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The Iraq War and Its Implications on the World Security

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The Iraq War and Its Implications on the World Security¹

Major General Pan Zhenqiang (retired)

Introduction

On March 20, 2003, the U.S. led-coalition forces started a large-scale military attack against Iraq, thus initiating the Iraq war. Like the Gulf war in 1991, the Iraq war was in essence an American war as the troops thrown in were largely American troops primarily with British support. The war was entirely designed and commanded by the United States despite using the name of coalition consisting of 46 countries assembled to fight against Iraq.² The major operations lasted 42 days. The coalition forces quickly routed the Iraqi troops, took over Baghdad, and toppled Saddam Hussein's regime. On May 1, wearing the Air Force pilot uniform, President George W. Bush triumphantly declared on board the USS Abraham Lincoln off the coast of San Diego, California, that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended", and envisaged that "the arrival of a new era" had come in that liberated country.

But, the subsequent development has not vindicated that prediction. Instead, the Bush administration soon found out that to win peace in Iraq was far more difficult than to win the war as the war was without the authorization by the Security Council of the United Nations. Iraq has turned out to be more chaotic today than pre-war times and the U.S. troops are still experiencing guerrilla style attacks that generate more American deaths in Iraq since the end of active combat than during the six weeks it took to take control of the country. The reconstruction process in Iraq is quag-mired. The Bush administration has been increasingly isolated from the international community. Moreover, the blowback is extending to the U.S. domestic politics as the election campaign is getting closer and closer, putting George W. Bush at the risk of losing his second term of presidency if he is not quick enough to find a way out for tackling all the thorny post-war issues.

1 The article was finished on December 31, 2003.

2 The exact number of countries joining the real combat in Iraq has never been clear. 46 countries were said to form the coalition of willing in the war on Iraq. But many of these countries have no military force at all. A few others were quietly removed from the list later on. For the detained discussion on the issue, see Dana Milbank, "White House Notebook: Many Willing, But Few Are Able", The Washington Post, March 25, 2003.

Meanwhile, a Pandora Box has been opened up as far as the implications of the Iraq war to the world and regional situations are concerned. Many factors, which used to be taken for granted as the pillars for the peace and stability of the world, are fast eroding. New uncertainties are cropping up. The world seems no longer the same, much more confused, turbulent and unsafe.

It is against this backdrop the present paper attempts to give a brief view of the war and its implications to the world and regional security in the hope of providing clues for a better understanding of where the world is headed for and what the international community should strive to do in order to make the world a better and safer place to live in.

Overview of the Iraq war

1. Background of the Iraq war

Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs, along with its long-range missile development and alleged support for terrorism are the major justifications put forward for the U.S. invasion.

There is no doubt that Iraq possessed varying capabilities in all these weapons of mass destruction (WMD) before the 1991 Gulf war. The Iraqi government even used chemical weapons on a number of occasions.³ The end of the first Gulf war resulted in a permanent cease-fire agreement together with the resolution 687 of the UN Security Council in April

1991, which ordered Iraq to eliminate under international supervision its biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs, as well as its ballistic missiles with ranges greater than 150 kilometers. The Security Council also declared that the comprehensive economic sanctions imposed in 1990 on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait would remain in place until Baghdad had fully complied with its weapons requirements. Baghdad agreed to these conditions. For eight years from 1991-1998 the group of the UN inspectors which were called the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) destroyed the bulk of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons and dismantled its nuclear bomb program. But the Iraqi government was perceived to offer only sporadic cooperation in the process. More often than not, the Saddam Hussein's regime was time and again accused of systematic obstruction and deception. On the other hand, the Iraqi side charged the United States for its manipulating the inspections and even using them to collect intelligence for its own purposes. The mutual accusation led to a tough confrontation between Iraq and the UN Security Council.

The United States and Britain have been the most intransigent in demanding the complete disarmament of Iraq, and advocating military pressure, including the using force to compel Iraq's compliance with the UN resolutions. Right after the first Gulf war was over, they immediately created no-flying zones within the territory of Iraq without the endorsement of

³ Iraq repeatedly violated the international norm against using chemical weapons during its eight-year war with Iran in 1980s. Iraq also used chemical weapons against some of its own villages, most notably against Halabja in a March 16, 1988, attack that killed an estimated 5,000 people.

the UN Security Council, launched repeated air-strikes against Iraq's various military targets, and firmly rejected any easing of the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The American and British actions added difficulties to the already complex and emotional standoff between Iraq and the UN Security Council. They also gave rise to serious divisions within the UN Security Council with regard to the Iraq issue.

A number of other members of the UN Security Council, notably those permanent members like Russia, China and France, gradually saw growing rift in their positions with the United States. They wondered if the Bush administration had not exaggerated the threat of Iraq's WMD; they resented the US-British military actions without the authorization of the UN Security Council, and their indifference towards the sufferings of the average Iraqi people as a result of the continuing sanctions. Under increasing pressure from these countries to ease the sanctions imposed on Iraq and to address worsening humanitarian problems in the country, the UN Security Council in April 1995 unanimously approved the so-called oil-for-food program. The program permitted Iraq to sell up to \$1 billion of oil every 90 days to buy food, medicine, and other civilian goods. The revenue from the sale of oil was kept in an escrow account controlled by the United Nations to prevent Iraq from purchasing items with potential military uses. The decision seemed to improve the inspection situation to some extent; thereby further progress was made in the inspection and destruction process. In May 1998, the UN Security Council issued a statement, expressing satisfaction with Iraq's recent cooperation. Some

Security Council members even wanted to officially declare Iraq disarmed of its nuclear weapons and to relax IAEA inspections, but the United States and Britain again resisted, claiming there were still unanswered questions. Thus, despite the limited progress, the confrontation between the Iraqi government and the UN Security Council continued and deteriorated, which led to the eventual desperate refusal of Saddam Hussein's regime to cooperate with the UNSCOM, and the departure of UN weapons inspectors in late 1998.

After the inspectors left the country, Iraq permitted only limited inspections of declared nuclear sites but did not allow the return of intrusive inspections to verify that it had lived up to its commitment to get rid of all its prohibited weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. In 1999, the Security Council authorized a review of UN policy toward Iraq, including the status of Iraq's disarmament. The panel, charged with assessing Iraq's disarmament, reported at the end of March that "the bulk of Iraq's proscribed weapon programs has been eliminated," but it also noted that "important elements still have to be resolved." The panel called for a reinforced monitoring and verification system and cautioned that the longer weapons inspectors were kept out of Iraq, the greater the risk that Iraq might reconstitute its programs. Months of debate ensued among the UN Security Council members over how to address the Iraqi situation. While the United States and the United Kingdom insisted that Iraq fully disarm before sanctions were relaxed, Russia, China, France and other members contended that Iraq had already fulfilled the bulk of its disarmament commitments and that sanctions should be eased to induce Iraq

to complete its final obligations. For its part, Iraq insisted that sanctions must be lifted before inspectors could return.

It is against this backdrop, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1284 on December 17, 1999, creating a successor to UNSCOM—the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Russia, China, and France abstained from the vote, revealing that divisions between Security Council members on Iraq still existed. The debate continued as on what terms the Security Council could relax its sanctions. No agreement was reached. Meanwhile, Iraq rejected Resolution 1284, making it virtually impossible to have meaningful inspections and verification in Iraq in the following years.

Then came the year of 2001, when the Bush administration took power. Further, on September 11 that year, a horrible terrorist attack occurred on the homeland of the United States that shocked the world but also served to dramatically change the U.S. threat perception and its security strategy. One of the repercussions was that the American attitude towards Iraq was further hardened, which immediately also intensified the tension in the Gulf as well as in the Security Council.⁴

In January 29, 2002, George W. Bush labeled

Iraq a member of an “axis of evil,” along with Iran and North Korea in his State of the Union address.⁵ The speech was taken as the first of many signals by top U.S. officials that the U.S. was going to focus on the threat posed by Iraq; to question the ultimate worth of arms inspections in that country; and to advocate the overthrow of Saddam Hussein as the only way to guarantee that Iraq would not develop weapons of mass destruction in the future. The change of the U.S. position was made more explicit by George W. Bush’s another speech to the United Nations on September 12, calling on the world body to enforce its resolutions on disarming Iraq. Bush strongly implied that if the “United Nations does not act the United States will”.⁶

At the same time, the Bush administration was stepping up preparation for a military invasion against Iraq. In October 2002, despite suspicion of some members about the adequate information about the military threat by Iraq, Congress authorized the President to use armed forces of the United States to defend U.S. national security against the threat posed by Iraq and to enforce all relevant UN resolutions regarding that country (P.L. 107-243). The following months witnessed intensified U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf. By January 2003, the U.S. forces were actually positioned to launch an attack on Iraq by mid-Feb-

4 It has been widely reported that the neoconservatives in the Bush administration played a critical role in developing this hardened attitude towards Saddam Hussein. The latest of such reports is, for example, “How Dick Cheney Sold the War” by Mark Hosenball, Michael Isikoff and Evan Thomas in Newsweek November 17, 2003, pp. 30-33.

5 State of Union, White House, Washington, January 29, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2002/history.html>.

6 President’s Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly, September 12, The New York Times, September 12.

ruary or early March in the hope of finishing the war in the cooler months before May.

But the Bush administration seemed also to experience some internal division as to the best approach to the Iraq issue, including whether military forces should be used to topple Saddam Hussein's regime and whether they should be used unilaterally without the authorization of the UN Security Council. Secretary of State Powell was said to represent those in the administration who believed that a long term program of unfettered weapons inspections could succeed in containing the WMD threat from Iraq. He was reportedly key to the decision by George W. Bush in September 2002 to work through the United Nations to give Iraq a final opportunity to disarm unilaterally. On the other hand, Media report suggested that Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld among others had consistently been skeptical that inspections could significantly reduce the long-term threat from Iraq and reportedly had long been in favor of military actions against Iraq. They argued that Iraq was concealing active WMD programs and would eventually try to use WMD to harm the United States unless it was completely disarmed, and therefore as Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz put it: "We cannot wait to act until the threat is imminent".⁷ They also believed that overthrowing Saddam Hussein would pave the way for democracy not only in Iraq, but also in the broader area of the Middle

East, and reduce support for terrorism. As with regard to the role of the United Nations, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stressed that it could indeed stand aside, warning that the return of UN inspectors to Iraq would only give "false comfort". When the situation evolved into 2003, the hawks within the Bush administration seemed to occupy the dominant position, and even Powell changed his tones, issuing dark warnings that inspections would not succeed in disarming Iraq and that war may be required with or without the UN authorization.

In January 2003, the Bush administration revived assertions it had made periodically since the September 11, 2001 attacks that Iraq supported and had ties to the al Qaeda group, among other terrorist organizations. George W. Bush said in his 2003 State of Union message that evidence had been obtained "from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements from people now in custody." According to the administration, Iraq had provided technical assistance in the past to al Qaeda to help it construct chemical weapons; senior al Qaeda activists had contacts with the Baghdad regime. A faction based in northern Iraq and believed to be linked to al Qaeda, called the Ansar al-Islam, was in contact with the Iraqi regime.⁸ However, the world opinion was largely suspicious about the accuracy of the U.S. accusation. Press reports in early February suggested that even the intelligence

7 Address to IISS by US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz December 2, 2002, <http://www.iiss.org/conferencepage.php?confID=42&PHPSESSID=f1a6b412bd94abbac1ff378973b4e4aa>.

8 President Delivers "State of the Union", The U.S. Capitol, Washington, January 28, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>.

community in Washington was divided about the tie of Iraq with al Qaeda. Some thought it only a possibility, others held that there might have been some cooperation when Osama bin Laden was based in Sudan in the early 1990s, but that any Iraq-al-Qaeda cooperation trailed off later on, after bin Laden was expelled in 1996 and went to Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Bush administration never dropped its official accusation about this linkage.

