

‘What were the causes and consequences of Iraq’s descent into violence after the initial invasion?’

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Introduction: the extent of the violence in Iraq.

The violence that has engulfed Iraq since 2003 consists of three overlapping conflicts. The first is the fighting caused by the invasion itself and the continued presence of US troops in the country. The second, the insurgency that erupted in the summer of 2003, where numerous disparate and localised groups sought to drive US forces from Iraq. The third, the civil war that engulfed Iraq in 2005 and raged until 2007. In the case of all three conflicts the actions of the US-led coalition either directly caused the rising violence or policy decisions they imposed contributed to its escalation.

Before assessing the causes and consequences of the violent aftermath of regime change it is important to assess the extent of civilian casualties across Iraq. Given the ferocity of the conflict, the data on casualties is understandably variable and open to dispute. One of the most widely accepted medical surveys of Iraqi casualties was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in January 2008. It estimated that between January 2002 and June 2006, 151,000 people were killed in violent deaths.¹ The non-governmental organisation Iraq Body Count has collected documentary evidence from the media which suggests figures of between 93,795 and 102,330 civilian deaths.²

A clear trend in civilian casualty figures is also detectable (see figure 1), beyond several specific spikes, the number of violent civilian deaths steadily increased from May 2003 until February 2006. By the time of the Iraqi elections of 2005, the conflict undoubtedly met the standard and widely accepted academic definition of civil war, which places the casualty threshold at 1,000 battlefield deaths per year in a “primarily internal” conflict, “pitting central government forces against an insurgent force capable of effective resistance”.³ However, the rate of violent civilian deaths steeply increased after 22 February, 2006 when the al-Askariyya Mosque in the northern Iraqi city of Samara, a site revered in Shia Islam, was destroyed in an incident calculated to accelerate the sectarian murder rate. The United Nations in Baghdad estimated that 34,452 civilians were killed in 2006.⁴ If there were any doubts that these figures amounted to a civil war, the nature of the violence and the associated population transfers should have put pay to that. After the al-Askariyya bombing, estimates based on anecdotal evidence placed the number of Sunnis murdered in extra-judicial killings in Baghdad at 1,000 per month with 365,000 Iraqis forced from their homes.⁵ Violent deaths peaked in January 2007 when 3500 people were murdered.⁶ Since February 2007 and the start of the Bush Administration’s new Iraq policy, ‘the surge’, civilian deaths dramatically dropped to between 200 and 300 civilians a month.⁷

Debating the causes of violence in Iraq.

Analytical disagreements surrounding the causes of violence in Iraq have much greater significance than the academic debates they may originally have sprung from. The conscious and subconscious / overt and covert explanations of Iraq’s descent into violence shaped the policies pursued by US and Iraqi governments as they attempted to stabilise the country. The vast majority of the popular debate and policy discussion surrounding the Iraq conflict were dominated by two separate arguments. One blames the ethnic and religious divisions in the country which pre-date the invasion while the other cites the continued presence of US troops in the aftermath of the invasion.

The dominant approach used to explain Iraq's descent into civil war and used to draft policy proposals to end violence, imposes a primordial template onto the political and societal complexities of the situation. This argument starts with an *a priori* assertion of a society deeply divided by ethnic and sectarian tensions. The retired US diplomats and policy pundits, Leslie Gelb and Peter Galbraith, have become the chief promoters of this approach. For them Iraq has "three distinct and sectarian communities," Sunni, Shi'a and Kurd.⁸ These communities, it is claimed, are largely geographically homogenous and mutually hostile. They have been locked in an artificial, Sunni-dominated state for 85 years. This analysis leads its promoters to view the post-Saddam civil war as an unavoidable tragedy. In this approach, Iraqi politics has always been animated by deeply held communal antipathies; the civil war is simply a by-product of this.

