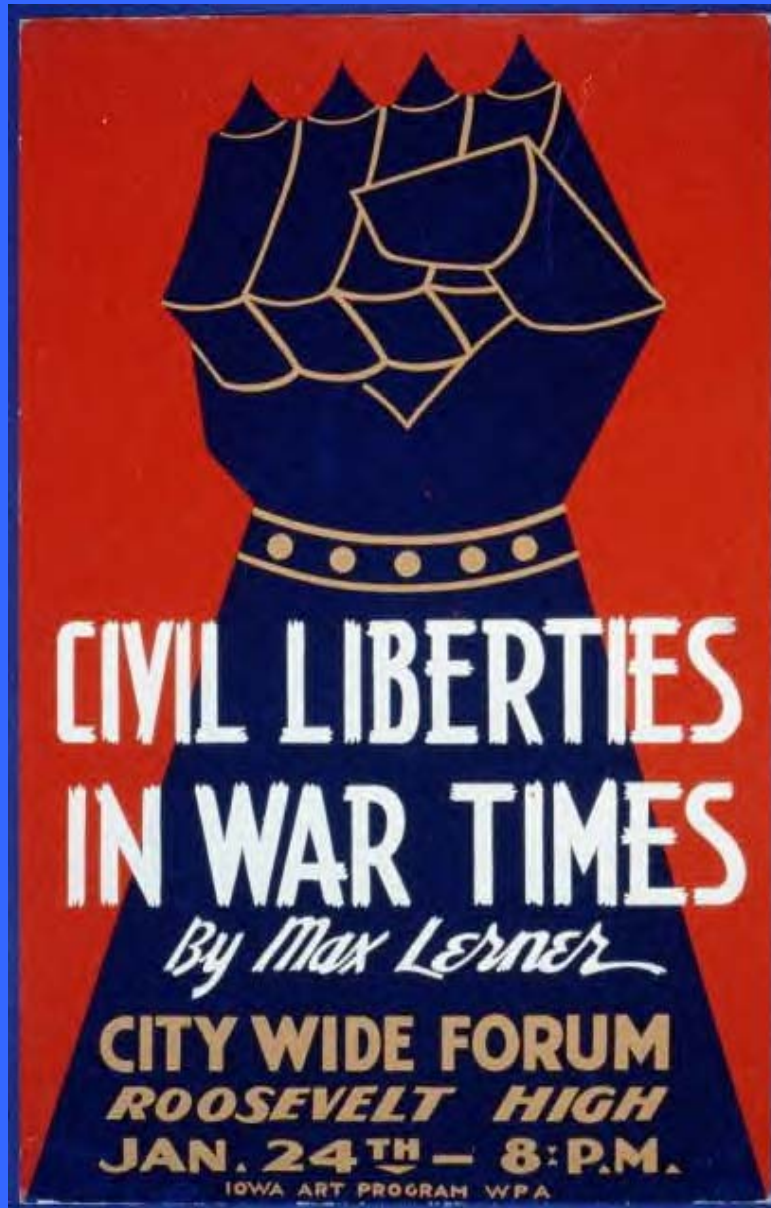


# *Public Voices*

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# *Public Voices*

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## **Governments, Governance and War: What We Have Learned in Iraq**

### **Symposium**

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## Front Cover

“**Civil Liberties in War Times by Max Lerner: City Wide Forum,**” between 1936 and 1940, Iowa Art Program, WPA.  
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The Poster, showing an armored gauntlet clenched in a fist, was created for a lecture by Max Lerner, an influential liberal journalist and scholar, at Roosevelt High, Des Moines, Iowa.

## Back Cover

“**End the War Girl,**” by Valerie L. Patterson

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<sup>1</sup> The same cover-up is, of course, operating during the present-day occupation of Iraq by US military forces.

several successful strategies used by the Bush administration to secure support for the invasion of Iraq. By assessing the utility of “the hook” that in Hip Hop music and Opera is used to “grab” people and make them like or remember the melody, and in President Bush’s political rhetoric was used to reconstruct and repackage tactics that can be perceived as deceptive by some, the author argues that the repetitive utterance of certain words and concepts could explain the acceptance by many Americans that the WMD claim was a truthful assertion and thus validated and legitimized the decision to engage in a preemptive strike against the people of Iraq.

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<sup>2</sup> See Guy B. Adams and V. Ingersoll’s “Culture, Technical Rationality, and Organizational Culture,” in *American Review of Public Administration*, December 1990, 20/4: 285 – 302, for an excellent elaboration of the concept. In general, technical rationality is an approach to thinking that “has stripped reason of any normative role in shaping human affairs” (Adams and Balfour 1998, xiii).

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The Reinventing Government (ReGo) movement that was popularized during the 1990's by Osborne and Gaebler's 1992 book of the same title is founded on the concept of "managerialism," which has "management rights" as its core theme (Shafritz & Russell, 2005). The principle of management rights advocates wide-ranging discretion for administrators in the decision-making process that can possibly circumvent the constitutional value of due process in the public sector. With this questionable allowance, unscrupulous public administrators have the opportunity to employ patronage practices beyond acceptable limits that allows a "spoils system" of favoritism to prevail over merit practices.

In this article, the concept of "spoils in government" is linked to reinventing government precepts that allow corruption to become ingrained within an organization's culture. As a consequence, opportunities for ethical violations of office increase relative to the degree of discretionary authority afforded to public administrators. Should a corruptible individual assume office in such an environment, the likelihood of unethical behavior becomes relatively certain.

A case study of nepotism from the same decade of reinventing government is documented that illustrates how the implementation of an employment pool in the hiring process of a municipal fire department permitted unethical violations of due process by its fire chief. The discretionary authority afforded to a corruptible fire chief in the name of managerialism reinstated a culture of favoritism prevalent within the department from earlier days. The resulting public scandal was sensational but short-lived and was ineffectual in redressing the wrongs brought about by the misuse of authority. The discretionary hiring process not only continues in the department to this day but has been expanded to include promotions.

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# Listening to “Other” Voices: Letters from Readers

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*Symposium:*

# Governments, Governance and War: What We Have Learned in Iraq An Introduction

*Valerie L. Patterson*

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Edwin Starr in 1970 topped the music charts with the song “*War*,” where he pondered the following:

War  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing

Starr was, of course, protesting the war in Viet Nam. Thirty years and a couple of wars later, the current US-led war, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, as a preemptive mechanism offers new and different insight. The purpose of this symposium is to provide a forum for scholars who have pondered the questions of war, especially “this” war, to present their analysis of the vital lessons for the discipline of public administration.

The technological advances of the twenty-first century, combined with the proliferation of information, propelled by instantaneous video and audio images, offer a different level of access to this current war that previous generations were not provided. The phenomenon of the ‘embedded’ soldier/broadcaster provides up-close and personal footage that shapes perspectives, public opinion and even dissent.

The 24/7–365 coverage unfortunately hyper-sensitizes the viewing public but offers the “detached” scholar an opportunity to access a massive amount of information that can be crucial in conducting a critical assessment of the conflict.

When reading this symposium I am sure that you will agree that the work offered by scholars presented here is truly reflective of the unique approach of *Public Voices*. It represents perspectives and an approach that the reader should find refreshing and different from what one would consider the ‘status quo.’

In the first article, *Iraqi Notes: A Personal Reflection on Issues of Governance in Iraq and US Involvement*, Alexander Dawoody uses eyewitness account, historical narrative and personal reflection to examine governance from the perspective of an Iraqi native having experienced the oppression, violation of personal freedom and liberty administered by the regime of Saddam Hussein, and the contradictions that are to be found in the freedom of American “democracy.” Dawoody provides a compact and informative history of Iraq that is useful and necessary in contextualizing any critique of lessons learned but is frequently missing from the deliberations of armchair generals and “hawks” who plot military strategy from the comfort and safety of their living rooms in between channel surfing, voting, and responding to national polls. Dawoody’s article forces the reader to consider conflicting values, symbolism, tyranny, hubris and enduring freedom.

Next, the symposium turns to poetry. *On A Mission* offers my initial frustrations, musings, and assessment of the undisputable and irrefutable “truths” of the war from a social, political, and economic perspective as perceived by a “trained” bureaucratic analyst.

In the second article, *What Went Wrong – An Essay on Post-Hussein Iraq*, Michael W. Popejoy presents a compelling and provocative critique of the continued threat and danger to be found in failing to reflect, use, and act on lessons learned as a preventive strategy – and the need to prepare for peace. Popejoy’s reflections force the reader to consider questions of hypocrisy and hegemony and the ideal of “democratic freedom.” The author’s discussion of the separation of church and state takes on new meaning in light of the results of Election 2004, creating another lens by which to examine lessons. The author discusses the war’s impact on bureaucracy, civil service, and professionalism, timely as each new day post “Mission-Accomplished” there is news of attacks on those recruited to provide civil service.

Following Popejoy’s article, Mameli and Patterson provide another poetic interlude. In *New Orleans 1991/New York 2004*, Peter Mameli takes the reader on a journey from New Orleans to Baghdad to New York as he reflects on the wonder of Carnival and the horror of war. In light of the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the city of New Orleans, the truths to be examined in Mameli’s poetry as they relate to the present parallels between Baghdad and New Orleans have grown in significance. In *A New National Strategy – Lessons, Output, and Outcome*, I invoke the spirit and tradition of performance management to determine lessons learned based on output and outcome. This piece is offered in the true spirit of hyperbole sprinkled with provocative truth.

Phillippa Winkler, in *The Sanctions Regime Against Iraq (1990-2003): Policymaking and Values*, assesses the use of UN sanctions against Iraq as precursor to the war. Using expert interview data, Winkler applies the “ethics lens” and feminist perspective to the behavior of diplomats who are critical actors in implementing foreign policy targeting Iraq. Winkler’s analysis and assessment is unsettling and enlightening.

In *Reconstructing Operatic Melodrama – Lyricism and War, Lessons Learned for Creating My Opus Sectile*, political rhetoric becomes lyrical visioning, a useful tool for garnering support for claims that may or may not be true. Several successful strategies used by the Bush administration to secure support for the invasion of Iraq are reviewed. I assess the utility of

“da hook,” a tool used in Hip Hop music, to reconstruct and repackage tactics that some may perceive as deceptive.

The final piece presented in the symposium is *It's Raining Iraq*. Alexander Dawoody presents a play that transports the reader through the various stages found in the journey from oppression to liberation. The reader will experience the horror, despair, hope, enthusiasm and philosophical leanings of a tragic and possibly naïve hero, Kifah. Dunwoody provides another powerful opportunity for the reader to confront and examine the multiple realities of war and occupation.

