

# **Global Imperialism or Regional Development?**

*The U.S. Role in Post-War Iraq*

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"The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution."

-President George W. Bush  
November 6, 2003

Biblical experts suggest that Iraq, with its fertile river plain, was the place where mankind may have gained a first foothold in civilization. Modern day Iraq is poised to carry on that tradition in the form of another kind of foothold- liberalism.

Many call the war in Iraq part of a greater "War of Ideas"<sup>1</sup> in which a campaign resembling the ideological conflict the Cold War will again be waged against the forces in the world that are intolerant of moderation and liberalism. According to the theory, the greater "Arab World" has fallen into a slump. Whereas they were at one time a leading force to be reckoned with, they have failed in the last couple of centuries to keep up with the other forces in the world moving all around them. Middle East historian Bernard Lewis offers up this sentiment of inferiority and resentment among the Arab people as an explanation for the allowed existence of the religious fundamentalists and harsh dictators, each of whom call for a new phase in Arab history. However, their recipes for resurrection have too often called for *Western* destruction. It has taken a very large image- an attack on a key symbol of the West- for this threat to be clearly identified by the Western world as a whole. Although this offensive was not waged by the Arab world as any kind of whole, but rather a sect of extremist Muslims mostly hailing from Saudi Arabia and operating out of Afghanistan, the Arab world is the entity that will bear the defensive. This begs the question of a legitimate enemy: who are we fighting and why? When it was Al-Qaeda, the enemy was visible and valid. When it is translated into a war against countries that support what we believe to be the precondition for terrorism, it requires an intense moral debate.

The actors in the debate include, of course, the United States government, the leader of the increasingly free world we find ourselves in today, who claims to be offering a chance for Arab resurrection; the United Nations and its subparts; NGO's along with all the empowered people of the world community. A general consensus exists among these bodies concerning certain issues of development and security, and models have been offered and sanctioned through the various arms of the UN, with premises that generally agree. But there is a missing component, and that is a body of Arab leaders with a united stance.

The problem is not that the majority of these people we identify as a part of the greater "Arab World" do not want to jump on an endorsed highway to modernization that we are offering to build. Rather, the prevailing forces in their countries, namely their religious and state leaders, are trying to say that progress is not worth it if it comes served by the West. This is the greater war against terrorism, according to the Bush Administration. Usurp these leaders who have annexed the Arab tradition, who say that Islam is inherently incompatible with moderation and liberalism, and either change their minds or remove them. Not just for the safety of the West, but possibly as part of a new

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically Thomas Friedman, NY Times foreign correspondent

global campaign for the spread of liberalism which is to be a new insurance for peace and stability in the world.

First, are these claims true? Are we committed to the task of un hypocritically and evenly applying pressure to these countries to moderate and modernize? Second, if true, is this a justified action and a just response to an attack on our soil? Third, will this work? These questions bring us back to the premises of the “war on terror.” While Al Qaeda and Saddam are wholly different things, and different threats, do they emerge from the same “pathology” of economic stagnation, fear of cultural decline, and widespread repression? This is something that has been called not just a poverty of the stomach, but also a poverty of dignity within the Middle East.

My argument is that fostering development of the underdeveloped nations is an understood function of many of our most important global institutions. Bodies like the United Nations and all of its sub-parts, including the Bretton-Woods institutions, along with human rights groups such as Amnesty International and the Center for Global Development are our global voice, which preach the tune of advancement for the underdeveloped, as well as furthering the advancement of the developed nations. Across the Global East, West, North and South citizens are either creating or echoing the call for development. The significance of this is that the question becomes not one of principle, but of method. Liberalism very well may be acknowledged as a timeless and universal virtue, but it is one that rises above the sovereignty of nations? That is, while we may accept these values as essential to human rights, human liberty, functioning, ect., we are still not sure if they are to be promoted or merely defended. If they are to be promoted, are they superior to the value of national sovereignty?

The pre-eminent war waged by the United States of America seemingly brought Iraq to the forefront in this mission. It is possible that a new mentality was present in Operation Iraqi Freedom, one that the name of the operation itself implies. “Iraqi Freedom.” Either a cute and cunning propagandistic catch phrase, or a foreshadow of what would be revealed once Hussein was uprooted. In this case, more than simply uprooting the impediment to development, the goal seems to have been full promotion of a principle- that of liberal development. The answer will prove itself throughout the post-war rebuilding process, and it is sure to be proven further down the road of history.

It is a hard case to argue that the sole cause of the war waged with Iraq was the hope of the Bush administration that the removal of Hussein would bring a greater degree of freedom and development to the people of Iraq. More realistically, it was not the *sole* cause. Many other factors were in play including an elusive security threat. But, the case can be made that this philosophy was a major *determinate* factor, and I hope to argue the case.

With a stripped Iraq, the task of developing, essentially from the ground up, the entire structure of the nation is now in the hands of not only those governments who actually caused the destruction, but also the whole European and Arab worlds, as well as other powerful countries- who feel various pressures to contribute capital, or man-power, to the project. Non-governmental agencies also have a role to play in giving muscle to the project through their involvement in both governmental and private contracting. Overseeing the whole project is the United States: the head of the Coalitional Authority, Iraq’s post-Saddam Hussein interim government, the initiators of Operation Iraqi-Freedom. But what is development, and what will judge its success?

Another important question is, why? What motivation could there be in setting, or spreading standards of freedom implied in the mission? What was the incentive for the United States to spend such a high percentage of its budget on the project, as well as subject itself to intense criticism, both at home and abroad? It is necessary to confront critics such as Tariq Ali, who asks:

“Was it simply Northern arrogance with regard to the South; or a desire to appease the U.S.; or a belief that Iraqis are a different breed of people who might be happier under occupation, just like the Palestinians? Perhaps it was a mixture of all three.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps, there is a fourth option. The mantra that has continuously been on the tongues of U.S. leadership needs to, *at least*, be considered as valid: that the mission in Iraq is for the ultimate purpose of instituting a system that will realize the enormous potential of the Iraqi people, and in effect, stop terrorism. Many remain skeptical. Political analyst Noam Chomsky, for example, seems to agree with Ali on the first two counts- Northern arrogance and the will to make the U.S. comfortable- when he discusses how the spread of liberalism is a guise for the spread of Western, specifically American, dominance over the third world; this propagandistic method, using liberal values as a cover for exploitation, has been used for over a decade in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> But a further argument for the consideration of the U.S.’s case is that developing liberalism abroad is not just the mantra of the U.S. authorities and it is not just limited to the West; it is the cry of authorities in every international policy-making body. The post-war mission in Iraq, it’s goals and it’s premises, laid out by U.S. policy makers are in line with the aspirations stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals, each branch of the United Nations- including UNICEF and UNDP, the mission statements of the World Bank and IMF, and groups such as Amnesty International. But again, the argument hits a block, when the legitimacy of the UN is questioned. Is the UN a functioning government body outside of what the U.S., and occasionally other Western powers, dictates? This is one discussion taking place all across the world. What remains to be seen is if this plan will further the objective of all these bodies.

Like many others who have added their two cents to this debate, I also have never been to Iraq. To me it seems a far-off place full of people more or less like me, only just a bit different. What that difference is remains a distant concept, and I would be afraid, anyway, to assume I know the exact nature of it. But religion, culture, history, tradition, upbringing; these could all be factors separating my life from that of my Iraqi contemporary. Because of these differences, it is arrogant to assume what they want. But on what level are we all human, and what does that entail? What would ‘promotion of the Iraqi people’ look like? Is there a way to assess what ‘promotion’ of Iraqis would look like from a Western perspective?

I hope to establish a starting point for the nature of development by pinpointing it as human rights and liberalism and describing its use as a standard throughout the world; then endeavor to establish whether the action in Iraq constitutes development, in this modern sense. Then I hope to see if the action in Iraq can be described as the implementation of development, of the liberal brand, in a new and revolutionary way. I

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<sup>2</sup> Ali, Tariq. Bush in Babylon. New York: Verso, 2003. pg 2

<sup>3</sup> Chomsky, Noam. Chronicles of Dissent. Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1992. pg 251-263

hope to give a reason to idealistically wish the liberal foothold to flourish into a new starting point for the region.