This view was also adopted by several political parties who returned to Baghdad from exile after the invasion of 2003 and the two dominant parties in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). They have consistently argued that Iraq was irrevocably divided between sectarian and religious groupings, mobilised by deep communal antipathies. For the KDP and PUK this position had been nurtured by their aspirations for greater autonomy, if not outright independence and the horrific repression the Kurdish communities of northern Iraq suffered at the hands of the Ba'athist government. For the other non-Kurdish party advocating this policy, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), the primordial view of Iraq had the advantage of dividing the Iraqi polity in a way that maximised the returning exiles' influence and their vote in the elections of 2005.⁹

From this perspective, there can only be one policy option: the situation will be stabilized by dividing the country into three small, ethnically purer and more manageable units. There is a possibility that this could be done through a form of drastic decentralization as proposed in 2006 by Joseph R. Biden and Leslie Gelb. But the primordialization of Iraq has led Gelb and others to argue consistently for its complete division into separate states.¹⁰ Biden, now American vice president, has continued to advocate a federal, de-centered approach as US troops draw down and American influence in Iraq diminishes.¹¹

From a factual, as well as a policy viewpoint, the primordial approach, although until recently influential, is far from satisfactory. Those studying the social and political evolution of Iraq over the broad sweep of its modern history have long characterized the primordial approach as a static caricature that does great damage to a complex, historically grounded, reality.¹² In a series of nation-wide polls carried out from 2004 to 2009, between 64 and 70 percent of those questioned consistently backed "one unified Iraq with a central government in Baghdad" as their preferred form of government.¹³ This widespread commitment to a strong state likewise played a central role in the recent provincial election of January 2009. ISCI ran a campaign based heavily on religious symbolism and its pledge to move towards greater decentralised federalism. This approach badly misjudged the mood of the country. In Baghdad, ISCI took just 5.4% of the vote, compared to 39% in 2005. In the Shia religious heartlands of Najaf and Karbala its share was 14.8% and 6.4% respectively, down from 45% / 35% in 2005.¹⁴

The second popular approach to explaining violence in Iraq is to place the blame on the continuing presence of American troops. For Jonathan Steele the violent resistance to the occupation was inevitable as soon as the US refused to put a strict time limit on their presence in the country. "This was exacerbated by the way US forces operated. They created resistance by their own excesses."¹⁵ The policy proscriptions emerging from such an analysis are obvious. As US troops and their allies are the main cause of the violence their speedy removal will reduce if not end the conflict. This argument was advocated as policy by the then British Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt, when he stated in October 2006, British forces "should get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems".¹⁶

The problem surrounding this apparently simple cause and effect is at what stage in the conflict would a US withdrawal have helped stem the rising tide of violence? Jonathan Steele argues that it should have happened as soon as possible after regime change. Indeed it can be argued that those involved in the growing insurgency were willing to negotiate with the US to speed the withdrawal of US troops right up until the end of George W. Bush's first term. However, as the nature of the violent conflict in Iraq changed from an insurgency into civil war, attempts at reducing UK and US troops number exacerbated the death toll.

Following General Dannatt's comments, British forces left their last base in Basra city in September 2007. It appears that part of the negotiations to secure a peaceful withdrawal from Basra involved giving the militias assurances that British forces would stay out of the city once they consolidated their forces at the air base.¹⁷ After the British withdrawal in September 2007 until April 2008, Basra's population could expect little or no law and order from the local police force or justice system. Instead, their lives were dominated by militias and criminal gangs fighting amongst themselves for control of the city and the revenues from the lucrative oil smuggling in the nearby port of Umm Qasr.¹⁸

George W. Bush's own effort to reduce the role and number of US troops was announced in June 2005 with the president's oft repeated mantra, "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down".¹⁹ This 'indigenisation' was managed by the US general, George W. Casey. The transition process aimed to hand over military responsibility to the Iraqi security forces as quickly as possible. Throughout 2006, Casey's policy doggedly focused on reducing the number of US troops in the country.²⁰ Those left were redeployed into large fortified bases safely stationed away from urban areas. Under Casey's plan, the dangers of an increased security vacuum would be avoided by the rapid training of the Iraqi army.²¹ However, this policy was a major contributing factor to Iraq's slide into civil war. In the aftermath of Bush's speech, Iraqi civilian fatalities steadily increased, reaching new peaks in 2006. This coincided with General Casey's plans for reducing or redeploying the US military (see figure 1). The Iraqi forces meant to fill the security vacuum were simply not ready to fulfil their role. What became known as 'Casification', the American abdication of responsibility for security whatever the cost, exacerbated an already deteriorating situation in Baghdad, across southern and central Iraq and on the fringes of the northern provinces handed to the new Iraqi military.