There are several consistent themes interwoven through all of the pieces offered in this symposium. I look forward to the passionate pondering and deep thinking that this symposium will generate.

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# Iraqi Notes: A Personal Reflection on Issues of Governance in Iraq and US Involvement

*Alexander Dawoody*

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## **Introduction**

Ever since Saddam Hussein attacked Iran in September 1980, Iraq became an important player in U.S. foreign policy. During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, the United States supported Iraq with agricultural credit loans, sophisticated technology, military equipments, and germ strands that went into the making of Iraq's biological weapons. After Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. relationship with Iraq shifted toward hostility and confrontation, resulting in two major wars, the Gulf War of 1991 and Operation Iraqi Freedom of 2003. As a consequence of the latter, the United States invaded Iraq, toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein, and occupied the country under the premise of bringing stability and democracy to the region of the Middle East within an on-going war on terrorism.

As an Iraqi-American who lived under the tyranny of Saddam's regime and later escaped to the United States, I wrote this commentary essay and memoir as a personal reflection on the political trajectory in Iraq that was impacted by U.S. foreign policy. With this reflection, I attempted to observe the conflict between Iraq and the United States both as an Iraqi native and as a citizen of the United States.

## **The Republic of Iraq**

When I was born in 1955, Iraq was ruled by a monarchy that was installed by Great Britain. It was Great Britain that created the modern state of Iraq in 1920 after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI, and then installed one of its regional allies, Prince Faisal of Hijaz (in today's Saudi Arabia) as Iraq's new king. During this period, the United States adopted a hands-off policy, rendering to Great Britain the power to redefine the political structure in the Middle East. U.S. participation in this process was concentrated on securing concession areas in Iraq,

Iran and Saudi Arabia for the American oil companies. In Iraq, American oil companies' share in oil exploration was 23.7 percent (Paul, 2002).

From its inception, the institutions of the modern state of Iraq, such as bureaucracy, lawmaking, and administration of justice, were founded on normalizing and regulating differences between the ruler and the ruled, between the Europeans and indigenous Iraqis, between tribal people and town people, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and Shiites and Sunni. Instead of a Western liberal democratic model, the British project in Iraq produced a highly contentious oligarchic monarchy that was closely allied to its imperial interests (Haj, 1997).

The British invention was an artificial mosaic that reflected its interests rather than the aspirations of Iraq's heterogeneous people (Sciolino, 1991). Under the British mandate, the Western-devised Iraqi political forms were imported into a tribal society ethnically and theologically fragmented (Hazelton, 1986). Narratives that had made sense of people's lives in one setting were being overtaken by changed circumstances as the emerging state became the vehicle for distinctive ideas and forms of order, prefigured by, but not necessarily identical to, those of the late Ottoman state. The Iraqi state became a new center of gravity, setting up or reinforcing the structures that shaped a distinctively Iraqi politics (Tripp, 2000).

The new state was beset by a complex web of social, economic, ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts, all of which retarded the process of state formation (Ireland, 1938). One feature of the new state that was apparent was the absence of any Shiite or Kurdish appointees to senior administrative positions. The old Sunni-dominated order of Ottoman times was re-established, and the Shiites and Kurds had largely been excluded from the administrative levels (Tripp, 2000).

The political system under the monarchy, with its parliament of landlords and handpicked government supporters, was increasingly incompatible with the changing social reality marked by the quickening pace of urban-based economic activity fueled by the oil revenues. The faction of the elite investing in manufacturing, the petty bourgeoisie, and the working classes pressured the state to represent their interests. As the armed forces came to reflect this shifting balance of social forces, a radical political change became inevitable (Kelidar, 1969).

On July 14, 1958, the Iraqi Army overthrew the monarchy and established the Republic of Iraq. Since I was only three years old, I do not remember anything about the incident. The revolt's objectives were to liberate Iraq from the oligarchic monarchy and its creator, British imperialism, and to rebuild Iraq by promoting social and economic development on behalf of its people (Haj, 1997). The seizure of power was possibly quicker than any of the coup leaders had anticipated. By the same token, they found themselves in command of the massive financial and administrative resources of the state. Some of their civilian allies believed that this would open the way for an assault on the systems of privilege, allowing political life to be reestablished on a democratic basis. However, the ease of the transfer of power encouraged different thoughts among the coup leaders, who soon discovered the immense powers of patronage conferred upon them (Tripp, 2000).

Since the majority of Iraqis between 1920 and 1958 were divorced from the political process, and the process itself failed to develop procedures for resolving internal conflicts other than

rule by decree and the frequent use of repressive measures, the formative experiences of Iraq's post-1958 political leadership centered on government activity that has been veiled in secrecy. Furthermore, because the country lacked deeply-rooted national political institutions, political power was also monopolized by a small elite, the members of which were often bounded by close family or tribal ties (Dann, 1969).

On the third anniversary of the July 14<sup>th</sup> coup, I was standing next to my uncle in my hometown of Khanaquine, a small Kurdish city near the Iranian borders, as we were watching a military parade celebrating the event. People seemed to be genuinely happy and supportive of the new government and its leader, General Abdul Kareem Kassim, whom they regarded as a national hero. I had a small Iraqi flag in my hand, waving it to the troops as they were parading in front of us while crossing from underneath a giant arch that had a small torch on top of it and a picture of General Kassim.

On the way home, we passed by a fifteen-foot tall bronze statue of General Kassim standing in the middle of a park. Driven with childish curiosity, I wanted to touch the image of the hero. So, I climbed the stairs and touched the bronze statue. I was no higher than the general's knee. A soldier, who had been standing guard, approached me and ordered me to kiss the statue's feet. I refused, remembering my father's advice never to do so. My father said I should be like the Kurdish hero Salahaddin—the Muslim leader who drove the Crusaders out of Jerusalem during the 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade. As a boy, Salahaddin was ordered to bow and kiss the hand of Syria's king, which he refused to do. When I refused to kiss the foot of the statue, in essence, I was emulating the great Salahaddin. Still, the soldier became upset, pulled his gun and pointed it at me. My uncle interfered and was able to convince the soldier that I was only a child and that he needed to let me go.

From that time on, soldiers for me were no longer harmless images in peacetime parades. They became frightening figures. To reflect back, I can say that they became for that six-year-old child representatives of irrational anger and twisted logic that required the enforcement of outmoded rituals involving slavery and submission, instead of promoting new revolutionary ideas for peace and democracy. Perhaps it was not fair to generalize from one incident to include everything that soldiers and the military stand for. But, for a six-year-old child, it was not logical thinking that constituted my views of the world then. Rather, it was my feelings based on my perceptions of reality.

Interestingly enough, my perception of General Kassim himself did not change. To me, he still represented celebration, parades, and heroism. Perhaps my parents' admiration of the general enabled me to distinguish between him and the soldier who ordered me at gunpoint to kiss his statue's feet.

Prior to 1958, Iraq was regarded as a key buffer and strategic asset in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, especially when it joined in the 1950s, along with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Britain, the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact. After the 1958 military coup by General Kassim, the overthrow of the monarchy in a horrible orgy of bloodshed, and the emergence of the Republic of Iraq, little attention was paid by the United States to Kassim's bloody regime. The



Eisenhower administration abided Kassim as a counter to Washington's Arab nemesis of the era, President Nasser of Egypt (Dann, 1969).

However, seeking new Soviet arms, threatening Western oil interest in Iraq with Law Number 80, resuming an old quarrel with Kuwait, talking openly of challenging the dominance of America in the Middle East – all that had caused the United States to regard Kassim as a dangerous leader who must be removed (Morris, 2003). Also, domestic instability in Iraq under Kassim prompted CIA Director Allan Dulles to say publicly that Iraq was "the most dangerous spot in the world" (Sale, 2003).

The first attempt came in 1959, when the CIA supported the Baath Party to assassinate Kassim. Saddam, while only in his early 20s, became a part of the U.S. plot and was installed in an apartment in Baghdad on al-Rashid Street directly opposite Kassim's office in Iraq's Ministry of Defense. Saddam's CIA handlers were an Iraqi dentist working for the CIA and Capitan Abdul Majeed Fareed, the assistant military attaché at the Egyptian Embassy, who was also an Egyptian intelligence officer. Fareed paid for Saddam's apartment during this period. Once enough information was gathered on Kassim's movements, Saddam was assigned to become part of a CIA-authorized six-man squad tasked with the assassination of Kassim (Sale, 2003).

The assassination was set for October 7, 1959, but it was completely botched. Twenty-two-year-old Saddam lost his nerve and began firing too soon, killing Kassim's driver and only wounding Kassim in the shoulder and arm. One of the assassins had bullets that did not fit his gun. Another assassin had a hand grenade that got stuck in the lining of his coat. Kassim, hiding on the floor of his car, escaped death. Saddam, whose calf had been grazed by a fellow assassin, escaped to Syria and from there to Egypt, aided by the CIA and Egyptian intelligence agents (Sale, 2003).

Two years later, on February 8, 1963, I saw both my parents having their ears glued to our oversized electronic Philips radio, listening with subdued faces to abrupt military broadcasting of a coup that killed General Kassim and brought the Baath Party to power. On the following day, while playing in front of our house, I saw my father driving his car and speeding by our house toward downtown, with a soldier sitting in the backseat, pointing his gun toward my dad's head. I immediately ran home and tearfully informed my mother. After bribing officials through some Kurdish landlords, we were able to visit him in prison that evening. My father was a physician, and he was charged with smuggling medicine from his clinic to the Kurdish guerillas in the mountains. A few days later, he was deported to a remote clinic in the marshlands of southern Iraq.

At the time, I did not know much about the Baath Party, except that it had reawakened, with the image of the soldier that was pointing his instrument of violence at my father, the image of another soldier who ordered me at gunpoint to kiss the feet of a statue. Both images were demanding obedience and forceful submission by violence.

As its instrument, the CIA chose the authoritarian Baath Party to lead the coup. The Baath during this period was a relatively small political faction and had little influence in the Iraqi

Army. Nevertheless, the party was able to align itself with other anti-Kassim forces that had some influence within the army, making itself a viable vehicle to carry on the coup. Britain and Egypt backed the CIA-sponsored regime change in Iraq, while other United States allies, chiefly France and Germany, did not (Morris, 2003).

