakes.

¹⁷⁹ Franks, 331, 333, 350.

¹⁸⁰ Woodward, 5, 8, 54, 83-84.

¹⁸¹ Michael DeLong, "Inside CentCoM: the unvarnished truth about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq," with Noah Lukeman, Regnery Publishing, Inc, Washington, DC, 2004, 64, 67, 84.

¹⁸² A large force takes longer to deploy and requires more logistical support in the field, which constrains the maximum rate of advance.

problem in post-war Iraq.¹⁸³ They thought that they would be welcomed as liberators and that once they had captured Baghdad it would essentially be over, especially once they had removed Saddam Hussein from power.¹⁸⁴ Fourth, there was a natural tendency to focus on the combat phase. Although the State Department and even a few civilians at the Pentagon put some serious effort into planning for post-war Iraq, these plans were largely ignored with the result that effective planning for “nation building” and stabilization was *ad hoc* at best.¹⁸⁵ Lastly, the largely unilateral nature of the endeavour led to suspicion of America’s motives among the people of Iraq and Muslims in the Middle East. The following section examines each of these issues in greater detail with respect to the N-AWOW.

Speed and Small Ground Force

As we will see later in this Chapter, a small ground force was a major vulnerability that allowed the insurgency to get out of control. There were several aspects of the N-AWOW that militated the choice of a small ground force, all centred on the requirement that it could be moved quickly.¹⁸⁶ First, as discussed in Chapter 2, the N-AWOW emphasizes small ground forces that maintain their combat potency via information

¹⁸³ Woodward, 133-134, 174. CENTCOM planning for urban warfare centred on avoiding being drawn into urban combat in “Fortress Baghdad” during the combat phase.

DeLong 110, 116.

¹⁸⁴ Diamond 27, 280-281. The US post-war planning focused on humanitarian aid as well as the possible use of chemical or biological weapons by Saddam Hussein. It did not anticipate that the major disruptions in government services, lack of police, widespread criminality, or any great resistance.

Fallows 2005 63. It should have been clear that there was risk of conflict in a highly militarized society once the regime fell.

¹⁸⁵ Reiff 30, 31, 33.

¹⁸⁶ Woodward 58. DeLong 67, 84. Franks 331, 333. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 98, 99, 100.

superiority and support from precision air power. The N-AWOW had already proven in Afghanistan that a small force relying on air power could win decisive victory.¹⁸⁷ Second, the new pre-emptive doctrine for countering terrorist threats required that the threat of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists be dealt with before it was fully formed.¹⁸⁸ Third, pre-emption required speed and surprise, which in turn required a unilateral approach in order to minimize the potential for leaks and warning time. Unilateralism reduced the available resource pool, which together with the need for speed reinforced the N-AWOW preference for small ground forces since logistical constraints precluded moving a large force like was used in Gulf War I in much less than six months.¹⁸⁹

Pre-emption, Unilateralism, and Mixed Perceptions in the Muslim World

As discussed in Chapter 2, “coalitions of the willing” have been a feature of the AWOW for decades, especially after the end of the Cold War.¹⁹⁰ Although President George W. Bush built a very broad and solid coalition for his invasion of Afghanistan,¹⁹¹ he took a much more unilateral approach to the war in Iraq because of the doctrine of pre-emption. As President Bush wrote in the introduction to his 2002 *National Security Strategy*, “America will act against...emerging threats before they are fully formed.” He added, “We will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary....The greater the threat, the greater is the

¹⁸⁷ Boot, 41. Record 2004, *Dark Victory* 100.

¹⁸⁸ President Bush, *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 2

¹⁸⁹ Franks 331, 350. The Op Plan 1003 that existed when Bush first asked for Iraq war planning had required roughly seven months to move a force of 500,000 to the Middle East before commencing combat operations. Rumsfeld and Franks saw this as far too long.

Woodward 8, 54.

¹⁹⁰ Eyal, 40.

¹⁹¹ Dyer 2003, 96.

risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack.”¹⁹² The major concern was that Saddam Hussein might sell WMD to terrorists. In March 2002, Vice President Cheney publicly announced that “We have to be concerned about the potential marriage between a terrorist organization like al-Qaeda and those who hold or who are proliferating knowledge about weapons of mass destruction.”¹⁹³

Although the US wanted to get rid of Saddam since the first Gulf War, and regime change had been official US government policy since the Iraqi Liberation Act was passed in 1998,¹⁹⁴ the WMD issue was used to justify the invasion to the UN, to Congress, and to the American public. Bob Woodward’s interview’s with senior cabinet members corroborates statements by Generals Franks and DeLong that although regime change was always the primary goal, WMD was always a genuine planning concern.¹⁹⁵ However, to the international public, the justification for war appeared to shift over time from regime change to WMD elimination, all of which blended with the spreading of

¹⁹² President Bush, *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 2. Franks 353.

¹⁹³ Dyer 2003, 133, 40.

¹⁹⁴ U.S. President William J. Clinton, “The Iraq Liberation Act: Statement by the President,” Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Washington, DC, 31 October 1998, 1. Internet, <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/libera.htm>, accessed 11 April 2006.

¹⁹⁵ Franks xiv, xv, 331, 332, 336, 350., 355, 356. One of the Lines of Operation in General Frank’s plan was WMD removal. He put his forces into chemical suits for the launch of the war and created a separate task force to deal with chemical use by Iraqi forces. Al-Qaeda chemical and biological specialist, Abu Musal Zarqawi, fled from Afghanistan via Iran to northern Iraq to set up a camp with Ansar al Islam. President Bush emphasized to his cabinet during Iraqi war plan briefings that he was very concerned with WMD removal (Franks 355-356).

DeLong, 64-66, 110, 134, 135, 139, 140.

Woodward, 38, 46, 52, 156, 165, 220, 283, 316, 328. The WMD issue was seen as the most likely argument to gain UN support since Saddam Hussein had already ignored several UNSCRs on WMD.

democracy and freedom. This apparent inconsistency in rationale created distrust of US motives, suspicions which were increased by the unilateral approach to war.¹⁹⁶

In April 2002, Richard Haass, Director of Policy Planning at the US State Department, re-affirmed that the US had the right to attack unilaterally, without consultation or legal authority from the UN, whenever it felt threatened.¹⁹⁷ The Pentagon resented the UN because it constrained unilateral and pre-emptive action. In the words of Richard Perle:

Saddam Hussein...will go quickly, but not alone: in a parting irony, he will take the UN down with him....We will not defeat or even contain fanatical terror unless we can carry the war to the territories from which it is launched....The [UN] is simply not up to the task so we are left with coalitions of the willing.¹⁹⁸

Despite its impatience with the UN, Bush was persuaded in early September 2002 by Secretary of State Colin Powell and British Prime Minister Tony Blair to take the matter of Iraq's alleged WMD to the UN Security Council (UNSC), in order to get legal cover, especially for the British public.¹⁹⁹ In November 2002, the US and British governments sought a UNSC resolution demanding arms inspectors be admitted to Iraq to search for alleged WMD. The UNSC passed Resolution 1441, which sent UN arms

¹⁹⁶ Eyal, 33.

¹⁹⁷ Dyer 2003, 170-171, quoting Richard Haass in an interview in *New Yorker Magazine*.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Perle, "Thank God for the Death of the UN", *The Guardian*, 21 March 2003, 1. Internet, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,918764,00.html>, accessed 17 April 2006.

¹⁹⁹ Keegan 119.

Dyer 2003, 134, 178. While the idea of 'regime change' was alright with American audience's within Britain that was seen as an illegal act of aggression. The idea of weapons of mass destruction was much more important in convincing the British public.

Woodward 156, 220. Although the primary goal of the US was regime change, it was understood that this would not be acceptable in the UN as a reason for going to war, since many countries had brutal dictators. The WMD issue was seen as the most likely argument to gain support especially since "at least a dozen resolutions on Iraq's WMD already had been passed and to one extent or another ignored by Saddam."

inspectors back into Iraq in November 2002.²⁰⁰ If Saddam was found in material breach of the resolution he would face “serious consequences.” To the French and others on the Security Council this meant returning to the UN for another resolution. To the US it meant war.²⁰¹

Despite its unilateral stance, the US needed the support of countries in the Middle East.²⁰² The Americans considered that the governments of Egypt, Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Israel, and Turkey would support the removal of Saddam Hussein in secret only since their people were against the war.²⁰³ The US ignored the warning by the leaders of these countries that they were less concerned with Saddam Hussein than they were with lack of progress with the Middle East peace process.²⁰⁴ In the end, more than thirty governments participated in the Coalition, but the populations of many of these countries did not support the invasion, or thought it was premature.²⁰⁵

Aware that international support was weak, the US hoped to reach its objectives quickly, before support could decline.²⁰⁶ The US then hoped to expand the Coalition after

²⁰⁰ Dyer 2003, 181, 136.

²⁰¹ Woodward 221, 223, 226, 184. During his speech to congress, Bush advised that he would challenge the UN to deal with Saddam Hussein and that if it failed to act, he would since he had already completed military planning that indicated an invasion was feasible.

²⁰² Woodward 96, 239, Frank’s plan required a minimum of basing rights in UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia made its support conditional on the US seriously engaging in solving the Israel-Palestine problem.

²⁰³ Dyer 2003, 11-12, 19-20, 129, 174. A pre-war poll by the Pew Research Centre, conducted in Egypt and Jordan (Arab), and Turkey and Pakistan (non-Arab), found that 60-70% believed the war was actually based on ensuring US access to oil and to enhance security for Israel.

²⁰⁴ Woodward 111-112.

²⁰⁵ Diamond 280-281.

²⁰⁶ Woodward 82-83.

the end of combat operations, in order to facilitate its own rapid withdrawal from Iraq.²⁰⁷ Troop draw-downs were planned to commence in August 2003 and there were to be only 30,000 to 50,000 troops left in Iraq eighteen months later.²⁰⁸ This pattern of get in quick, obtain a decisive victory, and leave again quickly was a consistent feature in the N-AWOW since the US wished to avoid engaging in time consuming “nation building.” Unfortunately the unilateral approach to the war made it difficult to solicit international peacekeeping troops since many nations saw the war as illegitimate.²⁰⁹

Public Support: Quick Decisive Victory with Minimum Casualties

The faith in the leveraging capability of technology, air power, information superiority, and “Shock and Awe” of the N-AWOW, led General Franks and Secretary Rumsfeld to plan for a relatively light force of about 150,000 Coalition troops.²¹⁰ This was despite warnings from “peace enforcement” experts that securing the peace after the invasion would require two to three times that amount.²¹¹ Franks emphasized at several presidential briefs that his plan could avoid a long drawn out build up of force so he

²⁰⁷ DeLong 146-147. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 137.

²⁰⁸ Woodward, 96, 121, 133,146, 148, 329. In Frank’s final plan, he would have 137,000 US ground troops plus 44,000 Coalition forces, mostly British. He had plans for, but never deployed, another two divisions.

²⁰⁹ Dyer 2004, 230.