Largely pushed by the U.S. and also perhaps out of a desire to avoid a military confrontation, the UN Security Council became more determined to pressurize Iraq for its compliance with the UN Security resolutions. On November 8, 2002, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1441, which declared that Iraq "remains in material breach" of past resolutions and gave Iraq a "final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" set out by Security Council various resolutions stretching back to the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf war. It also decided to strengthen powers of the UNMOVIC's and the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) to conduct inspections throughout Iraq, specifying that Iraq must allow "immediate, unimpeded, unconditional and unrestricted access" to "facilities, buildings, equipment, records, and means of transport which they wish to inspect." UN inspectors were given the authority to prohibit the movement of vehicles and aircraft around sites to be inspected and have the right to interview anyone they choose, without Iraqi officials

present, in any location they wished. The resolution warned that Iraq would face "serious consequences" - an obvious hint of war, if it failed to comply with its disarmament obligations.

Quick to grasp the implications of all these U.S. actions and the new UN Security Council resolution, the Saddam Hussein's regime swiftly changed its tactics to avoid the imminent attack by the U.S. On November 13, Iraq declared that it accepted Resolution 1441 and was ready to cooperate with UNMOVIC and IAEA inspections. On November 27, the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspection teams went into Iraq and began to work. The Iraqi side surprisingly "improved" its cooperation with the inspections. But obviously it came too late, despite the fact that both UNMOVIC and IAEA acknowledged limited progress in inspections, confirming that so far no WMD had been found, and stressed that more time was needed for the completion of the work to finally ascertain the status of Iraq's disarmament. On February 5, 2003, Powell went to the Security Council and made a strong speech in an effort to persuade members that Iraq was continuing to subvert the inspections process. He publicly presented intelligence for the first time to support Washington's claim that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction and interfering with inspections.⁹

Other members, however, were not persuaded. The rift in the UN Security Council was deep-

9 Secretary's address to Security Council on Iraqi violations of Res. 1441, February 5, New York, Press Release, the U.S. State Department, February, 6 2003, <http://usembassy.state.gov/uscongencmc/www06feb03.html>.

ened centering on the question whether the inspection should continue or the using military forces be authorized to members of the international community. France, Russia and China, strongly supported continued inspections. On February 24, 2003, the United States, Britain and Spain co-sponsored a new Security Council resolution saying "Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it by Resolution 1441." The same day, Russia and France submitted a memorandum stating that military force should be a "last resort" and that force should not yet be used because there was "no evidence" that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. The memorandum also said, however, that "inspections cannot continue indefinitely. Iraq must disarm." It further added that Baghdad's cooperation, although improving, was not "yet fully satisfactory." The memorandum also suggested "further measures to strengthen inspections," including increasing staff and bolstering technical capabilities. Additionally, it proposed a new timeline mandating regular reporting to the Security Council about inspectors' progress, as well as a progress report to be submitted 120 days after the program of work was adopted. Neither measure was accepted.

Soon after, the United States, Britain and Spain co-sponsored another resolution stating that Iraq "will have failed" to comply with Resolution 1441 unless Baghdad cooperates with its disarmament obligations by March 17". The draft resolution implied that the council members would take military action if Iraq failed to meet the deadline.

But again, the U.S. led-effort was met with stiff objection from the France-led opposition, bringing the UN Security council in a powerless position to take actions. Moreover, relations across the Atlantic fell to the lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War.

After U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to build support for the new resolution failed, the United States decided on March 17, 2003 not to seek a vote on it - a reversal of Bush's position that the United States would push for a Security Council vote on the resolution, regardless of whether it was expected to pass. Interestingly, at this final stage of the confrontation, Iraq made an 11th-hour appeal to avert the imminent hot war. According to a recent report in the New York Times "an influential adviser to the Pentagon received a secret message from a Lebanese-American businessman: Saddam Hussein wanted to make a deal. Iraqi officials, including the chief of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, had told the businessman that they wanted Washington to know that Iraq no longer had weapons of mass destruction, and they offered to allow American troops and experts to conduct an independent search. They also offered to hand over a man accused of being involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing who was being held in Baghdad. At one point, the intermediary said in an interview, the Iraqis even pledged to hold elections. Unfortunately, at this late hour, the Bush administration had lost all the interests to make a deal, to save the skin of Saddam Hussein. The offer was turned down quietly.¹⁰

¹⁰ James Risen, "Iraq Made 11th-Hour Appeal to Avert the War", November 5, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/05/international/worldspecial/05CND-INTEL.html?hp>.

On March 17, Bush demanded Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq within 48 hours or the United States would initiate military action. The next day, upon the decision of Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors left Iraq. The stage was finally set for the invasion of the coalition. On March 19, 2003, the United States commenced military action coded "Operation Iraqi Freedom".

2. Characteristics of the Iraq War

The Iraq war was typical of its asymmetry in nature. There was such a huge gap between the two warring sides in terms of their weapons and equipments that they were like living in different ages. While the U.S.-British coalition force embarked on informationalized warfare with all their sophisticated weapons and equipment, the Iraqi army seemed still engaged in mechanized or semi-mechanized warfare with its mechanized or semi-mechanized arms. Thus the outcome of the war was but a foregone conclusion even before it started.

More than 225,000 American forces were in the Gulf region, with more than 130,000 Americans in Kuwait alone. About 25,000 British ground forces were also in the region. About 1,000 air force, navy and Marine Corps strike and support planes were poised to attack from

five aircraft carriers and land bases in the region. The Pentagon's war plan called for unleashing 3,000 precision-guided bombs and missiles in the first 48 hours of a short air campaign, to be followed quickly by ground operations. In addition the British dispatched 45,000 men, including an air force with more than 100 combat aircraft such as Tornados, Harriers and so on; a naval fleet composed of 16 warships with aircraft-carrier Royal Ark as the flagship; and a sizable ground force. Australia and Poland also sent a small number of troops. Although the coalition forces deployed to the Persian Gulf were smaller in absolute size than they were in 1991 for Operation Desert Storm, this assembling of the military forces was still very impressive as it represented a higher proportion of both the American and British combat units into battle at once than it had in decades.¹¹ But what mattered was not really quantity but quality. As far as the combat capability of the coalition forces were concerned, it was much more powerful and effective than during the first Gulf war.

The Iraqi Army was also much smaller and far less capable than it was 12 years ago. The war in 1991 had dealt a devastating blow to the Iraqi forces. The army ended up with as little as a quarter of its pre-war divisional strength, a quarter of pre-war manpower and half of its equipment. Since 1991, the Iraqi High Com-

11 For example, the US committed most of its heavy ground forces and deployable aircraft carriers, as well as a large share of its best attack aircraft and air- and sea-lift units when the invasion started. At least five of its 10 active Army divisions and one of three Marine divisions were deployed to the Gulf. Those included America's most mobile parachute- and helicopter-borne divisions, and some advanced mechanized forces. Five carrier battle groups were already in the Gulf region and a sixth was on the way, leaving only a couple of the Navy's 11 carrier air wings left to for possible deployment, since some were in dock for maintenance or overhauls.

mand had been engaged in a desperate attempt to rebuild its armed forces. The rebuilding, however, took place against a background of political instability, with numerous senior officers losing their lives in coup attempts and purges, and in light of the impossibility of obtaining new equipment or spare parts due to the UN embargo. Nonetheless, the Iraqi military seemed to manage to be able to reconstitute a considerable portion of its pre-Desert Storm combat power at least in appearance.

Since the 1991 Gulf war, the army had been the prime focus of the rebuilding effort. The approach since 1991 had been to reduce the number of formations and personnel, amalgamate units and concentrate on rebuilding armored and mechanized units. In 1991, the army was infantry heavy but it now had more armored and mechanized formations. The number of regular army divisions had fallen from about seven armored/mechanized and 20 infantry divisions to two or three armored divisions, three mechanized divisions and 15 to 17 infantry divisions respectively. Among the ground force, Saddam Hussein's regime had concentrated its energies on reconstituting the Republic Guard formations but only eight divisions seemed to have been reconstituted. There were three armored divisions (al-Nida, al-Hammurabi and al-Medina), one mechanized division (al-Abid) and four infantry divisions (al-Adnan, al-Nebuchadnezzar, al-Baghdad and one other). Even these units were undermanned and poorly equipped. According to the standard Iraqi organization, the total manpower of these eight divisions

should be 11,240 each; in fact, it probably had a maximum of 8,000 soldiers. Likewise, tank holdings should be 1,320 against a likely actual figure of no more than 800; armored vehicle holdings should be 2,260 against a probable actual figure of up to 1,100; and they should have 642 artillery pieces compared to the 500 they did have.

As a consequence, the Iraqi army consistently operated with a hollow organizational structure. Its large number of divisions had never been manned and equipped according to their tables of organization and equipment. In theory, regular armored divisions prior to Desert Storm had 12,100 men and 245 tanks, while infantry divisions had 14,100 men and 78 tanks. In practice, these complements were not reached. They were often intended to be filled out by reservists or additional conscripts in time of crisis. This discrepancy between nominal and real strength certainly deluded outside observers during the Gulf crisis, and it was quite likely that it deluded Saddam himself as to the true state of his military establishment. Regarding the other services, the navy actually non-existed, the air force almost insignificant.

Thus the war quickly became a rout. As one American field report described what was often being happening in the battleground: "We are able to hit them relentlessly; they can hardly hit us. We can move at will and attack their flanks and rear; they move only with great danger. They must disperse to avoid our air attack; we can mass our forces to penetrate their stretched and battered lines."¹²

12 Michael Vickers, "Ground War: Doing More With Less", *The Washington Post*, Sunday, April 6, 2003; p. B01.

Despite some sporadic desperate tough resistance often executed not by the Iraqi regular military units but by irregular guerilla force or fedayeen militiamen elements, the fighting almost became a landslide game from the very beginning. The U.S. forces first started their attack by a strategy dubbed by "decapitation attack", with the aim of killing by surprise Saddam Hussein and his primary aids with just a few precision guided ammunitions. It was hoped that with Saddam Hussein gone, the whole regime would collapse without further fighting. While Saddam narrowly escaped, the strategy of decapitation was never given up. Whenever his whereabouts were found, a real time attack would just follow, making the Iraqi leadership forced to disperse, busy in hiding rather than commanding the operations.

Immediately after the first decapitation attack failed, the coalition shifted to launch a large scale air assault dubbed by media as "shock and awe" although the Pentagon never officially accepted it. These waves of unprecedented high-intensive air attacks continued incessantly during the whole operations from all directions on vital military targets as well as critical civilian targets that had important bearings on the progress of the war at later stages. In the first three days of combat, the U.S. military dropped over 1,100 precision-guided ammunitions of various kinds, which were 4 times and 5 times compared with those used during the same period of the first Gulf war and the Kosovo conflict respectively. During the whole process of the war, the U.S. military was reported to fly more than 30,000 sorties of all kinds of warplanes, dropped more than 950 cruise missiles and about 20,000 pre-

cision-guided ammunitions. The first Gulf war saw the use of precision-guided ammunitions as only accounting 8% of all the ammunitions used. The percentage was 35% in the Kosovo conflict; 56% in the war in Afghanistan; and up to 68% in this war. Thanks to this relentless air attack, the U.S. military was able to effectively paralyze the command and control systems of the Iraqi forces, smash its whole defensive posture, shake the will of the soldiers and civilians to resist, and provide the essential conditions for the speedy pushing movement of its ground force.