**Human Rights and Liberalism as premises for development:**

*“The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity. People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society—and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”*  
George W. Bush,  
September 17, 2002

Bush explicitly declares that these values are to be defended, but comes short of saying that they should be actively advanced. He does, however, put forth liberal notions as true for everyone, and others follow suit. Paul Berman, in his book “*Terror and Liberalism*” claims that there is a war between the two, one that is, most importantly, an ideological conflict but has also translated into physical aggression. The terrorist ideology is better deemed “totalitarian” in nature according to Berman, as opposed to the “plurality” of the liberal ideal. Not too long ago, the plurality notion was deemed the eternal victor, after the Cold War, according to analysts like Fukuyama and many others. And what was the secret to this all-powerful, all-conquering principle? Berman rhetorically asks.

“It was the recognition that all of life is not governed by a single, all-knowing and all-powerful authority- by a divine force. It was the tolerant idea that every sphere of human activity- science, technology, politics, religion, and private life- should operate independently of the others, without trying to yoke everything together under a single guiding hand. It was a belief in the many, instead of the one. It was an insistence on freedom of thought and freedom of action- not on absolute freedom, but on something truer, stronger, and more reliable than absolute freedom, which is relative freedom: a freedom that recognizes the existence of other freedoms, too. Freedom consciously arrived at. Freedom that is chosen, and to just bestowed by God on high. This idea was, in the broadest sense, liberalism- liberalism not as a rigid doctrine but as a state of mind, a way of thinking about life and reality.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Berman, Paul *Terror and Liberalism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003. pg 38

Iraq has certainly had totalitarian characteristics. Hussein was an all-powerful authority and the spheres of activity were generally limited to the states mandate. But how far did President Bush really go in discussing liberal promotion as a basis for policy, Berman wonders? Not far. But, he theorizes, “What would some of those sinister coalition partners have thought, if the American president had gone on speaking about Hitler and waving an anti-fascist flag?” He answers, knowing quite well that “The coalition partners would have shifted in their seats, fingering their daggers.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, hoping not to make anyone uncomfortable, Bush refrained from making *too many* overt statements of the sort, as not to imply that this would be the overarching mission for any future U.S. policy. Rather, Washington has tried to keep the discussion focused on Iraq, and its specific deficiencies and threats to us. Berman doesn’t feel the Bush Administration has started an imperialist venture to spread liberalism to the four corners of the earth. Regardless, President Bush’s grand, almost religious sounding statements of the universality of freedom still make some quite nervous. But I do not think that Berman was entirely accurate about these “sinister coalition partners.” The Whitehouse webpage dedicated to coalition information states that “it is no accident that many member nations of the Coalition recently escaped from the boot of a tyrant or have felt the scourge of terrorism.” Indeed, reading the statements of the countries involved seems to emphasize how much this is a war of ideas. Slovakia, a former Communist nation undergoing many liberal reforms of its own, gave the rationalization for their decision to side with the U.S. by saying “In Iraq today one has to prevent further threats for mankind, to ensure more hope for peace and to terminate the death cult at the stage when it can still be stopped...”

Many may scrutinize President Bush’s grand, almost religious sounding, statements of the universality of freedom. To assume Western ideas can work for the benefit of all nations has always been to tread choppy waters. But his statements at least strike a chord with the whims of the rest of the world. Assuming the validity of a semi-democratic governing body, the United Nations measures of development have already been agreed upon at the global level- a doctrine of liberalism as the *single sustainable model of development*, including freedom, rule of law, democracy and free enterprise. This doctrine is embodied primarily in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), but in reality its ideological reach goes much further. The importance of the UDHR was reiterated at the Millennium Summit, where the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) established actual timelines for seeing these goals realized around the world. In fact, the year 2015 is supposed to mark a reduction in poverty and hunger by 50%. The correct models of development are supposed to be vital in reaching this goal. These declarations represent a set of standards which national leaders have agreed upon - in writing- as the minimal entitlement to which every human has a right. No one should be deprived of these basics. The stated goal of the standards is “to instate better conditions of life.”<sup>6</sup> The declaration constitutes an important first principle from which the strengths and weaknesses of global development trends can be assessed.

In this way, The UDHR is a landmark document in world history. It is, at its center, a document based on the rights of the individual. This, however, demonstrates the strong Western influence of the declaration, since the very concept of the individual hailed from the West. One can simply look at the champion of it, Eleanor Roosevelt, and

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<sup>5</sup> Berman, 10

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

it is easy to see the Western influence the document was subjected to. The wonderful thing about the document is not that it sets up some perfect utopia for the world to live under, but rather advocates a model for the best kind of human systems that are sustainable. Despite the Western influence, the document is looked at by much of the developed and developing world as the best chance for there to be sustained peace in the world.

However, while most nations are signatories, few can claim that they meet every principle set forth in the Declaration. Most likely, this is because the concepts in the UDHR are just that, concepts, and the implementation of them is a subject that retains much interest. As such, the Declaration is followed only on a case-by-case basis, because it usually remains up to the discretion of the sovereign nation state to govern as they please, with only a symbolic mandate to point them in the right direction. While no institution is specifically designated to enforce these principles, many make them a key factor in dealing with nation-states. The international development banks often use the presence of liberal institutions as criteria for loans, and in effect create policy in those nation-states who wish to receive outside assistance in development projects. But some argue that development banks are not designed to affect policy in this way.

UDHR provisions are also subject to limitation "for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society". Meaning, there is often a give and take when it comes to realizing human rights. There is a possibility, also, that it will not look the same everywhere. But this is where cultural relativism fits in; while there is an agreed upon *single model* as far as the basic functionings of a human- meaning, what is necessary for every human being to have in order to, in essence, be a human- different cultures and groups still have the discretion to formulate many other aspects of society. Some equate concepts of liberalism, including human rights, with modernization. A country modernizes when it puts these principles into practice. Westernization, on the other hand, goes into another realm of society, which, in fact, modernization does not have to touch. That is to say that, just because a country espouses these modern principles, does not mean that they will have to abandon their cultural identity and become, in a cultural sense, like the West.

Beyond the UDHR, the very essence of the United Nations reflects the liberal vision of building institutions and programs to increase prosperity – this happens through all of the hands of the international governing bodies, from the General Assembly of the UN to the international economic (Bretton-Woods) institutions.<sup>7</sup> The World Bank has been one of the key players in the rebuilding process so far. But they are careful to point out that " the World Bank is not a relief organization," and that their effectiveness is enhanced only by cooperation with others. The Bank stresses that it works closely with the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, WHO), the European Union, regional financial institutions, such as the Islamic Development Bank, and governments in all of their development projects, including Iraq. The Bank lists four priority areas, which they describe as critical for the welfare of the population

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<sup>7</sup> Mingst, Karan A. The United Nations in the Post-Cold War Era. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000. pg 121

and viability of the Iraqi economy: human development (health and education), power, water and economic management.<sup>8</sup>

Each agency listed by the World Bank is responsible for an aspect of development. The World Bank on its own does little to ensure growth in the nations to whom it loans money, but with monitoring by the governmental agencies, with the correct policies in place, the money could be secured in its purpose. However, to date there has been a limited role for these governmental agencies in acting as a check to the functions of lending agencies like the World Bank. This has caused the World Bank, often, to have to take policy-making into its own hands, a purpose it was never designed to have. Structural adjustment programs, for instance, were supposed to promote liberal development as espoused in the UDHR, “as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,” but often did not work that way because of various failures in the mechanisms used. In Iraq also, aid from the Bank will be dependant on the sustainability of the institutional structure Iraq ultimately adopts.

That it’s provisions are included in virtually every international group that exists, from the UN to the World Bank to Amnesty International adds further legitimacy to the use of this definition of development by the U.S. The fact that this has come to be regarded as one of the essential functions of any international institution is fundamental. Because of its widespread acceptance, I am willing to accept these assumptions as valid, and will therefore use this definition of human promotion as the basis of development in this discussion. But the *recognition* of development as a primary objective and the *concurrence* on a way of actually achieving it remain estranged. The rift between agreeing what needs to be done and then actually doing it is one of the most important discussions at both the international and global level. The situation in Iraq today has illuminated this dilemma.