²¹⁰ Franks xiii, 350. DeLong 106. Woodward 5, 8, 54, 76, 83-84, 101-102. Diamond 280-281.

²¹¹ Dobbins et al. 165-166. Story 21, 27. Story reports that Army Chief of Staff, General Shinseki publicly expressed concerns in the press on 17 March 2003 over the small size of the ground force for stabilization operations based on experience in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Concerns by Shinseki and others were also reported after the fact by Warren P. Srobel and John Walcott, “Post-war planning non-existent,” Knight Ridder Newspapers, Sunday, October 17, 2004, 1, Internet, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/kwashington/9927782.htm>, accessed 11 April 2006.

could attack more quickly with a smaller force.²¹² Because General Franks and Secretary Rumsfeld were focused on using “Shock and Awe” to achieve a quick decisive combat phase,²¹³ a feature of the N-AWOW, they ignored warnings of potential insurgency,²¹⁴ and the reports that suggested many more troops would be required to provide security during the occupation.²¹⁵ It was hoped that a shorter war would mean fewer casualties and less chance of public or international opinion going against the war,²¹⁶ which was consistent with the Powell Doctrine another aspect of the N-AWOW discussed in Chapter 2. These factors reinforced Rumsfeld’s disregard for “nation building” and his desire to avoid getting “bogged down in the effort.”²¹⁷

The last factor militating for a small invasion force was the need to avoid mobilizing large scale reserves since the public would question this, another aspect of the N-AWOW discussed in Chapter 2. For this reason, Rumsfeld reportedly denied a request for several thousand more military police, since it would have meant additional mobilization of reserves.²¹⁸

²¹² DeLong 67, 84, 83, 106, 136. Woodward 54, 76, 101-102

²¹³ Franks 350.

²¹⁴ Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, “Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario,” US Army Strategic Studies Institute Report, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, Feb 2003, 37, 42.

²¹⁵ Dobbins et al., 165-166. Dobbins et al. provide recommendations based on US experience in occupations and peace keeping since World War II, including recent experience in Kosovo and Bosnia.

²¹⁶ Woodward, 58, 122.

²¹⁷ Diamond 285

²¹⁸ Diamond 286.

Technical vs Human Focus

US planners were influenced by the N-AWOW to put too much faith in technology, while ignoring human factors that might have warned that there would be resistance to an American occupation of Iraq.²¹⁹ The US had invested in a vast array of powerful electronic intelligence gathering technology, including satellites, aircraft and drones that provided good intelligence on Iraqi air defences, but little knowledge of the ground forces, and basically nothing about the intentions of Saddam, the political leadership, and the *Saddam Fedayeen*.²²⁰

Because the US lacked human intelligence agents,²²¹ US war planners did not realize that an extended military and political presence would be perceived not as an as an “instrument of liberation,” but as an occupation that would stimulate feelings of national resistance, around which an insurgency could be rallied.²²² General Franks’ assumptions of support from the Iraqi population were based less on solid intelligence than they were on feelings about how Iraqi people *should feel* towards a ruthless dictator. This pervasive view was reinforced by uncritical acceptance of statements by exiled

²¹⁹ Anthony Cordesman, “Planning for a Self-Inflicted Wound: US Policy to Reshape a Post-Saddam Iraq,” *CSIS Report (Working Draft)*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, December 2002, 1-7. Cordesman predicted most of the problems encountered in post-war Iraq.

Diamond 286.

²²⁰ Woodward 217.

²²¹ Franks 353-354. George Tenet briefed President Bush that he lacked adequate human intelligence (HUMINT) from Iraq. See also Woodward 63, 81.

²²² Diamond 280-281.

opposition leaders in America that thought US troops would be welcomed as liberators.²²³

Overconfidence

Planning and executing the stabilization operations were biased at every step by a sense of overconfidence brought on by the N-AWOW. Together with a lack of human intelligence to indicate otherwise, this overconfidence generated a kind of “faith” that Americans would be welcomed as liberators and things would work well.²²⁴ Whenever President Bush asked, General Franks confirmed he was absolutely confident in his plan.²²⁵ General Franks did not consider irregular militias like the *Saddam Fedayeen* to be a serious threat,²²⁶ calling them a “speed bump” on the road to Baghdad.²²⁷ A more realistic appraisal would have suggested serious risks in the small ground force being proposed given that Saddam Hussein needed a half million troops and police to provide security. The proposition was even more risky considering that virtually none of the US troops spoke Arabic²²⁸ and the major cities provided a plethora of hiding spots for guerrillas that would negate US firepower and technology.²²⁹

²²³ Woodward 26, 259-260. The exiles that met with President Bush in January 2002 emphasized that Iraqis would welcome Americans as liberators and they did not think that there was much potential for ethnic strife.

²²⁴ Diamond 286.

²²⁵ Woodward 66.

²²⁶ DeLong 103. Franks 486-488, 541.

²²⁷ Dyer 2004, 42-44.

²²⁸ Fallows 2005, 64 and Diamond 286. Lessons learned from peace enforcement and stability operations in Bosnia and Kosovo suggested a tripling of the troop to inhabitant ratio was required in order to provide security after the invasion;

²²⁹ Dyer 2003, 42-44.

In the end, the apparent success of the N-AWOW in achieving Rapid Dominance in Afghanistan reinforced overconfidence in Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks leading them to focus only on the “first overwhelming blows.”²³⁰ President Bush promised members of Congress, “If we use force, it will be fierce and swift and fast. . . . I have been looking each general in the eye and asking them whether or not they see any problems for a regime change. They do not.”²³¹

James Fallows contends that overconfidence led the Pentagon to ignore warnings from the CSIS, State Department, RAND Corporation, and US Army Strategic Studies Institute about the risks of an insurgency.²³² It was only a year after the war that Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, admitted during congressional testimony that the Pentagon had underestimated the “tenacity of the resistance in Iraq.”²³³

Ad hoc Planning for Stabilization Phase

The N-AWOW emphasizes conventional combat rather than peace enforcement, nation building, or stabilization operations. The emphasis on conventional combat, together with a sense of overconfidence, led to a failure to fully appreciate the planning requirements for post-war Iraq. The result was a rushed and incomplete plan that failed to account for security problems or the possibility of an insurgency.²³⁴ In mid-May 2003,

²³⁰ Dyer 2003, 142.

²³¹ Woodward 5, 188. See also Franks xiii where General Franks recounts President Bush asking him and his CENTCOM component commanders whether they are pleased with the ‘strategy’.

²³² Dyer 2003, 140.

²³³ James Fallows, “Blind into Baghdad,” *The Atlantic Monthly* Jan-Feb 2004, Vol. 293, Iss. 1, Boston, 54.

²³⁴ Reiff, 33.

OHRA Director Garner testified to Congress that “This is an *ad hoc* operation, glued together over about four or five weeks time.” He did not think his team had been given sufficient time to plan.²³⁵

There should have been plenty have time to plan for the post-war situation but the Pentagon was more focused on the combat phase, specifically on how to reduce the force size and time required for deployment and decisive combat operations.²³⁶ From November 2001 until February 2003, the emphasis was on successive iterations of plans designed to achieve ever greater speed with a smaller force.²³⁷ Additionally, the focus on removing Saddam Hussein’s regime and his WMD dominated thinking, leaving the question of how to fill the void created by his removal as a side issue.²³⁸ Although General Franks saw the stabilization phase as important²³⁹ he did not see much of a role for the military in it, since “the military did not do nation building very well.”²⁴⁰ And as previously discussed, planners at CENTCOM or the Pentagon did not expect significant looting or resistance to US occupation after the combat phase.²⁴¹ Neither the Pentagon, or CENTCOM did enough planning for the post-war phase, but made their situation worse by ignoring the extensive work that had been done by the State Department.

²³⁵ Diamond 31. For his comments Garner was quickly replaced by Paul Bremer.

²³⁶ Diamond 291.

²³⁷ Woodward, 96, 121, 133, 146, 148, 329.

²³⁸ Keegan 142. Woodward 137.

²³⁹ Franks 336, 351.

²⁴⁰ Woodward 62.

²⁴¹ Reiff, 44. DeLong, 103, 116. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 133.

The State Department had worked with groups of experts and Iraqi expatriates for over a year to develop the “Future of Iraq Project,” a comprehensive set of plans for building a new nation in Iraq, including close attention to security as a key enabler.²⁴² However, the dominance of the Pentagon over other departments of the government, a characteristic of the N-AWOW discussed in Chapter 2, influenced President Bush on 20 January 2003 to transfer all responsibility for post-war Iraq to the Pentagon.²⁴³ He directed that all work done by the State Department be handed over to the newly created ORHA. The Pentagon subsequently excluded the State Department planners and ignored most of their advice because it was outside the scope of conventional war-fighting.²⁴⁴ This had a crippling effect on post-war planning because the State Department people were the experts on the region, its politics, culture, and language, and had foreseen most of the problems that would be encountered such as the widespread looting.²⁴⁵

A State Department memorandum dated 7 February 2003 warned Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky that CENTCOM and OHRA were overly focused on military

²⁴² US State Department, “Future of Iraq Project: Overview”, US State Department Report, 12 May 2003, obtained through access to information request by *The Memory Hole.Org*, and posted to http://www.thememoryhole.org/state/future_of_iraq/future_overview.pdf, accessed 14 April 2006.

²⁴³ Woodward 283. NSPD (Number 24) to set up the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) in the Pentagon was signed by the President on 20 January 2003.

²⁴⁴ Dyer 2003, 40. Diamond 280-281, 286. Woodward 283, 321, 339, 342, 433, 339, 342. The Pentagon rejected the participation of Thomas Warrick, the Future of Iraq project leader, and the names of 75 other State Department Arab experts who had participated in the project.

Reiff 32.

²⁴⁵ Record, 130.

objectives and were ignoring the requirements for post-conflict security and policing.²⁴⁶

Secretary of State Colin Powell followed up with a meeting with President Bush in which he tried without success to correct the military-centric focus.²⁴⁷

The Pentagon's military-centric approach also resulted in poor interagency integration.²⁴⁸ In August 2002, Frank Miller, Director of National Security Council (NSC) Staff for Defense, reported in frustration to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice that interagency coordination for Iraq was dysfunctional. Miller emphasized that the Iraqi army, police and judiciary would be crucial for the successful establishment of law and order in the immediate post-conflict environment, thus allowing for relief and reconstruction. However, Douglas Feith, Undersecretary for Policy at the Pentagon, ignored his advice and decided to purge senior Ba'ath members from the Iraqi government, including the complete dismantling of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the Special Republican Guard, Republican Guard, and Special Security Organization.²⁴⁹ The Pentagon decided to preserve the regular army and police but was suspicious of the Ba'ath influence and would later decide to disband them with dire consequences.²⁵⁰

Suspicion of US Motives

²⁴⁶ Lorne Craner, Arthur Dewey, and Paul Simon, "Iraq Contingency Planning, Information Memorandum," US State Department, S-ES, 200303129 Released in Part B5, original dated 7 February 2003, 1. Obtained under Freedom of Information by Malcolm Byrne and posted to Internet, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB163/iraq-state-03.pdf>, accessed 16 April 2006.