Meanwhile, the U.S. ground force was playing a central role in the campaign and had advanced at unprecedented speed - something that stood in stark contrast to the sideline role played by land power in all the previous wars in the post Cold War ear. As a matter of fact, the ground war was even initiated before the principal air campaign had begun. The U.S. forces started a two-pronged main attack from southern Iraq all the way towards Baghdad. In 6 days the advance troops were able to drive as deep as over 400 kilometers and soon were within shooting range of the capital. The capture of Baghdad was also innovative. After occupying the Saddam International airport, the army entered Baghdad at once to do reconnaissance with a small armored unit. Finding that Iraqi forces didn't organize effective defense, the commander quickly ordered his troops to break into the City and took vital targets in downtown. This led to the crumble of Iraqi city defense at once and with least casualties. To the surprise of many observers, Baghdad thus fell into U.S. hands without serious fighting. This became the turning point

of the war. A few days later, the U.S. ground force took Tigris, the last strategic stronghold of the Iraqi forces, and had most of Iraqi land under its control. The main operations in Iraq, lasting only about 42 days, were virtually over.

If purely looked at from an operational point of view, the U.S. military victory was astonishing, with almost insignificant casualties (148 deaths out of over 250,000 invading force) during the period of major operations. It was also amazing for such a force to destroy over 400,000 Iraqi forces, topple the Iraqi government and occupy a territory of more than 400,000 square kilometers in such a short period of time. Two characteristics may be in order in the Iraq war:

The first and foremost was the dominance of the coalition forces supported mainly by high technologies. The U.S. Vice President put it in this way: "The superior technology we now possess is, perhaps, the most obvious difference between the Gulf War and the present conflict."¹³ A Washington based think-tank report stressed that it is owing to the superior technologies, the U.S. forces were able to achieve such "speed, precision, intelligence and jointness that have virtually brought the warfare into a new phase".¹⁴

The coalition used all kinds of new munitions that can be put into use in the operations.

Indeed, the war became the test ground of its new weapons and equipment. For the precision guided munitions, apart from those which had been employed in the past such as Tomahawk cruise missile, GBU-31 Joint direct attack munitions (JDAM), GBU-28 earth penetrating bombs, napalm bombs and depleted uranium bombs, new kinds of these weapons were first used in the war like the 10-ton MOAB super bombs (called Mother of all bombs), which were almost tantamount to a mininuke in terms of its shock wave generated and its kill zone extending between 100-300 meters. The British introduced Paveway III laser-guided bombs, Stormshadow air-to-ground standoff missiles and CBU-105 Wind Correct Cluster Bombs, whose lethality was all vastly increased. In addition, the American military introduced a number of improved electronic warfare aircraft for information warfare. They played such a critical role in forcing the Iraqi army to refrain from turning on its guidance radar for the sake of survival that virtually paralyzed all the Iraqi air defense systems.

One element in the Iraq War meriting particular attention was the role played by satellites in space. During the war, 91 satellites for various purposes were employed. These satellites were said to form a practical link to integrate space for the first time with air, land and maritime battleground. As revealed by the U.S. Aviation and Space Technology: "Re-

13 See John H. Cushman Jr. and Thom Shanker, "Backup of War in Iraq Provides Model of New Way of Doing Battle", *The New York Times*, April 10, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/10/international/worldspecial/10COMB.html>.

14 For the discussion of these new characteristics of the Iraq War, see Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, "The lessons of the Iraq War:", July 15, 2003, Center for Strategic and International Studies. http://www.csis.org/features/rag_instantlessons_exec.pdf.

quirements for space support - such as satellite communications and "tweaked-up" GPS accuracies - were included routinely in daily air tasking orders (ATO) during the Iraq war, for example. A separate space tasking order (STO) detailed how space-based constellations were to be set up in support of specific air strike, reconnaissance and other missions. And space-derived information often was routed directly to forces in the field, where it could be used to advantage immediately, instead of being processed before dissemination by a middle-layer analyst.

In certain cases, the STO also reserved a portion of military satcom resources for unpredictable requirements, such as covert special ops deep in Iraqi-held territory, or quick-reaction search-and-rescue missions."¹⁵

As a result, according to an American senior space officer, "We talk about Desert Storm being the first 'space war,' but I'd call this the first real space war - where we have truly integrated 'space' throughout the battle space, in ways we've never been able to do before... Our whole intent was to bring an integrated effect to the battle space - put air and space together and support [troops] in the field, as well as other [service] components. Its not space for space's sake; its space integrated with everything else to produce effects in the kill chain."¹⁶

With the new technology in place, the war

planners were also able to define an entirely new way of thinking about the modern warfare. Rumsfeld was said to be the soul of a new doctrine for fighting the Iraq war. With the air dominance unpinned by the technological superiority, Rumsfeld felt it possible to have light and fast formations do more with less. His views were not entirely embraced by the U.S. military, but the result of the war seemed to vindicate his far-sighted vision.

The second characteristic of the war was that the increasing role played by politics which affected the way how the war was conducted as well as the process of the actual operations. The war was controversial from the very beginning. The Bush administration bypassed the UN Security Council to launch the invasion under the justification of preemption, which generated worldwide opposition. To achieve the very aim of eliminating this threat to the United States, the administration was clearly aware that it would not be enough to only remove Saddam Hussein's regime by force. It would also be obligated to rebuild a new Iraq, free and democratic as it repeatedly claimed after the war was ended. To do so, one of the requisites was that the war must be a clean war and that the Iraqi people must accept the coalition forces as a liberator and not as an occupation force.

Thus the Iraq war was going to be a very different one. First of all, the war must be won as quickly, decisively and inexpensively

15 William B. Scott and Craig Covault, "High Ground OverIraq", Aviation and Space Technology, June 8, 2003, http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel_awst_story.jsp?id=news/06093top.xml.

16 *ibid.*

as possible. For the administration, to win militarily was quite sure. But it could not afford to have the whole process long and protracted, nor allow a heavy cost both in terms of money as well as lives. Or even a military victory could be turned into a political disaster. Second, unlike all other wars in which victory was won by defeating the enemy's military, defeating or even destroying the Iraqi troops was not the aim in this war against Saddam. "In essence, the operation was a hostage-rescue scenario on a huge scale. The Iraqi army is a secondary target. Much of it will be bypassed. Much if it is expected to surrender without a fight. Hence, destroying it is a waste in human and political terms, provided that it poses neither threat nor resistance."¹⁷ Thirdly, the Bush administration had also to make sure that even the Iraqi side should not suffer a great loss: there should be neither great loss of life, particularly no great civilian casualties, nor excessive destruction of civil infrastructures. For "integral to the strategy is the image battle that would have been ill-served by a huge air assault on the civilian population, followed by a plodding advance to Baghdad."¹⁸ It is for this purpose, the U.S. military would even had to prevent Saddam Hussein's own troops from resorting to a "scorched land strategy", setting the oilfields on fire for instance in order to stop the advance of the coalition forces, and to keep them from falling into their hands.

So the special forces were dispatched to seize key targets ahead of the main force well before the campaign started. Success of one such incident was reported that at the beginning of the campaign, "Britain's Special Boat Service infiltrated the Faw oilfields and engaged the attention of Iraqi troops, while Royal Marine commandos, attacking from Kuwait, drove off the defenders and occupied the area. This operation was brought forward by two days to nip Iraqi plans in the bud."¹⁹ But of course, the U.S. military had a further motive to keep the oilfields well in their hands: To prepare for the future reconstruction of Iraq. You have to have this precious resource turned into necessary funds for the rebuilding of the country.

It was a moot point, however, to argue to what extent all these politics-motivated goals were achieved. But evidently, from an operational point of view, tension would sometimes be inevitable between political goals and the military requirements. "Ten days into the invasion of Iraq, the political imperative of waging a short and decisive campaign is increasingly at odds with the military necessity of preparing for a protracted, more violent and costly war."²⁰ Fixing on a strategic focus of taking Baghdad first in the hope of finishing the war as fast as possible, the U.S. made a swift drive northward, leaving behind the enemy troops un-attacked and population

17 Harlan Ullman, "A Very Different War", The Washington Times, March 19, 2003.

18 Julian Thompson, "Air power was devastating and Iraqi forces lamentable", The Observer, Sunday April 13, 2003, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12239,935797,00.html>.

19 *ibid.*

20 Rick Atkinson and Thomas E. Ricks, "War's Military, Political Goals Begin to Diverge", The Washington Post, March 30, 2003; p. A01.

centers without control. The result was that it was soon discovered that the fast movement had left insecurity in its wake - a difficult and unexpected threat in the rear areas with the coalition's troops spread thin and their supply lines insecure. Many casualties suffered by the U.S. troops were caused by the paramilitary Fedayeen fighters rather than the Iraqi regular forces.

At the initial stage of the massive air strikes, the coalition did try hard to confine its attacks to destroying targets which were deemed absolutely necessary like Saddam Hussein's presidential palaces and other operational centers. Civilian targets like general transport and communications facilities, fuel storage depots, refining capabilities and electricity generation were kept deliberately intact. The coalition forces were also trying to be friendly towards the Iraqi citizens in the hope of winning the soul and mind of the average people.

But things did not develop as expected. The Iraqi people might have hated Saddam Hussein and indeed might have welcomed his removal, but they obviously disliked the foreign troops staying on their soil also. As one Western media reports noted: "When this campaign was begun, like so many others throughout history, with lofty exhortations from battlefield commanders to their troops, urging courage, patience, compassion for the Iraqi people and even chivalry. Within a week it had degenerated into an unexpected ugliness in virtually every popu-

lated area where American and British forces have come under fire. Those who believed from intelligence reports and Pentagon war planners that the Iraqi people and particularly those from the Shiite sections of the southeast, would rise up to greet them as liberators were instead faced with persistent resistance. Soldiers were not being welcomed as liberators but often confronted with hatred...Visions of cheering throngs welcoming them as liberators have vanished in the wake of a bloody engagement whose full casualties are still unknown...".²¹

Under growing frustration and fear of isolation, the occupation forces became increasingly desperate and impatient. With chivalry being turned into paranoid, the coalition forces became more and more indiscriminate in the air bombardment and the killings on the ground. Soldiers fired at any targets that were deemed threatening to their personal safety and security, particularly when the Iraqi paramilitary forces often disguised themselves as civilians in plain clothes and resorted to unconventional tactics to attack them. The civilian casualties increased dramatically, many of whom were innocent women and children.

Meanwhile, the air bombardment began to aim at civilian infrastructures in order to facilitate the final take on of the major cities. Even the Iraqi TV station at Baghdad, which the coalition had allowed to continue its broadcasting, was incapacitated in an attempt to completely shut up the Iraqi regime's voice. The war became bloodier, which may just be the typical

21 James Webb, "The War in Iraq Turns Ugly. That's What Wars Do", The Washington Post, March 30, 2003.

pattern of any large scale military conflict.²² But the political goal of winning the support of the average people was evidently lost.

3. Reconstruction of Iraq

Although the major operations were completed as George W. Bush claimed on May 1, 2003, the war was not over. Indeed, the President himself refrained from say that. Meanwhile, he was keenly aware that the best way to justify the war was to win a positive peace in the post-war country, which meant establishing order, ensuring security and greatly reducing crime and looting in the society. That was also the best way to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqis for the long haul, as well as to influence other Arab nations and US critics in Europe, and to show to the world that the Iraq War was not only the victory but the success for the United States policy. Bush hoped that this could pave the way for the eventual building of a free and democratic Iraq in the Middle East.

But then the US reconstruction of Iraq proved inept, misconceived, and haphazard from the very outset.