This dynamic, however, was not repeated in 2009, violence has not dramatically increased as US troops withdrew from urban areas under the terms of the Status of

Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a Strategic Framework Agreement signed between the Iraqi government and the US administration just before President Bush left office. There are four possible explanations for this. Firstly, the Iraqi security services have greatly expanded their capacity in the intervening years, 2006 to 2009.²² The second explanation would focus on the 'surge', from February 2007 until the middle of September 2008. This would examine the effects of increased US forces and their Iraqi counterparts and their ability impose order on Baghdad and the surrounding area.²³ A more negative account would focus on the nature and extent of population transfers in Baghdad, 2006-2007, arguing that sectarian motivated death squads succeeded in segregating the city, which reduced the violence.²⁴

The role of state collapse in Iraq's cycle of violence.

Against this empirical background an analytical explanation of violence in Iraq from 2003 until 2007 would focus on the drastic reduction in state capacity from April 2003 onwards. The collapse in Iraq's institutional capacity was the direct result of the policies and actions taken by US and UK occupation authorities, with the rising tide of violence resulting from coalition forces' inability to control the country.

The entrance of US troops into Baghdad in the first weeks of April 2003 destroyed the Iraqi state. Faced with the widespread lawlessness that is common after violent regime change, the United States did not have the troop numbers needed to control the situation. After three weeks of violence and looting the state's administrative capacity was destroyed. Seventeen of Baghdad's 23 ministry buildings were completely gutted.²⁵ Following the destruction of government infrastructure across the country, de-Ba'athification purged the civil service of its top layer of management, making between 20,000 and 120,000 people unemployed, removing its institutional memory.²⁶ In another act of amazing folly and destructive intent, the US authorities added to lawlessness by disbanding the Iraqi army and security services. The compulsory redundancy of 400,000 trained and armed men removed any indigenous capacity to impose order and created a large pool of resentment across southern and central Iraq.

It is the collapse of the state and resultant security vacuum that drove Iraq into civil war. This sudden security vacuum created, or at least empowered, three distinct sets of groups deploying violence for their own ends. The first were the 'industrial-strength' criminal gangs that terrorized what was left of Iraq's middle class. The high levels of criminal activity indicate that violence was opportunistic springing directly from state weakness, not the antipathy of competing groups within Iraqi society. Crime was instrumentally driven, primarily non-communal and a key factor delegitimising the new Iraqi ruling elite.

The second type of organisation comprises the myriad groups making up the Iraqi insurgency. The insurgency was born in a reactive and highly localised fashion, as the US military's inability to control Iraq became apparent.²⁷ This saw the creation of a number of small fighting groups built around personal ties of trust, cemented by family, locality or friendship.²⁸ Since 2005 the insurgency consolidated around four or five main groups: the Islamic Army in Iraq, the Partisans of the Sunna Army, the Mujahadeen's Army, Muhammad's Army and Islamic Resistance Movement in Iraq.²⁹ As the names suggest, political violence was increasingly justified in religious terms. The

main insurgent groups found ideological coherence by fusing a powerful appeal to Iraqi nationalism with an austere and extreme Salafism.³⁰

The numbers of and role played by Arabs from neighbouring countries is estimated by the US military at approximately 5–10% of the total.³¹ These foreign fighters played a disproportionately large role in the insurgency's ideological coherence. The group al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia has driven the rising influence of Salafist doctrine and claimed responsibility or been blamed for the majority of the violence that has increased sectarian tensions in the country. This dynamic reached its peak with bombing of the al-Askariyya Mosque. Although the city of Samarra had long been dominated by the insurgency, the destruction of the mosque, one of Shia Islam's most important shrines, was an act calculated to outrage Shia opinion.

The violence that erupted following the Samarra bombing saw the insurgency combine with a third type of organisation to drive violence forward. The plethora of independent militias with an estimated 60,000–102,000 fighters.³² They overtly organised and legitimised themselves by reference to sectarian ideology. But their existence was testament to the inability of the US occupation and later the Iraqi government to guarantee the personal safety of Iraqis on the basis of equal citizenship, not sectarian identity.