²⁴⁷ Woodward 149-152, 189.

²⁴⁸ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 98, 120, 124, 130.

²⁴⁹ Woodward 321, 339, 342, 433.

²⁵⁰ DeLong 117-118, 123. According to General DeLong, Paul Bremer and Paul Wolfowitz always wanted to completely abolish the Ba'ath Party and hence any security or government apparatus that was associated with it, including the army and police.

With its unilateral approach to war, the US created a negative impression of its intent that insurgents would be able to exploit.²⁵¹ Osama bin Laden, for instance, justifies his attacks to the pan-Arab community by appealing to grievances against Israel and by creating fears of US interference in the Middle East:

The aim [of the US] is to ...divert attention from its [Israel's] occupation of Jerusalem....The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq....and their endeavour to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets....²⁵²

A classified opinion survey carried out by the Saudi Arabian interior ministry found that 95% of educated Saudis between the ages of 28 and 41 agreed with Osama bin Laden's views on the US. It was likely that any insurgency would enjoy widespread popular support, at least at a passive level, from people all over the region.²⁵³

International support was damaged after David Kay, chief of the post-war Iraqi survey group searching for WMD, stated in January 2004 that he did not think they had ever existed.²⁵⁴ The WMD issue also caused distrust of US motives and undermined efforts to establish the legitimacy of the transitional government, increasing the appeal of insurgent propaganda to people of the Middle East,²⁵⁵ especially since possible invasions of Syria and Iran were widely perceived as being next.²⁵⁶ The US National Security Advisor admitted that the US government had misunderstood international concerns

²⁵¹ Eyal 32.

²⁵² Page 58.

²⁵³ Dyer 2003, 19-20, 175, 188-189.

²⁵⁴ Dyer 2004, 190, 230.

²⁵⁵ Record 2004, Dark Victory, 64, 123. Dyer 2004, 200.

²⁵⁶ Dyer 2004, 233.

leading up to the war: “There were times when it appeared that American power was seen to be more dangerous than Saddam Hussein. I’ll just put it very bluntly. We just didn’t understand it.”²⁵⁷ The unilateralism and lack of emphasis on human factors in the approach to war contributed to this widespread international perception.

Planning Summary

Although extensive planning was done for contingencies like humanitarian crises arising from mass refugee flows, the Pentagon dismissed advice from the State Department and others about the potential for insurgency and the requirement for a large force to establish order and security as priorities. There were many aspects of the N-AWOW that contributed to the planning errors, but probably the most damaging were the emphasis on pre-emption, unilateralism, and rapid decisive victory through firepower since these led to a ground force that was one-third the required size. The unilateral approach also damaged Iraqi impressions of the legitimacy of the occupation before it even began, while undermining international support that would mean America would have to carry its burden largely alone. The focus on conventional war-fighting combined with the dominance of the Pentagon made it easier for the Pentagon and CENTCOM to ignore advice from the State Department and led to a poorly integrated interagency approach. As Senator Chuck Hagel, the deputy Republican member on the Foreign Relations Committee, declared in November 2003, “We so underestimated and underplanned and underthought about a post-Saddam Iraq that we’ve been woefully unprepared. Now we

²⁵⁷ Condoleezza Rice, May 30, 2003 as quoted in Dyer 2004, 247.

have a security problem. We have a reality problem. And we have a governance problem....And time is not on our side.”²⁵⁸

IMPACT OF THE N-AWOW ON FIRST YEAR AND A HALF

The Influence of Far Reaching Political Objectives and American Values

The Bush administration’s goals for regime change in Iraq were consistent with the idealistic nature of the N-AWOW, which marries great moral purposes like spreading democracy with far reaching political objectives like transforming the Middle East, beginning with Iraq. Secretary of State Powell acknowledged in a speech to the Heritage Foundation in December 2002 that “too many Middle Easterners are ruled by closed political systems.” He further stated that “We believe democracy and free markets will benefit all countries in the Middle East.”²⁵⁹ This ideology was bound with faith in the power of freedom, as President Bush announced on the eve of the invasion, “History has called America and her allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight.”²⁶⁰

Unfortunately, the ideologically driven approach led to an emphasis on democratization and freedom at the expense of providing security, order, and restoring basic services.²⁶¹ Americans often emphasized that Saddam Hussein was an “evil” dictator, a example of the tendency to demonize the enemy, an aspect of the N-AWOW

²⁵⁸ Diamond 286.

²⁵⁹ Secretary of State Colin Powell in a speech to the Heritage Foundation in December 2002, as quoted in Dyer 2003, 173.

²⁶⁰ Dyer 2004, 168.

²⁶¹ Keegan 207-209.

mentioned in Chapter 2. The net result was an undue focus on Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party. Critical resources were diverted towards finding Saddam Hussein and his "evil" weapons of mass destruction at the expense of providing security to the population and key facilities that would be needed for the reconstruction.²⁶²

Purging the Ba'ath Party and Disbanding the Iraqi Army and Police

It was the ideological aim of "purging" Iraq of "any vestige of Saddamism or Ba'athist rule" that led to the decision to disband the army and police.²⁶³ Americans regarded Saddam as being a ruthless dictator of the style of Hitler and Stalin,²⁶⁴ and associated the Ba'ath party very closely with this evil. Although prior to the war, Jay Garner had successfully argued for incorporating the Iraqi military and police into America's occupation force, the Pentagon was really uncomfortable with the Ba'ath party.²⁶⁵ Keeping the force offered the advantages of ready organization, equipment, and mobility that could be useful for security, as well as providing a visible sign of Iraqi power and unity around which to rally the population.²⁶⁶ Iraqi forces also fill a huge gap in local and cultural knowledge that is essential for stabilization operations, since the US did not have enough language and cultural specialists.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Woodward 4.

²⁶³ Diamond 39.

²⁶⁴ Keegan 202.

²⁶⁵ Diamond 283-284, 294.

²⁶⁶ Vest 46.

²⁶⁷ Fallows 2005 64.

When Garner found that the army had unexpectedly melted away, he sent out requests to report for duty and pay and he *did* receive a lot of positive responses.²⁶⁸ However, on 23 May, Paul Bremer, Garner's replacement in Iraq, announced that the Iraqi military would be disbanded and its members sent home without pay. The risks of Ba'athist influence now seemed to outweigh any potential advantages.²⁶⁹ However, this ideologically motivated decision failed to consider how unemployed Iraqi army and police personnel would perceive being dismissed without pay, thus demonstrating cultural unawareness. The decision flew in the advice of the State Department that the Iraqi Army and Police must be maintained to help maintain order and security.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, the unilateral way the decision was made, without consultation with Iraqi leaders, gave Iraqis the impression that the US was not serious about restoring a sovereign Iraqi government.²⁷¹ Blindly confident in Coalition forces alone, Bremer failed to provide an alternative plan for the demobilized men, such as civilian employment, pensions, or of trying to use them as sources of intelligence. His decision generated almost a half-million armed potential recruits for the insurgency.²⁷² Iraqi sources confirm that discontented former police and military personnel who felt "cast aside and insulted" by the US were a decisive factor contributing to the rising momentum of the

²⁶⁸ Fallows 2005 64. In fact, the night before the order to disband, there were more than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers who had registered to show for a \$20 one-time emergency payment.

²⁶⁹ Fallows 2005 65.

²⁷⁰ Diamond 282. The State Department recommended that decommissioning of soldiers and policemen be done gradually in order to avoid a flood of hundreds of thousands of unemployed military and police personnel that would be tempted to engage in crime or insurgency. According to them a portion of retired soldiers and policemen should be re-enlisted while others should be offered incentives for other jobs, or be given pensions.

²⁷¹ Diamond 39. 281.

²⁷² Keegan 205.

insurgency.²⁷³ Although Bremer reversed the decision several weeks later, the damage was largely done.²⁷⁴

Failure to Co-opt Elites

As discussed in Chapter 2, the exportation of American ideals of democracy is part of the N-AWOW.²⁷⁵ Although spreading democracy is a positive goal, it does have some negative side effects, including a natural suspicion of Islamic leaders, which dissuaded US officials from co-opting powerful moderate allies at a time when the US desperately needed to establish its legitimacy with the population. Americans, for example, often portray Islamic fundamentalists as being inherently militant and anti-democratic. One scholar writes: “The modern Islamic movement is authoritarian, anti-democratic, anti-secular, and . . . is an aggressive revolutionary movement as militant and violent as the Bolshevik, Fascist, and Nazi movements of the past.”²⁷⁶ However, viewing Islamic fundamentalism as inherently militant, hateful, or anti-democratic is a gross overgeneralization. Like Christianity, Islam teaches human equality, one of the pillars of democracy; there is nothing inherently undemocratic about Islam.²⁷⁷ However, in the Muslim world the concept of separation of religious and state power is not as well

²⁷³ Quoted from Fallows 2005 66. The same point is made in Keegan 206, Vest 46, Dyer 2004, 251, and Diamond 39.

²⁷⁴ Fallows 2005 65. Keegan 207. Diamond 42-43.

²⁷⁵ *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 1-2.

²⁷⁶ Pape 105. Pape quotes Amos Perlmutter, “Wishful Thinking About Islamic Fundamentalism,” *Washington Post*, Jan 19, 1992.

²⁷⁷ Dyer 2003, 175-182. Dyer argues that democracy is less dependent on cultural values than it is on the interaction between human nature and mass communications. He emphasizes the role of mass communications in that the Chinese example in Tiananmen Square, was received on the television by Eastern Europeans inspiring them in a peaceful revolution that brought two dozen countries to democracy in that region.

embraced as in the West.²⁷⁸ So Muslims in Iraq are likely to be receptive to democracy, but they will likely prefer a role for Islam in public life and government, a concept of which Americans are suspicious.²⁷⁹

Because of its ideological fear of Islamic fundamentalism, the US ignored Ayatollah Sistani, equating him with the Iranian Shiite religious tyrants since he was educated in Iran. Ideology blinded the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to the fact that moderate pro-democracy al-Sistani had affirmed that “As long as I am alive, the Iranian experience [theocracy] will not be repeated in Iraq.” The US should have considered Sistani as a potential ally instead of fearing him especially since Sistani held so much moral authority in Iraq. The failure to consider Sistani’s opinion alienated moderate Shiites who made up a bulk of the Iraqi population.²⁸⁰

Insurgent groups exploited America’s fear of Islam. For example, al-Qaeda attempted to portray the US as a religiously motivated aggressor, intent on occupying and transforming Muslim societies; it used this portrayal to generate support for its martyrdom operations.²⁸¹ Similarly, radical Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr played up people’s religious fears. Skilled at stirring up religious fervour of the poor, he claimed that the Americans had come to Iraq to seize and kill the Mahdi, a messianic figure prophesized in Islam.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ Dyer 2003, 77-81.

²⁷⁹ Keegan 202.

²⁸⁰ Diamond 43.