In the first place, the U.S. led-coalition forces seemed to be professional in combat, but to be entirely novices at peacekeeping or policing in the streets. This found particular ex-

pression in their inability of maintaining order and providing minimum security to the citizens in Baghdad and other major cities while the troops were obliged to spread thin all over the country. "Television commentaries and images of celebrating Iraqis quickly became images of utter chaos - unrestrained looting and even wanton destruction of property. If it could be moved, it was taken; if it couldn't, it was smashed or burned. Whether in Basra or Baghdad, Kirkuk or Mosul, the coalition forces were simply too few to even seriously attempt regaining control of the cities without the cooperation of large segments of the population, which they did not have".²³

This anarchic situation was somewhat improved with the setting up of the U.S led Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi Interim government. But with the scattering of the routed Iraqi troops nationwide with all sorts of small weapons in their hands, and a great number of responsible former Iraqi officials or military officers still at large, resistance has never ceased. Meanwhile, with the former Iraqi forces gone, Iraqi borders with Iran and Syria became even more porous. Various international terrorist elements, including al Qaeda group, took the advantage and infiltrated into Iraq. They virtually took Iraq now as their "safe heaven", taking revenge at the U.S. soldiers, and sabotage the Iraqi civil in-

22 According to one estimate by an American independent think-tank, during the first month of the war, over 150, 000 Iraqi people were killed by the coalition forces. Among those dead, 4,300 were civilians, the figure being almost twice that of those perished during the 9-11 terrorist attack in the U.S. See "The First Month Sees the U.S. killing over 4,000 civilians", Lianhe Zaobao, Singapore, October 30, 2003, <http://www.zaobao.com/special/newspapers/2003/10/others301003e.html>.

23 Col. Dan Smith (Ret.), "The Regime Is Gone—Early Lessons from Iraq", Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC), April 17, 2003, <http://www.foreignpolicy-infofocus.org/commentary/2003/0304lessons.html>.

frastructure like oil and water pipelines in Iraq in an attempt to forestall the rebuilding of the country. Suicide bombs and organized attacks continued almost at daily basis. These attacks were even expanded to the Iraqi clerics and officials, foreigners, and even the international organizations like the United Nations, Red Cross, etc, who were thought to be pro-U.S. and to offer assistance to the U.S. occupying forces. On August 19, a cement truck packed with explosives detonated outside the offices of the top U.N. envoy in Iraq killing him and 19 other people and devastating the U.N. headquarters in an unprecedented suicide attack against the world body. At least 100 people were wounded. Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility, and no evidence to prove that Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network was behind the attack, the tactics of the bombing "resembled attacks blamed on Islamic militants elsewhere in the world, ...and fits the ideology of al-Qaida. They consider the U.N. one of the international actors who helped the Americans to occupy Palestine and, later, Iraq."²⁴

Despite the efforts by the U.S. forces to mop up the remnants of the former regime and suspected terrorists, the terrorist attacks increased surprisingly in both ferocity and frequency in recent months, bringing the toll of the U.S.-troops to a new high. According to

one report in early November, "the U.S.-troops faced 25 to 30 attacks daily, compared with 15 to 20 in September. In December 33 Americans were killed, twice as many as in September".²⁵ On November 2, targeting Americans with new audacity, insurgents hiding in a date palm grove shot down a Chinook helicopter carrying dozens of soldiers heading for home leave Sunday, killing 16 and wounding 20 in the deadliest strike against U.S.-forces since they invaded Iraq in March. The attack "represented a major escalation in the campaign to drive the U.S.-led coalition out of the country".²⁶ At the same day, three other Americans were killed in separate attacks including one 1st Armored Division soldier in Baghdad and two U.S. civilians working for the U.S. Army Corps. All three were victims of roadside bombs. As a result of the escalation of these bombings, the coalition forces suffered deaths almost daily. As of December 28, the death pushed the US toll to 212 since May 1, when Washington declared major hostilities over.²⁷

The peace building has also been experiencing serious setback in its political dimension. As with executing the war itself, the U.S.-led occupation forces lacked the legitimate power for the peace building in Iraq. Particularly when it turned out that Iraqi troops did not use any WMD during the war as many had predicted

24 Sameer N. Yacoub, "Truck Blast at U.N.'s Iraq HQ, Kills 20", Associated Press, August 20, 2003, http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=540&e=1&u=/ap/20030820/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iraq.

25 Nicholas D. Kristof, "Death by Optimism", The New York Times, November 5, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/05/opinion/05KRIS.html>.

26 Tini Tran, "Iraq Copter Shooting Kills 16 U.S. Troops", Associated Press , November 3, 2003, http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=540&e=1&u=/ap/20031103/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iraq.

27 See Beijing Evening, Beijing, December 29, 2003, P. 16, <http://www.ben.com.cn>.

that they would, and when no such kind of weapons were found both during and after the war, the U.S. motivations about launching the invasion were again seriously questioned. As a matter of fact, to find such weapons to justify its war effort became one of the major objectives of the Bush administration right when the campaign started. Various teams were sent together with the combat troops to Iraq to search for sites for any possible signs of the alleged hidden chemical, biological and nuclear ammunitions and missiles or their development programs. This effort has never been interrupted. Today, at the point of writing, a large contingent of research persons numbering 1,400 still remain in Iraq, leaving no stones unturned to try to have the magic finding. The U.S. has also begun a covert mission to acquire Iraq's intelligence assistance in the hope of finding and safeguarding realms of official documents that would provide clues to tell a fuller story of Saddam Hussein's "full spectrum of Iraqi war crimes, as well as Baghdad's ties to international terrorist groups, such as al Qaeda, and where it may be hiding weapons of mass destruction".²⁸ None of any traces of Iraqi assessment of WMD were found despite all these U.S. efforts.

What made the Bush administration and for that matter, the Blair cabinet, who had equally been eloquent in claiming to have found the hard evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, in an even more embarrassing

position is the fact that the apparent failure was most probably not due to the ignorance of the top decision-makers, but was very likely due to the intelligence provided to them. A number of scandals were revealed in both capitals about the distortion of the prewar intelligence by the state leaders, which generated the demanding official enquiries as who should be blamed for misleading the public. Although enquiries were made in both countries, none of them ended up with anything definite. But according to many intelligence and arms control experts, the fact is clear: the Bush administration exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and derided the UN arms inspections process in order to justify toppling the Iraqi dictator. One specialist argued that it appeared that senior administration officials had already made up their minds about the U. S. course of action on Iraq and then selectively used intelligence to support preconceived conclusions. "This administration has had a faith-based intelligence attitude. It's top-down use of intelligence; 'we know the answers, give us the intelligence to support those answers'".²⁹ Indeed, it has become the Achilles heel of the Bush administration to launch the war on the twisted facts.

The Bush administration had also soon found out that it was unable to go alone with the sole responsibility for the reconstruction in Iraq. It needed the international support, including the involvement of the United Nations. However,

28 Rowan Scarborough, "Mission Aims to Find intelligence Agency's Files", The Washington Times, March 25, 2003.

29 "Former Intelligence Officials, Arms Control Experts Say Bush Administration Misrepresented and Hyped Iraqi Threat", Arms Control Today, July 11, 2003.

on the other hand, to enlist it meant conferring certain power to the international community for managing the peace building process in Iraq. Moreover, despite the effort to achieve reconciliation with its allies, Washington turned out that it cannot allow itself to forget the "negative" role played by those war critics like France, Germany and Russia. In the view of the Bush administration, these countries had virtually shot at its back when it needed their help in its war on Iraq.

In the beginning, it turned down their participation in the rehabilitation of Iraq. The House of Representatives formally passed a supplementary budget amendment excluding France, Germany, Russia and Syria from taking part in US-funded reconstruction bids in Iraq. The measure would even bar access by the four countries to information on that matter. The amendment was meant to send "a signal to our allies that we appreciate those who support us in our time of need and remember those that have sought to thwart coalition efforts to defeat Saddam Hussein's regime."³⁰ On December 5, Washington again let out a Pentagon decision that the Coalition Provisional Authority would limit \$18.6 billion contracts only to coalition partners who are "helping and sacrificing" to rebuild Iraq, thus again blocking from participation countries like France, Germany, Russia and Canada, which were expressively opposed to war.

The Bush team showed interest in hoping the United Nations only played the role of endorsing its invasion so that it could borrow certain measure of legitimacy of the war, but was adamant against handing over to the international body the central role of supervising the reconstruction of Iraq, thus losing a valuable opportunity to enlist the international support. All the burdens of rebuilding have now primarily fallen to the United States alone, which turned out to be an impossible job to accomplish by even a military superpower like the United States. Further, all these aggravate the anti-American sentiments of the average Iraqi people and heighten the tension between them and the American occupying force. As Zbigniew Brzezinski put it: "paradoxically, American power worldwide is at its historic zenith while its global political standing is at its nadir."³¹

The Bush administration also understood that to ensure the speedy stabilization in Iraq, the whole reconstruction process must be "Iraqilized" as soon as possible. It would inevitably, however, involve transferring sovereignty to the Iraqi people, which again the hawks in Washington were most reluctant to do, lest they lose all that was achieved through the action of war. Immediately after the collapse of Saddam Hussein in April, the occupation forces set up an American authority, which, directly responsible to the Pentagon, resembled something like a viceroy in colonial times, having the absolute authority over its

30 Dexter Filkins, "The coalition of the unwilling should not participate in reconstruction with US tax dollars," The New York Times, September 2, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/02/international/middleeast/02IRAQ.html?th>.

31 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "To lead, U.S. must give up paranoid policies", International Herald Tribune, November 15-16, 2003, p. 4.

subjects in Iraq. The authority then hand-picked up an Iraqi Governing Council, supposed to represent all the different ethnic and religious factions in Iraq to assist in stabilizing the country. Since the Shiite Muslim accounts over sixty percent of the whole population, they dominated the Council in contrast to the overwhelming position of the Sunni Muslim in the Saddam Hussein's regime. In September 2, the Council appointed a 25-member cabinet, taking over day-to-day control of the government, including important portfolios like foreign affairs, finance, internal security and oil. But neither the American Authority, nor the Iraqi interim government has the real power to run the country with the rising chaotic tension all over the country.

Thus the U.S. 130,000 occupation forces together with the U.S. allies in Iraq have been asked to undertake missions beyond their capability. The latter, about 21,700 strong from 27 countries³² could only play a minor role. These forces would not only have to carry out operations against insurgents, but also maintain security and order of the whole country. Deficiency was obvious. One way to remedy it was to set up and train the Iraqi security force to alleviate the heavy pressure of U.S.-led coalition forces. Right after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the Coalition Pro-

visional Authority had ordered the disbanding of the Iraqi armed forces, which were thought to be part of the old regime. But soon it was found out to be a fatal mistake as scattered with arms all over the country, these professional military officers and men became one of the major sources of instability. Moreover, with these people gone, it was extremely difficult, if not impossible to find adequate professional persons as the backbone to form a new army. The tactic was quickly changed. Efforts were made to recruit these people back into the Iraqi security force with the objective of training 40,000 members of light infantry battalions by October, 2004. But there seemed multiple difficulties according to a Western report. In the first place, ethnic and religious differences made it extremely hard to form a cohesive and unified force. Among the total force in place, for instance, there are 3,800 members of the Mujahedeen Khalq, a group of Iranians who oppose their religious government and have been living in Iraq. This group, once considered terrorists by the coalition, was vehemently opposed and ordered to leave the country by the U.S.-appointed Governing Council by the end of the year.³³ The same report also pointed out that low payment is another reason for the complaints of the Iraqi force. Half of the men of a unit, which were part of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and

32 27 countries, in addition to the United States, have contributed a total of approximately 21,700 troops to ongoing stability operations in Iraq. These 27 are Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, El Salvador, Estonia, Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. See Answer to question taken at State Department briefing, August 20, 2003, the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>.