All of this can create ambiguity, though, since there is not a perfect model out there for what *full* practice of “human rights” looks like. This is how one criticism against the U.S. and its mission is premised- the U.S. has not always practiced human rights to the fullest extent, so how can it point to Iraq and condemn its human rights delinquency? This demonstrates the need for United Nations participation in decisions regarding when and if a country’s deficiency warrants outside intervention, since the legitimacy of the UN as a global authority is perceived as, at least, more valid than the legitimacy of an individual nation, or other institutions such as development banks, in enforcing principles. But should the UN be the center of decision making on any intervention. Just War theorist Michael Walzer says that humanitarian intervention will be the new kind of war. But he questions whether an ultimate decision to intervene should be left up to a central authority, as absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely. Walzer comes short of saying this, but I feel that the nation with the most interest in intervention may be the most justified to intervene in the case of a humanitarian crises. However, when the authority initiating intervention on “humanitarian grounds” is not the UN but another absolute authority- an American hegemon- the same principle applies. Power should not be monopolized in any case.

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<sup>8</sup> Omar Razzaz, Lebanon Country Manager of the World Bank stated at ESCWA Post-War Meeting on Iraq. Beirut, 9 July 2003. <http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/press/escwa/2003/july/9.html>



Iraq clearly fit the requirements of humanitarian crisis, as many nations do. Hussein had been charged on human rights abuses by the UN- Security Council Resolution 688, a document approved by the council and ratified by the General Assembly; in effect, condemned by the whole world. The resolution deplored the repression of the Iraqi civilians, “the consequence of which threaten international peace and security.”<sup>9</sup> This resolution required Iraq to immediately end the repression and allow international humanitarian aid access to those in need. But the condemnation was not singly coming from the UN; Reports by groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch confirm that the level of human rights abuses in Iraq was horrendous. But although this humanitarian crisis was identified and condemned as the type that shocks the worlds conscious, years went by and nothing significant was done by the central authority of the UN. When progress against Hussein’s regime was made, it came through the diligence of the U.S. While the U.S. may have self-interested motives in intervention, beyond the general human rights issue, that self-interest was the factor that may have served as the kind of incentive that morals rarely provide.

But is this a serious goal or a façade? I am all too aware there are many people- in the U.S. and across the globe, and certainly here at Illinois State University- that picture George Bush as a scheming rich boy, brewed in militarism, and greedy to the core; ready to smash the populations of countries that just don’t matter, because they’re not playing ball, in order to bring up the commodity stock returns of his Yale cronies—I used to be one of them. For many academicians that mental picture would be evidence enough for concluding the administration is conquering Iraq for either the incentive of oil profit or for the erection someone like Donald “Rummy” Rumsfeld would get from asserting his dominance over poor people.

It is hard to tell if this image is a tangible one. Historical examples paint many pictures. The history of Western influence in the Middle East is ripe with economic and military assertiveness. Whether or not the assertiveness was warranted depends on the interpretation of the event. From U.S. involvement in irradiating Egypt of Nasser’s brand of “independent nationalism”, to reprioritizing the danger of Saddam when he appeared to threaten U.S.-UK oil colonialism by invading Kuwait, to dropping bombs over Baghdad on and off for 12 years, not to mention the U.S.’s stance in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These actions, along with many others which time restricts me from recalling, makes it seem like Western goals in the region have always been either short-sighted or domanistic, and human rights have always remained on the periphery of the action. The morality of past actions has been questioned time and again by our social scientists. With apparent arrogance and disregard for human life overwhelming these historical precedents, it becomes harder to automatically grant credibility to the U.S. when the administration claims its goals are to bring freedom and prosperity to the region. Even beyond the Middle East, the credibility of the U.S.’s so-called nation building efforts are called into question by the citation of cases of seemingly failed projects of the World Bank and other international development agencies in Central and South America. All too often there has seemed to be hypocrisy in the kinds of foreign policy that led to intervention in Latin America under the Regan Administration, when authoritarian regimes were given support and even implemented by the CIA. Currently, critics point to U.S. allegiance with Saudi Arabia, as well as the Pakistanis and Uzbeks-

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

each representing an antithesis to this notion of the supremacy of human rights and liberalism. A blatant hypocrisy if the U.S.'s support of human rights is to be taken seriously.

## **Development and Nation Building**

The rebuilding of Iraq has been equated to the situation following WWII in Europe, and the massive development that was required to assimilate the region back into the world community, and back in line with ideas of liberalism which fascism had attempted to debase. One needs to only look at Western Europe now and see the positive affects that the Marshall Plan had on their institutions and their societies as a whole. While the right to political legitimacy of Germany had to be suspended for a time, other basic rights were considered more supreme. Then there is post-Cold War Russia, in which many efforts have been made to bring about a slow transition to liberal institutionalism. While Russia is still suffering setbacks in their journey, progress has been made.

Amnesty International, for instance, claims that their primary mission is to uphold the sections of the UDHR that deal with the ultimate right to life. Relating this concept to nation building then, in this sense, it would be just to practice it, although it is against the will of the subjects, as long as it does more to preserve life than to end it.

Is the right to life the entitlement that should be extended, or is it greater political sovereignty, or something else- perhaps liberalism?

There are several commonly used ways to qualify positive development for a group of people. One definition of positive development for a group is the increase in material wealth, leading to an increase in living standards. A second definition is an increase in utility, or happiness and pleasure in general, across the group. A third is an increase in the freedoms, measured through the presence of choices a group has at their disposal. Each of these definitions has been promoted by one group or another, and with each, a conception of 'the good' is being assumed. While these are not exhaustive options, the full spectrum of definitions of 'the good' is too large to deal with here. Therefore, only these four possibilities- utility, freedom and material wealth will be treated in this discussion, although these in no way comprise all the possibilities for what might be 'good' for a group of people

Three schools of thought about economic development have shaped discussion in the UN and other international systems: Economic Liberalism, Mercantilism, and Marxism (dependency). Economic liberalism is a dependency on the markets, mercantilism, or statism subordinates all economic activities to the goal of state building and encourages self-sufficiency rather than dependence on other nations. Marxism's primary goal is more equitable distribution; it highlights the core-periphery (dependency) theory as the ultimate symbol of disparity, which needs to be resolved before development can commence.<sup>10</sup>

The end of the cold war (allegedly) marked the world's rejection of both mercantilism and Marxism, which could not be effectively separated from each other, and a subsequent acceptance of economic liberalism. "Countries from Communist China and

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<sup>10</sup> Mingst, 117

Vietnam to socialist Zimbabwe and Zambia and statist Brazil accepted the reality of markets and private enterprise as the primary engines for economic growth.”<sup>11</sup>

In the past few years there has been a resurgence of interest in developmental economics, what is often called a neoliberal field of study. This branch of economics is the science that addresses the causes of enormous gaps in income across the world, the unequal distribution of this income, and then tries to formulate systems that will alleviate it. Development theorist Martha Nussbaum claims the goal of development economics is to “support capabilities that make it possible for citizens to pursue their conceptions.”<sup>12</sup> She feels that true knowledge of the ends of this activity (development) is necessary when assessing it. One must make sure that the end result of development is a promotion of liberal values, which Nussbaum feels are the height of human functioning. She makes the claim that these kinds of views about human functioning have been present since Aristotle, reconciling modern liberal ideas, towards which social democracy aims, with Aristotle’s notion of promoting human activities to their best capabilities.

Aristotle knew that often the means for achieving an end are not ideal, but that “it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities.”<sup>13</sup> And whatever we deem to be the principle end, the best end, to a certain activity must be what we direct our action towards achieving. The understanding of this end, for each particular activity, will make us that much better and more likely to “hit upon what is right”<sup>14</sup> in term of the function of that activity.