The militias themselves can be divided into three broad groups, depending on their organisational coherence and relationship to national politics. The first and most disciplined consists of the Kurdish militias of the KDP and the PUK. The second includes those created in exile and brought back to Iraq in the wake of Saddam's fall. The most powerful of these is the Badr Brigade, the military arm of ISCI, estimated at 15,000 fighters. The Badr Brigade's colonisation of large swathes of the security forces, notably the police and paramilitary units associated with the Ministry of Interior, did much to de-legitimise the already limited power of the state-controlled forces of law and order. The Ministry's Wolf Brigade commandos were repeatedly accused of acting as a death squad, frequently resorting to extra-judicial execution and torture.³³ Complaints reached their peak in November 2005, when US forces raided a Ministry of Interior detention facility and found 170 detainees "who had been held in appalling conditions".³⁴

The third group comprises militias created in Iraq since regime change. They vary in size, organisation and discipline, from a few thugs with guns controlling a street or a neighbourhood to militias capable of running whole towns. The largest and most coherent is the 50,000-strong Jaish al-Mahdi, set up by Moqtada al-Sadr. The core of the Mahdi Army was organised around the offices of al-Sadr's religious charity, the Martyr al-Sadr. Each office was run by a cleric appointed by Sadr's headquarters in Najaf, with full-time fighters paid as much as \$300 a week.³⁵ However, the speed with which the militia was built after regime change and the two prolonged conflicts with the US military took a toll on its organisational coherence. Mahdi Army commanders became financially independent of Najaf through hostage-taking, ransom and the smuggling of antiquities and petroleum. Al-Sadr repeatedly tried to instil discipline but as one of his own commanders admitted, "even when Sadr fires the brigade commanders, their soldiers follow them and not Sadr. Now Sadr fires commanders every month, so their fighters will not become too loyal to them".³⁶ In spite of al-

Sadr's repeated calls for calm, the Mahdi Army was blamed for the majority of violence in and around Baghdad following the al-Askariyya bombing.³⁷

Once a state has failed, the population has to seek new, local ways to survive, to gain some degree of day-to-day predictability. This quest has haunted the majority of Iraq's population since regime change. The quality of an individual Iraqi's life depended at least until 2008, on the discipline, organisational coherence and central control of the militias that dominated their streets, neighbourhoods and towns.

Conclusions.

The two main organisations that drove Iraq into a cycle of violence through 2005 and 2006, were the Jaish al Mahdi and the diffuse alliance of radical takfirist or Jihadi groups intent on fermenting sectarian conflict that can be loosely labelled Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia. The violence that dominated Baghdad in 2006, saw Al Qaeda targeting the Shia community with mass casualty truck and car bombs, whilst the Jaish al Mahdi retaliated by attacking Sunni communities, murdering male adults and driving the Sunni residents of mixed Baghdad neighbourhoods from the city.

A significant section of the troops sent to Iraq under the surge focused on attacking the ability of Jaish al Mahdi and Al Qaida to deploy sectarian violence. US forces claimed short term success for this policy in November 2007, when Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, the commander of US forces in Baghdad, claimed "There is no part of Baghdad in which al-Qaeda has a stronghold any more".³⁸ Likewise, during 2007-2008 there was a significant reduction in the organisational capacity of Jaish al Mahdi in Baghdad and across the south of Iraq, when leaders of what the US identified as particularly violent 'Special Groups' were targeted.³⁹

Against this background and to prevent Iraq descending into another civil war the Iraqi government must rapidly increase its intelligence capacity to better target Al Qaeda and to stop the resurgence of Jaish al Mahdi as US forces are removed from the streets and by 2011 out of the country. In addition to security, the Iraqi government needs to consolidate the progress that has been made on improving the delivery of essential services to the whole population. There has been progress towards this end. The most egregious sectarian actors in Iraq's security services and their counter-parts in the civilian ministries have been removed or at least discouraged from acting in such an overt fashion. Likewise, since late 2007, government capacity has increased,

"Although electricity supply for many Iraqis is still intermittent and unpredictable, the gap between demand and supply has narrowed." "Electrical generation for March 2009 was 25% higher than production during the same period last year."⁴⁰

Improvement in water treatment lags behind electricity but that too has shown slow but incremental improvements. In February 2008, 8% of the population had access to sanitation, a year later that figure was 20%.⁴¹ Overall the national rate of unemployment was estimated to have decreased to 12.5% in the fourth quarter of 2008 from 17.6% in 2007.⁴²

To some extent the capacity of the Iraqi state to deliver services to the whole of its population is slowly increasing. This in turn is shrinking the potential recruiting base

for the non-state purveyors of violence. There is clearly much much more to be done, and these improvements could be easily overturned, however it can be tentatively argued that the trend in both security and government service delivery is heading in the right direction.