33 Hamza Hendawi, "Iraq Army Desertions May Force Pay Raises," Associated Press, December 13, 2003, http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=540&e=1&u=/ap/20031213/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iraq.

worked under the command of the 1st Armored Division deserted. Of 700 soldiers originally in the new unit only 400 are left. "The major reason for the defections of Iraqi soldiers was pay, specifically allowances for married soldiers who were struggling to support their families on \$60 a month."³⁴

Under the circumstance, it was natural for the Bush administration to look towards its allies for financial as well as military assistance. But again, the deteriorating security and political environment has made many countries pause. Despite the UN Security Council passed resolution 1511 on October 16, endorsing the international assistance in the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq and outlining the roles of key players, the response from the U.S. allies and other international bodies were lukewarm at the best. In late October, a donors' conference was held in Madrid. \$13 billion was committed in grants and loans to Iraq in addition to the \$20 billion from the United States. There is still a huge gap between the committed \$33 billion and the estimated \$55 billion that is needed for reconstruction in coming years.³⁵

The requests for sending troops by other countries are mostly stonewalled. Major countries like France, Germany and Russia have all made it clear that they would not send any troops unless the U.S. turns the sovereignty to the Iraqi people and let the UN play a central role in the peace building in Iraq. Washington had particularly wished some friendly Muslim coun-

tries like Pakistan may offer help to ease the burden on the American military and to change the image of the occupation from that of a solely Western effort to one that is multiethnic as well as multinational. However, none of them responded positively partly for fear of the insecure situation, partly for the strong domestic opposition. Turkey once promised to send 1,000 troops across the border to Iraq. But faced with unanimous opposition by the Iraqi Governing Council in addition to the strong domestic protest, Ankara backed off in the last minute. The only good news for the Bush administration is that South Korea and Japan have both declared recently to send troops under the heavy pressure from Washington.

Lack of security has also contributed to the balking of the economic rehabilitation of Iraq. It is true that in Iraq today, the coalition has in some respects made progress in the reconstruction. For example: production and refining of oil - the most precious resource for Iraq - have quickly resumed. Iraq is even beginning to export oil now. Only a small number in contrast to the one million of refugees once predicted had actually run out of the country and the vast majority of the newly displaced have returned to their homes. No widespread famine or disease outbreaks, which were often associated with conflict, have occurred in Iraq. But the problems are that the pace of the reconstruction is much slower and the cost much higher than originally expected. The rea-

34 *ibid.*

35 Richard W. Stevenson, "Bush Praises Aid Donors for Pledges to Help Iraq", *The New York Times*, October 26, 2003 <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/26/international/26RADI.html?th>.

sons are not only because the infrastructures and equipment like the nationwide electrical grid and water and sanitation systems gravely suffered from the extensive sabotage often accompanied with the harassing attacks, but also because all these systems were so depredated due to the long-time embargo and war wreckage that to upgrade them to the modern standard would require both greater funds and longer time than anticipated. Private analysts have estimated that the cost of U.S. military and nation-building operations in Iraq could reach a figure ranging from \$600 billion to \$1.6 trillion. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of occupied Iraq, put the cost much smaller in August. He said "getting the country up and running again "could cost \$100 billion and take three years." These expenses include \$13 billion of repairing Iraq's electrical grid and \$16 billion of getting the water system in shape.³⁶

4. Future prospect

Despite the brilliant victory in the Iraq War and the further strengthening of the U.S. strategic position in the Middle East as a result of toppling the Saddam Hussein's regime, the fact that the coalition was quagmired in Iraq has been now posing serious threat to the Bush administration in terms of both international and domestic repercussions.

At the international arena, if the Bush administration let the situation adrift, it could play havoc with the implementation of the U.S. whole strategy. The administration is hardly

able now to afford time and energy to take care of problems in other parts of the world. In addition, it has also greatly tarnished the U.S. image.

At home, George W. Bush has faced even more practical and imminent challenges if the Iraqi crisis is not resolved as quickly as possible. What adds the urgency to the Bush's problems is that time does not appear on his side. He has to act quickly and show to the world as well as to the domestic audience the physical results and his confidence and resolve that the administration is in control of the situation. If he fails to achieve these objectives, George W. Bush may well run the risk of losing his second term of presidency. Already, Bush's support rate has fallen, and the Democratic presidential aspirants are waiting for every chance to jump on him for his poor policy towards Iraq.

The capture of Saddam Hussein on December 16 may have relieved the Bush administration a great deal of the pressure and boosted the morale in his team. The neo-conservatives have already been bragging that the event indicated the victory of their strategy. But it may not help much ease the situation in Iraq. In fact, with his regime gone, Saddam Hussein has long been dead politically; his influence over the resistance against the coalition has drastically reduced. The mounting insurgents' attacks after his capture prove the irrelevance of Saddam Hussein to the insecurity of Iraq. Thus, the central issue facing the Bush administration con-

36 See "Postwar Iraq likely to cost more than war, Associated Press Washington, August 11, 2003, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-08-11-rebuild-bill_x.htm.

tinues to be how to ensure security and stability so as to create adequate propitious conditions for the reconstruction of Iraq.

The issue evidently involves the dual challenges of transferring the sovereignty to the Iraqi people and conferring the authority from the coalition to the United Nations Security Council. Remaining in Iraq as an occupation force, the United States will always find itself in isolation and will have no way for the smooth peace building progress. Fortunately, the good news is that the Bush administration seems to come to accept this fact and to have backed off from its original arrogant and rigid position under the international and domestic pressure. Washington now accepts a timetable of transferring the coalition authority to a legitimate Iraqi government no later than the end of June, 2004. It has also agreed to set up the government first before a constitution is produced, just like what has happened in Afghanistan. This is indeed a welcome reversal of its original position, which many security analysts had believed was only Washington's buying-time tactics in order to consolidate its control in Iraq as long as possible.

In the meantime, the international community is also anxious to see a quick coming back to stability and order of a new Iraq, as the growing terrorist activities and chaotic situation in the country will not only jeopardize the interests of the United States, it also undermine the long-term interests of the whole world. As the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan puts it:

"We all realize that it is urgent to help bring peace to Iraq, bring peace to the region. An Iraq that is destabilized, an Iraq that is in chaos, is not in the interest of the region or the world. And we do have a responsibility to ensure this."³⁷ A tendency is gradually emerging that more and more members of the international community express their willingness to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq and for that matter to seek some ways of compromise over their difference with the U.S. on the issue of Iraq. That should open up a window of opportunity for the U.S. to eventually implement its exit strategy from Iraq.

A great amount of uncertainty still lingers with regard to the motivation as well as feasibility of the U.S. new schedule. Many suspected that the U.S. new exit strategy well ahead of its previous schedule may be designed also to suit the needs of the U.S. presidential election next year. Time is therefore most probably not enough for the process of forming a well representative government acceptable by all parties concerned. Under the circumstance, the Bush administration argued that since conditions were not ready for a national election to form an Iraqi government, what would be practical is an Iraqi government that is set up through consultation chiefly with the current U.S. hand-picked Iraqi Governing Council. The proposal was severely criticized by Shiite population, which, making up 60 percent of Iraq's total and is better organized than other groups, would be the likely beneficiaries of a national ballot. Already, "Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani,

37 Betsy Pisik, "U.S. request for more troops in Iraq received coolly at U.N", The Washington Times, August 22, 2003.

Iraq's senior Shiite cleric, laid down his own definition of legitimacy. Nothing less than an election was acceptable, he declared.³⁸ On the other hand, the Sunnis feel now much "marginalized", most reluctant to work with the U. S. new designs. As one U.S. administration official put it: "If we turn things over next July 1 to whatever slapdash conglomeration that is out there - let's say the Governing Council plus some others, which is what they want, you could have a civil war in Iraq come next November."³⁹

The Bush administration is also planning to continue its military presence in Iraq even after the hand-over of the authority to the new Iraqi government. As a matter of fact the Pentagon plans to keep as many as 100,000 troops or more in Iraq well into 2006. That could be another bone of contention in the future arrangement in Iraq.

To sum up the whole situation, one perhaps has good reason to argue that the situation in Iraq is really at a crossroads. Despite all the serious rift between the U.S. and other members of the international community, there is a possibility of future cooperation between them for the peaceful reconstruction in Iraq. The point is that the Bush administration will have to draw lessons from its unilateral approach towards the Iraq war. Washington has to accept the truth: it can win the war militarily, it can lose it politically.

Will the Bush administration draw the necessary lessons? It is possible, but only when the neo-conservatives in the team have the political courage to look squarely at their problems and work out a realistic and unified policy. The problem is there continues to be a division among the Bush team with regard to the best approach to the Iraqi issue. The fight between the Pentagon and State Department centered first of all on who should be most responsible for the planning and implementing of the Iraqi reconstruction. It seemed that the Pentagon won the first battle as President Bush granted authority over reconstruction to the Pentagon, the Defense Department all but ignored the State Department and its working groups. With the time passing, it became evident that the rude and clumsy way of dealing the post-war Iraq by Pentagon had resulted in many failures; the White House was forced to order a major reorganization of American efforts to quell violence in Iraq and Afghanistan and to speed the reconstruction of both countries. The new effort includes the creation of an "Iraq Stabilization Group, which will be run by the national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice. The decision to create the new group, five months after Mr. Bush declared the end of active combat in Iraq, appears part of an effort to assert more direct White House control over how Washington coordinates its efforts to fight terrorism, develop political structures and encourage economic development in the two countries".⁴⁰ The move angered the Pentagon

38 Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. plans for Iraq: a dilemma over exit", International Herald Tribune, November, 29, 2003. <http://iht.com/articles/119553.html>.

39 *ibid*.

40 David E. Sanger, "White House to Overhaul Iraq and Afghan Missions", The New York Times, October 6, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/06/international/06PREX.html>.

boss Rumsfeld as it clearly is aimed to reduce his influence.

But this does not suggest that the Bush administration has shown any interest in a dramatic change in its policy. In fact, the dominant position of the neo-conservatives in the current administration seems still solid and unshakable. With this in mind, one perhaps should not be too optimistic about the quick returning to normality in Iraq.

Implications of the Iraq war on the world and regional situation

1. World security structure

With so many uncertainties in the air, it is always risky to define the precise impact of the war on Iraq on the world and regional security. One thing, however, is perhaps clear: the world effort against the international terrorism has been much undermined due to the U.S. sole preoccupation with in the war on Iraq. Afghanistan is the showcase of the extent to which this failure is felt. The U.S.-led operations called "Operation Enduring Freedom" in 2001 under the auspice of the United Nations soon routed Taliban and al Qaeda group. But immediately after the military victory, the U.S. attention was diverted. The terrorist forces have been able to regroup themselves, attacking aid workers, coalition forces, and moderate Islamic clerics. The authority of Afghanistan's transitional government, established in June 2002 and headed by President

Hamid Karzai, does not extend much beyond Kabul. Outside the capital, militias headed by warlords control most provinces. As part of the effort to defeat the Taliban, the United States provided money and arms to warlords during the war. After the Taliban fell, this relationship continued in some cases while the United States also backed the government in Kabul. Now, owing to its deficient force in Iraq, the rumor has it that Washington has been considering reallocating some of its security force from Afghanistan to Iraq, when the former is also in desperate need of more financial and military assistance from the international community.

The coming back of the international terrorism has its announcement by staging more and more terrorist attacks almost all over the world. Its ringleader bin Laden is still at large, claiming to plan more ferocious attacks against America. It is ironical that for all the victory in Iraq and the enhanced security the Bush administration claimed to have achieved for its own country, the United States today looks as if the most insecure and besieged nation in the world. On the eve of Christmas, the White House upgraded from "Code Yellow," or "elevated" status, followed intelligence that al-Qaida militants may be plotting attacks on America during the holidays. The new designation indicates a high risk.⁴¹ It is the fifth time since September 11, 2001 that the country has done this to be on guard against the terrorist attack on its homeland. At the same

41 Jennifer C. Kerr, "Security Hiked After Threat Level Raised", Associated Press, December 22, 2003, http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=542&e=1&u=/ap/20031222/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/terror_threat.

time, Air France canceled several flights to the United States after U.S. officials, on heightened alert for terror attacks over the holiday, passed on "credible" security threats involving passengers scheduled to fly to Los Angeles on flights from Paris.⁴²

The setback in the international effort against terrorism has become the cause as well as the effect of the deep rift among major powers in the world. From the very beginning, Russia, China and many U.S. major allies like France and Germany voiced strong opposition to the planned invasion against Iraq. They challenged the validity of anti-terror or nonproliferation as the justification for the war, and stressed that the UN Security Council should play the central role in addressing these issues. This position has been embraced by the majority of the developing countries. The difference has resulted in a tough struggle in the debate at the Security Council. When the Bush administration insisted on its own way and started the war, the opposition has become even stronger, dealing a particular heavy blow to the relations across the Atlantic. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, it seems that a crack emerged in the Western alliance, which will have a far-reaching impact on the future world security structure.

