

Assessing the Claims of State-Building Skeptics: Occupation and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

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Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors. They must be prepared to help reestablish institutions and . . . be able to facilitate establishing local governance and the rule of law.

—Lt Gen David H. Petraeus
Lt Gen James F. Amos

Traditionally, we do not equate state building with military strategy. It usually occurs after the cessation of hostilities as a means of solidifying an existing peace or enabling an exit strategy. Nonetheless, we are currently pursuing such a course in Iraq and Afghanistan to quell insurgency. Indeed, political leaders have considered state building, especially the creation of democratic institutions, a panacea for insurgency. However, we should not assume that state building creates effective governments, that democratically elected leaders enjoy widespread legitimacy, or that insurgents will not actively attempt to derail what might otherwise be successful tactics. Instead, we need to shift our focus from conjecturing over what ought to work to examining what is actually developing on the ground. Has the effort to create and strengthen new institutions in Iraq decreased levels of insurgency? At present, the literature has not fully addressed this question empirically, but the findings of related studies have generated a great deal of conjecture and a number of arguments. This article finds reasons to suppose that state building may disrupt as well as facilitate counterinsurgency (COIN).

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On the one hand, state building may in fact be part of a winning strategy during COIN warfare. First, new state institutions can normalize politics by giving social groups, including insurgents, an alternative and peaceful way to realize their goals.¹ In this way, insurgent groups may become socialized into the political system. Second, creation of a police and military force may legitimize and shift the burden of military operations to local citizens, who best understand their culture.² Third, because state building also entails creation of a new market economy, growth and development may give impoverished individuals an incentive to refrain from joining the insurgency.³ Last, by constructing public works that provide essential services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, medical care, and education, we can win the gratitude of the local population.

On the other hand, scholars suggest that state building may hinder COIN efforts. First, creation of new institutions requires alliances with local elites whose objectives are unlikely to coincide with the occupation's goals. For this reason, individuals deemed legitimate and funded by occupational forces would likely work against the goals of the occupation.⁴ Second, instead of condoning the presence of occupational forces, new institutions would probably cause popular dissatisfaction because such institutions cannot fulfill their mandate under wartime conditions and have no autonomy from occupational forces.⁵ Third, creating an accountable and effective government out of the ashes of a failed state is an extremely difficult task. Doing so during an insurgency would further reduce the chances of success. Hence, state building as a COIN strategy may prove effective only in states in which strong institutions previously existed. In sum, because external state building efforts probably would not be successful, such efforts will not decrease the insurgency.

America's long-term military success depends upon understanding whether engaging in state building before the cessation of hostilities helps or hinders the war effort—an important issue addressed by this study. However, asking whether state building wins the hearts and minds of the people assumes the possibility of building a successful state. Therefore, before assessing the effect of state-building activities on levels of support, we must determine the degree of success enjoyed by state building. This article, then, examines whether the Iraqi case supports the predictions of state-building skeptics. It does so by reviewing the literature on state building

and insurgency and then identifying four predictions asserting state building's impracticality. The article then tests these predictions, using the case of state building in Iraq. As we shall see, despite continued failure in the delivery of essential services and economic development, gains have accrued as a result of democratization and the deployment of independent security forces. The article concludes by considering the implications of these findings in terms of a larger research project dealing with the effect of state building on levels on insurgency.

State Building: A Counterinsurgency Strategy?

Insurgencies are characterized by the use of indirect strategies (e.g., terrorism, psychological warfare, and guerrilla tactics) intended to erode the means or desire of the state to continue fighting. In such circumstances, the state may be either a domestic government or an occupational force. For this reason, insurgents may not attempt to control any one territory but blend into both urban and rural populations to avoid direct confrontations. Therefore, whereas guerrilla fighters are full-time soldiers, insurgents may fill multiple roles in society and only intermittently engage their enemies, thereby creating difficulty for authorities trying to ferret out insurgents from the general population. Since insurgents are adept at evasion, often-times they alone hold the initiative, allowing them to strike quickly and to deadly effect, without ever offering themselves up as targets. In this way, attrition becomes the worst enemy of the authorities, who must decide whether to give in to insurgent demands or continue to suffer further losses.

Military strategists offer a great deal of advice for countering insurgency. However, a reading of the relevant literature reveals one central tenet from which all other advice stems: winning the support of the people is the key to victory.⁶ As John Nagl explains, "to defeat an insurgency you have to know who the insurgents are—and to find that out, you have to win and keep the support of the people."⁷ David Galula points out that any political cause includes "an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause," so the best strategy involves relying "on the favorable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority."⁸ The tug of war between insurgents and counterinsurgents for the neutral majority is critical for both sides. A loss of hearts and minds by the occupation is connected to levels of insurgency

because, as resistance to the occupation grows, so will some individuals' desire to support or join the insurgency. Steven Metz explains that the two sides in insurgency warfare must create an identity that will appeal to the population and win their support:

The counterinsurgency strategy . . . must not be based solely on the fact that the enemy has adopted insurgency, but also on the fundamental cause and form of the conflict. . . . In a political struggle, the insurgents must create a new identity structure and attract supporters to it. Hence the conflict is a competition for "hearts and minds." Advantage accrues to the side which creates the more appealing identity structure.⁹

Creating such a universally appealing identity, though, can become difficult because every population has religious, ethnic, tribal, or racial cleavages. In fact, insurgencies often involve several different identity groups fighting the state for their own reasons. David Kilcullen describes how al-Qaeda has masterfully united differing groups: "Transnational extremists infect an existing societal problem, and then through a process of contagion spread instability and violence into broader society."¹⁰ He calls this process the accidental guerrilla syndrome because the majority of these insurgents are tricked into fighting for a larger cause that they may or may not support. Describing this syndrome in action, he quotes an Afghan provincial governor: "Ninety percent of the people you call 'Taliban' are actually tribals. They're fighting for loyalty or Pashtun honor, and to profit their tribe. They're not extremists. But they're terrorized by the other 10 percent: religious fanatics, terrorists, people allied to [the Taliban leadership *shura* in] Quetta. They're afraid that if they try to reconcile, the crazies will kill them."¹¹ The success of any COIN strategy, then, must ultimately discredit or co-opt insurgent identities, just as insurgents attempt to do the same to the occupation.