Evidence of the direct involvement of the CIA in the 1963 coup came to light in later years. According to Ali Saleh al-Sadie, a Baath Party official and one of the coup's leaders, "the Baath came to power in Iraq in 1963 while riding an American train" (Zaher, 1986). King Hussein of Jordan also confirmed the CIA's involvement in the 1963 coup during an interview with the chief editor of the Egyptian *al-Ahram* newspaper in September 1963 (Batatu, 1978). With the Baath in power, Saddam returned to Iraq to head a branch of the National Guard in Baghdad.

## **The Second Baath Regime**

In November of 1963 the Baath Party was toppled from power. There was less political tension under the subsequent regimes. My father, however, was still in the south of Iraq. We moved to Omara, a city near the marshland, in order to be closer to him in 1966. On July 17, 1968, the Baath once again returned to power in Iraq. Two men emerged in charge of the new regime, President Bakr and his deputy, Saddam Hussein.

The Baath of 1968 was more tightly organized and more determined to stay in power than the Baath of 1963. The demise of pan-Arabism of Egyptian President Nasser following the June 1967 War with Israel, and the emergence of a more parochially oriented Baath in Syria, freed the Iraqi Baath from the debilitating aspects of pan-Arabism. In 1963, on the other hand, President Nasser was able to manipulate domestic Iraqi politics (Khadduri, 1978).

The Baath institutionalized its rule by formally issuing a Provisional Constitution in July 1970. The governing Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), headed by President Bakr, institutionalized the interweaving of the party with the state machinery and with secular society at large. The new Constitution also formalized party supremacy by stating that the RCC, the highest state body, had the right to select its new members from the regional leadership of the party. The party tightened its grip over the armed forces, police and intelligence (Hiro, 2002).

The governing RCC then initiated programs aimed at the establishment of a "socialist, unionist, and democratic" Iraq. This was done with scrupulous care for balancing the Baath requirements of Iraq on the one hand and the needs of the "Arab nation" on the other (Gotlieb, 1981).

The RCC also attempted to create a strong and unified Iraq through formal government channels and political campaigns designed to eradicate what it called "harmful pre-revolutionary values and practices." It called for abandonment of traditional ways in favor of a new life-style fashioned on the principles of patriotism, national loyalty, collectivism, participation, selflessness, love of labor, and civic responsibility (Marr, 1985).

The regime, however, was confronted with a wide range of problems, such as ethnic and sectarian tensions, the stagnant condition of agriculture, commerce, and industry, the inefficiency and the corruption of government, and the lack of political consensus among the three main sociopolitical groups: the Shiite Arabs, the Sunni Arabs, and the Kurds. The difficulties of consensus building were compounded by the pervasive apathy and mistrust at the grassroots levels of all sects, by the shortage of qualified party cadres to serve as the standard-bearers of the Baath regime, and by the Kurdish armed insurgency (Marr, 1985).

In the hope of winning public support, the Baath allowed limited forms of political expression. In 1970, it reached an agreement with the Kurdish leadership to grant the Kurds full autonomy within democratic Iraq by 1974. As a consequence, my father was able to reunite with us and together we returned home to Kurdistan. The Kurdish area was in a festive mood, with the *Peshmarga* (the Kurdish guerillas) walking in the streets, greeting the public and establishing a form of national identity.

With the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War in October 1973, Iraq dispatched troops to the Syrian-Israeli front. The war impelled the Baath to take complete control of Iraq's oil resources, and the regime became one of the strongest proponents of an Arab oil boycott of Israel's supporters (Hiro, 2002). These events emphasized both the importance and the instability of the Middle East to the United States. The Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the subsequent oil embargo by the Arab oil producing nations had once again alerted the U.S. government to the importance of the region to American interests. President Nixon considered launching airborne troops to seize the oil fields in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. The embargo, however, was lifted before any American military action took place. In Iraq, the United States began to increase its military support for the Kurdish leadership via Iran in order to reignite its insurgency and exert pressure on the Baath government to change its policies (Paul, 2002).

In 1973, after graduating from high school, I applied to the Iraqi military academy. It was ironic that the military image that haunted me from early childhood became a venue at this time, one that I wanted to conquer by becoming one of its officers. My hope in joining the military, however, was not to force others to bow, kiss bronze feet, or submit, but to organize a revolt against the organ of power and submission in Baghdad and help bring forth progressive changes that would benefit the suffering masses. With my early youth filled with news of military coups, I figured – why not lead one of my own as well? Fortunately, this teenage adventurous dream did not materialize. Once the interviewing committee discovered that I was not a member of the Baath Party, a requirement for admission to military school, and that I was a Kurd, my application was rejected.

Then, I was accepted at the college of civil engineering in Basra in southern Iraq. In Basra, I joined the Kurdish Student Union and became active in promoting a grassroots campaign in support of the Kurdish people. Some of my assignments were to organize public functions in the city's parks to celebrate March 21, the Kurdish New Year (Newroze), distribute political pamphlets in support of the Kurdish nationalist movement, and increase public awareness of the Baath's increasing violation of human rights and suppression of political freedoms in Iraq.

In March 1974, the Baath announced its promised autonomy law for the Kurds, excluding the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and my hometown of Khanaquine from the autonomous region. I did not know the ethnic make-up of Kirkuk and was unable to challenge the government's claim that the city lacked a Kurdish majority in order to be included in the autonomous area. But I knew my hometown and was aware that the majority of its residents were Kurds.

When I went home for a visit during spring break, I noticed long lines of buses guarded by armed soldiers near my house. My neighbors and friends were being loaded onto the buses to be deported to Iran. In their place, Arabs were brought from southern Iraq in order to change the city's demographic and ethnic identity into that of an Arabic city. It was then that I understood the reason for the Baath Party to relocate all these people.

I returned to Basra while the political atmosphere was charged with tension and anticipation of the Kurdish leadership's response to the government's new law. As I expected, within months, the Kurdish leadership resumed its armed struggle against the central government in Baghdad. Many of my Kurdish friends at the university joined the uprising in the north, but I had to stay and risk being arrested, since my father wished for no disruption in my education, even if it was for a cause that he believed in.

Unfortunately, events often take place despite our calculations and wishes. It was in mid-May 1974 that the Iraqi secret police came to arrest me while I was asleep in my dormitory room. Thanks to my alert roommate's warning from the floor below, I was able to jump from the window and run to the train station, take the train to Baghdad, and from there ride a minibus to Kurdistan and join the Kurdish uprising.

## **The Kurdish Uprising**

I was 20 years old when I arrived in Kurdistan. The coordinating committee of the uprising, directed by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, sent me to the city of Qalat Dizza for the purpose of continuing my education in the newly created University of Kurdistan that was located in that city. Other university students, who had escaped and joined the uprising for similar reasons, greeted me as I arrived to Qalat Dizza. Many were my friends from Khanaquine or had attended the University of Basra. We were placed in local hotels, awaiting the start of classes, and spent the time discussing politics or reminiscing about the past.

A week later, two Iraqi MiGs arrived and started bombing the city with napalm. I was, as the others, running aimlessly, searching for shelter. As I was running, I passed by body parts, mutilated dead students, and burned buildings. What frightened me most was seeing a body running toward me while missing its head. It ran for a few seconds before it collapsed. The raid lasted for only a few minutes, but it seemed like hours. After the MiGs disappeared, people started to run to the nearby mountains. I joined a few friends and walked through the mountains toward the uprising's headquarter in Nowperdan. After walking for nearly a week, we arrived there, only to be welcomed by the Kurdish officials' sarcasm and ridicule for leaving Qallat Dizza. The officials then separated us into groups. Some were assigned

positions as school teachers in refugee camps near the Iranian borders. Others joined the *Peshmarga* in fighting the advancing Iraqi army. I joined the Kurdish radio station as an anchorperson and also worked part-time as a cartoonist for a periodical published by the Kurdistan Democratic Youth Organization.

The daily bombing of Kurdistan continued, and the thunderous sound of military jets altered whatever normality was left in my life. I was unable to fall asleep without being awakened, either by raids or by nightmares.

At its peak, the conflict involved 45,000 Kurdish *Peshmargas* who pinned down four-fifths of Iraq's 100,000-plus troops and nearly half of its 1,390 tanks. The Kurds liberated some 25,000 sq miles with a population of 1.5 million adjacent to the Iranian border. They achieved this with the assistance of the Shah who, besides supplying U.S. and Israeli arms to the Kurds, used his troops to cover the insurgents with artillery fire and anti-aircraft missiles. Periodic skirmishes erupted between the armies of Iraq and Iran, all along their 750-mile border. By early 1975, both sides realized the danger of a full-scale war, aware that it would lead *inter alia* to immediate destruction of their vital oil installations, which neither could afford (Hiro, 2001).

The uprising continued with no decisive end favoring either side. I saw Iranian and Israeli officers passing by in military jeeps going toward the front, carrying military supply boxes sent from Egypt. But despite all that help, Iraq, with its massive oil wealth, was able to secure more support, especially from the Soviet block. Eventually, in March 1975, the Kurdish uprising collapsed due to the Algiers Accord between the late Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein. The Shah promised to stop aiding the Kurds, and Saddam promised to expel the late Ayatollah Khomeini from Iraq.

Almost immediately after the signing of the Algiers Accord, Iraqi forces went on the offensive and defeated the Kurdish *Peshmargas*, which were unable to hold out without Iranian support. Under the amnesty plan, about 70 percent of the *Peshmargas* surrendered to the Iraqi army. Some remained in the hills of Kurdistan to continue fighting, and about 30,000 crossed the border to Iran to join civilian refugees, then estimated at between 100,000 and 200,000 (Ghareeb, 1981).

Of those who returned to Iraq, many were either deported or executed. Others, including myself, decided to take refuge in Iran. We were first placed in refugee tent camps for nearly eight months, and then we were dispersed throughout various Iranian cities. I was given permission to attend the University of Tehran to resume my studies. At night, I had to sleep inside a tent that was set up for me in a park near the university by the Red Lion and Sun relief organization (the Iranian equivalent of the American Red Cross).

## **From Captivity to Freedom**

While at the university, I was exposed to the Iranian students' movement against the corrupt regime of the Shah. Since the Shah betrayed the Kurds and sold them out to Saddam in

exchange for Khomeini's departure from Iraq, I found comfort in attending a student rally against the Shah. Unfortunately, by doing so, I attracted the attention of the Savak, the Iranian secret police. I was arrested by the Savak and imprisoned in Aveen's torture camp in southern Tehran. After five months of daily and continuous physical and psychological torture, suddenly all forms of abuse stopped. Within a matter of days, I was permitted to meet with two foreigners. They seemed to be either European or American. They had the UN insignia on their coat pocket.