²⁸¹ Pape 117.

²⁸² Diamond 213.

Despite the presence of extremist groups, only a tiny fraction of the members of Islamic fundamentalist movements have actually engaged in acts of violence.²⁸³ Most people are more concerned with daily issues like law and order, security, adequate housing, and employment. Elites use Islamic rhetoric, nationalism, or people's grievances as a "rallying cry" around which to attract followers.²⁸⁴ To fight or prevent an insurgency, the ruling authority must address the specific grievances of the masses while co-opting the elites and countering their propaganda.²⁸⁵ But the US waited far too long to reach out to disaffected elites in order to bring them into the political process. Although the Shiites have now bought into the political process, Sunni elites are still alienated despite giving signals that they wanted to talk directly to the US.²⁸⁶ Co-opting them is important since they might be capable of defusing the Sunni-based resistance associated with former Ba'ath and military personnel afraid of losing the status they enjoyed under Saddam's regime.²⁸⁷

Mao cautioned that winning the hearts and minds of the people requires finding out their specific grievances rather than presuming *a priori* that one "understands the

²⁸³ Pape 16-17. Previous studies of suicide terrorism have explained it as the result of indoctrination into Islamic fundamentalism, or as the result of suicidal individuals who were likely to take their own lives anyway. However, the evidence shows that politics rather than religion and psychology are the underlying motivators.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid* 106. Note that Osama bin Laden belongs to an Islamic fundamentalist movement called Salafism, a Sunni movement. No follower of Iranian or Iraqi Shi'ism has ever joined al-Qaeda. Note also that other sects of Salafism, such as Wahhabism, the official religion of Saudi Arabia, emphasize non-violence.

²⁸⁵ O' Neill 59, 70, 77-78, 125.

²⁸⁶ Richard Johnson, "Liberation, Interrupted: Three years after U.S. forces raced into Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein, the country teeters on the edge of civil war," *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, March 18, 2006, A7.

²⁸⁷ .Diamond 294.

people's mind."²⁸⁸ Counter-insurgency expert Bard O' Neill cautions that "a misreading of the content, extent, and intensity of popular grievances can have costly and sometimes fatal consequences."²⁸⁹ Therefore, it is essential to avoid ideological biases like those in the N-AWOW.

The tendencies in the N-AWOW to demonize the enemy and to see wars as the promotion of democracy can result in an extreme polarization²⁹⁰ of the conflict in terms of good and evil.²⁹¹ US leaders often call insurgents "evil doers,"²⁹² an oversimplification that makes it difficult to counter the strategies of each terrorist group.

The focus on good vs evil led US leaders to explain away the resistance as the work of thugs or religiously motivated foreigners who "hate our freedoms",²⁹³ implying that insurgents hate liberal democracy. This obscures the real goal of Islamic extremists to expel the US not because it is American, but because it is a foreign power in an Arab land.²⁹⁴

Overconfidence and the ideological focus of the N-AWOW led to the decision to purge the civil service, police, and army, unintentionally creating a mass of armed and

²⁸⁸ Mao Tse-Tung as quoted in O' Neill 78.

²⁸⁹ O' Neill, 78.

²⁹⁰ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 136.

²⁹¹ Diamond 300.

²⁹² President George W. Bush quoted by Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Bush vows to rid world of evil-doers," CNN.com, 16 September 2001, CNN Washington Bureau, 1. Internet, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.bush.terrorism/>, accessed 17 April 2006.

²⁹³ President George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," United States Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20 September 2001, 1. Internet, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>, accessed 17 April 2006.

²⁹⁴ Page 17. Religion is used as a rallying tool, as a way to explain the 'martyr status' of the attackers, and as a way to justify the collateral deaths of innocent people.

alienated people ready to join the insurgency, while denying the CPA critical resources that could have been used to maintain law and order. Ideology also led to missed opportunities to co-opt the Sunni and Shiite elites, creating additional obstacles to efforts to establish a sense of legitimacy. Characterizing the insurgents as “evildoers” led to missed opportunities to develop counter strategies because of ideological rhetoric that treated all insurgent groups the same.

The Looting Problem and Lack of Sufficient Troops

Although the war was a stunning military victory, the immediate aftermath soon degenerated into chaos and violence, mostly due to lack of troops.²⁹⁵ In hindsight, the most significant event of the first six months was the looting because it degraded daily life for Iraqis and made restoring order that much more difficult later.²⁹⁶ However, at the time, it was not treated as an urgent priority. After the brilliant military victory, American leaders seemed to lose interest, as evidenced by General Franks’ almost immediate departure and retirement. Weeks went by before US troops effectively intervened and by the time looting was subsiding in June 2003, the first signs of insurgency were appearing.²⁹⁷ A CSIS survey team that visited Iraq in June 2003 was dismayed with the situation: “There is a general sense of steady deterioration in the security situation, in Baghdad, Mosul, and elsewhere. Virtually every Iraqi and most CPA and Coalition military officials as well as most contractors we spoke to cited the

²⁹⁵ Woodward, 413.

²⁹⁶ Shehata 71, 73. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 122.

²⁹⁷ Fallows 2005 66.

lack of public safety as their number one concern.”²⁹⁸ There are three reasons related to the N-AWOW for why this situation occurred.

First is the overconfidence during the planning phase that led war planners to disregard several expert studies that warned of the dangers of tribal and ethnic conflict, given the widespread presence of private, armed militias, and the probable infiltration by Sunni Islamist terrorists that would wage a suicide bombing campaign.²⁹⁹

Second, the same ideological blindness that led the CPA to disband the Iraqi Army and Police also influenced American officials to ignore the initial signs of insurgency until it was well underway.³⁰⁰

Third, for the reasons discussed under planning, the US only had enough troops to guard the Ministry of Oil, a situation worsened by the diversion of resources on the hunt for WMD and Saddam Hussein. A lot of valuable documents and computers that would have helped with the reconstruction were destroyed or taken away as 17 of 23 ministries, plus hospitals and schools, were ransacked. Telephone networks, electrical grids, sewage systems, and other valuable infrastructure were also destroyed. Losses were estimated at US\$12 Billion, much more than what was damaged during the war.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Fallows 2005 66 quotes Anthony Cordesman, who conducted a CSIS security survey of post-war Iraq in June 2003. For another reference to the study, see Vernon Loeb, “Postwar Window Closing in Iraq, Study Says: More Funds, International Force Recommended to Improve Security Situation,” Friday, July 18, 2003, A09. Internet, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A8445-2003Jul17?language=printer>, accessed 18 April 2006.

²⁹⁹ Diamond 283-284. Reiff 30. Diamond and Reiff refer to previously cited studies by Dobbins et al. (RAND), Cordesman, December 2002, and Crane and Terrill 2003, as well as the State Department’s “Future of Iraq Project,” all of which predicted looting and popular resistance as significant risks.

³⁰⁰ Fallows 2004, 70. Vest 47.

³⁰¹ Fallows 2005 66. At the time, 5000 US troops were occupied guarding buildings in Baghdad, with about 1000 devoted to the CPA headquarters alone.

The failure to establish immediate law and order had a decisively negative effect on the course of the occupation. It created the wrong impression with Iraqis. As a Shiite cleric explained, “We saw that the Americans protected the oil ministry and ‘nothing else’ ... So what else do you want us to think except that you want our oil?”³⁰² Even more importantly, Iraqis lost confidence in the ability of the Americans to provide security and order.³⁰³

Insurgent groups took advantage of the security vacuum. Islamic extremists infiltrated Iraq since there were too few Coalition troops to seal the borders. According to tribal leaders, Iran was providing arms, intelligence support, money, and advice to Shiite extremists like Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army, the Badr corps, and SCIRI.³⁰⁴ Robert Pape’s research on suicide bombers indicates that most al-Qaeda attackers were Iraqi Sunnis, augmented by foreign fighters coming from Saudi Arabia.³⁰⁵ Jay Garner, admitted, “We did not seal the borders because we did not have enough troops to do that, and that brought in terrorists.”³⁰⁶

The core of what would be the Sunni preservationist insurgency used the security void to quietly organize additional support, a task it was greatly aided in when Bremer decided to disband the army and police.

³⁰² A leader in the Hawza, the Shiite religious authority quoted in Reiff 44.

³⁰³ Shehata 73-74.

³⁰⁴ Diamond 219, 222. Iran’s goal was to encourage a Shiite Islamist theocracy in the Shiite south, one step in establishing a sphere of influence over all Shiites in the Persian Gulf region, in an arc from southern Iraq to northern Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

³⁰⁵ Pape 246. Robert Pape conducted a detailed review of the background origins of al-Qaeda attackers up to the end of 2003.

³⁰⁶ Diamond 288.

The lack of Coalition troops also encouraged the rise of the Shiite militias.³⁰⁷ For instance, after the regime fell, al-Sadr immediately moved his private army into the security vacuum to set up a shadow government in East Baghdad, Kufa, Najaf, and Karbala with the aim of discrediting the Coalition as well as moderate Shiites like Ayatollah Sistani.³⁰⁸ The result was a heightened potential for violence that al-Qaeda was unable to resist. Since its first such attack on 2 March 2004, several al-Qaeda strikes appear to have been aimed at Shiites in order to provoke civil war while highlighting the apparent inability of the CPA to provide security.³⁰⁹ A CSIS survey in June 2003 revealed that the CPA lacked the forces it needed to demobilize private militias, which encouraged more rebellion.³¹⁰ Although al-Sadr's militia was finally demobilized in August 2004, it was far too late, which cost the US credibility, legitimacy, and lives.³¹¹ It also forced the CPA to fight on too many fronts at once, which gave the Sunni insurgency more chance to grow.³¹²

³⁰⁷ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 121, 139.

³⁰⁸ Naomi Klein, "You Can't Bomb Beliefs," *The Nation*, October 18, 2004.

Dyer 2004, 20, 22. Diamond 213, 215.

³⁰⁹ Diamond 220, 227. On Shiite Islam's holiest day, Ashura, 2 March 2004, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the local al-Qaeda lieutenant, launched a series of suicide bomb attacks that killed 171 people, and wounded hundreds more in Karbala and Baghdad. The attacks were designed to incite a violent Shiite response.

³¹⁰ Frederick Barton, Bathsheba Crocker, and Daniel Werbel-Sanborn, "Post-War Iraq: Are We Ready?," *CSIS Report*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 3 June 2003, 2-3.

Diamond 222. There were an estimated 102,000 fighters involved in the Shiite militias, plus a significant number of recruits available among the 2 million people of Sadr city. In addition to these, there were an estimated 300,000 cashiered Iraqi army soldiers left over from the previous year.

³¹¹ Dyer 2004, 22. See also Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muqtada_al-Sadr, accessed 22 March 2006. Al-Sadr demobilized his militia after al-Sistani negotiated a truce between him and the American authorities in August 2004.

³¹² Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 118. Dyer 2003, 15.