Figure 1: Estimated number of Iraqi civilian fatalities by month, May 2003 to the September 2009.

From Michael E. O'Hanlon and Jason H. Campbell, *Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*,
<http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index.pdf>

Endnotes and reference.

¹ See Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, 'Violence-Related Mortality in Iraq from 2002 to 2006', *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 358, No. 5, (31 January, 2008), pp. 484-493,
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/NEJMsa0707782>

² See <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>. I thank John Sloboda of Iraq Body Count for his advice on casualty figures.

³ Errol A. Henderson and J. David Singer, 'Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (May, 2000), p. 284.

⁴ See Damien Cave and John O'Neil, 'UN puts '06 Iraq Toll of Civilians at 34,000', *International Herald Tribune*, 17 January, 2007, and *Associated Press*, 'Iraq Sets Toll of Civilians at 12,000 for 2006', *New York Times*, 3 January, 2007.

⁵ Based on interviews and Fareed Zakaria, 'Rethinking the Way Forward', *Newsweek*, 6 November, 2006, p. 26.

⁶ See O'Hanlon and Campbell, *Iraq Index*, p. 5.

⁷ See *Iraq Index*, p. 5.

⁸ For a short account of this argument see Leslie H. Gelb, 'Divide Iraq into Three States', *International Herald Tribune*, 26 November, 2004. Peter W. Galbraith develops it at greater length in 'How To Get Out of Iraq', *New York Review of Books*, 13 May, 2004 and *The End of Iraq; How American Incompetence Created a War without End*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). Both Gelb and Galbraith have professional experience in the Balkans which may have influenced their views. Other possible reasons for Galbraith's approach have recently emerged. See Farah Stockman, 'Former diplomat denies oil dealings influenced views', *Boston Globe*, 15 October, 2009,

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/10/15/former_diplomat_denies_iraqi_oil_dealings_influenced_views/.

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¹⁰ See Joseph Biden and Leslie Gelb, 'Unity Through Autonomy in Iraq,' *New York Times*, 1 May, 2006, and Gelb, 'Divide Iraq into Three States'.

¹¹ See Reidar Visser, 'Biden, US Policy in Iraq and the Concept of Muhasasa', 6 July, 2009, www.historiae.org and Reidar Visser, 'The Second Biden Mission to Iraq', 17 September, 2009, <http://gulfanalysis.wordpress.com/2009/09/17/the-second-biden-mission-to-iraq/>

¹² See for example, Reidar Visser, 'Centralism and Unitary State Logic in Iraq from Midhat Pasha to Jawad al-Maliki: A Continuous Trend?', 22 April, 2006, <http://historiae.org>, and Toby Dodge, *Iraq's Future: The Aftermath of Regime Change*, Adelphi Paper 372 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies and Routledge, 2005), especially chapter three.

¹³ See Toby Dodge, 'State collapse and the rise of identity politics', in Markus E. Bouillon, David M. Malone and Ben Rowsell (eds.), *Preventing Another Generation of Conflict*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), pp. 23-39.

¹⁴ For Iraq's provincial elections results see, the Iraqi High Electoral Council, http://www.ihec.iq/content/file/Election_results/IHEC_Preliminary%20Results_Governorate%20Council%20Elections_2009_EN.pdf.

¹⁵ Jonathan Steele, *Defeated. Why they Lost Iraq*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), p. 252.

¹⁶ See Sarah Sands, 'A very honest General', *The Daily Mail*, 12 October, 2006. For a powerful critique of Dannatt's comments see James Hanning, 'Our troops know Iraq, let's listen to them', *Independent on Sunday*, 21 December, 2008.