The visitors asked me if I knew of the reason for my imprisonment, and I said that I attended some Iranian student rally. Apparently, that was not a just cause for imprisonment or torture. The two foreign visitors then promised to advocate on my behalf and return with a release order. I was too disillusioned at the time to take their promise seriously. I did not even ask who the two men were. But, as a human being yearning for survival, I was hoping for the best.

I stayed in Aveen for another month, but without torture or harassment. In September 1977, I was released from prison with the condition of leaving the Iranian territories within 48 hours or I would be handed over to the Iraqi authorities. Within that short period of time, I knocked on the doors of every Arab embassy, as well as the Soviet, Chinese, and French embassies, pleading my case and begging asylum. No one responded. I grew weary and anxious. The prospect of handing me over to Iraq had only one consequence: death by execution.

As I was returning to my hotel room (paid for by the Savak), I passed by the American embassy. There was a long line in front of its doors, with people waiting for appointments to authorize their visas. The Savak person who was accompanying me suggested that I might try my luck with the American embassy. I refused.

Throughout my life, I heard nothing but bad things about America. Although generated by the official Iraqi propaganda machine, it succeeded in convincing me that America was an imperialist nation that was taken over by greed, selfishness, crime and racism. As such, America was the last place on earth that I wanted for an asylum. The Savak person then replied: "Don't be so quick in rejecting the Americans. If it was not for America's president, you would've been a toast by now." Later I discovered that the two visitors who came to see me in prison were Americans, sent by President Jimmy Carter as part of his international campaign to end human rights abuse in countries that were receiving U.S. aid.

Comparing the American bureaucracy under the Carter administration, a system that was reaching out to the world to do noble things, with that I had witnessed in Iraq since an early age, a bureaucracy that was built on manipulating power to force the will of the few through subversive and tyrannical methods on the public, I began to see the difference between good and bad administrative practices and realize what a dysfunctional bureaucracy was capable of doing. Without such comparison, all forms of government for me would have been mere forms of submission and violence.

I entered the American embassy in Tehran and pleaded my case to the Consul. To my surprise, he authorized my entry to the United States as a political refugee without hesitation.

I departed from Mehrabad's Airport in Tehran with a hope for a new future shining on the horizon. I had nothing to take with me except for the clothes that I was wearing and three dollars in my pocket. After a short stay in Frankfurt, Germany, where my immigration papers were processed, I arrived in New York City on September 29, 1977. I was twenty-two years old.

America was not at all what I expected or heard about. There were no cowboys brandishing their guns in the street. People seemed friendly and at ease to have yet another foreigner coming to their country. Everyone in America seemed to have come from somewhere else. This was a strange phenomenon to me. The entire world seemed to assemble itself here.

Three striking observations first caught my attention. The first occurred as I was walking in Manhattan on my second day in America. Standing on the same street corner and not too distant from one another, there were two men. One was handing out directions to what seemed to be a new X-rated cinema, and the other was reading from the Bible and calling for the repentance of sins. Having such two contrasts existing as part of what seemed to be a normal life was testimony to freedom in this country. Freedom not only from political oppression, but also from social and traditional restraints. It is perhaps another matter to speak of the causality for these two contrasts, but having them rejecting one another in peace, without forcing either notion on the public, was something to be admired.

The other observation I had was seeing huge skyscrapers in Manhattan, representing wealth and power. Yet, at night, I saw withered homeless men sleeping near the garbage dumpsters in the back allies of these same symbols of wealth. How could such a contrast exist in the same place?

The third observation that I came to learn was that many Americans did not bother to learn about other parts of the world. When I introduced myself as someone from Iraq, no one even seemed to hear of the country. Some confused it with Iran because of the news regarding Iran and its Islamic revolution. It was not until 1990 that Iraq and Saddam became household names, and people began to know Iraq through its tyrannical regime. They did not know it as a country that had offered humanity its first taste of civilization through accomplishments in writing, astronomy, mathematics, and public administration.

## **The Iran-Iraq War**

Although I was imprisoned under the Shah's regime, and it was the Shah's betrayal of the Kurdish people that caused the collapse of their uprising in 1975, nevertheless I felt pity for the man after the collapse of his government in 1979. Traveling from one state to another in search of a safe heaven, with no country, including the United States, offering him refuge was equally sad. President Sadat of Egypt finally welcomed him to Egypt, where he spent the final years of his life. Perhaps this was a lesson not to place your people's interest second to others, especially to that of the United States. Sadly, the U.S. has a long history of abandoning its former associates once things start taking a turn for the worst.

Concern about the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a gradual warming of relations between Iraq and the United States. American National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski publicly encouraged Iraq to attack Iran and take back the Shat-al-Arab waterway. Most American foreign service officers despised the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran for having held diplomats of the US embassy hostage for 444 days. The “Carter Doctrine” was established in 1979, stating that America would intervene militarily in the region to assure its access to oil. In that same year, Saddam Hussein became President of Iraq (Henderson, 1991).

In 1980, Saddam wanted to replace the Shah as the next cop for Western interests in the region. In September he invaded the western part of Iran. He thought Iran was weakened after the Islamic revolution and a quick victory was achievable after a massive show of force. Unfortunately, victory was anything but quick for either side. Iran responded to Saddam’s invasion with massive human waves, and in 1983 the Iranian army was about to take Baghdad. The possibility of a victorious Iran created a nightmare for the West and the United States, and Western and American aid started pouring into Iraq. Ironically, it was in 1983 that I became a naturalized citizen of the United States. It was also around that time that Saddam began developing his weapons of mass destruction in order to use them against the Iranian army and stop the advancing attacks.

There was a change in relations between America and Iraq when Ronald Reagan became president. Fearing the rise of the Soviet influence in Iran, and fearing Iranian takeover of the region, the Reagan administration began actively arming and supporting Saddam. By 1983, Iraq was removed from the list of terrorist sponsoring nations. America was also actively sharing military intelligence with Saddam’s army. This aid included arming Iraq with potent weapons, providing satellite imagery of Iranian troop deployments and tactical planning for battles, assisting with air strikes, and assessing damage after bombing campaigns (Pitt and Ritter, 2002).

Following further high-level policy review, Ronald Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive (NSDD-114) on November 26, 1983, concerning U.S. policy toward the Iran-Iraq war. The directive reflected the administration's priorities, calling for heightened regional military cooperation to defend oil facilities and measures to improve U.S. military capabilities in the Persian Gulf (Battle, 2003).

Soon thereafter, Donald Rumsfeld, the head of the multinational pharmaceutical company G.D. Searle & Co. at the time, was dispatched to the Middle East as a presidential envoy. His December 1983 tour of regional capitals included Baghdad, where he was to establish "direct contact between an envoy of President Reagan and President Saddam Hussein." Rumsfeld met with Saddam, and the two discussed regional issues of mutual interest, shared enmity toward Iran and Syria, and discussed U.S. efforts to find alternative routes to transport Iraq's oil (Battle, 2003).

The Reagan administration allowed the Iraqis to buy a wide variety of “dual use” equipment and materials from American suppliers. The shopping list included a computerized database for Saddam’s security police, helicopters to transport Iraqi officials, television cameras for



video surveillance applications, chemical-analysis equipment for the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), and numerous shipments of “bacteria/fungi/protozoa” to the IAEC. The bacteria cultures were used to make biological weapons, including anthrax (Dickey and Thomas, 2002).

A US Senate inquiry in 1995 accidentally revealed that during the Iran-Iraq War the United States had sent Iraq samples of all the strains of germs used by Iraq to make biological weapons. The strains were sent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Type Culture Collection to the same sites in Iraq that UN weapons inspectors later identified as part of Iraq’s biological weapons program. These shipments continued until November 1989 (Chomsky, 2000).

So strong was the hold of pro-Iraq lobby on the Reagan administration that it succeeded in getting the White House to frustrate the Senate’s attempt to penalize Iraq for violating the Geneva Protocol on Chemical Weapons, which it had signed. This led Saddam to believe that Washington was firmly on his side, a conclusion that paved the way for his invasion of Kuwait and the 1991 Gulf War (RUPE, 2003).

U.S. support for Iraq further blossomed when the United States provided economic aid to Iraq in the form of Commodities Credit Corporation guarantees to purchase U.S. agricultural products (\$400 million in 1983, \$513 million in 1984, and \$652 million in 1987). This allowed Iraq to use money it otherwise would have spent on food to buy weapons and other military supplies (Hiro, 2002).

The most reprehensible of Saddam’s actions that the United States chose to overlook was his campaign against the Kurds, known as al-Anfal, a twisted reference to a verse in the Koran. In March 1987, Saddam appointed his cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, as governor of northern Iraq. Less than six weeks after his appointment, Majid employed chemical warfare to wipe out several towns in the Balisan valley. In February 1988, Majid unleashed the al-Anfal campaign. Iraqi forces began clearing areas of Kurdish residence with massive bombardments of chemical weapons and high explosives, followed by army sweeps that often killed anyone left alive and razed to the ground anything left standing (Pollack, 2002).

On March 15, 1988, Majid conducted his most famous attack, swamping the Kurdish town of Halabcha with several varieties of chemical weapons and killing at least five thousand Kurdish civilians. When the campaign finally ended in 1989, some two hundred thousand Kurds were dead, roughly 1.5 million had been forcibly resettled, huge swaths of Kurdistan had been scorched by chemical warfare, and four thousand villages had been razed (Pollack, 2002).

Yet, despite these crimes, politicians in America seemed unmoved or unconcerned about Saddam’s use of weapons of mass destruction either against Iran or the Iraqi Kurds. At the time, there were more objections raised by the Reagan administration against the government in Nicaragua than against Saddam. After bringing myself to believe that America was a country that stood for freedom and democracy, it pained me to see its foreign policy becoming another form to serve power interests.

## The Gulf War

I was living in Boston when Saddam invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Many Arab-Americans who were living there at the time cheered the invasion as a slap on Kuwaitis' faces whom they regarded as arrogant and elitist. When President Bush began to rally an international coalition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, I asked myself why America did not do the same when Iraq invaded Iran ten years earlier? And when the Gulf War began in 1991, it appeared to me that it was more about oil than freedom or democracy. After all, the Kuwaiti Royal family was no less democratic than Saddam.

As the bombs started falling on Baghdad, I was imagining them falling on my mother's head, who was living in Baghdad at the time. It was painful to watch the news, knowing those who were killed were average Iraqi workers and peasants who were drafted to the army against their will and forced to fight and die. In public, as I was driving to work or to class, some passed me by, making the effort not to hear them yelling, "Go back to Iraq," among many other negative comments.