State Building as an Effective Counterinsurgency Strategy

To win the support of the people, many COIN strategists recommend building a legitimate government that addresses the people's concerns. Kilcullen, a senior adviser to Gen David Petraeus, describes the importance of state building:

It is fundamental to build the political legitimacy and effectiveness . . . of a government affected by an insurgency. Political reform and development is the hard core of any counterinsurgency strategy, and provides a framework for all other counterinsurgency programs and initiatives. . . . An effective political strategy is designed to undermine support for insurgents, win over their sympathizers to the government side, and co-opt local community leaders to ally themselves with the government.¹²

COIN forces rarely use the term *state building* to describe many of their operations, but a review of these activities makes clear that they do in fact attempt to create and strengthen state institutions.¹³ Furthermore, a number of their recommendations involve elections and democracy. Some individuals go so far as to say that “it is not possible to wage a successful insurgency against a democratic regime,” explaining that “examples abound to verify the aphorism that ‘the ballot box is the coffin of insurgency,’” specifically mentioning COIN successes in South Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, and El Salvador.¹⁴ Nonetheless, we must not conflate state building and the establishment of democratic institutions. State building can refer to creating and strengthening institutions from any form of government. Consider, for example, France’s occupation of Mexico from 1861 to 1867, during which it installed a monarchy, or Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia from 1979 to 1989, during which it created a communist government. Therefore, although creation of democratic institutions may be part of a specific state-building effort, all state building does not involve creation of democratic institutions.

Many COIN strategists point to three core rationales to explain state building’s effectiveness. First, new state institutions may normalize politics by giving social groups, including insurgents, an alternative, peaceful way to attain their goals. This way, insurgent groups may become socialized into the political system. Michael Wagner concurs with this view in terms of the occupation in Iraq: “Creating an inclusive political process that gives the Iraqis a stake in building their own future is absolutely critical to the success of the overall operation. . . . Creating a safe environment and building political capacity are closely interrelated.”¹⁵ For this reason, he praises US attempts at state building and criticizes earlier strategies that did not take it seriously. Metz agrees with Wagner: “Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat”; consequently, a strategy that “integrates insurgents into the national power structure” is vital.¹⁶ Second, creation of a new government complete with a police and military force may shift the burden of military operations to domestic institutions and make the presence of the occupation legitimate. As Anthony Cordesman explains, creating new state institutions “helps the US compensate for the religious, ideological, and cultural differences that the US faces in fighting the war on terrorism; and it can help compensate for the lack of US civilian counterparts to the US military that can take

up many of the potential burdens in stability operations and nation building.”¹⁷ Last, because state building also entails forming a new market economy, growth and development may give impoverished individuals incentive to refrain from joining the insurgency. As Metz argues, “businesses started and jobs created are as much ‘indicators of success’ as insurgents killed or intelligence provided” because “a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy must offer alternative sources of identity and empowerment for bored, disillusioned, and disempowered young males.”¹⁸ For these reasons, Metz believes that COIN should be discarded in favor of “stabilization and transformation operations” in order to “help clarify strategy and priorities” and “reinforce the idea that military force is a secondary factor in counterinsurgency.”¹⁹

State Building as an Ineffective Counterinsurgency Strategy

Other scholars, however, are less certain about the effects of state building on levels of insurgency. According to David Edelstein, who conducted the first comprehensive study of success and failure of military occupations, “Intuitively, one might expect that indirect rule is more likely to aid in the winning of hearts and minds, but, in reality, both styles of administration are likely to lead to mixed results.” As he explains, indirect rule may make an occupation seem more legitimate—an effect nullified, however, by the perception that the new institutions lack autonomy.²⁰ As David Chandler notes in the case of Bosnia, “external pressure created a state, but one with no real basis in Bosnian society and little popular legitimacy.”²¹ Perhaps the only people who see these new state institutions as legitimate are the foreign states and international organizations that create them. Another case in point, the new Iraqi constitution, includes several provisions that look more like terms of surrender than a framework for new state institutions. Specifically, Article 8 states that “Iraq shall observe the principles of good neighborliness, adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, seek to settle disputes by peaceful means, establish relations on the basis of mutual interests and reciprocity, and respect its international obligations.”²² How can one consider legitimate a constitution, imposed by a foreign state, that limits the pursuit of foreign policy? Similar provisions written into the German and Japanese constitutions after World War II found acceptance because the governments of these two states had the unified support of their populace during surrender. In Iraq, however, coalition

forces promised to be liberators, not conquerors. If we wish to win over hearts and minds, it would make more sense to allow local elites to design their own constitution.

If this is the case, why are local elites so often divorced from the state-building process? As Michael Wesley explains, “the ‘failing state’ label tends to delegitimize local politics. . . . As a consequence, the process of state-building relies heavily on the expectations of international agencies and officials.”²³ Therefore, state building fails because “rather than treating local politics as the source of political institutions, international advisers rely on their own political understandings and commitments and their belief in the power of institutions to shape political behavior, rather than vice versa.”²⁴ For this reason, Wesley argues that, “to be sustainable, agreement on the nature of the state must arise from existing social forces and understandings, from ‘real’ interests and clashes of interest which lead to the establishment of mechanisms and organizational rules and procedures capable of resolving and diffusing disagreements.”²⁵ As long as state builders fail to give local elites more autonomy, new institutions not only will appear illegitimate but also will likely prove untenable in the long term. At the same time, however, transferring power to local elites can be highly problematic. Edelstein explains that to have indirect rule necessitates reliance “on local civilians of questionable loyalty.”²⁶ In this way, funds and resources slated for state building and reconstruction may be diverted to either corrupt or antioccupation goals. Considering the possible misuse of funds, Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke theorize that, “if wrongly distributed, [aid] may reinforce social cleavages and, paradoxically, sow the seeds of conflict and insecurity, rather than alleviate them.”²⁷

As explained above, good reasons for skepticism exist regarding state building’s effectiveness as a COIN strategy. In fact, state building that promotes democracy may actually inflame levels of insurgency. As Roberto Belloni notes, state building is often synonymous with the implementation of Wilsonian democracy.²⁸ Considering the success that developed states have had with their own democracies, statesmen may logically believe that replicating such institutions will also meet with success. Unfortunately, as Belloni laments, instituting democracy in conflict or postconflict zones can have paradoxical results. Instead of bolstering peace and conciliation, democracy may increase tensions:

Contemporary neo-Wilsonianism focuses on political and economic liberalization as means to build viable democracies. As increasingly highlighted by a new generation of democracy analysts, such a formula is often unsuitable for war-torn countries plagued by scarce domestic resources and continuing competition between groups wishing to control the state. At least in the short term, liberalization dangerously heightens competition among groups, thus increasing the possibility of a relapse into war. . . . Not only do political and economic liberalization risk promoting further conflict, they are also at odds with other important goals of international intervention in weak states; in particular, the attempt to uphold individual and group rights.²⁹

In agreement with Belloni, empirical studies have shown that democratization and economic liberalization tend to increase levels of conflict.³⁰ However, in the long run, studies show that democratizing states are no more likely to experience domestic conflict than their authoritarian counterparts.