The function of development economics according to Amryta Sen is to provide more freedom, which is both an end in itself and a means to other ends. So, if liberal economic systems promote the best kind of functioning possible, as compared to other systems, then Nussbaum, Sen and Aristotle would all agree that development should be centered on creating a liberal system of economics.

In Iraq, the new authority is doing what it can to achieve this. Many state owned enterprises have already been privatized and the country is well on its way to greater economic liberalization. But as discussed before, initial negative effects of these changes have made many both within and outside of Iraq nervous.

The U.S. government added to this wariness when it contracted out certain infrastructure development projects to U.S. based companies, such as the highly publicized Halliburton contract, awarded, without open auction to the company that maintains very close ties with Vice President Cheney.

Selling off Iraq’s wealth- especially to vested Western interests- does not sound like a smart plan for the Iraqi people. Politically, it is disastrous. But full understanding of each economic factor in Iraq explained through general economic principles, rather than political assumptions, will add maturity to any argument that can be made regarding the rebuilding, and how a new and liberalized economic system in Iraq will be much different that the previous system.

A generally accepted definition of economics is ‘the study of limited resources.’ As the population of the earth swells, this field will become increasingly more relevant as

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<sup>11</sup> Mingst, 121

<sup>12</sup> Nussbaum, Martha. “Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilites: A Response to Antony, Arneson, Charlesworth, and Mulgan.” *Ethics*. 111 (2000): 102-140. refer to pg 128

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1094a4

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle. *NE* 1094a25

resources must become allocated ever more efficiently. Also as modernization raises the standard of living across the globe, economics will address the ways in which resources will be used more effectively.

According to economic law, the most effective and efficient method of allocation is the system of prices. Prices in a free market economy, dependant on both supply and demand, are the invisible hand that guide resources to be deposited in a relatively equal manner.

“The ‘cost’ of anything is the value that it has in alternative uses,” according to Thomas Sowell in his book *Basic Economics*. He continues to state that “once we realize this we can then compare how economic systems which use prices to force people to share scarce resources among themselves differ in efficiency from economic systems which use kings, politicians or bureaucratic orders to say who can get how much of what.”<sup>15</sup>

Sowell used the Soviet Union as an example of how, without prices, the method of allocation is less effective: “The Soviet Union did not lack resources, but was in fact one of the most richly endowed countries in the world... it lacked an economic system that made efficient uses of resources,” which is why during the price fixing of the communist reign so many Soviet citizens went hungry (Sowell, 12).

Iraq is a country of limited resources. While it is blessed with both the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, it is still dry, hot land located in the center of the Middle East. Little wealth naturally exists beyond petrol-chemical reserves, Iraq’s one gem.

As a demonstration, imagine an Iraq where the oil is not used. Their one resource stays in the ground, no advanced technology has had to be implemented to extract the oil, and subsequently no commodity trading takes place, because there is no commodity exists other than oil. In our example, Iraq is, then, dependant on the scarce resources it can gather from the rest of its land. The Fertile Crescent, the land around the two rivers, will provide them with grain. Individuals could raise sheep or camels in oases around the country. Small scale trading with M.E. neighbors could take place if there was a surplus production of grain.

In fact, in our example, Iraq looks much like what it did 1,000 years ago, with nomadic tribes wandering around the land trying to provide sustenance for themselves. Except, something is different now. The Fertile Crescent, while fertile, could no longer sustain the population the way it could 1,000 years ago. The population of Iraq today is 24 million, no longer occupied by bands of nomads but rather hoards of city dwellers. If the agricultural sector were producing at the maximum production levels, only about 44% of rice ration requirements and 64% of wheat ration requirements would be met.<sup>16</sup> This is considering that the production can commence without the persistent draughts to which Iraq is prone. Meaning, there probably wouldn’t be enough food production within the countries borders alone to meet the nutritional requirements of the Iraqi population. Without food, and without a commodity to trade with others to get food, another option for Iraq would be to borrow money (capital). With that money, Iraq’s government could first feed its people, and then start building up infrastructure, then create some kind of industry that could compete in the global market, and eventually bring money into Iraq so that the loan could be paid back.

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<sup>15</sup> Sowell, Thomas. Basic Economics. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Pg 11

<sup>16</sup> white, 297

But without a commodity, what kind of production industry could be created? Iraqis could invest in the development of technology to sell, like Japan did after WWII- being in the same boat with no commodity other than their brains. But while an industry of technology development is plausible, it would require enormous initial investments, which would have to be begged from those countries that possess capital. The risk of the investment would be high and interest rates would be reflective of the risk.

Looking at reality in Iraq, there *is* a commodity- a bargaining tool for outside goods. Iraq has some of the largest oil reserves in the world. This commodity is the short-cut Iraq needs, and is lucky for having- there are many countries whose reality is the above scenario, lacking any element for trade.

However, diversity is a trait of any stable system, and in order to become stable, it will take more than Iraq pumping out oil.

### **Democracy in Iraq, and other institutions of greater utility:**

“Specifically, improvements in institutions lead to higher incomes, stronger growth, and lower volatility,”<sup>17</sup> at least, according to the IMF. But the acceptance of these claims is not limited to only development banks. The Iranian U.N. ambassador Javad Zarif, when speaking about the situation in Iraq and its relation to the condition of the entire region, placed institutional reform at the top of the agenda for both Iran and the greater Middle Eastern region. He concedes that government institutions in the region need to reform their methods of interacting with their people. Extremism in the form of Islamism stems from the lack of public institutions present in Muslim societies that serve as a forum for peaceful expression of dissent, according to Zarif.

Institutions have been defined along a wide spectrum ranging from the “rules of the game” for a society, or as the formal and informal constraints on political, economic, and social interactions. From this perspective, “good” institutions are viewed as establishing an incentive structure that reduces uncertainty and promotes efficiency— hence contributing to stronger economic performance. In some cases, institutional improvements have come about only after collapse of the previous regime—especially where this has been driven by a widespread desire for political and economic reform rather than, for example, the overthrow of one oppressive regime for another. In most cases it has been systematic and orderly restructurings, rather than drastic regime changes through war and violence.<sup>18</sup> In Iran today, popular sentiments opposing the status quo of theocracy are causing leaders to take a hard look at the Iranian system and see the need for more institutional reform. In Iran’s case, a war will most likely not be necessary; rather, change will come from popular support for democracy movements and the introspection of Iran’s leaders. Again, the U.S. has expressed the hope that the events in Iraq will add urgency to a political shift in Iran. The method of bringing change about has varied drastically over different countries. Countries that have experienced significant institutional change over recent decades- including China, Chile, and the central European economies- have done so using vastly different approaches.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf) pg 18

<sup>18</sup> [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf) pg 18

<sup>19</sup> [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2003/01/pdf/chapter3.pdf) pg 19

One debate regarding institutions and development is an old one: will the right institutions bring freedom or will freedom bring the right institutions? Sen sees freedom as both the primary end and principle means of development.<sup>20</sup> The game plan in Iraq seems to be taking the *means* side, as they take advice to implement institutions and principles of democracy first, and then expect the reality of true democracy later.<sup>21</sup> The creation of democratic institutions in a country that has been governed for decades by military rule is a complicated process. Yet Iraqis are not inherently incompatible with democracy or any other element of human rights. Indeed when the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad the included decrees of human rights were revolutionary. In 1981 the Islamic Council proclaimed the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, creating it with a foundation in the Quran and the Sunnah. "It is observed that the UDHR bears an uncanny resemblance to the Islamic human rights which probably entitles it to be called universal. Unlike the UDHR and the European Convention of Human Rights however, the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights has yet to be recognized as a binding instrument of Muslim countries."<sup>22</sup> Obviously the foundational principles for these institutions can be coaxed out of the Quran. But those extremists in the Muslim world who preach Islamism have annexed the Quran and purged it of what they deem "Western" ideas of liberalism.