¹⁷ See James Hanning, 'Deal with Shia prisoner left Basra at mercy of gangs, colonel admits', *Independent on Sunday*, 3 August 2008, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/deal-with-shia-prisoner-left-basra-at-mercy-of-gangs-colonel-admits-883756.html>

¹⁸ Sam Dagher, 'As British Leave Basra, Militias Dig in', *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 August, 2007, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0828/p01s03-wome.html?page=1>, Karen DeYoung and Thomas E. Ricks, 'As British Leave, Basra Deteriorates', *The Washington Post*, 7 August, 2007 and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, '“Welcome to Tehran” - how Iran took control of Basra', *The Guardian*, 19 May, 2007.

¹⁹ See 'President Addresses Nation, Discusses Iraq, War on Terror', 28 June, 2005, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050628-7.html>.

²⁰ John Koopman, 'Putting an Iraqi face on the fight. US goal: turn battlefield over to Iraqis by year's end', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 May, 2006.

²¹ See Toby Dodge, 'Iraq and the next American President', *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 5, (October-November 2008), pp. 37-60.

²² *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2009, Report to Congress in accordance with the Department of Defense Supplemental Appropriations Act 2008 (Section 9204, Public Law 110-252) p. 5-6. On continuing problems with Iraq's security forces see International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance 2010*, (London: Routledge, forthcoming, 2009).

²³ See Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How this Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2008) and Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble, General Petraeus and the Untold Story of the American Surge in Iraq, 2006-2008*, (London: Allen Lane, 2009).

²⁴ John Agnew, Thomas W Gillespie, Jorge Gonzalez, 'Baghdad nights: evaluating the US military "surge" using nighttime light signatures', *Environment and Planning*, No. A., Vol. 40, (2008), pp. 2285-2295.

²⁵ See David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Post-War Reconstruction Fiasco* (Boulder: Westview, 2005), p. 135.

²⁶ Phillips estimates it made 120,000 unemployed out of a total party membership of 2 million. Paul Bremer cites intelligence estimates that it effected 1% of the party membership, 20,000 people. George Packer estimates 'at least thirty-five thousand'. The large variation in estimates indicates the paucity of reliable intelligence on the ramifications of such an important policy decision. See Phillips, *Losing Iraq*, pp. 145-6, L. Paul Bremer III with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq. The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 40 and George Packer, *Assassins' Gate. America in Iraq*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), p. 191.

²⁷ See Dodge, *Iraq's Future*, pp. 11-19.

²⁸ See the interview given by General Muhammad Abdullah Shahwani, Iraq's intelligence chief, to *Asharq al Awsat*, 4 January, 2005, and Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, 'US Says Resistance in Iraq up to 20,000', *Guardian*, 23 October, 2004.

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- ²⁹ International Crisis Group, 'In their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency', *Middle East Report*, No. 50, (15 February, 2006), pp. 1–3.
- ³⁰ For this point see Roel Meijer, 'The Sunni Resistance and the "Political Process"', in Bouillon, Malone and Rowsell (eds), *Preventing Another Generation of Conflict*.
- ³¹ See Dexter Filkins 'Foreign Fighters Captured in Iraq come from 27, mostly Arab, Lands', *New York Times*, 21 October, 2005.
- ³² See Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, p. 274 and Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq*, (New York: Times Books, 2005), p. 222.
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- ³⁴ See Amnesty International, *Beyond Abu Ghraib: Detention and Torture in Iraq*, (March, 2006), p. 4.
- ³⁵ See Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, 'Tea and Kidnapping – Behind the Lines of a Civil War', *The Guardian*, 28 October, 2006.
- ³⁶ Quoted by Solomon Moore, 'Militias Seen as Spinning Out of Control', *Los Angeles Times*, 12 September, 2006. Also see Abdul-Ahad, 'Tea and Kidnapping' and Peter Beaumont, 'Inside Baghdad: Last Battle of a Stricken City', *Observer*, 17 September, 2006.
- ³⁷ See Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada al Sadr and the Fall of Iraq*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), p. 249.
- ³⁸ Jim Muir, 'Is Iraq getting better?', 11 November, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7089168.stm
- ³⁹ See press briefing with Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner, spokesman, Multi-National Force - Iraq, (2 July, 2007). http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12641&Itemid=1
- ⁴⁰ Department of Defence, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, p.18.
- ⁴¹ See *Iraq Index*, p. 39.
- ⁴² *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, p. 12.