The difference seems in appearance to center on the different approaches to the issue of anti-terror and nonproliferation. It does make some sense as the European allies tend to favor a multilateral and arms control approach

to the emerging threats and thus are often repugnant to and even appalled at the U.S. unilateral attitude. But at bottom, the rift has deeper roots. It involves different security perceptions as well as different core strategic interests that either side interprets.

In terms of the security concept, the European allies like France in particular take the U.S. war on Iraq without the authorization of the United Nations as a clear indication of its effort to create and consolidate a unipolar world, and to rewrite the rules of game in the international relations at its dominance. This is not to be accepted, particularly when the European countries have been making painful efforts to be further integrated into one union, which will be as powerful and prosperous as the United States, and hope to play a more active role in the world affairs. As one Western media analysis described: "at the root of Chirac's moves on the international stage in recent weeks is his vision of a strong, united Europe, with France at its head, acting as a counterweight to the US in world affairs. 'Any community with only one dominant power is always a dangerous one and provokes reactions,' he told Time magazine in an interview this week. 'That's why I favor a multipolar world in which Europe obviously has its place.'"⁴³

The European divergent views on the war on Iraq are also generated from different perception of their own vital interests. During the Cold War, there were overwhelmingly overlapping interests across the Atlantic as both sides

42 Larry Margasak, "Credible" Threats Ground Six Flights, Associated Press, December 24, 2003, http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=519&e=1&u=/ap/20031224/ap_on_re_us/terror_threat.

43 Peter Ford, "Between Bush and Iraq - Jacques Chirac", The Christian Science Monitor, February 21, 2003.

were faced with what they had perceived a formidable threat in the form of the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, which served to be strong incentives to maintain the unity of NATO and uniformed actions despite occasional frictions. With the Cold War being over and the common threat gone, the European countries believe that they have to take care of their own interests which are not necessarily identical with those of America. In the Middle East, France and Germany have been wary of their huge stake in securing oil resources being undercut by the U.S. further dominance. In Iraq, both countries are debtors of a large sum borrowed by Saddam Hussein's regime. According to the Paris Club's estimation, Baghdad owes France at least \$3 billion (before interest) in addition to about \$4 billion in orders from French contractors for F1 fighters, air-to-surface missiles, laser guided missiles, attack helicopters, military vehicles, and artillery pieces. Iraq also owes \$2.5 billion to Germany.⁴⁴ This explains partly the ambivalent feelings of both countries towards Saddam Hussein and his regime. Domestic politics also has significant bearing on the position of the two governments. France has now a Muslim population numbering 6 million. Being close to the Gulf region, Paris cannot ignore the repercussions that the Iraq war will invariably have to the social stability at home. In Germany, the Schroeder government could not resist the temptation of taking advantage of the strong anti-American and anti-war feelings among the grass-roots to win the reelection last year.

The difference on the Iraq war in the Western alliance will have milestone significance in the sense that it may erode the existing world security structure and precipitate the profound adjustment of security policies of major powers. Against the above background, it is interesting to notice that NATO was not able to take unanimous action in support of the war in Iraq. When the Bush administration tried to initiate the Article 6 of NATO's charter to call on the European allies to employ forces to protect Turkey, the proposal was turned down by European allies like France and Germany - an incident that has rarely happened in the history of the alliance. With the expansion into a 26-member club in 2004, it is questionable if that major alliance will continue to be the most effective instrument to protect interests of countries across the Atlantic in the future. Already, Washington started to talk about the difference between the "old" and "new" Europe, attempting to drive a wedge between original founders of the European integration and the new members of the union. It has also planned to remove the major portion of its troops stationed in Germany to countries like Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria. The signal the Bush administration wished to send to the world seemed to be clear enough - its future focus will be on creation of ad hoc coalitions in light of the emerging specific situation rather than relying sole on the existing alliance; on the European new members of NATO rather than on those old unyielding primary allies.

The European countries have felt the blunt of

44 See "Iraq, the Regime's Debt", Council of Foreign Relations, November 7, 2003 http://www.cfr.org/background/background_iraq_debt.php.

the U.S. change in strategy and seem ambivalent in their response. Pushed largely by France and Germany - the primary engine for the European integration, however, the main trend appears to speed up the process of the European Union and strive for greater independence in their role in addressing the world security issues. Despite heated debate and continuing division of views, the European Union has managed to work out its first constitutional draft, and agreed to set up its own rapid response force, which is designed to act on Europe's behalf if NATO proves incompetent to function. In 2004, ten new members will join the European Union; which will have 25 members altogether, and become even stronger in its economic volume than America. Moreover, the closed rank of the countries in Europe has itself produced momentum for the further economic interdependence and political uniformed action. It is unlikely that the U.S. strategy of splitting Europe will prevail. What is more likely to emerge is perhaps a rising and more self-assured European Union that will become an important constrain in the U.S. behavior in the future.

But on the other hand it will be a mistake to suggest that the rift in the Western alliance will indicate a complete antagonism across the Atlantic tomorrow. That is not going to happen. Indeed, what one may actually see is a gradual process in which the two sides are constantly adjusting their positions, each stressing to preserve its independence and the maximum freedom of action while continuing their extensive cooperation based on the need to address common threats, their common values, and great interdependence.

First of all, the U.S. and Europe are facing the same newly-emerging threats in security that requires the joint effort of the two sides to address. International terrorism has, for example, become the common scourge to the stability of their homeland as well as to the security of the whole world. To help solve the regional disputes and turbulences is also a task that no single country can afford to undertake. As demonstrated in the recent development of Afghanistan, the U.S. and NATO peace-keeping force have further defined their division of labor and improved the coordination after closer consultation. The move is supported by the United Nations, thus at least providing a ray of hope of putting the war-battered country back to normality in due time.

Secondly, common interest in prosperity is the most important element that continues to put the transatlantic close relations on a solid foundation. Indeed, when the end of the Cold War supposedly demised the common threat, the present year marked one of the most intense periods of integration. This is particularly true of U.S. economic engagement with those bad 'old' boys of Europe, France and Germany. The U.S. and Europe continue to remain each other's most important and profitable markets. According to some statistics in an article in Financial Times, corporate America pumped nearly \$40 billion in foreign direct investment into Europe in the first half of 2003, an almost 15% increase on the same period a year ago. U.S. foreign affiliates in Europe in the same period earned nearly \$35 billion, 23% more than in the same period last year. In spite of anti-French rhetoric in the U.S. FDI into France hit \$2.3 billion in the second quar-

ter of 2003, one of the highest quarterly levels in nearly a decade. U.S. profits from France jumped to \$1.7 billion in the first half of the year, up from just \$700m in the same period a year ago. U.S. investment flows to Germany were just as strong. Corporate America ploughed nearly \$5 billion into Germany in the first half of 2003, a sharp reversal from the first half of last year, when U.S. investment in Germany fell by \$4.7 billion.

Europeans are also returning strongly to the U.S. market. European companies put \$36.3 billion in FDI into the U.S. in the first half of 2003 - more than double that of the same period last year. British companies accounted for roughly two-thirds of the total, yet even after excluding the UK, European investment flows across the Atlantic rose to nearly \$13 billion in the first half of the year, greater than the \$11.1 billion invested in all of 2002. German companies have been among the largest European investors in the U.S. German foreign investment in the U.S. was \$6.4 billion in the first half of 2003, compared with disinvestments of \$4.6 billion in the same period of 2002. Moreover, German portfolio managers bought nearly \$12 billion in U.S. securities in the first eight months of the year, after selling off \$2.3 billion in 2002. The authors of the article concluded that given such robust economic transatlantic commerce fuelled by mutual investment, either side simply cannot afford a divorce.⁴⁵

Finally, members of the European Union seem

to need more time to do their homework - to solve many of their divergent views within the big family with regard to the rules of the ongoing integration as well as the Union's role in the international affairs. To many members, whether old or new, it remains a big challenge how to strike a balance between becoming part of a united Europe and maintaining their national sovereignty and national interests. This has particularly found its expression in the issue of forming an independent European defense. It is partly because smaller countries in addition to Britain still do not want a common European defense at the expense of the U.S. involvement; partly because many European countries are reluctant to allocate more funds to contribute to the enhanced European defense. Thus, as far as security issues are concerned, the European countries will remain weak, a poor match to the role of the United States. They can find no other alternative to the continuing support to the leading role of the United States in the future. For all their intransigencies on the Iraq war, the French and Germans have shown now considerable willingness to compromise in order to participate in the Iraqi reconstruction.

Russia also stands much affected by the Iraq war. It has traditionally a great stake in the Middle East. Like France and Germany, Russia had very close economic and trade interactions with the pre-war Iraq, and is another big debtor of Saddam Hussein's regime. Moreover, sharing the multilateral approach with China and many other European countries, Russia

45 See Daniel Hamilton and Joseph Quinlan, "A Common Interest in Prosperity, despite the rhetoric", *Financial Times*, November 18, 2003, p. 15.

has been a vehement critic of the Iraq war. Moscow has also resented the half-hearted support of Washington to its effort to combat the terrorist activities in Chechnya while it gave all the possible assistance to the U.S. in the world war on terror. All these have made the Russian-U.S. relations on a cool and uneasy basis despite the rhetoric that the two countries have buried the "relics of the Cold War" and become the "allies" in the new century.

The unilateral approach of the Bush administration and the resultant rift among the major powers have also impacted the role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and stability in the world. The war on Iraq has not only halted completely the verification and destruction process of WMD in Iraq under the auspice of the United Nations, which on retrospect proved very effective; it has virtually marginalized the role of that world body during the whole military operation process. But with the growing challenges emerging, it became increasingly clear that the UN was indispensable in the postwar reconstruction in Iraq. The coalition might be able to provide the security environment. The nation-building, however, needs a lot of more tasks that the U.S. alone simply cannot handle. As a former UN high-ranking official stressed: "down the road the United States will want the new Iraqi government to obtain diplomatic recognition, claim Iraq's seat in the UN and attract World Bank loans and private investment. Diplomatic recognition, by its very nature, requires acceptance by other

countries. It is axiomatic that the greater the international confidence in the political process that determines the future government, the easier it will be for the new Iraq to gain universal recognition. UN involvement would provide that confidence." On more practical matters, the coalition needs the United Nation for more specific help in particular. He pointed out for example: "the coalition will now find that many of the Iraqi police they are seeking to reemploy need to be reeducated and some replaced. Where will the police trainers, monitors, and actual cops come from in the short run? Not from the United States, where they're needed to deter domestic terrorist attacks. In contrast, the UN has a system in place that has worked well in dozens of places."⁴⁶

It is no wonder that no longer calling the United Nations only an "impediment" to the U.S., the Bush administration has been now making great efforts to enlist its support and greater involvement in the Iraqi reconstruction. The U.S. changing attitude demonstrates that as the unique forum for maintaining peace and stability, the role of the UN Security Council is still irreplaceable. But on the other hand, the Iraq war has also brought home many structural problems, including its low efficiency and the incapacity of the UN on many occasions, that seriously constraint its functions. It is perhaps for this reason, the Secretary General Kofi Annan challenged the U.N. to make radical reforms in an unusually candid report issued on September 8, 2003. He noted that

46 John G. Ruggie, former assistant secretary general of the UN, the Kirkpatrick professor of international affairs at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government currently, *The Boston Globe*, April 23, 2003, http://bcslia.ksg.harvard.edu/publication.cfm?program=CORE&ctype=article&item_id=577.