Democracy is vital to the rebuilding process, because when questions of economic restructuring surface, ultimately the decisions must be made by the Iraqi population as a whole, rather than only those with an authoritative grip on the Arab and Islamic traditions. It has often been argued that economic development may actually be harmful for a nation, because it might result in loss of traditions and cultural heritage. So when it comes to making valuational judgments about abandoning traditions if they cannot be preserved with economic changes, it is essential that the people have a democratic output for their opinions, rather than leaving the decision up to a "guardian" of tradition. "If a traditional way of life has to be sacrificed to escape grinding poverty or minuscule longevity (as many traditional societies have had for thousands of years), then it is the people directly involved who must have the opportunity to participate in deciding what should be chosen."<sup>23</sup> This is one of the strongest cases for political freedoms- it allows people to set their own priorities, rather than having either a leader like Saddam Hussein or a religious leader setting them.

Further, U.S. policy formulators suggest that a situation in which "Iraqis themselves are leading the reconstruction effort will also counter the myth that the war was fought for foreigners to gain control of Iraqi oil." The democratic process in Iraq plays into administration politics, but in many ways suggests that the critical view of the war (that it was solely for oil) begin to appear unsound when policy papers state that "Questions of whether U.S. and other international oil companies should play a prominent role in expanding oil output, and if so which oil companies, should be left up to the Iraqis and to

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<sup>20</sup> Sen, 36.

<sup>21</sup> "Winning Peace in the Middle East: a bipartisan blueprint for postwar U.S. policy." The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Pg 7. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>

<sup>22</sup> Hashim, Hurun. "Human rights not really a Western invention." New Straits Times (Malaysia). October 2, 2003, Thursday. EditorialBenchmark; Pg. 10

<sup>23</sup> Sen, 31

the workings of market forces.”<sup>24</sup> However, in other papers, such as a presidential study group report released in December of 2000, before President Bush took office and before the attacks of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, maintaining the free flow of oil at reasonable prices was listed, among other interests in the Middle East, as key issues to secure policy towards.<sup>25</sup> These conflicting reports create a sense of ambiguity that leads many to conclude that, since oil differentiates Iraq from so many other un-democratic countries, it *must* have been a main motive for war. But Defense Department CFO Dov Zakhein argues that this half-century old notion of “oil foreign policy” is plainly wrong.<sup>26</sup> Zakhein explains how this is not some kind of “cash cow” for industry to produce more, because in fact, most of the money allotted to the project is going to soldiers and not production. But he goes on to explain how this action benefits the U.S. in a different way, more indirectly related to economics and power. Zakhein claimed that the economic impact of 9/11 was far greater than what the U.S. has invested in Iraq and Afghanistan, therefore, by preventing another attack by countering the rise of discontent and anti-Americanism abroad (by, of course, attacking its roots which is a totalitarianism and a lack of institutions), the U.S. is actually saving money. “Cost-benefit analysis clearly reflects what we did in Iraq,” Zakhein concludes. But when other nations appear to be talking freely about their decisions to support the coalition, they have explicitly mentioned the economic benefit hoped for by the operation. However, within that economic analysis is included considerations of the economic impact on Iraq itself- a factor that we would assume that countries like Japan took into consideration before deciding to commit funds and troops to the cause.

Back to democracy, even certain religious leaders see the need. Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq leader Adil Mahdi said the only thing that will empower all of the people of Iraq is a democratic system and strong civil institutions. "Instead of having a mighty state and a weak, deprived society, we have to strengthen society." He also stated that the funds for rebuilding the country and laying the basis for democratic institutions should be provided by increased oil production.<sup>27</sup> Oil is really the only way for Iraq to make these changes, because revamping an entire country and founding it on newly formed institutions is not cheap.

Democracy involves pluralism. While one ethnic or religious group might be a minority, in democratic systems everyone is given a voice and equal basic freedoms. The various ethnic groups in Iraq are going to get a chance that they were denied under Hussein of working together to make decisions about the country, but some feel that ethnic divisions will obstruct democracy. Iraqi exile Bakhtiar Amin with two decades of experience in human rights and humanitarian work optimistically commented, "This is a reality. This is [also] the beauty of Iraq, that it's a multiethnic and multireligious society. The future government of Iraq has to reflect the ethnic and religious composition of the

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<sup>24</sup> “Winning Peace in the Middle East: a bipartisan blueprint for postwar U.S. policy.” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy pg 7. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>

<sup>25</sup> “Navigating through Turbulence: America and the Middle East.” <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/> 12/12/00 Presidential Study Group. Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

<sup>26</sup> CSPAN2 Washington Journal 10/11/03

<sup>27</sup> Gaylak, Dale. Kurdistan Observer. “9 Iraqi Opposition Leaders Promise United, Multiparty Democracy.” Davos, Switzerland. 28 Jan 2003. <http://home.cogeco.ca/~observer/28-1-03-opposition-promise-united-democratic.html>

Iraqi society: a government which embraces all its citizens, all its various ethnic groups and religious groups, and respects this diversity and specificity of each one.” He said building democracy on religious and ethnic identity is possible if certain conditions are met. "I don't see any risk of explosion or the 'Balkanization' of Iraq or civil war in Iraq if we do things correctly, and don't repeat the errors of the past," Amin said. "We have to embrace all groups of Iraq, and live together in a pluralistic, constitutional, parliamentary, democratic, federal Iraq. That would be the solution, that will be the remedy."<sup>28</sup> Another more famous Iraqi exile, Tariq Ali, disagrees. He believes that ‘Balkanization’ or civil war will occur, almost as a matter of fact.<sup>29</sup> This is a difficult situation to assess, and I believe that in the short term Iraq could go either way. While Amin is right, the remedy will be slow in coming and ethnic conflict may be the result we see first. Everything is dependant on how quickly Iraqis accept the shift in power. Analyst Neil Partrick, with the Middle East and Africa section of the Economist Intelligence Unit in London, says it might be most difficult for Sunni Arabs to accept the shift. Partrick says the resistance against the coalition forces is strongest in the predominant Sunni Arab areas north and west of Baghdad not only because Sunnis support Saddam but also because of "genuine suspicion" among many Sunnis that the "new Iraq" will be dominated by Shi'ite politicians.<sup>30</sup> I would also suggest that their resentment stems from being kicked out of biased privilege and power for the moment with the installation of democracy, this is probably going to become a permanent situation, since the Shi'a are a majority in Iraq. But it also depends on how the nation is going to be divided into districts.

Volatility concerns are raised at the CATO institute, where they ask “what if Shi'a Muslims, who comprise over 60 percent of the total population of Iraq, elect a leader with ties to Iran - a democracy, but one in which religious mullahs dominate political life, suppress dissent, are building nuclear weapons, and fund terrorism? What if ethnic Kurds, emboldened by their relative autonomy from the last 12 years, choose leaders committed to full-fledged statehood, independent of Iraq? What if a host of candidates split the votes of Shiites and Kurds, while minority Sunni Muslims unite behind a former Baath Party official?”<sup>31</sup> This kind of atomization of Iraq- the Sunnis versus the Shiites and Kurds might be a product of the years under Hussein. While there are real divisions, their polarization may not feel so real under a more pluralistic form of governance.

One of the largest worries is the possibility of democracy resulting in an extreme shift towards a more religious state. Iraq has had a secular society under Hussein, but after the war and strife of the past 30 years, religious institutions may offer a much-desired sense of security. The U.S. is actively trying to avoid the marriage of the conditions in the Arab world with state-sponsored religious fundamentalism. Even though the U.S. turns its back on Saudi Arabia, the emergence of another highly religious state in the region could prove to be devastating to U.S. interests. However, this is also a

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<sup>28</sup> Blua, Antoine. “Iraq: The Pitfalls of Building Democracy On Ethnic, Religious Lines.” Radio Free Europe

<sup>29</sup> Ali, Pg 5

<sup>30</sup> Mite, Valentin. Asia Times. July 16, 2003 Iraq's small step for democracy.

<sup>31</sup> A Democratic Iraq May Not Be Friendly to U.S. Christopher Preble director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute. April 14, 2003



factor that has resulted in hesitancy to hold immediate elections. The U.S. feels that it must be confident the outcome of a democratic voice will be along certain dictated lines. Ayatollah Sistani, the leader commanding the greatest amount of support in the country, is capitalizing on this opportunity to call for direct elections within the next few months. The presumption is that he favors an Islamic Republic resembling Iran. An interesting side note is the recent positive growth of a democracy movement in Iran.