Exacerbating existing ethno-religious tensions by pursuing democratization may be an acceptable trade-off. However, during an insurgency, insurgents may purposely inflame tensions to produce a chaotic environment that further weakens occupational forces and the new government. In such circumstances, an insurgency could grow very quickly as rival identity groups begin to arm themselves. Unsurprisingly, then, early in the current Afghan war, one encountered pessimism about state building in Afghanistan: “Given the extreme fragmentation and militarization of Afghan society, democratic reconstruction cannot possibly work. Instead, we need to devise a more modest and realistic program, aimed at creating peace and restoring basic economic functions rather than rebuilding the entire state.”³¹

Astri Suhrke also is pessimistic about democratization in Afghanistan: “With the national budget mostly financed by foreign governments and institutions, the Afghan government’s major responsibility in accounting for the use of these funds is towards the donors, rather than its own people.”³² Accordingly, he labels Afghanistan a rentier state, explaining that this form of government “is not conducive to either economic development or the evolution of a democratically accountable government.”³³ In addition to a lack of accountability is the issue of state strength. Externally providing a weak state with funding begins a cycle of dependency that negates the capacity to tax and move towards “fiscal sustainability.” This dependency cycle creates a government in name only. Barnett Rubin observes that “electing officials to preside over a non-functional pseudo-state that can provide neither security nor services does not constitute democracy.”³⁴ Nonetheless, one may argue that a guise of democracy ought to increase the

legitimacy of an occupation even in the absence of new institutions. However, as Jan Angstrom explains, this argument is flawed: “The liberal state-building paradigm starts from the assumption that legitimacy follows from institutions and law,” but in fact “legitimacy follows from order.”³⁵ Consequently, holding elections and building new institutions are meaningless if the occupation cannot ensure security.³⁶ Therefore, Angstrom argues that if the occupying force cannot create order, the populace will turn to local elites to provide security. Invariably, these elites will then contest the occupying force for local control.³⁷

Galula, one of the seminal COIN strategists, advocates the use of elections—number five on his list of eight steps to win over local populations. He believes that the military should first “expel the main body of armed insurgents,” “detach for the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent’s comeback in strength,” sever any links the population had with insurgents, and only then hold elections.³⁸ In this way, security would already be in place so that the nascent government would not lose its legitimacy. However, Galula’s steps assume the possibility of ridding an area of insurgents before winning the support of the people. A Catch-22 situation could develop whereby one gains support of the people only through providing security but that security comes about only through support of the people. He also recommends that military leaders “discover what reforms are really wanted . . . or determine whether the announced reforms conform with the popular wish.”³⁹ This advice is important because, as will be explained for the case of Iraq, the local population probably would neither utilize nor sustain institutions and facilities created without such consultation.

Expectations of state building’s decreasing levels of insurgency rest on “an assumption that a sophisticated, yet still utopian, ‘social engineering’ approach could replace, or accelerate, a process of state formation that occurs rather more organically.”⁴⁰ At present, the literature addressing this presumption is mixed. The democracies in West Germany and Japan reflect successful state building by occupational forces. As Karin von Hippel explains, though, “allied success in implementing democratic reforms was enhanced by respect for education and high literacy rates, advanced levels of industrialization, and, of course, unconditional surrender.”⁴¹ In other words, because Japan and Germany already possessed many of the ingredients for successful statehood, it was easy to replace old institutions with new. For

this reason, one might best describe the cases of Japan and Germany as state replacement under which preexisting bureaucrats and their institutional capacity were allowed to endure. However, most present-day state building occurs because states are weak or failed. Therefore, they have none of the elements that make for a smooth transition to new institutions. Consequently, Wesley's survey of current state-building endeavors is not hopeful:

There is little evidence that the new, hands-on state-building project is any more effective than the old, arm's-length approaches to nation building. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the state-building missions face rising insurgent violence. In East Timor and Solomon Islands, until recently considered "poster children" for successful state building, unresolved tensions led to serious rioting in early 2006. Bosnia and Kosovo appear no closer to self-administration than they did in 1999, and the state of the Democratic Republic of Congo appears as fragile as it was before the original intervention.⁴²

Thus, state building as anti-insurgency strategy may work only in states that have previously enjoyed strong state institutions. In this regard, neither Iraq nor Afghanistan represents a good candidate for this type of COIN strategy.

Thus far, we have considered how state building may affect levels of insurgency mostly in terms of winning over hearts and minds. However, state building may also affect strategic interaction between insurgents and occupational forces. Patricia Sullivan makes one such theoretical argument, explaining why strong states lose "limited wars" and developing a theory that foreign policy objectives requiring the compliance of those occupied probably won't succeed. Using this logic, Sullivan explains how the war in Iraq conforms to her expectations:

Operation Iraqi Freedom is a case in point. U.S. troops attained their first objective—the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime—quickly, and few American lives were lost in combat. Less than three weeks after the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, central Baghdad fell to U.S. forces. However, after the fall of the regime, the United States' primary political objective shifted from regime removal, a brute force objective, to regime maintenance, a moderately coercive objective, and the target became a growing insurgent movement.⁴³

Consequently, because state building requires compliance from the native population, it depends upon low levels of insurgent resolve. As Sullivan notes, the populace can deny a stronger military force "simply by refusing to comply regardless of the level of destruction visited on it" because an insurgency "does not need to win or even fight battles to accomplish this[;] it can

avoid direct combat and frustrate a strong state's efforts to achieve a decisive military victory."⁴⁴ In this way, new state institutions may act as an Achilles' heel for occupational forces because they are easily disrupted.

A review of the literature on the effect of state building on levels of insurgency reveals two distinct positions. The first sees state building as an integral part of a strategy to win over a population in the grips of an insurgency. The second holds that it is impracticable and cannot decrease levels of insurgency. At present, we do not know which position is correct because most of this discussion has been either theoretical or anecdotal. We need an empirical study that assesses the ability of occupational forces to reach their own state-building goals.

Testing the Claims of State-Building Skeptics

Distilled from the literature presented thus far and the concerns of this author are four rationales which argue that external state building will fail. First, because new institutions are not created by those who will use them to govern, they likely will not reflect the values and desires of the people. Accordingly, these institutions may become circumvented, underutilized, or unworkable. Moreover, because these new institutions lack full autonomy, their legitimacy and responsiveness to citizens are questionable. Second, attempting democratization in a fragmented society during an insurgency will almost certainly lead to violent competition over state power and development aid. Majority groups probably will enjoy and distribute resources inequitably; in response, minority groups will turn to violence to defend their own interests. Third, by building public works, COIN forces give insurgents a large array of unprotected, high-value targets to select from. If those forces do not first ensure security, the billions spent on reconstruction will not translate into gains in economic development or feelings of gratitude. Last, citizens of a foreign state have goals and loyalties that supersede partnerships with an occupying force. Therefore, coethnics trained to fight against insurgents will be disposed to disloyal behavior that could take a variety of forms: unwillingness to battle kinsmen, use of power to settle ethnolinguistic or religious grievances, and infiltration with intent to spy or steal for insurgents. The four sections that follow use the case of state building in Iraq to determine if, or to what degree, these predictions have been borne out.