"in the 58 years since the United Nations Charter was written, the membership of the body has grown to 191 from 51. Nothing in the Charter provided for the relatively predictable cold-war world turning into one in which terrorists move freely across state lines, potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction. And where there were no rules or mechanisms, individual states could not be blamed for going it alone." He went on to call for expanding the most visible instrument of the U.N., the Security Council in particular.⁴⁷

Mr. Annan's remarks echo broad views of the majority of the international community. There has been an established consensus that the UN and particularly its Security Council must reform. But the devil is in the details. Despite the debate over a decade, the world body is yet to reach agreement on the basic principles for these reforms. Indeed, it will become one of the major challenges for the world in the future as how to push forward this task and make the United Nations a truly efficient and relevant world forum for maintaining international peace and stability.

2. Regional Security

The Iraq war has immediately had revolutionary implications on the Middle East. Barely before the Iraq war started, the world opinion had called to attention the fact that the true motivation of the Bush administration in launching the war was indeed not really for nonproliferation or anti terrorism. The war actually constituted part of its grand strategy

to further control the Middle East, the Gulf in particular, due to the extreme strategic importance of the region in terms of both location and resource of gas and oil. Iraq was thus only the point of breakthrough in Washington's overall strategic blueprint in that area. Joseph Cirincione, a well-respected American analyst had a vivid description of what he had believed the Bush administration's true intentions about the war:

"This is not about WMD, it is not about terrorism. It's about seeing that the US, the most powerful nation that the world has every known, uses its power to transform the world...

They want to start with Iraq, and then they believe that Iraq will let off a 'democratic tsunami' in the region. They believe that with US help we can topple the government of Syria, breaking the Syrian grip on Lebanon, eliminating the operating bases for Hamas and Hezbollah, and thus improving the security situation for Israel. In this process we will transform the Palestinian Authority into a democratic organization, giving the Israelis a reliable negotiation partner for a final peace settlement. The reason this president has not spent more than two hours on Middle East peace is that for him the road to Jerusalem goes through Baghdad. We will also deal with our problem in Saudi Arabia by moving the bases from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. We will establish a pro-American regime that can host our troops and consolidate a permanent American presence in the Gulf. You think that I am

47 See "Bringing the U.N. Into the 21st Century", New York Times, September 22, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/22/opinion/22MON2.html?8br>.

making this up? Go read the 2002 National Security Strategy for the United States, which holds that our defense 'will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia'.

Read the 2000 report from the neo-conservative Project for the New American Century signed by many current administration officials. The report says, 'The U.S. has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in the Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.'"⁴⁸

Cirincione made his remarks when the war just started. The subsequent developments gave full testimony to the validity of his prediction. On the eve of the victory over the Saddam Hussein's regime, it was revealed that Pentagon "is planning a long-term military relationship with the emerging government of Iraq, one that would grant the Pentagon access to military bases and project American influence into the heart of the unsettled region."⁴⁹ The Bush administration also made it clear that it would assume keeping about 100,000 U.S. troops in Iraq through March 2006. This is well beyond the time next year when Washington expects to turn political control of Iraq back

to Iraqi leaders.⁵⁰

On the political level, the Bush administration has now made no secret that its ultimate goal of the Iraq war is to push for democratization in the Middle East. On November 6, 2003, George W. Bush made an impressive speech before the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, putting forward what he called a new "forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East". Likened to the one by Ronald Reagan's 1982 declaration in England that America wanted to spread democracy in Asia after World War II, Bush's new strategy envisages how democracy could unfold in the Middle East and beyond once Iraq is stabilized.⁵¹

According to many remarks by the neo-conservatives in Washington, two categories of states are on the list of this transformation after the Iraq war is completed. One is those dubbed as "rogue countries" like Syria, Iran and Libya, who have been defiant to the U.S. hegemonic policy. Signals were sent that these countries must change their policy, including complete disarmament of WMD. Or they will be the next target of "regime change" by force like Iraq. Accompanying the rhetoric of intimidation, the U.S. Congress has endorsed recently a full sanction against Syria. The Bush

48 Joseph Cirincione, "Why We Are In Iraq", Speech at American University, Washington, DC, March 23, 2003.

49 Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, " Pentagon Expects Long-Term Access to Four Key Bases in Iraq", The New York Times, April 19, 2003.

50 See Eric Schmitt, "Army Plans for 100,000 Troops Until 2006 in Iraq", The New York Times, November 24, 2003, <http://iht.com/articles/118775.html>.

51 David Sanger, "Bush asks Mideast to try democracy", The New York Times, November 7, 2003, <http://iht.com/articles/116743.html>.

administration has also been mounting increasing pressure on Iran to give up its nuclear program. Israel even threatened to launch air strikes to destroy the Iranian nuclear facilities.

The recent announcement in Tripoli that Libya agreed to give up its capability of WMD and expressed its willingness to dramatically improve its relations with the U.S. has indeed boosted the morale of the hawks in Washington. They hailed the dramatic change of Libya provided "shining moments" for the Bush doctrine. "It's always been at the heart of the Bush Doctrine that a more robust policy would permit us to elicit greater cooperation from adversaries than we'd had in the past when we acquiesced," said Richard Perle, a typical representative of the neo-conservatives and influential adviser to the administration.⁵² His view reflects the determination of the administration to adhere to the rationale to use military might if necessary to achieve its strategic objective.

The other category of countries in the Middle East in which Washington also aims to initiate democratization includes largely those who are friendly and even allies to the U.S. but with non-Western-type-democratic institutions at home like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab smaller monarchies. The U.S. new strategy indicates a significant change of its past policy as Washington used to provide substantial support to these countries while tolerating their domestic undemocratic institutions in the hope that robust relations with them may help protect the U.S. interests in the region. After the

9-11 attack, the neo-conservatives began to feel uneasy about the role of these countries in actually fostering terrorism against the United States. Governments of these countries were either acquiescent or simply powerless to arrest the rise of anti-American feelings of their population. The fact that out of 19 convicts of the 9-11 attack, 15 are Saudi Arabian must have shocked the U.S. administration. It was reported that there has been closed-door discussion in Pentagon as to whether Saudi Arabia might soon become a threat to the U.S. Evidently, although it is uncertain to what extent that the U.S. will exert pressure on these so-called pro-American and moderate Arab countries for urging the speeding up of their domestic reforms for greater democracy, the strategy itself will become a new element in the regional security in the region.

In the meantime, the Bush administration is keenly aware that the goal of democratization cannot materialize until there is an eventual peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Washington believes that the toppling of Saddam Hussein has paved the way for it. Immediately after the victory in Iraq, Washington set out to focus on the implementation of the road-map program, which envisioned the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel within three years of its adoption. To be fair to the administration, the roadmap has the credit of taking into consideration of the security needs of both Palestine and Israel although there are many parts that need further elaboration. That's why Palestine ex-

52 Dana Milbank, "The 'Bush Doctrine' Experiences Shining Moments", The Washington Post, December 21, 2003, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17979-2003Dec20.html>.

pressed its willingness to support it. But, Israel did not, feeling it could get an even better deal if it was allowed to have its own way.

Added together, all the above said strategic designs of the Bush administration will surely bring about dramatic changes in the security landscape in the Middle East. But it is unlikely that the U.S. will see a smooth sailing to reach its objectives.

In the first place, the Iraqi situation is far from certain. Much will depend on the future form of government and the policy orientation of the country after the U.S. transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people. On the other hand, if the insecurity and chaos drags on, and the U.S. attention continues to be pinned down in Iraq, not only the Bush administration will have little time nor energy to attend other matters, the attitude of other major players will also change. And that in turn will impact the pace as well as the substance of the changes in the region.

Secondly, it is highly questionable if Western-type democracy could really be compatible with the Islamic culture. Contrary to what Washington has imagined, the democratization drive may well produce more cultural, ethnic and religious antagonism, which in turn drives the region into futile soil for tension, turbulence and terrorism.

Last but not least, strong anti-American sentiments are not easy to abate in the Middle East as a result of the U.S. heavy bias towards Israel. The anger will indeed be enhanced when Israel continues to obstinately sabotage the peace process and the Bush administra-

tion is not able to reign it due to Washington's pro-Israel position. Over years, the Sharon cabinet has believed to ensure its security; there must be one more "regime change", the change of the Palestinian Authority. It has been trying hard chiefly through pressure to reform a new Palestinian government with a more moderate policy, and remove its long-time leader Yasser Arafat from power in particular. The Israeli efforts have never been successful despite the U.S. acquiescence. In the first case, the new Palestinian cabinet headed by Mahmoud Abbas, which enjoyed somewhat endorsement of both Washington and Tel Aviv, did not receive any meaningful support from either of the governments. His request for Israel to release prisoners, to dismantle illegal settlement outposts, and to remove checkpoints went largely ignored. Israel argued that until the Palestinians showed some real sign of cracking down on their terrorist networks, it would do little. In the second case, Washington simply grossly underestimated the strength of Arafat as an irreplaceable leader so far among the Palestinian people. Thus, when the new Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei has now taking his post and tried to renew the contact and negotiation for the peace in the Middle East, a familiar pattern will almost be certain to emerge if there is no change of policies by both George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon. Then the result will be one more failure of talks, the reoccurrence of suicide bombings, and the retaliations by Israel. The endless vicious cycle of killings will go on and on.

The Bush administration seems to understand the risks. Being aware that the Sharon cabinet

bears its share of responsibility for the failure of the roadmap program, the U.S. seems powerless to stop it particularly when the election year is getting closer at home and no politician in Washington can now afford to offend the powerful Jewish lobbyist force. Against this backdrop, also emboldened by its strengthened position in the Middle East as a result of the U. S. victory in Iraq, the Sharon cabinet has greatly expanded its hegemonic ambition. Israel could become a major trouble maker in the implementation of the U.S. strategy.

3. Military Transformation

The Iraq war is also an indication of the extent to which revolution of military affairs (RMA) based on the advancement of science and high technologies, has influenced the modern warfare. The pace how these technologies developed is amazing. As one figure pointed out that the first Iraq war had just seen the burgeoning of information technology being used in the operations. Ten years later, the degree of information-ization level in the U.S. Army reached over 50% in the second Iraq war. The figures in the Navy and Air Force were even over 70% and 80% respectively.⁵³ The U.S. overwhelming superiority in weapons and equipment has not only underscored the brilliant victory in the Iraq war, but it will also continue to ensure its status as the major driving force in the development of new military capabilities.

The U.S. actions will be bound to have implications over the modernization programs of

other major powers. Russia was reported to start to implement a full-fledged development program to beef up its aging and decaying hardware despite the financial constraints. European powers like France and Britain have also expanded their input into research and development, striving to produce entirely new weapon systems within 15-20 years. It could be conceived that the war has actually played the role of precipitating the military competition among the world major powers as well as the military transformation of the militaries of these countries.

The competition will inevitably lead to the further imbalance of force among nations. Particularly, the gap between major powers, the U.S. in particular, on the one hand, and the broad small and medium countries on the other, will inevitably enlarge. One consequence of the imbalance could be the greater incentives for the latter countries to seek unconventional capabilities to defend themselves since they are not in a position to compete with the developed countries in developing conventional high-tech hardware.