Sufficient troops would have been most decisive at the very beginning when they would have been able to establish security and order.³¹³ Lacking sufficient troops, the US should not have disbanded the Iraqi security forces, and they should have put more effort into reconstituting Iraq's military and police forces.³¹⁴ A leaked CIA report of 12 November 2003 stated that a growing number of Iraqis were joining the insurgency because they thought the US could be beaten and expelled from the country.³¹⁵ Counterinsurgency scholar Bard O'Neill observed that the masses tend to swing in favour of the winning side, implying that it was easier to prevent people from joining the insurgency than it was to try and win them back.³¹⁶ Further, adding more troops once the insurgency was underway may have stimulated greater national resistance,³¹⁷ and was not politically feasible according to Paul Bremer.³¹⁸ For reasons discussed in Chapter 2, mobilizing additional troops would have signalled serious problems to the casualty adverse US public.³¹⁹ The troops were needed at the very beginning when they would have been decisive.

In summary, the planning for a small force size contributed directly to the collapse of public order immediately after the invasion, a decisive event that had

³¹³ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 117-118, 120, 122. Shehata 73.

³¹⁴ Fallows 2005 66. Shehata 73.

³¹⁵ Diamond 26.

³¹⁶ O'Neill 137.

³¹⁷ Dyer 2004, 24.

³¹⁸ Diamond 228-229. In an April 2004 conversation with Larry Diamond in the CPA offices of Iraq, Diamond quotes Bremer as acknowledging that it was politically impossible to get more troops.

³¹⁹ Dyer 2004, 24. The Americans could have only added 20,000 without having to resort to more drastic measures like the greater reserve mobilization or the draft.

“devastating, long-lasting consequences.”³²⁰ It created an atmosphere of lawlessness and a security vacuum that was exploited by the insurgents. But most importantly the lack of security undermined Iraqi confidence in the US and the post-war administration and swung popular opinion away from the Coalition towards the insurgents.³²¹

Direct Strategy Emphasizing Military Firepower

The use of heavy offensive force to defeat today’s terrorists is the most likely stimulus to the rise of more. – Robert Pape³²²

A consequence of the Pentagon having refused to let the State Department participate in post-war planning was that the ORHA deployed into Iraq without sufficient civil administrative skills or expertise in Iraqi politics, history, and culture.³²³ The ORHA was dominated by Pentagon staffers with no practical experience in “nation building,” while the military showed little interest, as exemplified by General Frank’s often repeated excuse, “I have a war to fight.”³²⁴

The ORHA and its successor, the CPA, dealt primarily with the Pentagon and the White House, marginalizing the State Department.³²⁵ The result was an over emphasis on the military arm of national power that prevented greater involvement by not only the State Department, but also agencies like USAID, which would been better qualified to

³²⁰ Diamond 288.

³²¹ Vest 46.

³²² Pape 23.

³²³ Diamond 29.

³²⁴ Woodward 413. Franks went on leave as soon as the combat phase was over, and by July he was retired. As result there was no continuity of military command for the transition from combat to stability operations.

³²⁵ Diamond 299.

coordinate reconstruction. Belatedly realizing the problem, President Bush transferred primary supervision within the US government from the Pentagon to the NSC in August 2004.³²⁶

The Battle of Fallujah: Losing Hearts and Minds through Firepower

Chapter 3 introduced, in general terms, the limits of using conventional firepower to combat insurgency. According to US Army Colonel Terence Daly, a counterinsurgency expert with Vietnam experience,

No modern army using conventional tactics has ever defeated an insurgency. Conventional tactics boil down to killing the enemy. At this the U.S. military, with unmatched firepower and precision, excels. Classic counterinsurgency, however, is not primarily about killing insurgents; it is about controlling the population and creating a secure environment in which to gain popular support.³²⁷

With this in mind, the following section briefly examines the impact of US firepower, using the Battles of Fallujah in April and August 2004 as case studies. Neither battle seemed to make any dent in the insurgency, but the numerous Iraqi casualties created a political disaster that may have generated more recruits for the insurgency.³²⁸

After the Iraqi army was dissolved, Fallujah became a hotbed of Sunni insurgency led by disgruntled former Army officers. It had been a “no-go” area for months when it exploded in mob violence in April 2004.³²⁹ In response, on 5 April 2004, the US Marines (USMC) cordoned off the city and commenced their assault. Following the USMC

³²⁶ Diamond 308. According to Diamond the NSC is not really equipped for such a task either.

³²⁷ Cited in Fallows 2005 71, 72.

³²⁸ Jonathon F. Keiler, “Who Won the Battle of Fallujah,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 2005, 2; Internet: http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_0105_Fallujah-P1,00.html accessed 22 March 2005.

³²⁹ Diamond 233.

doctrine that “overwhelming superiority is needed if all costs are to be minimized,”³³⁰ the Marines had to rely on assault helicopters and AC-130 gunships to compensate for having insufficient infantry to control a city with such a large population (300,000).³³¹ Although killing fifty fighters for every US soldier lost³³², the Marines halted their advance after a few days, realizing that to continue the battle into the very centre would be too costly in US and Iraqi lives. Even so, 700 Iraqis were killed and 1200 were wounded.³³³

The area remained a haven for insurgents and terrorists but the political fallout was worse.³³⁴ Two members of the Iraqi Governing Council resigned in protest, and President Ghazi al-Yawer called it “genocide.”³³⁵ The Arab press condemned the assault; the UAE daily, *Al Khaleej* wrote, for instance, “Freedom, democracy, the rule of law and other such promises have been transformed in the occupation’s lexicon into violation, invasions, sieges, curfews, bombardments from Apache helicopters and the terrorization of a people.”³³⁶ Even Adnan Pachachi, a staunch US ally, called the offensive “unacceptable mass punishment” of the people of Fallujah while Sir Jeremy Greenstock,

³³⁰ Keiler 2.

³³¹ Keiler 2. The Marines called in a few precision air strikes as well from fixed wing jets.

³³² Diamond 233.

³³³ Samer Shehata, “Losing Hearts and Minds: Understanding America’s Failure in Iraq,” *Culture and Society*, Winter/Spring 2005, 76.

³³⁴ Keiler 2. Dyer 2004, 15.

³³⁵ Shehata 77. See also Diamond 233. Adbud-Karim al-Muhammadawi, an original leader of the Shiite uprisings against Saddam in 1991, resigned in protest from the Governing Council.

³³⁶ Diamond 233.

British envoy to the CPA resigned in despair.³³⁷ Ordinary Iraqis felt that the heavy use of firepower took an unfair toll of Iraqi lives in order to avert American casualties.³³⁸

Drawing the lesson that they needed more troops with greater firepower, the US military returned to Fallujah in November 2004. They cordoned off the city again, provided warnings, and allowed most of Fallujah's civilian population to flee the city, which greatly reduced the potential for noncombatant casualties. During the battle, fixed wing air strikes, artillery, and armour were used along with helicopter gunships. The Marines won the tactical battle, but like the Battle of Hue in Vietnam, this did not necessarily translate into strategic victory.³³⁹

According to Gynne Dyer, Fallujah demonstrated the widespread attitude among the US military that the way to fight the insurgents was by using overwhelming military force through a series of large scale assaults.³⁴⁰ As discussed in Chapter 3, this attitude was a natural outgrowth of US conventional supremacy. It manifested itself in a "kinetic" approach to pacifying the country as exemplified by Paul Bremer saying on 3 September 2003 that "We are going to fight them and impose our will on them and we will capture them or, if necessary, kill them until we have imposed law and order on this country."³⁴¹ Meanwhile, the rationale being used by insurgents to motivate popular support were going unaddressed and the insurgency slowly continued to grow.³⁴²

³³⁷ Dyer 2004, 16.

³³⁸ Diamond 237.

³³⁹ Keiler 2.

³⁴⁰ Dyer 2003, 11. See also Diamond 238 who makes a similar point.

³⁴¹ Dyer 2004, 11.

³⁴² Pape 23. Shehata 76.

Gaining popular support was of utmost importance but polls taken immediately afterwards suggest that the battles had the opposite effect.³⁴³ A May 2004 poll revealed that only 2% of Arab Iraqis still saw the Americans as liberators, down from roughly half a year before, and 57% wanted the Coalition forces to leave immediately.³⁴⁴ This correlates with US estimates of active supporters of the insurgency, which grew continuously despite killing an average of 2,000 insurgents per month: from 5,000 in the spring of 2004 to 20,000 by fall of 2004, and as many as 100,000 by January 2005.³⁴⁵

Insurgents exploited the perception that Americans' considered Iraqi lives to be expendable in order to intensify nationalist feelings of resistance.³⁴⁶ According to Bard O'Neill, members of a community tended to forgive someone from their own nationality that committed an excess more easily than they forgave a foreign power of the same mistake. In assessing, "Who Won the Battle of Fallujah," Jonathon Keiler concludes that "The Battle of Fallujah was not a defeat [for the US]—but we cannot afford many more victories like it."³⁴⁷

The Battle of Fallujah showed that the emphasis on firepower within the N-AWOW is not conducive to fighting an insurgency.³⁴⁸ Rather, Pape concluded from his

³⁴³ Shehata, 76.

³⁴⁴ Dyer 2004, 20.

³⁴⁵ Pape 7-8, 82, 245. Pape refers to a release by Agence France-Presse, January 3, 2005, "Iraq Battling More Than 100,000 Insurgents"; Most of these supporters are Iraqi. Only 5% are estimated to be foreign. Pape's data for Iraq also shows that direct military action has not curbed the rate of suicide bomber attack.

³⁴⁶ Pape 85. Vest 41.

³⁴⁷ Keiler 2.

³⁴⁸ John Batiste and Paul Daniels, "The Fight for Samarra: Full-Spectrum Operations in Modern Warfare," The U.S. Army Professional Writing Collection, 1, Internet, http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume3/september_2005/9_05_3.html, accessed 4

study of al-Qaeda that to win against terrorists one must simultaneously defeat the current attackers while preventing follow-on terrorists from taking up their bombs.³⁴⁹ Defeating the current attackers will be done primarily through good intelligence and police work, rather than through the use of conventional military power.³⁵⁰

The experience of the US in Vietnam, as a conventionally superior force fighting insurgents, showed that there is an endless supply of locals with a strong national will to resist while at home there is little tolerance for high casualties.³⁵¹ As Roger Trinquier, a French veteran of Vietnam, cautions about counterinsurgency, “Combat operations carried out against opposing forces are only of limited importance and are never the total conflict.”³⁵²

Defeating the recruiting appeal of a-Qaeda and other terrorist groups requires that one split these groups off from their critical base of social support, since broad community involvement is extremely important for the success of a terrorist bombing campaign.³⁵³

October, 2005. The US Army realized after the Battle of Fallujah that a kinetic approach based on killing insurgents would not be sufficient for obtaining victory.

See also Hoffman, 918 or Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 121 for an explanation of the limitations of US conventional firepower in counterinsurgency.

³⁴⁹ Pape, 23, 238, 241, 247.

³⁵⁰ Dyer 2003, 105.

³⁵¹ Dyer 2004, 25. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 66, 155.

³⁵² Trinquier, 7.

³⁵³ Pape 7-8.