Creation of Institutions Independent of the People

After the fall of Saddam, the United States predominated over issues of governance. Iraqis had no influence over selection of the transitional government, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC). The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) ignored calls by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to hold elections for posts on the council, instead choosing each member itself.⁴⁵ Even after the CPA handed over power to the IGC, many security and reconstruction decisions were made without consultation from Iraqis.⁴⁶ Further, decisions made by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer during the reign of the CPA have had and will continue to have lasting effects on the Iraqi people.⁴⁷ In sum, the United States did predominate over Iraqis even at times when compromise and negotiation were possible. One must then ask what effect this had on the success of state building.

Iraqis were well aware of their disengagement from the state-building process. They resented the fact that they were not part of the decision calculus in the devolution of power to local levels of government, the design of the electoral system, the choice of a parliamentary democracy, or even smaller issues like the placement, size, and number of hospitals.⁴⁸ Little wonder, then, that the issue of capacity, whereby Iraqis failed to take ownership over new state institutions, became a central dilemma for the occupation. The capacity problem naturally fueled itself because Iraqis were unaccustomed to working in an institutional structure foreign to them; the occupation had to take a more senior role. The hesitation of heads of various Iraqi ministries to spend money from their budgets offers the best evidence of the capacity problem. Why wouldn't Iraq's ministries pay the salaries of police officers or buy parts necessary for the maintenance of infrastructure? A report from the United States Institute of Peace explains that "the extraordinary number of agencies, amounts of resources available, and high-level attention from multiple directions produce powerful 'centrifugal forces' that interfere with efforts to stay focused on local institutions and needs in the interest of advancing reforms that will be locally sustained."⁴⁹ In other words, the heads of these ministries were so turned around in regard to whom they were accountable that they did not first think of their own employees or the delivery of essential services to the Iraqi people. Ironically, the ministries were hampered by their desire to work with the occupation that was attempting to guide them towards their duties. Even when Iraqi

oil sales decreased the new government's financial dependency on the occupation, this situation proved problematic.

The difficulties within Iraq's new judicial system provide a good example of how US predominance in institutional design prevented state-building efforts from reaching stated goals. Sermid Al-Sarraf (a member of the Iraqi Jurists' Association), testifying in 2003 before Congress, reported that "Iraqis are feeling like strangers in their own country" because the CPA was "avoiding direct Iraqi involvement and their opinions in important decisions."⁵⁰ In later years, the courts were described in the following way: "To the average Iraqi, the CCCI [Central Criminal Court of Iraq] courts are an American creation. 'We call them the Potemkin Courts.'"⁵¹ This comment affirms predictions that external state building often creates institutions with no legitimacy or real basis in society.⁵² Additional examples also abound of modes of governance, offices, and ministries—with which Iraqis had no experience—being thrust upon them. In one case, the United States insisted that Iraqis establish their own inspectors general (IG): "The perception of the IGs as a foreign antibody inserted into Iraq's body politic by the Americans persists. Many IGs believe that 'everyone assumes we're just spies for the Americans.' One IG noted: 'If we're too active, our minister will fire us.' Another said, 'If I do my job, they'll kill me.'"⁵³

Failures like the one described above offer strong evidence of the inability to build states externally. To deal with this issue, the occupation turned to capacity-building programs, believing that training, education, and an army of advisers could remedy "a crisis of Iraqi government mismanagement."⁵⁴ Ultimately, these programs proved as ineffective as the government they attempted to improve:

Years after some capacity-building programs began, it was not clear whether they had any lasting effect.

A look at Diyala province four years after the invasion illustrates how slowly Iraq's governing capacity had developed. None of Diyala's service directorates had a dedicated maintenance budget . . . [and] the local government in Diyala knew no more about ministry projects planned in its territory than it did in 2004.⁵⁵

Not until later did the occupation recognize that only by allowing Iraqis to take a lead in the state-building process could it build capacity and fix mismanagement.

Just as difficult as persuading Iraqis to take ownership of their new government was the task of training them to maintain and utilize infra-

structure ordered by the coalition and built by foreign contractors. Unfortunately, just as Iraqis did not participate in the design of their governing institutions, neither did they have a hand in spending the billions of dollars to build sanitation facilities, schools, power plants, and other such structures. Consequently, they had neither the training nor the inclination to use these new facilities. For the coalition, this became the issue of sustainability; unless this problem could be fixed, all of the dollars and lives spent on reconstruction would go for nothing. In fact, the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction (SIGIR) reported that “the deterioration of poorly maintained infrastructure projects after transfer to Iraqi control could end up constituting the largest source of waste in the U.S. reconstruction program.”⁵⁶ Specifically, “the U.S. program was allowing too many reconstruction dollars to exit Iraq into the coffers of non-Iraqi firms.”⁵⁷ Without Iraqi leadership over these projects, there was no way to ensure use of the facilities after the coalition handed them over. The rejection by Iraqi accountants of a “state-of-the-art financial management information system . . . built with U.S. rather than Iraqi accounting practices in mind” illustrates the difficulties associated with sustainability.⁵⁸ However, the phenomenon was much larger:

All across Iraq in late 2005 and beyond, a series of SIGIR inspections discovered that physical infrastructure put in place by U.S.-funded reconstruction was breaking down and coming off-line. Failures plagued both refurbished and new facilities in the water, electrical, sewer, and oil sectors. It was not just a question of maintaining individual plants and teaching Iraqi engineers who run them to master more advanced machinery. It was about building the systems and processes within Iraq’s government to sustain the infrastructure it had just received.⁵⁹

Perhaps the best evidence that US predominance over Iraqi governance led to state-building failure was the success realized when the coalition allowed more involvement by the Iraqis and their leadership during the later years of the occupation. Instead of building capacity, the occupation eventually shifted its strategy to one of Iraqi leadership. Permitting the Iraqis to set their own goals, prioritize their own efforts, find their own solutions, and execute their own plans inculcated capacity and sustainability from the outset. By doing so, the Americans realized that the Iraqis, not the United States, should fix Iraq. Interviews show that many members of the SIGIR staff involved in the state-building process in Iraq echoed this doctrine:

Ambassador Crocker said, “You have to listen as much as you talk. Let them tell you the problem and then use ways they think it can be fixed with our help. It is not going to

resemble how the Walla Walla, Washington City Council deals with Olympia, but it may work in Iraqi terms. So we talk about Iraqi solutions. . . . It has to work for them.” . . .