Analysts agree that the democratic systems found in the US and Europe cannot simply be transplanted onto Arab society. Rami Khouri, a Jordanian-Palestinian and executive editor of Beirut's English-language Daily Star argues that the transition to Western-style democracies must be a natural process of evolution, citing the experience of the US as an example. "The early democracy of the United States was not really a democracy.... Real power was tightly controlled by small groups of white guys who owned land, had slaves, and whose wives couldn't vote," he says. "I think the transition comes with time. It comes with emergence of a middle class, it comes with prosperity."<sup>32</sup>

To convince Iraqis that Saddam is not their soul authority will take time, and transitioning them to a democracy will not be a fast process. Will the different generations in Iraq talk amongst themselves? Will the new generation learn from any wisdom and foresight the latter generations might have learned from the history of their land? Which would their forefathers have learned- that the land and people should be governed with an iron fist, or that they should have a more self-determining existence.

According to one study, the population of Iraqis under the age of twenty is estimated at 52.5% in 2003. Some suggest that impatient youth in countries with similar demographic trends will more adamantly demand freedom and economic progress than older generations.<sup>33</sup> The social revolution that has slowly risen in Iran has come about largely through the youth of the country, which like Iraq represents a large section of their population.

But it seems that the longings for reform in Iraq indeed spread across the various demographics. The Department of State Office of Research conducted a survey among residents of seven urban regions of Iraq. Results of the poll showed that large majorities in all seven cities support democratic values, for example 95% think it important that people vote in free and fair elections; 86% support the right to criticize the government; 78% think the media should report without censorship; and 71% agree with rights for women that are equal to those of men. How much weight to give these findings is debatable, but they at least seem to imply that desire for democratic values is widespread. However, the Iraqis polled were divided on what will be the best system of actual governance for the country- a democracy, an Islamic state, or a mix of both. But the study stressed that the primary difference between those who desire democracy versus those who want an Islamic state is their views of the proper place of religion in politics. The Islamic position on the separation of religion and state has always been very clear- in virtually every Middle Eastern country it has been rejected. Only two Middle Eastern states do not give constitutional status to a religion- Lebanon and Turkey, but in both the

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<sup>32</sup> Blanford, Nicholas. "How Iraqi democracy might look: Some Arab countries blend monarchies with parliaments and elections to form 'Oriental democracy.'" Christian Science Monitor. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0404/p06s01-wome.html>

<sup>33</sup> White, Thomas. Reconstructing Eden. Houston: CountryWatch, 2003. pg 13

separation is somewhat weak.<sup>34</sup> This separation has been one of the primary elements of Western society and philosophy that has rubbed extremist Muslims the wrong way. Sayyid Qutb, deemed “the single most influential writer in the Islamist tradition” described this division of evidence of the hideous schizophrenia that plagues the West—something that Muslims want nothing to do with.<sup>35</sup> While today this view does not in any way represent the majority view, it still remains influential in institutional and policy formulation, much like the traditionalist views of the Christian Religious Right in America.

Another factor adding to the hesitancy for democracy, the Gallup research concluded, is that historical experience has “sullied the image of political parties, especially outside of Northern Iraq where no more than one-third express confidence in parties. In addition, when asked to volunteer the name of a leader they trust most, two-thirds do not name anyone.”<sup>36</sup> Considering their history with the Ba’ath party, hesitancy to support any political party is not surprising. The report quoted a 49-yr old male from Kirkuk, expressing his fears that “At first they call for home and freedom and after that they all become like Saddam.”<sup>37</sup> But also, because of the authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein, the knowledge of other parties is limited, since any opponents that existed during his rule were often effectively disposed of.

The Iraqi Women’s league expresses their anger that no vote has been held yet, “But our people have not remained silent in the face of this calamity. In mass rallies all over occupied Iraq, millions of women and men are calling for freedom, security, democracy and national sovereignty. They want to elect their leaders and run their own country. Yet this fact has been hidden from world public opinion. This censorship contributed to the passing of the UN resolution that legalises and perpetuates military occupation in Iraq.”<sup>38</sup> However, within the UN, occupation has been denounced continuously, and it continues to urge the U.S. to quickly provide an actual semblance of Iraqi control through democratic input.

But currently the UN recognizes the Iraqi Governing Council as the authority in Iraq, although it has not been assembled through democratic means but rather by dictate of the Coalition. That is not to say, though, that the Council is not wholly representative of the Iraqi people. The IGC consists of 13 Shi’ite, five ethnic Kurds, five Sunni Arabs, one Christian (Assyrian) and one Turkmen. It also includes leaders of the main Iraqi political parties, such as Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim of the Shi’ite group the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and Mas’ud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, the leaders of the two leading Kurdish parties. Three women are included on the council, as is a human rights activist and a member of Iraq’s Communist Party

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<sup>34</sup> Lewis, Bernard. What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. pg 108

<sup>35</sup> Berman, 76

<sup>36</sup> Dept. of State Office of Research. Oct. 21, 2003. “Iraqi Public Has Wide Ranging Preferences for a Future Political System.” pg 1

<sup>37</sup> Dept. of State Office of Research. Oct. 21, 2003. “Iraqi Public Has Wide Ranging Preferences for a Future Political System.” pg 5

<sup>38</sup>

One aspect of the composition of the council drawing criticism is that nine members are exiles who returned to Iraq after years abroad. While this criticism is legitimate, the fact that few political alternatives to the Ba'ath party were allowed to remain in Iraq during Hussein's regime is quite significant to the decision to allow exiled Iraqis to return and play a role in the rebuilding process.

Lieutenant Paul Bremer, though, is the ultimate authority in the country, but has said that he will follow the council's decisions under all but the most extraordinary circumstances.<sup>39</sup> The administration has not set out a timeline for when the governing of Iraq will be in the hands of Iraqi, rather than American military personnel. There are varying sentiments on when it would be best for this to take place. Other UN members are emphasizing the urgency of a transfer in power. However, a Gallup survey in Baghdad found that a majority, 61%, have a favorable opinion of the IGC (13% unfavorable, 27% don't know).

President Bush has said that democracy in Iraq will be beneficial not just for the Iraqis, but for the safety of Americans as well.<sup>40</sup> But, it is not always the best policy, economically, for a Middle Eastern country to be built up in this manner. Often upholding the despotic rule of dictators, including Hussein, is beneficial to western industry. So if creating the most beneficial business environment is always the goal of U.S. foreign policy, then how was toppling Saddam and working towards democracy conducive to the goal? Ibrahim of the Ibn Khaldun Center says cynics in the Middle East argue the U.S. didn't really want to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but that

“Sustaining him [Hussein] the way he has been since his defeat in February 1991 is of the greatest benefit to the US: he is too weak to seriously hurt any US interest; yet as a straw man he frightens his smaller oil rich neighbors who would continue to buy more American arms (which they cannot use anyhow) and ask for American protection, for cash. After each carnage, both Iraq and the Middle East are always back at square one.”<sup>41</sup>

If Saddam is such a benefit, why get rid of him? What was even more important to the US that they were willing to get rid of him? Political analyst Noam Chomsky quotes Dilip Hiro in making the point that

“The United States opposes democracy in the region, Hiro writes, because ‘it is much simpler to manipulate a few ruling families- to secure fat orders for arms and ensure that oil prices remains low- than a wide variety of personalities and policies bound to be thrown up by a democratic system,’ with elected governments that might reflect popular calls for ‘self-reliance and Islamic fellowship.’ Hence the persistence of Washington’s policy of ‘supporting dictatorships to maintain stability’ (Ahman Chalabi), and the admitted preference for the ‘iron fist’”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Mite, Valentinas. “Iraq’s small step for democracy.” *Asia Times*. July 16, 2003

<sup>40</sup> Watson, Roland and James Hider. “Iraq ‘not in chaos, but it needs billions’”. *The Times*. 8/28/03

<sup>41</sup> Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. “For Iraq, Not For Saddam: Evil and Super Evil in the Middle East” *Civil Society* March 1998

<sup>42</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *World Orders old and New*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. pg 198

But in this case, in the post-9/11 world, ousting the regime *was* the option most conducive to U.S. industry. A successful free and democratic Iraq is essential to the survival of the West- our security depends on it. "Promoting democratization is not a policy born of altruism; widening the scope of political and economic participation is ultimately the best way to help Middle Easterners define their own destiny peacefully and responsibly and thereby bolster the stability of America's friends and strengthen long-term U.S. relations with the peoples of the region. It is also an indispensable part of the battle for hearts and minds in the war on terror."<sup>43</sup>

If described in this way, the optimistic vision the U.S. paints is easier to believe, since that action was less altruistic and more self-interested.