Technological vs Human Focus

In order to negate America's superior technology and firepower, urban insurgents tended to hide among the civilian population.³⁵⁴ Therefore, to directly combat insurgents, the police forces and intelligence services should have been the primary weapons with the military providing support, rather than the other way around.³⁵⁵ To be successful, security forces, especially the police and intelligence agents, needed local language capability and knowledge,³⁵⁶ preferably augmented by advice from country specialists.³⁵⁷ However, with its emphasis on technology, the N-AWOW placed little emphasis on cultural awareness, language, or civil-military training.

The CPA and the US military seemed uninterested in the cultural, political, or historical realities of Iraq.³⁵⁸ Extremely few US troops were given language training³⁵⁹ and the Pentagon purged language and cultural specialists from the CPA because there was no real interest in Iraqi culture.³⁶⁰ Once Americans picked up some Arabic on the job and built a relationship with their Iraqi counterparts, the career rotation system rotated

³⁵⁴ Dyer 2003, 105.

³⁵⁵ Vest 47. Dyer 2004, 252. O' Neill 65, 128.

³⁵⁶ Vest 47.

³⁵⁷ O' Neill 65. O' Neill advises that anthropologists and sociologists provide particularly useful advice.

Diamond 302, 312.

³⁵⁸ Vest 46.

³⁵⁹ Fallows 2005 70.

³⁶⁰ Diamond, 36.

them out, preventing the long-term personal relationships that are essential for effective counter-insurgency.³⁶¹

US troops, frustrated by their inability to understand the language or what was going on around them during the search for Saddam, alienated local Iraqis when they resorted to aggressive techniques: detentions, interrogations, and breaking down doors in the night.³⁶² James Fallows contended that a more subtle investigation conducted by culturally aware police could have produced similar information without any of the negative consequences.³⁶³

Jason Vest reported that US Army intelligence specialists produced a document, in November 2003, that criticized the lack of US cultural capability and undue emphasis on conventional military capabilities and technology.³⁶⁴ As if to underscore their criticism, the Pentagon allocated US\$336 million for drones, bomb-frequency jammers and other high technology solutions to insurgency rather than on training and deploying intelligence agents, police, civil affairs specials or even interpreters.³⁶⁵

The CPA suffered from a lack of translators that frustrated Americans and Iraqis alike. Salam Pax, an Iraqi reporter, wrote in *The Guardian* on May 2004 that “What is amazing is that the Americans have still not learned their lesson [at checkpoints] and always bring just one translator – actually, strike that: the translators have stopped going

³⁶¹ Fallows 2005 70.

³⁶² Shehata 75-76.

³⁶³ Fallows 2005 66.

³⁶⁴ Vest 47.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid* 46-47.

to work, so we are lucky if there is one at all....”³⁶⁶ The Pentagon only assigned four translators to the ORHA, which Garner fired almost immediately, seriously hampering the effectiveness of his meetings with Iraqi leaders.³⁶⁷

James Fallows contends that the N-AWOW discourages the creation of the long-term relationships and cultural understanding necessary for good intelligence and counterinsurgency because it emphasizes technology and firepower. It will be a challenge for most US soldiers to learn to accept human factors like language as being more important than weapon systems, but this is what effective counterinsurgency requires.³⁶⁸

Lack of Civil-Military (CIMIC) Troops, Police, and Intelligence

The cultural deficiencies of the N-AWOW were reinforced by a lack of civil-political troops, police, and intelligence.³⁶⁹ Besides investigating and hunting down insurgents, more police were needed to control crowds, secure key facilities, and prevent rioting, looting, and disorder. The lack of police contributed decisively to lawlessness and growth of the insurgency. More police could have been obtained by co-opting the Iraqi national police instead of disbanding them.³⁷⁰ Further, a ready reserve of international

³⁶⁶ Salam Pax, “Tigris Tales,” *The Guardian*, May 5, 2004. Internet, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1209442,00.html>, accessed 13 April 2006. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salam_Pax for additional information on Salam Pax, an Iraqi architect turned reporter and web blogger, son of the constitutional committee co-chair, Adnan al-Janabi, a moderate Sunni.

³⁶⁷ Diamond 33. Diamond implies that the translators were fired because Garner thought he could rely solely on one of his Arabic speaking diplomats.

³⁶⁸ Fallows 2005 76.

³⁶⁹ Vest 48. Diamond 306. O’Neill 37. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 122.

³⁷⁰ Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 139.

police could have been trained and ready to deploy to Iraq, if the US had taken a less unilateral approach to war.³⁷¹

Civil-military affairs (CIMIC) troops were also in short supply,³⁷² which had a negative impact on efforts to liaise with community and tribal leaders.³⁷³ Commanders in Iraq confirmed that troops were diverted from security tasks in order to patch oil pipelines, restore electrical grids, etc., because of the lack of engineers.³⁷⁴ These shortages delayed the restoration of basic electricity and sanitation services, which negatively affected Iraqi public opinion of the US presence.³⁷⁵ The *US Army Times* reported that as of 1 May 2005, the Iraqi power grid was still not fully restored and 80 percent of east Baghdad was “soaking in raw sewage” with no prospects for rapid improvement.³⁷⁶ Mass unemployment was also a serious problem, with large pools of young jobless men left as potential recruits for the insurgency.³⁷⁷ This situation did nothing to facilitate the building of good community relations by the CPA.

³⁷¹ Diamond 306.

³⁷² Ann Scott Tyson, “Crunch time for Special Ops forces”, *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 2005. Internet, [http://www.csmonitor.com/Crunch time for Special Ops forces csmonitor_com.htm](http://www.csmonitor.com/Crunch%20time%20for%20Special%20Ops%20forces%20csmonitor_com.htm), Accessed 10 November 2005.

³⁷³ Diamond 191.

³⁷⁴ Fallows 2005 67.

³⁷⁵ Samer Shehata, 71, 74, 75.

³⁷⁶ *US Army Times*, 9 May, cited in Vest 47.

³⁷⁷ Shehata, 75. Shehata cites a US White House Office of Management and Budget Report that estimates unemployment at 20-30% of the potential Iraqi workforce as of March 2004. CIA congressional testimony places the jobless rate higher at 50% of the working age population.

See George J. Tenet, “The Worldwide Threat 2004: Challenges in a Changing Global Context,” Testimony of Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 9 March 2004, 8, Internet, http://www.cia.gov//cia/public_affairs/speeches/2004/tenet_testimony_03092004.htm, accessed 29 August 2005.

Besides damaging CPA relations with the local communities, the lack of police, intelligence, and CIMIC troops resulted in missed opportunities. Suicide bombers were usually well known to most community members because they gave material rewards to the attacker's family and strove to ensure their sacrifices would be venerated by the community. The potential for intelligence tip-offs would have been huge, as was the opportunity to inhibit passive support through solid community building.³⁷⁸

Abu Ghraib

While the US was dealing with the negative publicity over the battles like Fallujah, the photos of Abu Ghraib prison abuses were leaked to the media. Some of the prisoners were intimidated, tortured, and sexually humiliated which displayed a lack of sensitivity to human dignity,³⁷⁹ seriously breaching the relationship between the CPA and the Iraqi population.³⁸⁰

US political leaders have been muted in their condemnation of the use of torture. While the US government publicly denounces the use of torture, officials interviewed by Priest and Gellman defended the use of violence against captives as just and necessary,³⁸¹ while Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General Brian Boyle acknowledged at a US District Court hearing on 2 December 2004 that US Military Panels could use evidence

³⁷⁸ Page 28.

³⁷⁹ Vest 47.

³⁸⁰ Dyer 2004, 18-19.

³⁸¹ Dana Priest and Barton Gellman, "U.S. Decries Abuse but Defends Interrogations: "Stress and Duress" Tactics Used on Terrorism Suspects Held in Secret Overseas Facilities," *Washingtonpost.com*, 1-3, Internet, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A37943-2002Dec25>, accessed 14 April 2006. Priest and Gellman also cite testimony by CIA Counterterrorist Centre Chief, Cofer Black, who admitted to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees that "after 9/11 the gloves came off."

gained during torture.³⁸² US officials have also made conflicting statements that detainees are protected under the Geneva Conventions but can be denied protection because they are not legal combatants. The law provides for no such exception.³⁸³ Given the inconsistency it should not be a surprise that Iraqis suspect the abuses of Abu Ghraib as being part of a systematic program rather than isolated incidents.³⁸⁴

Besides being contrary to international law, O' Neill contends that most counterinsurgency experts now recognize that torture produces inaccurate information and is counterproductive in the long-run.³⁸⁵ The incidents at Abu Ghraib created fear and ill will towards Americans, both locally and abroad.³⁸⁶ In his book, *Chain of Command: The Road from 911 to Abu Ghraib*, Seymour Hersh suggests that the Bush administration advocated harsher methods³⁸⁷ because they were frustrated by the lack of intelligence

³⁸² Michael J. Sniffer, "Evidence Gained Through Using Torture OK, US Officials Say," Associated Press, 3 December 2004. 1 Internet, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/1203-02.htm>, accessed 13 April 2006.

³⁸³ Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. Article 32 to Part III : Status and treatment of protected persons. Internet, <http://www.cicr.org/ihl.nsf/WebART/380-600037?OpenDocument>, accessed 13 April 2006.

Convention (III) relative to the Protection of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. Article 3 prohibits cruel treatment and torture of Prisoners of War. Internet, <http://www.cicr.org/ihl.nsf/FULL/375?OpenDocument>, accessed 13 April 2006.

According to reporting by Dana Priest and Barton Gellman, Michael Sniffer, and Stephanie Nebehay (cited previous page), US officials deny insurgent detainees POW status, hence protection under Geneva Convention III.

³⁸⁴ Charles Dunlap, Jr., "The Joint Commander and Force Discipline," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, September 2005, Vol. 131, Issue 9, 34. A 2004 poll cited by Dunlap found that 54% of Iraqis surveyed believed that all Americans behave like those alleged to have taken part in the abuse.

³⁸⁵ O' Neill 34. Bernard B. Fall, "A Portrait of a 'Centurian'", xv. Forward to Trinquier. Trinquier was a veteran of Algeria who advocated torture as an acceptable means of gaining information out of detainees.

³⁸⁶ Vest 47.

³⁸⁷ Stephanie Nebehay, "Red Cross: Guantanamo Tactics 'Tantamount to Torture,'" *New York Times*, 30 November 2004, 1. Internet, posted at <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/1130-01.htm>, accessed

being obtained from prisoners. They justified the methods under “military necessity” backed by the opinion of the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel, Joe Bybee, that “Certain acts may be cruel, inhuman, or degrading, but still not produce pain and suffering of the requisite intensity to fall within a legal proscription against torture.”³⁸⁸

The boundary between personal decisions and the impact of the N-AWOW is not clear in this case. However, the likelihood of these abuses may have been increased by the emphasis within the N-AWOW on decisive results rather than on patient police work.

Hersh also makes clear in his book that most of the military personnel associated with the abuses were reservist MPs with no special training in how to run a prison or care for prisoners, a reflection of the conventional war-fighting focus of the N-AWOW.