“We’ve got to start listening to the Iraqis. That’s Development 101,” said David Atteberry, the USAID [United States Agency for International Development] representative on the Rasheed ePRT [embedded provincial reconstruction team], located in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Baghdad. “The answer to most of your questions can be found by talking to the people you are working with.”⁶⁰

Lack of Iraqi ownership of the state-building process led to debilitating errors. Nonetheless, these failures were not so egregious that a change in strategy after the fact could not redeem the overall state-building mission. Therefore, lessons learned about the ability of external actors to build states are mixed. External state building cannot succeed when state builders take the lead. However, if foreign state builders limit their role to facilitation of indigenous leadership, then exogenous state building can create capable governance, and, in turn, state building may become an effective strategy in winning hearts and minds during an insurgency.

Effect of Democratization on State Power and Development Aid

The combination of democracy and development aid, although not exclusively at fault, certainly had a role to play in igniting the violent sectarian struggles in Iraq. The first election was set for 30 January 2005. Sunnis understood immediately that elections would bring the Shia majority into power, so they decided to boycott them and withdraw their membership in the IGC. Up until the point of the elections, both Sunni and Shia governed jointly. For Iraqis the concept of democracy had already been framed as a winner-take-all system. However, the establishment of consociational democratic practices (such as minority veto) might have assuaged Sunni concerns that even as a minority player, participation in government would be constructive. But the United States did not foresee that sects within Iraq would not share power and work together: “American strategy was based on the belief that a functioning constitutional, multi-party democracy was the top priority for all Iraqis except a small number of extremists when, in fact, the security and power of their sect and ethnic group mattered more to a significant number, perhaps most.”⁶¹ Therefore, no provisions for power sharing were included to ensure minority participation in governing. The Sunnis rightfully feared that once in power, the Shia would use their electoral

victory to consolidate power and jealously guard state authority and the delivery of resources.

For the Sunnis, violence represented the only way to participate in politics after they left the government. The elections themselves became a target for insurgents because they symbolized the legitimacy of both the occupation and the new Iraqi government. Unsurprisingly, violence occurred on the day of the election: “Insurgents launched about 300 attacks, killing at least 35 people and wounding more than 100.”⁶² However, Sunnis ended their boycott of the next round of elections (less than a year later), and turnout was high but violence minimal.⁶³ Sectarian violence continued shortly after elections with the bombing of the golden dome of the al-Askari mosque. In reaction to that incident, “Iraq’s Shi’a . . . accelerated the pace of sectarian killing that had been rising steadily for months. At least 1,300 Iraqis, mostly Sunni, were murdered in the next four days, many slain in the streets by organized killing squads associated with the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr.”⁶⁴ As one commenter noted, “The elections that were to be the capstone of a new democracy were based on a formula that only increased the forces driving Iraqis apart.”⁶⁵ Not until sometime after the surge in 2007 would the sectarian violence begin to ebb.

Democracy increased sectarian violence in other ways. First, the Shia attempted to dominate Iraqi politics by delaying provincial elections in order to hold on to Sunni majority district seats. This action led Sunnis to reject the provincial governments, cementing their belief that violence was the only answer. Additionally, the majority Shia party used force to replace a mayor with a party member.⁶⁶ In sum, both sides refused to concede after losing an election. Second, parties that did well in the elections used their power to take over entire ministries within the bureaucracy and then gave preferences in the distribution of resources to members of their own sect while blocking other sects from enjoying those same government resources. Even the coalition could not keep this from happening: “The construction commissioned by the civil affairs team crossed a de facto sectarian boundary. The Shi’a who held sway over city government took a ‘Shi’a first’ view of service delivery. Even if the pipes were completed, city officials would not allow the connection to a Sunni neighborhood to be activated.”⁶⁷ These actions also increased the rejection of governmental authority and the choice of Iraqis to join with insurgents against the government.

The dozens of assassinations of government officials reflected this rejection of authority. In the end, this violence and power grabbing kept state institutions from their duty to govern effectively. Provincial reconstruction teams tasked with restoring order found that

sectarianism and the battle for control between provincial and ministerial officials had crippled once-functioning organs of public administration. . . .The cycle's root causes were apparent. The struggle for power in Iraq's new electoral system, hurriedly arranged in the last days of the CPA, had overwhelmed the public institutions that manage reconstruction. The seeds of this tangled story were planted in 2003, matured in 2004, and finally burst open in 2005.⁶⁸

Did democratization single handedly lead to an almost all-out civil war? Obviously, the treatment of Shia during Saddam's reign was a necessary element of the eventual violence. Moreover, foreign influences from Iran and al-Qaeda played a significant role in inflaming violence. Had the designers of Iraq's democratic and electoral systems possessed greater foresight, though, the use of alternative democratic designs could have averted the Sunni boycott and withdrawal of the IGC elections.

Reconstruction Efforts Targeted by Insurgents

Insurgent attacks on reconstruction began as soon as such efforts were under way. The ghastly toll from this violence affected every level of reconstruction. Insurgents followed up acts of sabotage with attacks on repair crews sent to fix the damage. The following account of initial attempts to increase electrical output is illustrative of the violence:

Insurgents 'routinely targeted joint U.S.-Iraqi electricity meetings,' as well as Iraqis who were associated with the Coalition electricity restoration effort. In early June 2003, insurgents shot to death a senior Iraqi distribution engineer in front of her children as she left her Baghdad home. By the end of June, 'attacks on Iraqi electrical engineers and facilities in and around Baghdad' occurred daily.⁶⁹

Despite the difficulties, however, the occupation continued construction because building up infrastructure was part of COIN strategy, but the lack of security made reconstruction impossible in a number of ways: (1) it was too dangerous to conduct site evaluations competently; (2) building sites were blown up before completion; (3) insurgents assailed trucks tasked with bringing building materials to sites; (4) individuals involved in construction were harassed, intimidated, kidnapped, and assassinated; (5) contractors at times pulled out of their contacts entirely; and (6) the increase in the cost

and time to complete any project became outrageous. In the end, “the number of non-Iraqi contractor deaths would continue to rise, nearing 1,300 by the end of 2008.”⁷⁰ Why were so many contractors being killed? Even though construction was a major COIN strategy, coalition forces did not dedicate troops to protect building sites, power plants, or their employees.⁷¹