### **Rhetoric v. Reality**

"In all cases, international obligations are to be taken seriously. They are not to be undertaken symbolically to rally support for an ideal without furthering its attainment."

*-National Security Strategy of the United States of America*

Generally, human rights symbolize the ends of development. The means for achieving them is where debate is focused. While these premises are agreed upon as righteous goals, the processes necessary for actualizing them continue to be debated at state, local and international levels. But often the global community has cowered away from engaging in the necessary processes, scared of intruding on another nation's sovereignty (a fear that has kept Europeans out of many situations), hesitant to exert resources for a cause fully separated from themselves, or possibly even refraining out of fear of negating the very principles they are trying to uphold. Because often, while one policy or action may make a contribution to one aspect of the goal of increasing human rights, it may take away from another. Finding a solution for this potential "one step forward two steps back" dilemma, then, is ultimately the objective, by creating policy that moves development forward, by not holding freedom back.

President Bush proclaims we must defend freedom everywhere, and nearly every press conference held by the administration stresses the importance of the rhetorical goals of extending and equalizing human rights in Iraq, partially explaining how it will be done as well. The theme of the Bush Administration's briefings are not too different from statements by Amnesty International: "Projects should prioritize Iraqis' human rights: including their right to personal security, health, education, work and the reform of the judicial system," Amnesty International states. "The goal of reconstruction should be to ensure the effective protection and realization of all human rights for all Iraqis. Iraqis themselves, ideally through representative institutions, ought to make the decisions on rebuilding, on foreign investment, and on the selling of state assets."<sup>44</sup> Yet, full agreement between these two, the Bush Administration and Amnesty International, is obviously deficient. This estrangement possibly stems not from the goals, but their

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<sup>43</sup> Winning Peace in the Middle East: a bipartisan blueprint for postwar u.s. policy. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. pg 4

<sup>44</sup> <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE141722003?open&of=ENG-398>

method of implementation, or means. Because while the U.S. seems to be stating a very intense commitment to seeing these goals realized through actual policy implementation, specifically military action, and not just “undertaken symbolically” without “furthering it’s attainment”, Amnesty is not a policy making institution. Their role, in essence, is to issue merely symbolic stances- not by any means less important, but often less effective. Recently however, Amnesty President William Schulz said he knows that the organizations failure to make statements supporting policy might lead to its irrelevance. "In the long run," Schulz admits, "it may not be wise of Amnesty to have a policy that it takes no position on military intervention." Schulz believes that Amnesty’s traditional functions, like letter writing are important, “But if we fail to engage with the very real, hard decisions that governments have to make about protecting the safety of their citizens, then we’ll be dismissed as charlatans, or ideologues who are out of step with reality.” Schulz also said that he believes human rights are key to fighting terrorism.<sup>45</sup>

### Measures of Development

Obviously, there seems to be some rift between human rights as an ideal and the policies behind developing modern liberal institutions in underdeveloped nations. Other measures of development need to be assessed. These measures can then be applied to U.S. policy, in order to predict whether the results will constitute development, and in what sense they will.

Development can be measured in terms of increased GDP for a nation- which is supposed to translate into increasing access to consumer goods and services. This is the measure that has been predominately used in assessing development. In another measurement, the utilitarian notion, development can be extended to entail processes which increase overall human contentment- the materiality of which is debatable. Or even, as Sen theorized, a progression towards offering more opportunities and choices- more freedom as development. Depending on one’s notion of the first principle of human good, development will represent an advancement of this principle. It has generally been agreed, recently, that GDP is a poor measure of true development. But the roots of this knowledge are not new. Aristotle said that wealth is “merely useful and for the sake of something else.” It is not more money, per se, that underdeveloped countries need, but rather more of what money can help a nation to achieve for its’ people. Basically, the impact of economic growth largely depends on how the *fruits* of economic growth are utilized.

Freedom is a better measure, according to Sen, because having greater freedom to do the things values is (1) significant in itself for a person’s overall freedom, and (2) important in fostering a person’s opportunity to have valuable outcomes. He claims freedom is the “principle determinate of individual initiative and social effectiveness.”<sup>46</sup> But focusing too much on “pleasure” or “desire”, as in utilitarianism would be wrong also, “The mental metric... is just too malleable to be a firm guide to deprivation and disadvantage.”<sup>47</sup> However, utilitarian ethics have added to the general case for taking *full*

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2003/11/15/amnesty/>

Follman, Mark. “Why the Antiwar Left Must Confront Terrorism.” Nov. 15, 2003

<sup>46</sup> Sen, Amartya. Development as Freedom. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1999. pg. 18

<sup>47</sup> Sen, 63

note of results in judging policies and institutions, and going beyond the standard GDP measurements<sup>48</sup>. Sen goes on to suggest that policy makers continue to focus on the quality of life and substantive freedoms rather than just income.

U.S. policy makers are doing just that in Iraq. The plan is to increase liberal notions of freedom- free press, universal education, freedom to dissent, discuss, manufacture, produce and so on. In Iraq, then, development should be measured through the extent to which these freedoms materialize. These freedoms will be self-sustaining and will continue to generate more signals of a liberal system, the most significant of which is democracy.

But all is not destined to go perfectly. Development economist David Apter notes that “systematically” development generates democracy, but it does not do so easily, and there are problems along the way, “snares that result in violence and affect the future of the state itself.”<sup>49</sup>

“The sooner Iraq is stable and headed toward prosperity, the sooner the American troops can return home. The U.S. stands to gain a great deal of moral capital for deposing the tyrannical Saddam Hussein and then helping to create a stable, democratic and prosperous Iraqi state. Such moral capital would be diminished, if not undercut entirely, if the U.S. forced Iraq *to pay* the U.S. for its work. Further it would lend credence to the view that the U.S. is an occupier and not a liberator,”<sup>50</sup> Lieutenant Paul Bremer gave as another reason not to support loans. It creates the wrong kind of image if we benefit off interest on a debt. Even if the only aversion to this kind of image is that it will harm President Bush’s 2004 campaign, then the effect of the policy is nonetheless, according to economic theory, the best thing for Iraq’s future prosperity. But what is more likely is that there are many reasons for having an aversion to excessive lending to Iraq. Maybe the administration sees a possible threat to the entire global economy, like after WWI, although that would be a fairly unbelievable scenario.

Another reason that would serve both the interests of the administration and the Iraqis is that large debt hurts investment.<sup>51</sup> No one will continue putting money into something that is already totally debilitated. For example, if your car were simply broken, it would be stupid to try to keep putting more gas in it. But it is in the interests of both parties to negotiate the problem- the lender wants to be repaid, and the receiver wants to be able to repay the outstanding investment in order to receive more. The lender also wants new opportunities make money off of investments.