But of course the development of hardware could only provide the material basis for military transformation. According to the U.S. official definition, "transformation is the process of changing form, nature or function. Within the United States military, transformation requires changing the form, or structure of our military forces; the nature of our military culture and doctrine supporting those forces; and streamlining our war-

53 Xu Xin, "Iraq War and the New Revolution of Military Affairs", Jiefang Daily, Shanghai, December 22, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guojj/1030/2258716.html>.

fighting functions to more effectively meet the complexities of the new threats challenging our nation in the new millennium".⁵⁴

In light of the above definition, the Iraq war has given new impetus to the debate within the defense community in Washington as how the new armed forces should be restructured based on the new security perception and new military capabilities. It seems that a broad consensus has been established, that is, the future armed forces should be leaner and of a more expeditionary type since the possibility of fighting a long and protracted war with a peer adversary is increasingly remote. But divisions of opinion on the details still remain and have even been sharpened. It is interesting to observe how people may reach entirely different conclusions as how to define the future role of the army through the Iraq war.

One popular view holds that the Iraq war painfully demonstrates that the current U.S. ground force still oriented to conducting operations similar to those like in World War II and Desert Storm. In the future, it is argued "a reorganized Army will get to a conflict faster and be more able to maneuver on the battlefield - the ability to get there first with the most men is critical".⁵⁵ Thus, the army needs further reshape including the readjustment of its presence overseas. Most people thus expect deep cuts in army forces in order to fund greater

capabilities in air power, naval forces, missile defenses, space weapons, and special forces.

Others agree to the necessity of reforms of the army like the other services do, but strongly disagree to downgrading the traditional role of the army in the future. They argue: "what is most striking about the recent war to overthrow Saddam is just how much traditional combat capabilities still mattered. Yes, special forces and modern air power were important, but so were Abrams tanks, 5-ton supply trucks, rifle-wielding soldiers and marines, and old-fashioned infantry combat skills. When U.S. forces met the Republican Guard's Madinah Munawrah Armored and Baghdad Infantry divisions south of the Iraqi capital in the decisive battle of the war, they did so with numerical superiority, dominant air support, and tremendous firepower. The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have essentially been won with the military the Bush administration inherited from Bill Clinton, the first President Bush, and Ronald Reagan - a force constantly but gradually modernized - not with a reinvented force built by proponents of defense revolution. As such, those who would jettison the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force in favor of a Rumsfeld doctrine of stealth, surprise, finesse, and small coalitions of the willing should temper their views".⁵⁶

The difference reflects as much different attitudes towards doctrines in fighting the next

54 "What is Transformation?", U.S. Joint Forces Command, August 16, 2003, <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/transform.html>.

55 David C. Isby, "Transforming the Army", The Washington Times, August 18, 2003, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/op-ed/20030817-105455-3371r.htm>.

56 Michael O'Hanlon, "Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Future of the U.S. Military", Brookings Institution, June 19, 2003, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/ohanlon/20030619.htm>.

war in the future as the inter-service conflict over different interests. Preemption became the core of the U.S. new military doctrine. The Iraq war has seemingly tested successfully its validity. This is going to have impacts on the military thinking of many other countries. Already, a number of powers like India, Israel, Russia and even Japan declared their own versions of preemption when needed be.

But then with the growing inability of the coalition forces to maintain security and social order in Iraq, preemption has been increasingly challenged for its value. The questions asked include: whether and how preemption should be carried out on precise and correct intelligence; whether countries resorting to preemption should be endorsed by the international community through the United Nations; how preemption will not be abused or used by the more powerful country to bully the weak ones; will the preemption generate an asymmetric warfare that will virtually require the reformulating the rules of game on the battlefield; and will the political goal like nonproliferation and anti-terrorism be achieved through preemption. As the Iraq war still drags on, it is perhaps too early to have the definitive answers to all these questions. But one thing seems clear, that is, the understanding of these issues will be vital in influencing the military transformation in the future.

4. Arms Control and nonproliferation of WMD:

The Iraq war has a direct impact on the world efforts for disarmament and nonproliferation of WMD. Despite the broad common interests in nonproliferation as a goal, the international com-

munity has been further divided by the war as to the best approach to achieving the objective.

The Iraqi model is increasingly questioned by most nations as problems created by the war have been even more serious and sustained than those which were attempted to be solved. Looking into future, spread of WMD will continue to be one of the greatest challenges to the world security. The Libya's giving up its unconventional capabilities may be more an aberration than an inevitable trend. As discussed above, it is more likely for those who feel more military pressure from the United States may be more inclined to have the access to these capabilities in order to ensure survival. North Korea is a case in point. This possibility is further strengthened by the rapid development of science and high-technologies, which makes the acquisition more easy and practical of some form of crude capabilities of WMD by even non-state actors. The failure of the nuclear weapon states in their nuclear disarmament has also complicated the situation. The world was bitterly disappointed in particular to see the double standard of the Bush administration which has put nonproliferation as the top priority on its security agenda, while it has been all the time active in developing its own new type of nuclear weapons, and continuing to base its new nuclear strategy on the first use of nuclear weapons. The irony has seriously eroded the world nonproliferation regime.

Many Western countries wish to strengthen the international effort on nonproliferation chiefly through working out more stringent monitoring, control and verification mechanisms. This ef-

fort is necessary in light of the above said changing situation. Meanwhile, loopholes do exist in the existing monitoring, control and verification, which have often made people wonder how clandestine programs for developing capabilities of WMD could be carried out by a number of countries. But on the other hand, there have also been cases of success in verification efforts. Take Iraq for example, we are now fairly certain that Saddam Hussein has destroyed his weapons of mass destruction since the end of the first Gulf War primarily thanks to the work of UNSCOM. Contrary to the accusation by the U.S. that the UN was deficient in ridding Iraq of WMD, it proves to be surprisingly effective in this field.

In a larger political context, nonproliferation is in essence an issue of political nature. It is only by creating an environment in which countries feel no need to acquire capabilities of WMD based on mutual confidence and trust, can the goal of nonproliferation be achieved and sustained. And in the process, to enlist the role of the United Nations or through a regional collective mechanism is far more useful than the U.S. unilateral and high-handed approach.

Efforts to seek solutions to the nuclear crisis in North Korea and the Iran nuclear issue prove the utility and feasibility of a multilateral and cooperative approach. Pyongyang's pulling out of the NPT and its claim to have already acquired the nuclear capability is at least partly a direct result of the U.S. counter-proliferation strategy of the so-called preventive preemption against a backdrop of deep-rooted hostility in the Korean Peninsula over half a century,

while Tehran's dubious program for nuclear energy clearly points to its possible nuclear option against the U.S. military pressure. Both are the classic examples of how small and medium-sized countries might go nuclear in the regional hostilities, tension and turbulences. In both cases, the Bush administration resorted to the confrontational approach including threatening to use force, to demand both countries to disarm. But neither country listened. Instead, their positions were stiffened. It was thanks to the six-party talks sponsored by China, and the meticulous mediation effort of the three European countries of France, Germany and Britain that some forms of solutions based on mutual compromise began to be in sight respectively. At the point of writing, it seems still a long way to go before complete and irreversible solutions are firmly established to the nuclear issues in both North Korea and Iran. But it is highly likely that these solutions are attainable in the end providing all parties to continue to exercise constraint and patience and demonstrate adequate political will in embracing a give and take approach.

In the meantime, one should perhaps continue to stress the importance of all nuclear weapon states to undertake their due obligations to pursue nuclear disarmament. It is highly questionable for the international nonproliferation regime to sustain if the world is for ever to be divided into nuclear haves and have-nots. In this connection, it is perhaps essential for the nuclear weapon states to reconsider the value of nuclear weapons in the world security in the future. The Iraq war has once again demonstrated that while nuclear weapons or other WMD could be increasingly usable techno-

logically, they are increasingly unusable politically. On the other hand, these weapons could become the assets not so much to the sovereign states as to the international terrorism. Against the background, it is clear that to implement nuclear disarmament till their thorough destruction and complete prohibition is not only in the interests of the world effort for nonproliferation, it is also in the interests of all the nuclear weapon states.

Implications of the Iraq war on China's security

The changing international environment for China: The Iraq war has not only changed the security landscape in the Middle East. It has an important impact on the security of East Asia also, that will be bound affect China's threat perceptions as well as its resultant adjustment to enhance its own security. But on the whole, China may have been ambivalent towards the Iraqi war as it sees the event has brought to it both challenges and opportunities in the world as well as regional environment.

China has been consistent opposed to the invasion of Iraq. In the first place, Beijing still attaches importance to the sovereignty and the principle of non-interference of internal affairs in a sovereign country. The preemption doctrine of the Bush administration is not accepted.

Second, Beijing has been all the time advocating the peaceful settlement of the international disputes, and through the work of the UN Security Council. It is adamant against any military actions without the endorsement of that world body.

Thirdly, Beijing has suspected that the war against Iraq is more the product of the U.S. politics and its effort for creating a unipolar world rather than of nonproliferation or anti-terror. As was claimed by the Bush administration that Iraq was all but the first on the list of a series of "rogue countries" to be attacked, the question to China is who is going to be the next target to strike at.

Fourthly, Beijing has been concerned over the possible negative implications of the Iraq war to Japan, a country whose future policy orientation seems highly uncertain. The second largest economy in the world, Tokyo thus has long sought to be a political power through expanding its role in the international affairs and upgrading its military force. To achieve the aim, the country is poised now to revise its peace constitution. The fact that Japan has been in depression for over a decade does not seem to dampen the country's enthusiasm of playing a more proactive role.

On the other hand, the Iraq war is also likely to offer China good opportunities in its security. Despite its opposition to the war, the war does serve to relieve much of political and military pressure China feels from the United States as the latter looks to continue to be preoccupied with many nagging issues in Iraq as well as in the whole Middle East. Moreover, in its effort to augment stability in East Asia, Washington has found Beijing more a partner than an adversary.

On China's part, despite the difference it has with the United States, China still believes that the two countries continue to share vital in-

terests in addressing a series of non-traditional security challenges like anti-terror, nonproliferation, etc.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that despite its opposition to the Iraq war, China now begins to share certain interests with the U.S. to see a speedy stabilization in Iraq so that the country will start its reconstruction on a normal track. There is still a big difference as to what should be the best approach to this objective. But this sharing of objective provides a solid basis for the realization of the international participation in the Iraqi reconstruction process in the future.

China's response: Three issues will have priority on China's agenda as far as the Iraq issue is concerned.

First of all, China wishes to play a constructive and more proactive role in helping bring about the stabilization in Iraq so that the country is able to implement reconstruction on a normal track. That will work in the interests of all the parties concerned. To achieve the aim, China calls for a pragmatic and forward-looking attitude. What has gone is gone. The most pressing task at present is helping Iraq achieve peace, stability and development at the earliest day possible. China holds that the final settlement of the Iraq issue should rely on the Iraqi people. A new Iraqi regime should be established as soon as possible and should be universally representative. The political will and choice

of the Iraqi people should be fully respected. China believes that effective UN participation is conducive to the proper settlement of the Iraqi issue and is in conformity with the interests of the Iraqi people. China hopes that the legitimate interests of various countries in Iraq should be guaranteed. China also wishes to take a positive role in the economic reconstruction of post-war Iraq.⁵⁷

Secondly, China wishes to further improve the major power's relations so as to maximize their common interests, and minimize their friction and conflicts as a result of the Iraq war. The Asia-Pacific lacks a propitious framework for sustaining stability and peace. And it will not emerge until there is sufficient confidence and trust among the major powers.

Last but not least, China will continue to focus on the building of a peaceful and stable peripheral environment in the spirit of good neighborhood and friendship. The priority is of course helping the peaceful settlement of the nuclear crisis in North Korea within the context of the six-party talks. It is hoped that the solution of the issue will provide a golden opportunity for all the players in Northeast Asia to continue to explore a security mechanism in the region.

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57 In October, China promised to provide 25 million US dollars humanitarian aid to Iraq at an international donors' conference held in Spain.