The targeting of public works and governing institutions by insurgents became the single greatest obstacle to state building in Iraq. Without security the plan to win over hearts and minds by delivering public goods to Iraqis remained unrealized, and the job boom in construction and improved economic growth that a new infrastructure should have generated never materialized. Further, the chaos that seemed to envelop Iraq with constant assassinations, kidnappings, car bombs, and improvised explosive devices painted a picture of an occupation (and an Iraqi government) incapable of warding off anarchy. Thus, common Iraqis had no reason to believe that the occupation would bring anything other than despair. Despite the billions of dollars spent, the delivery of essential services and the production of electricity and oil were actually lower than during Saddam’s reign.⁷²

Failure to complete reconstruction efforts taught the obvious lesson that security is a necessary condition for success: “Endlessly rebuilding in the wake of sustained attacks on reconstruction personnel and critical infrastructure proved to be a demoralizing and wasteful proposition.”⁷³ However, after the establishment of security during the surge of US troops, the multiplier effect from reconstruction efforts originally envisioned by COIN strategists began to bear fruit:

By the end of 2007, [reconstruction] employed 319,583 Iraqis in short-term labor projects and provided 13,275 with vocational training for a total of 260,000 man-months of employment. More than 260,000 man-months of short-term employment helped make visible community improvements, many of which were overseen by municipal governments in places just swept by violent clearing operations. The role of this economic stimulus in solidifying security gains, although hard to measure, was seen by its implementers and military personnel as an essential element of the surge’s success.⁷⁴

In turn, security also helped improve Iraqi governance, which relied on the safety of officials and ministers.

Loyalty of Native Security Forces

The task of completely rebuilding the military and police force of Iraq proved daunting for the occupation. Recruits had to be located, motivated,

trained, outfitted, compensated, organized, and provided leadership. However, the greatest problem in deploying newly minted Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) lay in their reliability as partners in the struggle against insurgents. Desertion in the face of enemy fire, perpetration of sectarian violence, and the difficulty of tracking weapons meant for the ISF plagued the effort to create a competent fighting force. Nonetheless, a successful sharing of the occupation's burden of security with the ISF could produce an increase in the number of soldiers ready to engage with insurgents, a legitimization of the use of force, and reduced visibility for the coalition. Moreover, the occupation could leverage the ISF's greater understanding of local customs, which would improve intelligence gathering.

Desertion was a problem in Iraq for three reasons. First, Iraqis did not relish the idea of firing upon their fellow countrymen. Second, a lack of adequate training or experience kept confidence low. Third, high casualties associated with terrorist bombs and assassinations were demoralizing. These three problems led to early defeats for the ISF:

In April 2004, Sunni insurgents attacked Coalition forces in Falluja, Baghdad, Ramadi, Samarra, and Tikrit. . . . Many elements of the newly deployed Iraqi Security Forces proved unwilling or unable to fight. Some abandoned their posts and aided the insurgency. Others mutinied when they came under fire. Iraqi police units collapsed in Falluja, Najaf, Kerbala, and Kut, and the number of Iraqi police dropped by nearly 3,000 in one week in April 2004. The Iraq Civil Defense Corps fared worst of all. From April 2 to April 16, up to 12,000 ICDC members deserted.⁷⁵

Worse even than these early defeats by the ISF were the human-rights abuses perpetrated by sectarian members of the ISF on the Iraqi civilian population. According to Carter Malkasian, "Iraqi Army units often turned a blind eye to militia attacks on Sunnis" and "actively participated in ethnic cleansing."⁷⁶ During the sectarian violence that gripped Iraq from 2004 to 2007, units of the ISF joined with Shia militias in their assaults against Sunnis. For this reason, the occupation's effort "as it trained and equipped Iraqi security forces . . . was unwillingly feeding the sectarianism."⁷⁷ Worse than simple failure, the occupation's state-building activity actually motivated insurgent actions by Sunnis who "violently rejected the National Police, seeing it as an extension of Shi'a militia killing squads."⁷⁸ The following report showcases ISF activities:

In 2006, the United States discovered evidence of Shi'a death squads operating from the Ministry of Interior, and a secret network of prisons across Baghdad. Rival Shi'a factions

asserted claims to the spoils of government, commandeering floors of the MoI and appropriating U.S.-purchased weapons and vehicles for militia activity. Shi'a militias in particular successfully placed large numbers of their fighters on the government payroll. The National Police became so compromised that Sunnis began calling it a "Shi'a militia in uniform."⁷⁹

During this time, as Brian Burton and John Nagl report, "over 50% of the weapons [were] delivered between June 2004 and September 2005, [and] approximately 190,000 firearms went unaccounted for; some likely ended up in the hands of insurgents and militia fighters."⁸⁰ Even after establishment of a new tracking system for these weapons, auditors believed that "U.S.-supplied weapons intended for ISF use may have ended up in militia or insurgent hands."⁸¹ In addition to weapons, auditors "discovered that program funds might have been diverted to militia activity in one Baghdad district."⁸²

Attempts to stop sectarian infiltration through the removal of high-level ISF officers did not succeed.⁸³ Another unsuccessful strategy of the coalition involved training the National Police to "emphasize human rights and the rule of law," but ultimately, as an independent report commissioned by Congress concluded, "It is not clear that this element of the Iraqi Security Forces, in its current form, can contribute to Iraqi security and stability in a meaningful way."⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the ISF did eventually become an independently effective force after the coalition successfully negotiated the inclusion of Sunni militias into the ISF. This action was integral to stopping sectarian violence that the ISF perpetuated by allowing Sunnis to officially protect their own territories while removing the need for Shia-dominated units to patrol these zones. Of course, integration of militias into the ISF did not occur without problems:

The Ministry of Interior's desperate need for experienced recruits forced them to piece together units from Saddam-era commando units and Shi'a militia, each of which were likely to have their own sectarian agendas. The result was a force "riddled with corruption and sectarian influence," whose members engaged in routine shakedowns for private gain and committed appalling human rights abuses. These elite Iraqi units, trained and equipped by MNSTC-I [Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq] for counter-insurgency, were regularly accused of human rights abuses.⁸⁵

Obviously, the ISF remains deeply flawed. Nonetheless, the goal by which the coalition is most interested in gauging success (the ability to hand over security duties to Iraqis) reached an important milestone when

in June 2009 American troops closed bases and left Iraqi towns and cities, thereby decreasing the footprint of the occupation by using the ISF. On the day in question when the coalition formally transferred security to the ISF, Iraqis marched in parades and set off fireworks.⁸⁶

Again it seems that evidence from Iraq is mixed regarding the prediction that foreign states will build a security force disposed to disloyal behavior. On the one hand, there is no denying that the ISF was full of soldiers and officers who cared only for their sectarian identity. On the other hand, the coalition transferred power to the ISF, and thus far this force has operated independently of the coalition. The linchpin of success, it seems, resided in the incorporation of all sects into the ISF and the use of security forces native to the areas they were charged to protect.