Targeting US Casualty Aversion

The conventional military supremacy inherent in the N-AWOW is bypassed by the insurgents’ dual strategy of building local popular support while making Iraq ungovernable and targeting the willingness of the US public to absorb casualties in a war that may not be seen as vital for the nation’s defence.³⁸⁹

US commanders often helped the insurgents by alienating Iraqi tribal leaders through failing to engage with them out of force protection concerns, lack of language capability, or simply because they were focused on combat operations.³⁹⁰ The casualty

14 April 2006. Psychological coercion used in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, includes hooding and stripping detainees naked, similar to some of the abuses reported at Abu Ghraib.

³⁸⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, “Chain of Command: The Road from 911 to Abu Ghraib,” Harper Collins Publishers, 2004, 4.

³⁸⁹ Page 32.

³⁹⁰ Vest 47.

aversion of the N-AWOW also facilitated al-Qaeda's goal of compelling a US withdrawal by targeting public support at home. As bin Laden's *fatwa* against the US explains, "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty ...in order for their [US] armies to move out of all the lands of Islam...."³⁹¹ Therefore, each attack on American troops is calculated to kill or wound the maximum number of troops and bring fear of further attacks to come, while attacks on Iraqi security forces and civilians are designed to make Iraq unstable and ungovernable, thus reducing the legitimacy of the occupation authority. The terrorist groups know that American society will not tolerate many casualties for a war that does not appear to be in the nation's vital interest.³⁹² The US public would have been less strategically vulnerable to this campaign if there had been more emphasis on realistic costs and need for a long-term commitment, rather than being sold a "quick decisive victory."

Unilateralism and Iraqi Perceptions: From Liberators to Occupiers

Since the presence of a foreign military power greatly enhances the appeal of insurgents claiming to be freedom fighters, it is critically important to quickly establish the legitimacy of the occupation and the transitional government. Therefore, America needed a strategy to undercut the insurgents' appeal to nationalism. The three essential aspects of this approach would have been reinforcing legitimacy through security and public services, allowing political participation, and carefully managing perceptions of the people of Iraq.

³⁹¹ Page 32.

³⁹² Page 21-22.

As discussed earlier in this Chapter, the US's unilateral approach to war created Iraqi suspicions that made building vertical and horizontal legitimacy a challenge.³⁹³ A U.S. Army War College report based on lessons of previous US occupations and Iraqi history, warned that the US could lose the post-war peace in Iraq if it failed to quickly address Iraqi suspicion of US motives after the invasion.³⁹⁴ This section examines how errors on the ground reinforced rather than corrected the fears of the Iraqi population.

The initial anarchy damaged Iraqis trust in the ability of the Coalition to provide security and order. The fact that American troops guarded only the Ministry of Oil³⁹⁵ seemed to confirm suspicions that the US had come for the oil. Gallup poll results from September 2003 showed that only 5 percent of Iraqis surveyed thought the United States had invaded Iraq "to assist the Iraqi people" and only 1 percent believed it was mainly to establish democracy in Iraq; almost half thought it was "to rob Iraq's oil."³⁹⁶

As discussed previously, the US failed to co-opt the Ba'athist and religious elites for ideological reasons, thus reinforcing Iraqi suspicions that the US intended to apply pressure and influence over any Iraqi government established.³⁹⁷ Iraqis' sensitivities to

³⁹³ Kalevi J. Holsti, "The Strength of States," in Chapter 5 of *The State, War, and the State of War*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1997, 91-98.

³⁹⁴ Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, "Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post Conflict Scenario," *U.S. Army Strategic Studies Report*, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, February 2003, 18, 25.

³⁹⁵ Diamond 25.

³⁹⁶ Richard Burkholder, International Bureau Chief, "Gallup Poll of Baghdad: Gauging U.S. Intent," The Gallup Poll, 28 October 2003 (based on data collected in September 2003), 1-3, <http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=9595>, accessed 14 April 2006.

³⁹⁷ Burkholder 2. 51% of Baghdadis surveyed in September 2003 were concerned that the US would continue to apply pressure and influence over the Iraqi government once it was established rather than granting full freedom and sovereignty.

being dominated by a western power³⁹⁸ were exacerbated by the ORHA and CPA's unilateral approach to planning the transition.

Reflecting the N-AWOW's emphasis on leaving quickly once decisive victory is attained, the Pentagon initially directed Garner to complete the transition to full Iraqi sovereignty within 90 days, so troop withdrawals could begin.³⁹⁹ Although Iraqis were more concerned about lack of security than they were about rushing into elections, Garner failed to listen to their concerns.⁴⁰⁰ In May 2003, Garner's replacement, Paul Bremer, based on new direction from Washington, abruptly announced an indefinite extension of CPA rule until Iraqis created and ratified a new constitution. Created without Iraqi input, this plan greatly reinforced fears that the US would rule Iraq as an imperial power.⁴⁰¹

When attacks increased in November 2003 from an average of twelve per day to thirty-five per day, Washington responded with a vastly improved plan that moved transition to an Iraqi Interim Government forward to 30 June 2004. Although the new date met most Iraqi leaders' expectations, the good of this plan was diminished by the unilateral way in which it was conceived. And, implementing it was hampered by a continuing failure to engage with popular moderate Iraqi leaders like Ayatollah al-Sistani,

³⁹⁸ Crane and Terrill, 19. See also Diamond 240.

³⁹⁹ Keegan 207-209. See also Diamond 32. General David McKiernan, the top commander in Iraq in April had also been ordered to be ready for a possible August withdrawal indicated that the extremely quick time table was being directed by the Pentagon.

⁴⁰⁰ Diamond 32-33, 35-36. Garner called lots of meetings with tribal leaders but always failed to stick around after his own speaking role at the beginning.

⁴⁰¹ Burkholder, 2. While most Iraqis surveyed thought the US would implement democracy, they also feared that the US would implement it in such a way that it would continue to apply pressure and influence in order to ensure the new Iraqi government was friendly to US interests.

as well as disputes over the degree of sovereignty that would be transferred.⁴⁰² Since terrorists aim to destroy the credibility of moderates on both sides, while steadily widening the conflict, it would have been vitally important to reach out to and co-opt moderates while they were still receptive.⁴⁰³ Because US concessions were made tardily, and only after a lot of violence, it only reinforced the Iraqi view that the US was responding to coercion rather than genuine concern for Iraqis.⁴⁰⁴

Unilateralism and International Burden Sharing

The U.S. Army War College Study warned that “Occupation problems might be especially acute if the United States had to handle the bulk of the occupation itself rather than turn these duties over to a post-war international force”⁴⁰⁵ A RAND Study similarly emphasized that a multilateral approach would enhance the legitimacy of the interim government in the eyes of the Iraqi people.⁴⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the unilateral approach to war precluded any sizeable multilateral force being created after the war. Although the US saw a coalition of thirty different nations, the people of Iraq, and most of the Arab

⁴⁰² Diamond 26, 40-42. 50. 52. Bremer made the announcement on 15 November 2003. Two-thirds of Iraqis now saw the Coalition as an “occupying power” while only 15 percent saw them as liberators, down from 43 percent just after the combat phase had ended. Media interviews with tribal leaders suggested a major factor was that Iraqis felt like they did not have enough freedom to set their own course.

⁴⁰³ Page 33.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid* 63. If however, concessions are made to respond to real grievances and are done in consultation with Iraqis, then America can take just credit for it, especially if the announcements are swiftly coordinated with an effective public relations campaign.

⁴⁰⁵ Crane and Terrill 19.

⁴⁰⁶ Dobbins et al., 165-166.

world, saw only the United States and Britain, one a superpower, and the other the former colonial ruler of Iraq.⁴⁰⁷

A broader coalition would have facilitated more troops⁴⁰⁸ and specialists for security, police, engineering, and CIMIC.⁴⁰⁹ Greater participation by Muslim allies may have undermined some of the recruiting appeal of terrorist groups like al-Qaeda.⁴¹⁰ A broader coalition would also have relieved some of the burden on the US, a burden that is worsened by steadily mounting casualties, increasing the chances that the US will leave before the job is completed.

Political Summary

In order to establish legitimacy with the population, the ruling authority must outpace efforts by insurgents to do the same.⁴¹¹ In order to maintain community support, terrorist organizations support social institutions such as schools, universities, charities, and religious congregations.⁴¹² The Coalition started badly in this respect by allowing the looting, which damaged computers, information, and infrastructure badly needed for delivering basic services and reconstruction.⁴¹³ This undermined US efforts to overcome suspicion of US motives and build legitimacy. The unilateral approach of the N-AWOW contributed to the view among Iraqis that they were being “occupied” rather than

⁴⁰⁷ Diamond 311.

⁴⁰⁸ Dyer 2003, 97.

⁴⁰⁹ Bronson, 7.

⁴¹⁰ Pape 21-22. Dyer 2004, 251-252.

⁴¹¹ O’Neill 137-138.

⁴¹² Pape 81, 188, 195.

⁴¹³ Shehata, 71.

“liberated,” making the insurgents’ job much easier.⁴¹⁴ Al-Qaeda, for instance, appeals to the idea of ‘veiled colonialism’ to build its support, arguing that “masking colonialism” is what happens when the United States occupies a country and installs its “local agent.”⁴¹⁵ Since people often go to extreme lengths to regain self-determination, it is critically important to avoid reinforcing such perceptions through unilateralism or military force.⁴¹⁶

Lack of US Counterinsurgency Doctrine

The US post-war experience in Iraq confirms that the N-AWOW’s emphasis on swift decisive victory through firepower and technology is excellent for conventional combat but is a recipe for failure when fighting insurgency.⁴¹⁷ A counterinsurgency doctrine would have helped but the US went to war without one.⁴¹⁸ In the absence of a counterinsurgency doctrine the military was likely to adopt a conventional approach emphasizing overwhelming force and firepower that actually made the insurgency worse over time.⁴¹⁹ Unfortunately, the US Army’s counterinsurgency doctrine was only published in October 2004,⁴²⁰ too late to help with the period in question.

The lack of a counterinsurgency doctrine reinforced the dominance of the N-AWOW over the A-AWOW, contributing to delayed recognition and acceptance of the

⁴¹⁴ Diamond 300, 311-312.

⁴¹⁵ Page 118.

⁴¹⁶ Page 83-84. Diamond 290. Shehata 77.

⁴¹⁷ Vest, 41.

⁴¹⁸ Department of the Army, “U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Operations Handbook,” Department of the Army, The Lyons Press, Guilford, Connecticut, October 2004, ii.

⁴¹⁹ O’Neill, 128. Vest 45. Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 66, 121, 155.