For forty-two days the allied forces bombed and strafed, sending 2,000 sorties a day against the Iraqi armies and air force (Pitt and Ritter, 2002). Ninety-three percent of munitions used by the allies consisted of unguided "dumb" bombs, dropped primarily by Vietnam-era B-52 carpet bombers. About 70 percent of bombs and missiles missed their targets, frequently destroying private homes and killing civilians. The United States also made devastating use of anti-personnel weapons, including fuel-air explosives and 15,000-pound "daisy-cutter" bombs, napalm, and 61,000 cluster bombs (RUPE, 2003).

This style of warfare resulted in massive civilian casualties. In one incident, as many as four hundred men, women, and children were killed by one blow when the United States targeted a civilian air raid shelter in the Ameriyya district of western Baghdad. Thousands died in a similar fashion due to daylight raids in heavily populated residential areas and business districts throughout the country (RUPE, 2003). Total civilian casualties during the war were 2,278 (Simon, 2003).

Meanwhile, between 100,000 and 200,000 Iraqi soldiers lost their lives in a massive overkill. The heaviest toll was inflicted by US carpet-bombing of Iraqi positions near the Kuwait-Iraq border, where tens of thousands of ill-fed, ill-equipped conscripts were helplessly pinned down in trenches. Thousands were buried alive as tanks equipped with plows and bulldozers smashed through earthwork defenses and rolled over foxholes. Others were cut down as they tried to surrender or flee (RUPE, 2003).

The war ended with Iraq forced out of Kuwait. Shortly afterward, an uprising broke out against the Baath regime in the Shiites' south, followed by another one in the Kurdish north. They were encouraged by President Bush's call for the Iraqi people to rise and push the dictator aside. Unfortunately, Bush left the rebellious Iraqis to be killed by Saddam's Republican Guard, without coming to their aid. Bush amassed a coalition of nearly 33 countries to protect the Kuwaiti oil, but he neglected to send even one aircraft to prevent the

slaughter of thousands of innocent Iraqis. So much for America's democracy and idealism! It seemed to me that such empty rhetoric was soaked in oil rather than in human consciousness.

President Bush and his National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft explained the reason for stopping the war after the liberation of Kuwait and not continuing to Baghdad. In their 1997 book, *A World Transformed*, they wrote the following: "extending the ground war into an occupation of Iraq...would have incurred incalculable human and political costs... We would have been forced to occupy Baghdad and, in effect, rule Iraq. The coalition would instantly have collapsed...there was no viable exit strategy we could see...the United States could conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land" (American Progress, 2004).

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Bush was establishing the principle that America could deal with threats to world peace without recourse to an imperial presidency. He was inaugurating a new era in which major wars were not to be launched by presidential fiat, but only after the considered approval of representatives of the nation and the world (Ackerman, 2002).

I painted a 48 by 30 canvas of a Kurdish man, holding his infant child while both were frozen to death on a street in Halabcha. I sent the painting to President Bush in the White House, hoping that the image of Saddam's horror would persuade him to change his policy and help the Iraqi people to topple Saddam. Unfortunately, that did not happen. The Kurds managed to have a safe haven created for them in northern Iraq under Operation Provide Comfort, but that was merely a response to the embarrassment once the public worldwide became aware of the massive Kurdish exodus to the Turkish borders as they were trying to escape Saddam's retaliation.

Saddam continued to rule Iraq. My main concern was for my family, especially my parents, whom I had not seen since I escaped from the University of Basra in 1974. I avoided calling or writing a simple letter to them since a call or a letter from America might have caused them to be interrogated or tortured by the Iraqi secret police. I was hoping to smuggle them out of Iraq with the help of friends and relatives, who were able to maneuver in and out of Iraq to Turkey or Iran. The first one who managed to escape was my sister and her two young children, walking through the mountains of Kurdistan and making their way out to freedom to Iran and from there to Sweden. Then, my brother followed, and I kept hoping for mom and dad to get out.

Iraq was placed under heavy and foolish UN-imposed sanctions that punished Iraqis more than the regime. The country that was once the bedrock of civilization and one of the wealthiest nations in the Middle East returned to the Stone Age.

Denis Halliday, the Irish Quaker who was sent to Baghdad by the United Nations to supervise the oil-for-food arrangement under which revenues from exports of Iraqi oil were entrusted to the custody of the United Nations to buy food and other humanitarian supplies, resigned his post in 1998 in disgust. He directed a bitter blast at the policy that caused four thousand to five thousand children to die unnecessarily every month due to the impact of sanctions because of the breakdown of water and sanitation, inadequate diet, and the bad internal health situation (Cockburn and Cockburn, 1999).

Halliday was replaced by Hans von Sponeck, who also resigned in 2000 on the same grounds as Halliday. Jutta Burghardt, Director of the UN World Food Program operation in Iraq, also resigned, saying, "I fully support what Mr. Von Sponeck was saying" (RUPE, 2003).

The UN carried out a nationwide survey in Iraq of health and nutrition. It found that mortality rates among children under five in central and southern Iraq had doubled. That suggested that 500,000 excess deaths of children by 1997 were caused by the UN-imposed sanctions. Excess deaths of children continued at the rate of 5,000 a month. UNICEF estimated that 70 percent of children's deaths in Iraq resulted from diarrhea and acute respiratory infections. This was the result of the breakdown of systems to provide clean water, sanitation, and electrical power. Adults, too, particularly the elderly and other vulnerable sections, succumbed. The overall toll, of all ages, was 1.2 million in a 1997 UNICEF report (RUPE, 2003).

Yet, politicians in America did not seem to care about the plight and suffering of the Iraqi people. Saddam became a political ticket here to gain cheap votes. Whenever a politician had some sort of personal or political problem, he used Iraq as a scapegoat to justify dropping a few cruise missiles on civilians under the guise of punishing Saddam. An example of that was Operation Desert Fox of 1998.

Desert Fox consisted of four days of air and cruise missile strikes. The official goal of the attack was to degrade Iraq's WMD programs and its ability to threaten its neighbors (Pollack, 2002). Precision bombardment with cruise missiles made many walls crumble. But there was nothing of substance within those walls. UN inspection crumbled with the buildings in Baghdad, and inspections ceased. And a once-mighty coalition of allies had disintegrated (Ritter, 1999).

The decision to launch the attack followed a fierce debate among Clinton's advisers, who knew such a move on the eve of Clinton's possible impeachment would raise charges he was using the military to divert attention from his domestic troubles (CNN, December 17, 1998). On Saturday, December 19 at 1:30 P.M. EST, the House of Representatives impeached Clinton on the first article of perjury and again on the third article of obstructing justice. Half an hour later, the case went to the U.S. Senate, which had the final authority to dismiss him. At 4:30 P.M. Clinton stopped the bombing of Iraq after one hundred hours. By then, the Pentagon had fired 415 cruise missiles, 90 more than in the Gulf War, and dropped 600 laser-guided bombs (Hiro, 2002).

## **September 11, 2001**

It was another routine Tuesday morning when I arrived at work in Kalamazoo, Michigan. As I was reading the briefs and notes of the prior day left for me by my staff, the phone rang. On the other side of the phone was a former classmate. She asked if I was watching the news. I told her no and asked why she called, since this was a rarity. She said, "They attacked the WTC towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington." I asked again, "Who is they?" She said, "The television reporters suspect Islamic terrorists." My immediate reaction was that I hoped cooler heads would prevail.

I then watched the horror on television. It was so unbelievable that it seemed like one of Hollywood's movies. Who had done such a horrible thing, and why? The thought of Saddam being behind it did enter my mind. But then I thought: Saddam was not suicidal to invite American retaliation against him. What mattered for Saddam first and foremost was survival, not a crusade and open confrontation with a super-power. The attacks had to be planned by someone else. Within less than a day, the Bush administration identified al-Qaeda as the network responsible for the attacks. Al-Qaeda justified these attacks to be retaliation for the U.S. troops' presence in the Muslims' holy land in Saudi Arabia.

During his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush identified Iraq, along with Iran and North Korea, as the axis of evil. I thought North Korea was placed there just for show in order for the administration not to appear as to be targeting only Islamic nations. I also began to suspect that Saddam was next on Bush's hit list.

It seemed that the entire political career of George W. Bush was based on preserving family honor and seeking revenge for his father. He ran for governor of Texas in order to unseat Anne Richard, the Democratic governor who insulted former President Bush during the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Now, George W. Bush was gearing toward a war with Iraq in order to make Saddam pay for his attempt to assassinate the former president during his trip to Kuwait in 1993. Targeting Saddam, in my opinion, was not part of a comprehensive strategy to correct past failed policies, nor was it aimed to defend the Iraqi people and their yearning for freedom. Rather, it was a personal commitment by the president to avenge his father's honor.

According to Paul O'Neill, former Secretary of Treasury under President George W. Bush, "from the very beginning, there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go. Going after Saddam was topic A, ten days after the inauguration, eight months before September 11. It was all about finding a way to invade Iraq, with the president saying 'Go find me a way to do this'" (CBS, January 11, 2004).

If Saddam was to be removed and the president was eager to do so, so be it. As an Iraqi who suffered under the tyrannical Baath regime, nothing was more pleasing to me than to witness a day of the demise and destruction of this criminal regime. But in order to do so, the president needed to be honest and state his real reasons for going to war with Saddam rather than making up bogus excuses that not many people believed. He could also have followed President Clinton's example in Kosovo and decided to go to Iraq as a matter of humanitarian intervention to stop Saddam's crimes against humanity. No one would have faulted him for that even if there were minor international objections.

There had to be something drastic done in Iraq in order to change the status quo. The economic sanctions were crippling the Iraqi people, and lifting the sanctions had the risk of reviving Saddam's military power. The Iraqi regime was living on borrowed time and Iraqi sovereignty was fatally weakened. In order for America to win the hearts and minds of the oppressed Iraqi people and people in the Middle East, and to affirm its leadership in the world, it needed an honest approach to the Iraqi crisis. This approach would have begun by sincere self-criticism and evaluation, admitting past mistakes and hypocrisy in its policy

toward Iraq, and then designing a clear strategy with other nations in the world to interfere in Iraq as a humanitarian response.

## **The Iraq War**

What happened instead was Bush placing himself and his policy toward Iraq on an allegedly high moral ground while blaming Saddam alone for the atrocities committed against the Iraqi people and their neighbors. To me, that was the ultimate hypocrisy, with the United States exonerating itself of any role that it had in the past in supporting Saddam's crimes.