Conclusion: Implications for Gaining Support of the Iraqi People

How does the case of Iraq help us to judge whether external state building creates insolvent states? The long-term prognosis for the Iraqi state is still in question. The 2009 Failed State Index ranks Iraq as the sixth-most at-risk state, and the 2009 Corruption Perception Index rates it the fifth-most corrupt state in the world.⁸⁷ Recent elections have yet to produce a new government, and this delay has led to an increase in violence. Furthermore, despite billions of dollars spent, attempts to increase the delivery of essential services and improve the Iraqi economy have made only very modest gains. Regardless, the security brought by the 2007 surge and the Sunni realignment with the coalition has made it possible to work on these deficiencies. Additionally, the coalition has realized at least two of its goals: creating a democratic government and a security force that can operate independently of coalition forces, both of which allowed the United States to remove all combat troops in December 2011. Thus, state building made an exit from Iraq possible.

The generalizability of the Iraq case is important to consider. Are the failures of the coalition in Iraq inevitable and endemic to all exogenous state building? In fact, the United States could have avoided many of the challenges it faced. Had the coalition allowed Iraqis to take a leadership role over reconstruction and if institutions had been designed to ensure power sharing between sects, the insurgency might not have been as intense.

At any rate, the coalition made its biggest mistake by sending too few troops to Iraq. The ensuing power vacuum after the fall of Saddam's regime led to looting, sectarian violence, insurgency, and the creation of well-armed and organized militias. Furthermore, because top leadership took so long to remedy this error, insecurity quickly compounded the difficulty of attempts to deliver essential services, increase economic development, and build a competent new government. Hence the importance of the surge: security became a necessary condition for the success of state building.

The lack of unity of command and unity of purpose among coalition members stands as the last major mistake in the state-building effort. Though not the military's fault (because it had insufficient forces), the civilian side of COIN efforts did not receive support sufficient to succeed.⁸⁸ The SIGIR testified to Congress that the "existing structure for SRO [stability and reconstruction operations] management has led to poor coordination and weak operational integration, that these significant problems remain unresolved, and that they continue to inhibit SRO execution."⁸⁹ He therefore recommends creation of a new US Office for Contingency Operations capable of providing unity of command for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such an office would also help ensure that overly optimistic estimations of needed troop levels and similar mistakes would not recur.

It is too soon to say for certain whether Iraq is a solvent state. However, we can answer the question, What effect did state building have on Iraqis' level of support for the coalition? Future research needs to find a way to make connections between state-building activities and corresponding gains and losses in Iraqi support because, even if we agree that external state building can work, we still do not know if it is an effective COIN strategy. Unfortunately, even those persons involved in state building remain unsure about the effectiveness of their efforts:

One ePRT member said, "Through the delivery of essential services, we might extend legitimacy to the local government, but I don't know if that's necessarily true." When asked what motivated the focus on essential services, the official replied, "Out of a sense of moral imperative, out of a sense of wanting to do the right thing." "I know the Iraqis appreciate that we are doing this," the official said, "but it might not translate into strategic success for us."⁹⁰

It may be that certain aspects of state building are helpful and others are less important. The case of Iraq certainly gives credence to Angstrom's belief that "legitimacy follows from order."⁹¹ Ensuring security was an

extremely important aspect of working towards success in Iraq. However, just as important was the need to co-opt Sunnis, Kurds, and Shia into the government. Had the coalition not assured the Iraqis that it had no intention of colonizing their country through state building and ensuing transfers of power, insurgency in Iraq may have overwhelmed the occupation. Scholars have already begun to connect state-building efforts to COIN success: “[Ayad] Allawi and [Gen George] Casey immediately poured \$70 million in reconstruction and compensation funds into the city. Najaf would remain quiet for the next three years, and Sadr started pursuing power through political means instead of violent ones.”⁹² The next step must take a comprehensive look into the effects of all aspects of state building on Iraqi hearts and minds.

Notes

1. Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004); Michael Wagner, “The Challenges of Iraq: Putting US Army Stability Operations Doctrine to the Test,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 4 (December 2008): 484–509; and David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).
2. John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Importance of Building Local Capabilities: Lessons from the Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/060731_local_capabilities.pdf.
3. Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=790>; and Max G. Manwaring, *Shadows of Things Past and Images of the Future: Lessons for the Insurgencies in Our Midst* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=587>.
4. David M. Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security* 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 49–91, <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/edelstein.pdf>; and Brian Burton and John Nagl, “Learning As We Go: The US Army Adapts to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, July 2004–December 2006,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (2008): 303–27, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592310802228658>.
5. David Chandler, “Back to the Future? The Limits of Neo-Wilsonian Ideals of Exporting Democracy,” *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006): 475–94, http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/3986/1/Chandler_2006_final.pdf; and Jan Angstrom, “Inviting the Leviathan: External Forces, War, and Statebuilding,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 3 (2008): 374–96.
6. The importance of winning support of the people was recognized as early as the 1800s when France used a “political response to insurgency” whereby the “military would . . . attempt to win over the population, not only by offering protection but also by such methods as extending free medical help or establishing subsidized markets” so that “soldiers would act not only as administrators and police but also as ‘overseers, workshop managers, teachers, gardeners, [and] farmers.’” Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 40. The following classic works and recent publications have upheld this position: Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (London: Faber, 1971); Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966); Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004); Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2nd ed., rev. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005); and James S. Corum, *Bad Strategies: How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency* (St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing, 2008).
7. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup*, xiii.
8. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 53.
9. Steven Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=752>, 83.
10. Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 264.