⁴²⁰ US Army i.

fact that there even was an insurgency. Rumsfeld, for instance, asserted that Iraq was not “anything like a guerrilla war or an organized resistance.”⁴²¹ US leaders saw the violence as merely the “dregs of the old regime, whose power would naturally wane as its leaders were caught and killed.”⁴²² Often referred to as “cutting off the head of the snake,” the assumption was that killing or catching the leader(s) would suffice to quell the resistance.⁴²³ But a solely ‘kinetic’ approach to counterinsurgency does not work because insurgent groups are organized in small semi-autonomous cells and new leaders are always ready to step forward to replace losses.⁴²⁴ One must combine a strategy of finding the leaders with a wider political-military strategy of providing order and security plus other incentives to pull popular opinion in one’s favour while denying it to the insurgents.⁴²⁵

Abu Ghraib and other occasions where troops overreacted after “months of being shot at, ambushed, and bombed” suggest that special training on counterinsurgency, backed up by understanding of the underlying principles, would emphasize the required discipline and restraint for these types of operations.⁴²⁶

Providing security and order within the context of effective nation building is the best way to pre-empt insurgency or civil strife, but this requires a long-term commitment

⁴²¹ Fallows 2005 68.

⁴²² Fallows 2005 68.

⁴²³ Tenet 1-2.

⁴²⁴ O’Neill 24. In this case there was no evidence to suggest that Saddam was actively leading the insurgency.

⁴²⁵ O’Neill 147. See also pages 27, 40-41, 70, 128, 131, and 136 for guidelines on how to develop an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

⁴²⁶ Diamond 297. Bronson 3, 6.

and integration of all aspects of national power.⁴²⁷ The first responsibility in state building is to provide security and order.⁴²⁸ A counterinsurgency doctrine would have provided a framework for a more effective strategy that integrated military power with police and intelligence work, political and economic reform, and most importantly, efforts to provide security and basic services while building popular support and legitimacy.⁴²⁹ Such a doctrine would have made it obvious that planning for the post-war transition requires careful consideration,⁴³⁰ and may have prevented the mistake of dismissing the Iraqi army.⁴³¹

A counterinsurgency doctrine may have prevented the “B-Team phenomenon” that affected all aspects of stabilization, particularly the training of new Iraqi police and army forces. The “B-Team” refers to the perceived secondary status of stabilization functions in relation to combat functions, a manifestation of the dominance of the N-AWOW which holds conventional war-fighting as the pinnacle of warrior status. James Fallows contends that the B-Team phenomenon slowed training and equipping of Iraqi units to the point that only one-third of Iraqi units were capable of counterinsurgency operations in 2005.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Bronson, 1.

⁴²⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, “Failed States in a World of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, Iss. 4, New York, Jul/Aug 2002, 135.

Fallows 2005 76. Holsti 91-92.

⁴²⁹ Vest 42, 47-48.

⁴³⁰ Fallows 2005 64.

⁴³¹ Fallows 2005 64.

⁴³² Record 2004, *Dark Victory*, 118. Fallows 2005 67, 70, 60-63, 72. Iraqi police having only 41% of the required patrol cars, 21% of their radios, and 9% of protective vests in spring of 2004.

The Pentagon thinks there is nothing that could have been done to improve the post-war performance of US forces.⁴³³ Trinquier argues this is natural for a conventionally focused army, which has “never seriously approached the study of a problem it considers an inferior element in the art of war....The army is not prepared to confront an adversary employing arms and methods the army itself ignores. It has, therefore, no chance of winning.”⁴³⁴

⁴³³ Falls 2005 64.

⁴³⁴ Trinquier 3.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

The American Way of War (AWOW) has traditionally relied upon overwhelming force and technological advantage in order to win decisive victory while minimizing casualties. The New American Way of War (N-AWOW), which emerged from the 1990s technical revolution known as the RMA, relied on “Rapid Dominance” delivered by lean and agile forces to apply shattering force, simultaneously throughout the depth of the battle space, overwhelmingly shocking the Iraq’s will and capacity to resist. It was very effective during the conventional combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, decisively defeating an enemy force that outnumbered the Coalition three to one. However, the N-AWOW had serious limitations once the combat phase was over and the occupation phase began.

Fundamentally, the N-AWOW was unsuitable for winning the peace during the post-war phase for four major reasons: its unilateral approach did not lend itself well to broad coalition building and other means of developing and maintaining broad popular support in the local population, region, and international community; Rapid Dominance and shattering force were appropriate for active combat operations but tended to turn the population against the occupying force during stability operations; stability operations require a minimum ratio of troops to civilians that could not be bypassed by using technology or air power; and forces designed for high-intensity combat should not have been employed in nation building and counterinsurgency without special training including much more emphasis on local history, culture, politics, and social factors within the context of an effective counterinsurgency doctrine.

The major problem encountered during the stability phase was the failure to establish immediate security and public order, a direct consequence of the desire to pre-empt Saddam Hussein by using a small ground force that could be moved into theatre quickly and then on to Baghdad. Although a classic example of Rapid Dominance, the small ground force clearly demonstrated a lack of understanding of the requirements for population control in a post-conflict situation. For ideological reasons, the Iraqi army and police forces were also disbanded at a time when they would have been most useful in providing order and security. Reconstituting these forces lagged because US military culture sees these tasks as secondary to combat missions. An overemphasis on military operations, rather than on integrating political and diplomatic power, also hindered the battle to win broad popular support for the US sponsored government.

Negative Impact of the N-AWOW in Post-War Iraq

The far reaching political objectives and liberal democratic ideology inherent in the N-AWOW led to the disbandment of the Iraqi army and police because purging the Ba'ath party was given priority over establishing law and order. Further, the US goal of transforming Iraq into a western-style secular democracy played into appeals by Islamist extremists that were trying to exploit local fears that the US was a religiously motivated aggressor trying to force western values and modernism on local Muslim populations. The US actions should have been viewed through Arab eyes for how they might be perceived and should have been directed as much as possible in a direction that reassured the Arab world.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ Pape 58.

Because of its emphasis on pre-emption and rapidity of action, the N-AWOW constrained the US ability to build a broad coalition for the Iraq war. Despite the official support of their leaders, the populations of most supporting countries thought the US resort to war was premature. The result was that Iraqis tended to be suspicious of US motives, which made it harder to build popular legitimacy for the US sponsored transition government. Similarly, the relatively narrow base of international support meant that there were few nations offering significant numbers of troops for the post-war phase, thus increasing the burden on the US while making it more difficult to provide adequate security.

The preference in the N-AWOW for decisive military results led to a tendency to focus primarily on the combat phase rather than on post-war planning, a trend that was worsened by the domination of the Pentagon over the State Department. The State Department conducted thorough planning on “nation building” for post-war Iraq but most of this work was ignored. The result was that political and diplomatic efforts were not well integrated with the military effort. Worse, warnings on the criticality of establishing law and order were ignored, as were suggestions for how best to build political legitimacy. The US military in Iraq also tended to believe it could fight the insurgency through a series of large scale military assaults, an approach that ignored the crucial role of local popular support and contributed little to reducing the growth of the insurgency, despite having killed many insurgents.

The technological, rather than human focus, in the N-AWOW contributed to the neglect of local political and social factors that affect popular support. Urban insurgents also tended to hide among the civilian population in order to negate US technology and

firepower. Therefore, good police and human intelligence work would have been the most effective weapon for counterinsurgency work and both of these would have required awareness of the local culture and language.

While popular support is the centre of gravity of the host population, the vulnerable point targeted by insurgent terror is the long-term commitment of the US public in the face of mounting casualties. While casualty aversion is a characteristic of the N-AWOW, it is also a characteristic of most western democracies. The commitment of the US public would have been less vulnerable if US political leaders had publicized a more realistic pre-war appraisal of the difficulty and extended duration of the post-conflict phase.

The N-AWOW leveraged the precision firepower of modern air power in order to obtain a potent combat force that did not need large numbers of ground troops. Although this allowed US forces to achieve “Rapid Dominance” during combat, air power was unable to provide security, law, and order during the post-conflict phase. Studies of other post-conflict situations suggest that in order to guarantee security, it is necessary to provide a minimum troop ratio of one soldier per fifty inhabitants.⁴³⁶

Overconfidence in US conventional supremacy of the N-AWOW led war planners to underestimate the security and insurgency challenges that would be encountered in post-war Iraq. The risk of counterinsurgency operations should have been factored more prominently into the planning, a reflection of the low status accorded to the Alternative American Way of War (A-AWOW). US forces also lacked a counterinsurgency doctrine, which was not introduced until late 2004. Possessing such a doctrine before the war

⁴³⁶ Dobbins et al., 165-166.

would have provided guidelines on the required force structure and would have emphasized the importance of immediately establishing law, order, and security as well as the necessity of human intelligence, police work, and interaction with the host population.

Implications

The US government will have to make some tough choices about future acquisition projects if it wishes to do a better job at post-war stabilization. However, the latest Pentagon budgets confirm that the US military still does not take counterinsurgency seriously. The major weapons systems acquisition projects are the same as they were five years ago, and they still focus on high technology weapons for high intensity conventional combat.⁴³⁷

The US government will have to integrate its national diplomatic, economic, military, and informational power if it wants to be successful at nation building or counterinsurgency.⁴³⁸ At the tactical and operational level this requires soldiers that are able to make the mental switch from combat operations to reconstruction to stabilization and security operations, what the US Marines call the “Three Block War.”⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ Vest 48. Fallows 2005 76.

Christian Science Monitor, “Needed: More Troops, not High-Tech Gadgets,” 13 February 2006. The US DOD released the Quadrennial Defense Review and the defense budget for fiscal year 2007. The QDR reflects increased priority for counterinsurgency but the budget is diametrically opposed to it.

⁴³⁸ The US DOD refers to this as the DIME. In Canada it is called 3D + T, or Defence, Diplomacy, Development, and Trade.

⁴³⁹ General Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marines Magazine*, January 1999, 2.

The US experience in post-war Iraq re-emphasizes the importance of commitment and perseverance. It requires a new perspective on time, one that emphasizes patience rather than rapid dominance. The US public must be prepared to suffer a steady trickle of casualties over an extended period in order to achieve mission success in the end. Although a challenge, public acceptance is achievable if US political leaders clearly articulate the protracted nature of counterinsurgency and the vital stakes involved for US interests in the Middle East.

The US will have to re-evaluate the requirement for broad coalition building in the lead-up to war, in order to maximize international support and legitimacy and to ensure greater burden sharing. The US should reassure Muslim populations that it respects the Muslim religion and is serious about solving the Israeli-Palestine problem.

Although rapid dominance in the combat phase does not require a large force size, the requirement to provide security and order during the post-conflict phase requires a ground force sized in relation to the local population. Further, future US led coalitions will need greater numbers of military police, civil-military affairs, engineers, and local language capable intelligence specialists, police, and soldiers.⁴⁴⁰

Conventionally trained and equipped forces cannot be simply used for “nation building” and counterinsurgency operations without some special training and education.⁴⁴¹ The new counterinsurgency doctrine will have to be more widely trained and high level commanders, including the Secretary of Defense and the President, will have to be educated in its key precepts.

⁴⁴⁰ Vest 48 cites a November 2004 US Army War College Report.

⁴⁴¹ Vest 48 cites a November 2004 US Army War College Report

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