If there are loans given, they will probably be from the World Bank or IMF. Currently, Iraq’s obligation to the Bank stands at \$82 million, some of which may be forgiven, also.<sup>52</sup> This is a move the administration might support, even though the money is in loan-form, since the World Bank has expressed the same vision for Iraq that it has. This summer World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn went to Iraq and held discussions with Bremer on the progress in the reconstruction efforts. Mr. Wolfensohn and Mr. Bremer were in agreement that the future engine of growth lies with the private sector governed by a sound regulatory and legal framework and a stable environment to

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<sup>48</sup> Sen, 61

<sup>49</sup> Apter, David. Rethinking Development. Sage Publications, 1987. pg 11

<sup>50</sup> L. Paul Bremer. (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?r108:13:./temp/~r108VLkdCb:e33620>)

<sup>51</sup> Basu, 141

<sup>52</sup> world bank website, expanded trade and investment

foster and encourage investment and economic growth.<sup>53</sup> “The region has enjoyed greatest prosperity when it has been open to trade, ideas, innovation and private enterprise, and exploited its potential of location, endowments, and spirit of enterprise,” says Jean-Louise Sarbib, Vice President for the M.E. and North African region at the World Bank.<sup>54</sup>

Again, the World Bank has the same kind of changes in mind for growth in Iraq as the US does. A *philosophical* change of sorts in Iraq. A change that will affect their culture, their government, their economy. Bringing true Western standards to the country will ultimately change its identity. An example of one such plan that will affect the culture is the hope that “the economic and social barriers to women in the work-force are dismantled, their wider participation in economic life can boost growth and productivity in the region”<sup>55</sup> - practices that were realized long ago in industrial powerhouses like America, but have been slower to come to the Middle East. Leaders in the World Bank, as well as those in the UN and elsewhere recognize female participation as one of the most important factors in building a prosperous society. Although Iraq is more secularized than certain other countries in the Middle East, and therefore less restrictive in dictating the social roles of women, it has yet to achieve a true semblance of equality for them.

Building the institutions that will carry these kinds of philosophies or building the philosophies that will bring these kinds of institutions is, however, a laborious process. There is a comfortable consistency existing in Iraq that implementing a ‘laissez-faire’ brand of Western capitalism is going to disrupt. Without Hussein simply printing up more bank notes to sustain his population, his former populace will now have to adapt to self-sustainment. However, many say this will be the least chaotic and swiftest execution of this kind of transition ever. Last century, it took decades. Today, they are planning on years. Rumsfeld says the scope and speed of such operations are impressive. “If one looks back at Germany or Japan or Bosnia or Kosovo and measures the progress that has taken place in this country in four or five months, it dwarfs any other experience I’m aware of.”<sup>56</sup>

The Administration and others have often recalled other development projects, and compared and contrasted them to Iraq.

Rebuilding Germany was a long, difficult, and expensive process. "It took several years to construct those democratic systems in Germany," Robert Pfaltzgraf, international security expert at Tufts University's Fletcher School said. In this way, he said, these situations are alike. "We even used the term de-Nazification as we use the term de-Baathification today." The difference is that in Germany, internal opposition was nearly nonexistent- there weren't terrorists crossing borders to fight the US." Pfaltzgraf agrees that the point of departure between the two "is that Germany in 1945 was fully defeated. There was no internal enemy left."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> world bank website, expanded trade and investment

<sup>54</sup> world bank website, expanded trade and investment

<sup>55</sup> world bank website, expanded trade and investment

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<sup>57</sup> Bowers, Faye. “What lessons postwar Germany holds for Iraq.” Christian Science Monitor. Sept. 3, 2003

In both cases, though, rebuilding was in the interest of the U.S., for reasons of both security and trade. The ends of the Marshall Plan, which turned out to be liberal democracy for Western Europe, seemed to be more stumbled upon than striven for.

In Iraq, the new authority is doing what it can to actively generate liberalism. Constitutional drafting, economic restructuring, getting the institutional framework up for checks and balances to counter corruption; these are only one part of the transition. The US military in Iraq is currently laboring away on projects such as rebuilding (and in some cases simply building) schools, getting hospitals up and running, helping universities function, digging wells, and refurbishing the irrigation systems and roads. Then there are private specialists helping to maintain and rebuild the oil, electric and water infrastructure (the notorious role of companies like Halliburton). These physical infrastructure developments must necessarily coincide with political development.

But when the media reports on conditions, after many months of rebuilding efforts, progress looks quite grim. In October the Chicago Tribune cited a story of squalor in towns outside of Baghdad. Ahmed Abid of Yousifiyah, Iraq explains how under Saddam his life seemed quite stable. He had a job at a state-owned weapons factory, and he received free housing from the government. But the factory he worked at was flattened by the U.S. invasion and the apartment complex is “reeling from disrepair, vandalism and the stench from sewage backing up at broken pumping stations.” There is no factory left now to privatize and the coalition will not allow the plant to be rebuilt. The apartments had been situated so that workers would have short commutes; now most of the new jobs to the Iraqi economy are likely to be in Baghdad, 30 miles away. “It’s bad to be out of work,” Abid said, “and we have to worry, too, about where we will live.” Interestingly, he resigns that “this is not the kind of freedom we thought America would bring. All we can do is direct our protests to God.”<sup>58</sup>

Mainstream media reports can be conflicting. A Gallup poll of Baghdad residents found that 62% think the ousting of Saddam Hussein was worth any personal hardships they have endured since the invasion. However, those polled still express deep skepticism that the initial rationale the coalition gave for the action was truthful.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, a motivation more likely than simple altruism though, was terrorism. Virtually every time President Bush has discussed Iraq, the word “terrorism” has been used. But the link between terrorism and the regime of Saddam Hussein remains murky to many outside of the administration. Is it possible to reconcile the two things, as the administration hopes to do? Terrorism and the support of it have often been linked to a phenomenon called “relative deprivation.” Whether or not this form of relative deprivation existed in Iraq should not be debatable. The Iraqi people have been subject to violence and subjection for years, although their case was not like the absolute poverty of Africa, it was still a very dangerous, deprive mode of life for most of the population. If terrorism is the symptom of the greater disease of poverty and injustice, inhumanity and relative deprivation, then how do we solve it? Fighting terrorism has been equated to getting rid of a mosquito problem. As the analogy goes, knocking off terrorists is like swatting at mosquitoes, it is not going to get you anywhere because there is a pond over there breeding them. You must get rid of the stagnant water, in order to really solve the

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<sup>58</sup> Torriero, E.A. “Squalor adds to despair for Iraqi families.” Chicago Tribune. 10/23/03 1,4.

<sup>59</sup> Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing October 28, 2003 Richard Burkholder; Director, International Polling



problem and stop the influx of mosquitoes. What would the Middle East look like if its “stagnant water” were removed? What will the Middle East look like once these goals are achieved? In order to remove terrorism, it seems that the plan is to drain the breeding ponds of the Middle East, and pump them full of Western-brand prosperity. But is this really the plan and the premise behind the entire action?

“September 11 provided an undeniable impetus to revisit the question of post-conflict reconstruction by forcing the United States to reevaluate its approach to dealing with failed states. For national security as well as for humanitarian reasons, failed states—if left to their own devices—can provide safe haven for a diverse array of transnational threats, including terrorist networks, global organized crime, and narcotics traffickers who also exploit the dysfunctional environment. As such, failed states can pose a direct threat to the national interests of the United States and to the stability of entire regions.”<sup>60</sup>

Iraq is a stepping-stone to implementing this vision across the entire Arab world, and hopefully beyond. This single sustainable model for development is sure to take time to show itself in the region, but once it does, a domino effect is the highest hope. The implementation of liberalism around the globe will prevent the further development of the current war underway by Muslim extremists and others against the values of Western civilization.

At some point I heard an Iraqi wisely comment that “Before democracy, we need democrats.” And more, I would say, before liberalism can take hold, Iraqis and the Arab world as a whole must see the benefits of it, and become modern liberalists. The Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, read a message on the Secretary-General’s behalf, saying, “The Muslim peoples are capable of much greater things – and they know it.” The Secretary-General contends that most Islamic societies have fallen far behind in a rapidly changing world, but, he stated to the 10<sup>th</sup> summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference, “there is nothing natural or inevitable about the sad state in which so much of the Islamic world finds itself today.” Kofi Annan also states “the path of political reform, education and development is the only one that offers real hope of a more prosperous present and a glorious future.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> “Play to Win: Final Report of the Bi-Partisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction.” January 2003. Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Association of the U.S. Army. <http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/playtowin.pdf> pg.5

<sup>61</sup> Oct. 16., 2003. UN website daily briefing. “Annan to Islamic Summit: Muslims are capable of much greater things.”