11. Ibid., 39.
12. Ibid., 265–66.
13. State building is only one of many strategies encouraged by military experts. Command structures, the size and nature of unit deployments, and the selecting of targets are all addressed by COIN warfare texts. Similarly, other suggestions may help win support of the people without the use of state building. For example, COIN strategists stress propaganda, political stability, security for citizens, and minimization of the use of force. Strategists are also concerned with ending any international support insurgents may receive from abroad (e.g., supplies, recruits, and safe havens).
14. Joes, *Resisting Rebellion*, 234.
15. Wagner, “Challenges of Iraq,” 498.
16. Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, vi.
17. Cordesman, *Building Local Capabilities*, ii.
18. Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, 53.
19. Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, vii.
20. When Edelstein refers to indirect rule, he means that a government is created and supported by the occupational force. His reference to direct control denotes rule by occupational forces without the creation of indigenous institutional structures. See Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards,” 67.
21. Chandler, “Back to the Future?,” 493.
22. “Iraqi Constitution,” [5], accessed 17 February 2012, http://www.uniraq.org/documents/iraqi_constitution.pdf.
23. Michael Wesley, “The State of the Art on the Art of State Building,” *Global Governance* 14, no. 3 (July–September 2008): 380.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards,” 68.
27. Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke, “Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments,” *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (December 2005): 455, http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/admininst/shared/iheid/800/krause/2005%20mit%20j%C3%BCtersonke%20krause_peacebuilding%5B1%5D.pdf.
28. Roberto Belloni, “Rethinking ‘Nation-Building’: The Contradictions of the Neo-Wilsonian Approach to Democracy Promotion,” *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Winter/Spring 2007, 97–109, <http://blogs.shu.edu/diplomacy/files/archives/08-Belloni.pdf>.
29. Ibid., 98.
30. Carline A. Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, “Promoting Liberalization in Post-Civil War States: Building Peace or Fostering Instability?” (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, 22–25 March 2006); Jacqueline M. Klopp and Elke Zuern, “The Politics of Violence in Democratization: Lessons from Kenya and South Africa,” *Comparative Politics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 127–46; and Thorsten Gromes, “The Vicious Circle of Statebuilding and Nation-Building during the Democratization of Ethnically Divided Post-Civil War Societies” (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, New York, 15–18 February 2009).
31. Marina Ottaway and Anatol Lieven, *Rebuilding Afghanistan: Fantasy versus Reality*, Policy Brief no. 12 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2002), 1, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief12.pdf>.
32. Astri Suhrke, “The Limits of Statebuilding: The Role of International Assistance in Afghanistan” (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, 21–24 March 2006), 18, <http://www.cmi.no/publications/2006/isapapermarch2006.pdf>.
33. Ibid.
34. Barnett Rubin, “Peace Building and Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?,” *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 184.
35. Angstrom, “Inviting the Leviathan,” 380.
36. A Gallup poll of September 2003 showed the Iraqi population evenly split on the notion of instituting a democracy. This response could indicate that the form of government in Iraq was less important than its effectiveness. Lydia Saad, “What Form of Government for Iraq?,” Gallup, 23 September 2003, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/9343/what-form-government-iraq.aspx>.
37. Angstrom, “Inviting the Leviathan,” 374–96.
38. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 55–56.
39. Ibid., 84.
40. Krause and Jütersonke, “Peace, Security and Development,” 448. The authors compare this artificial approach with an organic “historical process . . . driven by local actors, instrumentally using external alliances and resources to consolidate their power or achieve their goals” (ibid., 451).
41. Karin von Hippel, “Democracy by Force: A Renewed Commitment to Nation Building,” *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 103, <http://www.twq.com/winter00/231Hippel.pdf>.
42. Wesley, “State of the Art,” 379.
43. Patricia Sullivan, “War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (June 2007): 518, <http://www.sagepub.com/martin3study/articles/Sullivan.pdf>.
44. Ibid., 507.

45. Babak Rahimi, *Ayatollah Sistani and the Democratization of Post-Ba'athist Iraq*, Special Report 187 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, June 2007), 8, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr187.pdf>.
46. Perhaps this occurred because the fledgling Iraqi government had yet to fill critical offices that might otherwise make policy.
47. Three of the most important of these decisions are the design of Iraq's new government, debathification, and dissolution of the Iraqi armed forces.
48. The United States wanted to change the Iraqi health system to deemphasize hospitals and increase the number of local clinics, but Iraqis in the health care system opposed this proposal. Nonetheless, the United States ignored the Iraqis and proceeded with its own plans. Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: SIGIR, 2009), 190, http://www.sigir.mil/files/HardLessons/Hard_Lessons_Report.pdf#view=fit.
49. Jeremiah S. Pam, *The Treasury Approach to Statebuilding and Institution-Strengthening Assistance: Experience in Iraq and Broader Implications*, Special Report 216 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, October 2008), 8, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr216.pdf>.
50. Senate, *Statement of Sermid Al-Sarraf, Board of Directors, Iraqi Jurists' Association, before the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and Judiciary*, 108th Cong. 1st sess., 25 June 2003, <http://ftp.resource.org/gpo.gov/hearings/108s/90493.txt>.
51. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 291.
52. Chandler, "Back to the Future?," 2006
53. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 214.
54. *Ibid.*, 272.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*, 332.
57. *Ibid.*, 234.
58. *Ibid.*, 259.
59. *Ibid.*, 258.
60. *Ibid.*, 306, 301.
61. Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, 84.
62. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 205.
63. The BBC reported an "explosion in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone . . . shortly after the polls opened. Two civilians and a US marine were slightly injured." "High Turnout' in Iraqi Election," BBC News, 15 December 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4531904.stm>.
64. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 274.
65. *Ibid.*, 256.
66. See James Glanz, "Baghdad Mayor Is Ousted by a Shiite Group and Replaced," *New York Times*, 10 August 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/10/international/middleeast/10iraq.html?pagewanted=print>.
67. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 248.
68. *Ibid.*, 249.
69. *Ibid.*, 147.
70. *Ibid.*, 179.
71. Leadership at the very top of US decision making had kept the number of troops in Iraq too low to provide security for construction. Leadership did not remedy this overoptimistic strategy, one of the biggest mistakes in the waging of the Iraq war, until the troop surge in 2007.
72. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.
73. *Ibid.*, 331–32.
74. *Ibid.*, 309.
75. *Ibid.*, 133–34.
76. Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 255.
77. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 202.
78. *Ibid.*, 288.
79. *Ibid.*, 275.
80. Burton and Nagl, "Learning As We Go," 315.
81. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 201.
82. *Ibid.*, 302.
83. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.
84. Gen James L. Jones, USMC, Retired, Chairman, *The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq*, 6 September 2007, in Senate, *The Findings of the Iraqi Security Forces Independent Assessment Commission, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 6 September 2007, S. Hrg. 110-231, p. 111/45, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110shrg38601/pdf/CHRG-110shrg38601.pdf>.
85. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 201–2.
86. Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraq Marks Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Cities," *New York Times*, 30 June 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/01/world/middleeast/01iraq.html>.

87. "The Failed States Index 2009," *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace, accessed 6 March 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings; and "Corruption Perceptions Index 2009," Transparency International, accessed 6 March 2012, http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table.

88. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.

89. *Testimony of Stuart W. Bowen Jr., Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, before the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan on "An Urgent Need: Coordinating Stabilization and Reconstruction in Contingency Operations,"* 22 February 2010, [1], http://www.wartimecontracting.gov/docs/hearing2010-02-22_testimony-BowenStuart.pdf.

90. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 304.

91. Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan," 380.

92. Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 249.

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