Then it was the effort to link the war on Saddam with the war on terrorism. I failed to see the connection. Saddam's regime was a terrorist regime against the Iraqi people. But there was no evidence of Saddam's involvement with al-Qaeda and other Islamic fundamentalists. On the contrary, Saddam and the Islamists were foes and fought one another. Therefore, I thought of the attempt to link Saddam with Islamic terrorism by proxy as a ploy by the Bush administration to justify its war. The same argument could be applied to the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) claim. If Saddam had such capacity, Israel would have destroyed it long ago rather than waiting for Washington to do so. Also, the UN weapons inspectors indicated that it was only a matter of time to verify if Iraq continued to possess these weapons.

According to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, the Bush administration focused on Iraq's WMD and used it as the primary justification for toppling Saddam Hussein because it was politically convenient (Usborne, 2003). A Pentagon committee led by Paul Wolfowitz advised Bush to include a reference in his 2002 January State of the Union address about Iraq trying to purchase 500 tons of uranium from Niger in order to bolster the case for war in Iraq, despite the fact that the CIA warned Wolfowitz's committee that the information was unreliable (Leopold, 2003).

Unfortunately, the Bush administration hyped the WMD issue in order to capitalize on the political atmosphere created after September 11 and push its own political agenda in Iraq. This was achievable partly because of faulty intelligence, partly because of misleading information by the Iraqi opposition groups, and partly by Saddam's double agents who proliferated false information as a tactical measure for deterrence purposes.

Since Bush invested so much in building a case for war and deployed nearly 200,000 troops to Kuwait, he, in essence, had boxed himself in one direction: to go to war with Iraq. Commenting in the *New York Times* in August 2002, Defense Advisory Board Chairman Richard Perle stated that "the failure to take on Saddam after what the president said would produce such a collapse of confidence in the president that it would set back the war on terrorism" (Pitt and Ritter, 2002).

Because of such diabolical and unconvincing reasoning to justify a war of choice, the United States lost its leadership edge and credibility in the world. Millions of people throughout the world took to the streets to demonstrate against what they perceived to be lies by a super power in order to justify a war of its own choice.

Many countries, including some of America's traditional allies, expressed their frustration with the Bush team. These countries included Canada, France, Germany, Pakistan, China, Russia, South Africa, India, and others. Within the US itself, more than thirty major cities issued resolutions in opposition to the Bush policy of preemption toward Iraq (Steinberg, 2002).

Bush faced an almost universal isolation, which was highlighted by the statement of Jean Chretien, the Prime Minister of Canada, a traditional ally of America: "As for going in and changing the Iraqi regime, as opposed to going in and ensuring that there are no weapons of mass destruction, we haven't signed on to that." All this was in stark contrast to the time when, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, world leaders rushed to express their backing for the war on al-Qaeda (Hiro, 2002).

Among the early critics of the Bush Iraq policy was Senator John Kerry, a veteran of the Vietnam War, who accused Bush of allowing his "rhetoric to get ahead of his thinking." Another person who was unequivocal about the Bush agenda was President Jimmy Carter. At first, argued Carter, Bush responded to the challenge of September 11 in an effective and intelligent way, "but in the meantime a group of conservatives worked to get approval for their long held ambitions under the mantle of 'the war on terror'" (Kingston, 2003).

The war took place in March 2003. I found myself helpless to witness my adoptive country once again about to kill people from my native country because of one man, one tyrant, one pathetic figure that should never have lasted in power for this long. Luckily this time, my parents had escaped to Jordan while hiding in the back of a truck, and from there they made their way to freedom in Sweden, joining my brother and sister. But, there were millions of other Iraqis who were still trapped in Iraq, waiting to see what would become of them and their country after yet another American war.

All major American media networks carried the events of the war, or at least one side of the story: the side of the American troops and their advance toward Baghdad. Iraqis and their suffering during the war were purposely omitted. According to Iraq Body Watch, more than 7000 Iraqi civilians were killed by cluster bombs during the war. Yet, not a single story about the death of even one Iraqi civilian was covered in the American media.

I had to get the news from elsewhere, such as al-Jazeera Television. The atrocities were painful to watch. Innocent children blown to pieces, old men torn apart, hospitals unequipped to care for the mutilated bodies. This was going on, while American television showed Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld eagerly describing his Shock and Awe campaign against Baghdad as though he was describing a show of festive fireworks during the Fourth of July celebrations in Boston or New York. What Secretary Rumsfeld failed to mention was that under the cluster bombs of his Shock and Awe campaign there were real people that had nothing to do with Saddam, yet they died as mere collateral damage of America's war of liberation.

On April 9, 2003, the regime of Saddam Hussein fell. Despite the violence of the war, I joined millions of other Iraqis in celebrating the demise of one of modern history's most brutal regimes. Regardless of past mistakes in America's policy toward Iraq, and despite the ill

justification of the 2003 war, I was willing to give the Bush administration the benefit of a doubt and hoped with all sincerity that things would go well in Iraq and that America's efforts would bridge a strong friendship between Iraqis and Americans based on honesty, sincerity, mutual respect, and mutual interest.

## **Post-Saddam Iraq**

Unfortunately, the Bush administration's management of post-Saddam Iraq was anything but hopeful of building positive relationships between Iraqis and Americans. On April 9, 2004, a year after the collapse of Saddam's regime, instead of friendship, there was violence, mayhem, and bullets exchanged between US troops and average Iraqi citizens. President Bush managed to turn the United States' efforts in Iraq from the liberator of oppressed people to a savage conqueror that did not hesitate to repeat some of Saddam's own brutal tactics in appointing yes-men, plundering Iraq's natural resources for the benefit of the few, torturing prisoners in the same torture camps that once were used by Saddam, such as the one in Abu Ghraib, and killing women and children hiding in mosques, as happened during the sieges of Falluja, Kufa and Najaf. What had happened in a year that turned Iraqis from jubilant and grateful people to enemies of U.S. troops in Iraq?

Today, many Iraqis view America as an occupying power that came to Iraq solely for its own benefits, not as a friend or a liberator. Even the comical installation of a puppet governing council in June 2003 and later an interim regime composed of CIA operatives in June 2004 as an indication of the return of Iraqi sovereignty was nothing but a ploy for political consumption here at home during the presidential election year.

Iraqi sovereignty was established by appointees appointing appointees to select appointees to select appointees. Add the fact that the U.S. Civil Administrator in Iraq was appointed to his post by Bush, and Bush to his office by the US Supreme Court, Iraqis were to have a new democratic tradition of the "appointocracy:" rule by an appointee's appointee's appointees' appointees' appointees' selectees (Klein, 2004).

In my opinion, several things took place that gradually alienated most Iraqis and turned them against America. These things can be summarized as the following:

- The Pentagon's airlifting of Ahmed Chalabi from his hotel room in Washington, D.C. to Iraq in order to groom him as the next president of Iraq. Chalabi is a convicted embezzler with questionable character, who lacks support among the Iraqi people.
- The dismantling of the Iraqi Army and police force. This resulted in an increase in the number of unemployed Iraqis (nearly 1.5 million in Baghdad alone). It also created a power vacuum after the collapse of the regime that resulted in chaos, looting, and disorder. One of the most tragic events was the looting of the Iraqi Antiquity Museum in Baghdad and the theft of more than 17,000 pieces of priceless historic artifacts that caused a loss not only to Iraq alone, but also to human civilization as a whole. Iraqis now question why the American troops were careful in protecting the building of Iraq's Oil



Ministry once they entered Baghdad but neglected to protect Baghdad's Antiquity Museum? Was oil more important to Americans than Iraq's history, heritage and identity?

- The dismantling of Iraq's infrastructure and administrative system in the name of deBaathification of the country. This resulted in the disabling of the professional cadre that was in charge of providing public services to the Iraqi cities, such as electricity, clean water, and taking care of other vital civic needs. As a result, major Iraqi cities were left without electricity and clean water for nearly eight months after the collapse of the regime, adding to the increased sense of resentment and hopelessness.
- Privatizing Iraq's economy and natural resources and granting huge contracts to American oil companies, such as Halliburton, without the consent of the Iraqi people or their representatives.
- The creation of a rubber-stamp, symbolic Iraqi Governing Council in June 2003 that lacked any power and authority. It also lacked respect and legitimacy among the Iraqi people. The council was composed of 25 members, emphasizing Iraq's ethnic and religious divide instead of its unity. The members were hand picked by the American civil administrator of Iraq, instead of the Iraqi people, and most of them were CIA stooges and individuals who lacked support among the Iraqi people.
- The creation of an interim Iraqi cabinet headed by relatives of the Iraqi Governing Council members, most of whom were CIA puppets. This discredited the cabinet as an illegal body and alienated it and its American creator from average Iraqis.
- The authoring of Iraq's new Provisional Constitution by Noah Fieldman on behalf of the American Civil Administrator in Iraq, without the participation or inputs of the Iraqi people. Most Iraqis rejected this constitution as illegal.
- Maintaining various armed Iraqi militia factions, such as the Kurdish and Shiites militia, after the collapse of the regime. This created a warlords' phenomenon in Iraq similar to that of Afghanistan. It also alienated the Sunnis and other minorities in Iraq, such as the Turkmons, and threatened their social base. As a result, some of the Sunnis and Turkmons resorted to violence as a preemptive strike against possible future Kurdish and Shiites hegemony. In April 2004, the US civil administrator of Iraq attempted to disband only one militia unit that was headed by Muqtada al-Sadir, a young Shiite cleric who stood in opposition of the occupation, while allowing for other Shiites and Kurdish militia to continue. The confrontations with al-Sadir's militia escalated the level of violence in Iraq to include major Shiite cites in the south.
- The use of excessive force by US troops in Iraq in order to deal with Iraqi insurgents. This resulted in senseless deaths of women and children who got caught in the crossfire. The American media did not carry the news and images of Iraqi civilians who were killed by their occupiers. I watched it once again on the al-Jazera television. Seeing an American sniper aiming at a mosque in Falluja and shooting unarmed civilians reminded me of the soldier who was trying to force me at gunpoint to kiss the feet of a statue when I was six years old, or the soldier who was riding in the back seat of my father's car, guiding him with a rifle to prison. All these images were illustrative of one thing: subjecting the innocent to empty and meaningless symbols of domination: either a dead statue or an arrogant occupation. What was hurtful to watch was seeing a U.S. Marine in an interview with a reporter during the siege of Falluja. The young Marine was shouting with glee "we killed 700 of the enemy." Enemy? Are the Iraqi people considered now to be the enemy of the United States because they are resisting occupation? If Americans had the right to

fight King George of England and his colonization of America during the War of Independence, why did the Iraqi people not have the same right to reject the occupation of their country?

- America's failure to hold democratic elections in Iraq in order for the Iraqi people to elect their own government. Instead, the Bush administration set an arbitrary date of June 30, 2004 to transfer power to the Iraqis. This was designed for the sole purpose of impacting the presidential elections here in the United States rather than promoting democracy and political independence in Iraq. The transformation of authority was shallow and meaningless since the U.S. continues to be in charge of Iraq's defense, internal security and policies. The only change that this so-called power transfer was able to accomplish was transferring members of the out going Iraqi Governing Council from one symbolic body to another.

## Summary and Lessons Learned

The trajectory in the policy toward Iraq was based on historical circumstances. The underlying motive for the policy was to secure the United States primordial interest as a nation-state serving the power interest of its economic corporations, mainly the oil companies. The policy was not about promoting liberal democracy or protecting human rights in Iraq.

It was the policy's primitive motive to secure the nation-state's interest that guided the United States to neglect recognizing an on-going dichotomy between the Iraqi people and the former repressive Iraqi regimes. We need to understand and recognize the dichotomy between regimes and people in our foreign policy and stop dehumanizing people in other countries if their regimes stand against our interest.

The policy toward Iraq represented the absolute triumph of image over reality, slogans over substance, and make-believe over reality. This policy was able to sell to the American people a package of poisonous initiatives in the name of defending world peace and America's security, such as the continuous bombing of Iraq since 1991, starving its people under crippling sanctions for 12 years, and eventually invading and occupying it in 2003. The policy sold the American people a lemon, while all along they thought they were driving a Cadillac. It was not the lies that were used to perpetuate the policy as something else that caused the most damage to governance in the United States. Rather, it was the myth behind the policy.

The policy's slogans in identifying Saddam as evil and the United States as the embodiment of moral good, and then dividing the world into "either you are with us or against us," were too simplistic and lacked the understanding of complex interconnected dynamics in geopolitics. They were consistent with a Cold War mentality but had no connection with today's reality. Other nations not only rejected this narrow understanding of the world and its final phase of preemptive doctrine, but they also developed alternatives to America's hegemonial foreign policy by creating regional powers able to challenge this policy.

Reducing a complex political system such as the policy toward Iraq to a single-issue system is evidence of ignorance of the complex dynamics of the interconnected relationships between

various interacting players in geopolitics. The better the understanding of such complexity and its multiple layers, the better policy decision-makers are able to choose the most viable solutions for emerging challenges.

The policy toward Iraq in 1990 was based on anger toward Saddam's action in invading Kuwait and taking possession of its oil fields. This anger, however, gradually changed to hate. The difference between anger and hate in politics is that anger is the anticipation of dialogue. Hate, on the other hand, is the end of dialogue. It was such transformation toward hate that locked the policy in a one-sided perspective that justified the use of force as the only means in dealing with Iraq.

Another aspect of the policy was that it allowed presidential extra-ordinary issues to play a hidden role in impacting its trajectory. Examples of that were President Clinton's impeachment trial in 1998 that pushed for the launching of Operation Desert Fox and the signing of the Iraq Liberation Act into law, and President George W. Bush's pronounced dislike of the person of Saddam for his failed attempt to assassinate former President Bush in 1993 that pushed for the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Presidents are human, but they ought not allow their extra-ordinary issues to impact their decision making process in matters that involve governance in the United States.

The policy's regional aim in the Middle East was designed to maintain the political status quo without the emergence of one particular strong nation-state in the region to disrupt the political balance in the entire region (and as a consequence to disrupt or impact U.S. oil interests in the area). As such, the tactical choices adopted by the United States in the region of the Middle East or in Iraq were motivated by a desire to restore and maintain political order in the region that served U.S. interests first and foremost.

The policy's drive toward maintaining political stability in the Middle East, however, resulted in the United States continuously supporting local repressive and authoritarian regimes and fostering dependence based on false prophecy and demagogy in securing peace and promoting democracy. America's support of repressive regimes in the Middle East included supporting even the regime of Saddam Hussein from 1979 to 1991. Such a policy alienated people in the Middle East who continue to suffer at the hand of these repressive regimes, and it exposed the United States as a hypocrite who was interested only in its own welfare at any cost.

In relation to the United Nations, there was a gap since 1990 between U.S. goals in removing Saddam Hussein from power and the goals of the United Nations in only disarming Iraq from weapons of mass destruction. Because of such a gap, the United States misused the UN mission in Iraq and infiltrated the UN inspection teams with U.S. spies for the purpose of achieving America's own political agenda.

The United Nations itself committed several mistakes in Iraq while impacted by U.S. foreign policy. The most obvious mistakes were:

- Allowing the regime of Saddam Hussein to continue representing the Iraqi people as their legitimate government despite the regime's repressive behavior.
- The failure to protect human rights in Iraq due to the failure to enact Article VII of the UN Charter obligating all UN members to enforce the measure.
- Enforcing crippling economic sanctions on Iraq from 1990 to 2003 that devastated the Iraqi people and caused the deaths of millions of Iraqi children because of malnutrition and disease.
- Acting as an extension of the U.S. government by adhering to U.S. political will and legitimizing actions taken by the U.S. government that were in violation of the UN Charter itself. The paradox here is that what the United Nations had considered as illegitimate, such as the U.S. war on Iraq in 2003, it later made legitimate by issuing resolutions 1443, 1483 and 1511 recognizing U.S. occupation and administration of Iraq as legal matters, or having the UN envoy to Iraq, Brahimi, to put his stamp of approval on a U.S.-picked Iraqi interim government in June 2003 that was composed of former CIA operatives. These events are becoming the new trend in the global order, with the illegal becoming legal because of the influence of powerful nation-states such as the United States.

The United Nations is due for an overhaul and a genuine reform that would pull it out of U.S. domination and end its current status as a mere building for representatives of nation-states who come together to aggravate their selfish interest. We need to transform the UN from a war product that emphasizes the power of the few to a true representative of the international will for the benefit of mutual cooperation between free nations, for peace and prosperity.

As of the mid-1990s, the U.S. gradually shifted its policy in Iraq toward dictating its will not only on Iraq and the region of the Middle East but also on the entire international community. This was done instead of seeking international cooperation, as was the case during the Gulf War of 1991. The shift became clearer in 2002-2003 when the Bush administration insisted on launching a preemptive and unilateral war on Iraq without UN approval. The Bush administration's language with the world was that of arrogance and power, flavored with the dictatorial terminology of "Mustology" (other nations must do this, must do that and so on). The United States ought to adopt a new language in its political dialogue with other nations outside "Mustology" and dictation.

The hidden reason for the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein through a military invasion in 2003, however, was to respond to a demand made by al-Qaeda in removing U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia. Prior to September 11, 2001, the United States ignored such demands. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Bush administration decided to avoid future attacks by responding to al-Qaeda's demands in pulling U.S. troops out of Saudi Arabia. Since these troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War of 1991 to contain Saddam, Saddam's removal had to take place after September 11, 2001 in order for U.S. troops to be removed from Saudi Arabia.

Iraq was chosen as a target for war in 2003 because it was an easy target militarily. Also, Saddam fit the image designed for him by the U.S. government and media as a perfect enemy. The combination of an easy military target and the image of a perfect enemy made the war an

appealing prospect for the Bush administration to score a quick victory and politicize it as a win in the on-going war on terrorism.

Maintaining Iraq as an enemy for nearly a decade and scoring an easy win against this enemy was important for the U.S. government as an institution that shifted its focus more toward defense than funding social programs. Without such an enemy, especially after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1992, the United States was deprived of a reason to justify its massive military build-up. Iraq and terrorism filled the void by becoming the enemy that justified the continuation of the military build up and the massive increase in military spending.

Although the military operation in Iraq in 2003 was easily won, the political aftermath proved to be disastrous for unilateralism. The Bush administration's prediction of Iraqis welcoming the U.S. invaders with open arms, having Iraqi oil pay for the reconstruction of Iraq, or establishing a democratic government in Iraq to become a model in the Middle East all proved to be wrong. U.S. cost both in human and financial terms was more than what the administration had anticipated and continues to be a problem.

The policy of war and preemptive strike, however, was not going to take hold without the demise of a viable opposition party in the United States. Unfortunately, the Democratic Party had caved-in to the Republican administration in the White House and the Republican majority in Congress. The continuous success of the Republican Party and right-wing ideology since the Reagan revolution of the 1980s had gradually shifted the political dynamics in the United States toward the right, making what once was considered as extreme, such as militarism, hegemony, dominance, unilateralism, religious fundamentalism, and pro-big business ideology, become the beliefs of mainstream America. On the other hand, what once was considered to be mainstream in American politics, such as liberalism, social programs, women's rights for choice, and multilateralism became examples of the extreme left.

Justification for a preemptive war in 2003 that was built on intelligence regarding Iraq's WMD and ties with al-Qaeda was misrepresented and misused by the Bush administration to serve the purpose of its predetermined case for war. There was no solid evidence of cooperative relationship between Saddam's government and al-Qaeda, no evidence that Iraq would have transferred its non-existing WMD to terrorists groups, and no evidence that Iraq continued to possess WMD prior to the war. Except for reliance on the discredited Chalabi and his cronies, the United States lacked viable human capacity in Iraq to rely on, both in terms of gathering information and reconstructing Iraq in a post-Saddam era. Instead, it relied too much on technology and the ill advice of the wrong Iraqis. This had short sighted the ability of the political decision makers to have accurate assessment of the political situation in Iraq and made them overly optimistic and careless in their planning.

Democracy is threatened by secrecy, fear and lack of debate, and encouraged by openness and transparency. The shift in American governance toward secrecy and the manipulation of fear, especially after September 11, 2001, had damaged the political discourse in the United States and encouraged the promotion of an administrative state led by a form of imperial presidency at the expense of democratic accountability, openness, and dialogue.

Also, democracy cannot be imposed on others from outside, especially if it was carried on the back of military tanks. Democracy is an internal process of change within a society. If the United States is sincere in its attempt to promote democracy in Iraq or elsewhere, then it needs to allow it to emerge on its own and according to the conditions and internal mechanisms specific to each nation.

In its dealing with the Iraqi people and attempts to rebuild Iraq in the post-Saddam era, the U.S. proved to lack sophisticated understanding of Iraq's ethnic and tribal composition as well as the residual nationalism among Iraqis that the Bush administration took for granted. This misunderstanding and the installation of former CIA operatives in leadership positions in Iraq through the process of "appointocracy" had alienated most Iraqis from the administrative practice in post-Saddam Iraq. The endless adaptation of change by the U.S. Civil Administrator in Iraq, for example, was a testimony to such a failure.

The United States ought to correct its blunder in Iraq by enabling the Iraqi people to choose their own form of government regardless of U.S. interest. The United States needs to refrain from imposing upon Iraqis (or any other nation) the type of government it wants them to have and end its practice of "appointocracy," whether at home (such as in selecting presidents) or in Iraq (such as in selecting members of Iraq's new government). Appointocracy stands in contrast to the ideals of democracy and the traditions and practices of representative democratic government.

Overall, the biggest beneficiary in the 2003 war on Iraq was Iran. Cooperation between the neocons in the Pentagon (such as Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Perle) and the common cons in the Iraqi opposition (such as Chalabi) led the United States to depose Iran's greatest enemy. Iran now is using its influence in Iraq through the Shiites' political groups to direct the political situation toward Iran's political advantage as a major regional power broker in the Middle East.

Having said all that, Iraq remains a temporary phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy and in the political reality in the Middle East. The larger concern for the United States is to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and to stop supporting tyrannical regimes in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. U.S. success in Iraq is tied to the success of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and to ending its support to the Mubaraks of Egypt and the Saudi types of regimes.

To secure such a shift in our foreign policy, the American consciousness must be awakened in order to guide us both at home and abroad without fear, gimmicks or manipulation. We are in desperate need both as a nation and as a government for a genuine self-evaluation and self-assessment of our policies and actions in the world. We must look into the mirror and see our own faults before attaching blames onto others. This calls for the adoption of morality and ethics in our policy, not the moral codes and ethics of a particular group or religion, but the universal doctrine of "doing into others what we like to be done to us."

We need to change our attitude toward power from one that is based on the Hobbesian philosophy of mistrust and force in a savage state of nature to one that is based on the Kantian

philosophy of reason and enlightenment. For an end to be just, the means to reach that end must be just as well. There must be no room for hypocrisy and Machiavellian tactics in our policies, and we must truly remain committed to our democratic ideals and American regime values.

Communism collapsed because it boxed itself within a limited and narrow mindset of two polar opposites. Islamic fundamentalism is reverting to terror and is unable to attract followers because of its limited and narrow scope. Neoconservatism and extremism is following the same path and is doomed to the same end because of its limited parameters. We need to promote pluralism of ideas in governance and depart from the simplistic mentality of “you are either with us or against us.” And, we have to encompass the complexity of the world in which we live and refrain from the narrow ideology of the few.

September 11<sup>th</sup> had shifted politics in the United States. Fighting terrorism became both a national policy and identity. Fighting terrorism, however, is a police action, not a political or military campaign. We need to allow our law enforcement agencies to lead the fight on terrorism, not our politicians. The best these politicians are able to do is misuse the war on terror for their own political agenda and exchange the labels of “ally” and “terrorist” between groups based on their narrow political interests rather than the nature of these groups.

Our current National Security Strategy ought to be revised to eliminate a policy of unilateral preventive war. We need to return to the traditional norms of engaging the world and working on multilateral levels in order to assure America’s mutual interest and security with other nations. By doing so, we can reclaim America’s leadership in the world. We need to work with other nations to make war, violence, militarism, occupations of other nations, and hegemony archaic and things of the past. We need to devote our energies and policies toward building a cooperative human society that promotes peace, transparency, openness, social justice, and prosperity instead of war, militarism, power, and greed.

Our humanity matters more than our differences. This ought to be the single most important concept in our political mantra in dealing with Iraq or any other nation.

## **Conclusion**

America is a great power, not because of its military might, but because of its ideals and democratic principles. Unfortunately, America’s idealism as represented in its Constitution and Bill of Rights is often not translated in its foreign policy, especially in its policy toward Iraq and the administration of Iraq in post-Saddam era. We need to reflect inwardly and assess our accomplishments and shortcomings with sincerity and honesty without the arrogance of political demagoguery. Winning in Iraq is no longer a military issue despite the calls by some politicians to increase the number of troops in Iraq.

Winning in Iraq is a political issue. And in order to win politically, we need to win the hearts and minds of Iraqis. To do so, we first need to be honest with ourselves as to what was our true purpose in going to war with Iraq and what is our true purpose in insisting on remaining

there for years to come. Then, we must demonstrate to the Iraqi people that we are not in their country to impose our will on them, not to rob them of their resources, and not to remain there indefinitely. We ought to build the mechanism to enable Iraqis to elect their own representatives and create their own form of government, without imposing it on them. Democracy must come from within. It cannot be carried on tanks.

America redeemed its past support for the tyrant Saddam by removing him and his regime from power. Now, it needs to do the bold and courageous thing by truly entrusting power to the very people that Saddam oppressed and America claimed it went into war in order to rescue. The way to Iraq as a friend of the United States is not through Halliburton and the Pentagon but through peace, bread, and an honest word.

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# On a Mission

*Valerie L. Patterson*

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**DEARLY BELOWED WE ARE GATHERED HERE TO AWARD THIS  
UNDISCLOSED NO-BID BILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT TO A COMPANY  
WE ALL KNOW AND LOVE AND USED TO REGULATE...**

We set out to liberate, coordinate, the mandate  
Contemplate the noble quest, because Big Daddy knows what's best...

We set out to let him know, what happens when you sow the seeds of arrogant posturing.  
On a mission of command and control, we follow-through and mean business when we  
say we will deliver –

## **Whippings of Mass Destruction**

Float like a stealth bomber, sting like a MOAB (Massive Ordinance Air Blast – Mother  
of All Bombs)

Bombs over Baghdad we'll use to convey

That WE rule the New World Order, get with the program or you will be stomped, or  
stopped or drop-kicked or toppled, devastated, decimated, incinerated, obliterated, blown  
back to the Stone Age if necessary, 'cause we *will* control the flow of black gold/Texas  
tea and the blood that will be shed, stains of red and black and black and red – color our  
schemes, delivered by the dream team, we are his worst nightmare...

**War Profiteers waiting in the wings, pulling all the strings, LET FREEDOM RING!!!**

Purveyors of mass imperialism, or colonialism, therapeutic occupation as we destroy  
your nation but –

**WE WILL REBUILD!!!!!!**

We will contract out the reinvention of your nation and history, mold and shape it into a kinder, gentler [war ravaged post-apocalyptic lump of clay] neo-democratic sensation to be fashioned, designed, engineered, developed, shaped into whatever we desire or at least what the specifications require.

We set out to emancipate, and facilitate, and liberate, demonstrate that we have “much love” for the oppressed. That we “show no love” to dictators and terrorists, and the families of dictators and terrorists, and the significant others of dictators and terrorists, and the French, and the people who live in close proximity to dictators and terrorists, and the people who look like dictators and terrorists, and people who shake hands with dictators and terrorists, and the friends of dictators and terrorists and so on and so on and so on...

**LET THERE BE SOLILOQUY ON EARTH AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME!!!!**

We set out to intimidate, and communicate and demonstrate the fate of those who consort, cavort, court, comport, aid, harbor, assist, kiss, once knew, once owned, occupied or worked in an inner-city grocery store, conspiring to use coupons to support terrorist activity, or were clearly hiding in-plain-sight **Weapons of Mass Destruction**.

**YOU’VE BEEN PLAYED AND YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW IT!!!!!!!**

What we’ve done is devastate, and dominate, excoriate, misstate, deprecate, create martyrs, and generate – zealotry, isolation, and hate...

**XENOPHOBES AROUND THE GLOBE**

Bombs over Baghdad to let the evil-doers know, that we rule the new world order and control the flow of oil and spill blood if necessary.

Hegemonic DC Hillbillies on a mission to create and enforce the new world vision, the model, the template, the strategic plan for a \*\* kicking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But I suspect if I looked into the mirror I would see –  
That the axis of evil is really  
Me.

We set out to conceive, a devious plan, designed to deceive, the peasantry, so easily led, mindless sheep, the walking dead. We set out to demonstrate the fate that awaits the subordinate.

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# What Went Wrong and Why – An Essay on Post-Hussein Iraq

*Michael W. Popejoy*

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This essay serves as merely one series of thoughts among many learned opinions out there regarding why we seem trapped in another war—a war on terror—that we may have brought upon ourselves—at least to some extent. Is what we learned in Iraq really the most important point of debate at this late date? What have we learned in any of our international adventures? Did the Marshall Plan prevent the Cold War? Did the Korean Conflict resolve the fundamental economic and political differences between a divided Korea? Did we win the hearts and minds of anyone in Vietnam? And, after two conflicts with Iraq in the Middle East, we remain reviled occupiers as we march through a literal and metaphorical minefield while we continually fear a renewed domestic terrorist attack at any time, whatever the threat level color code.

What U.S. policymakers do not understand well, and may have never learned throughout the long history of foreign policy, is that not everyone in the world share or embrace our fundamental beliefs on human rights and other related ideologies, including separation of church and state and freedom of individuals to choose their leaders and their form of government through a democratic forum, and authority of a constitutional rule of law, and a concept of impartial justice that parallels the American experience. Is this American experience an exportable commodity? This is a question we may, as a nation, and as a people, have to come to grips with.

It may be unfortunate for us, but not so for others, that there are those who wish to live, who are satisfied to live, under a rule of government separate and distinct, and even foreign from our ideological concepts. For example, it is not an alien reality for them to see, indeed it may be comforting for them to see, high ranking religious clerics in high governmental positions.

In the U.S., we have declined to send Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson to the White House—even though they campaigned for the job. Is it because they are fringe extremists or is it

because we simply see the separation of church leadership and state leadership as comforting? I suspect the answer is both: they don't speak for the majority of the people in a heterogeneous society, rather they speak for a community of believers with a shared culture of worship; and we have a long historical tradition of separation of church and state. However, in other countries, more traditional societies may be much more homogeneous in terms of religious faith (even though a particular religion may have distinct sectarian boundaries) and an ideological history of clerics in power.

We do not approve of how other societies within the boundaries of their sovereign nation-states treat their children, their women or their religious or racial minorities; yet we, in America, are still evolving as a society that historically mistreated the same groups, and did so within the memories of most of us. Blacks were separate, and not equal. Women were barred from many of the rights of citizenship such as voting even as they have glared more recently into a glass ceiling and male dominated barriers to employment. And, for all of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, children were made to work in the factories and the fields—black and white together. Did any foreign power invade our national boundaries to free these groups of their oppressions? No, we did it ourselves, slowly, over a century to arrive at an imperfect but evolving improvement in our social relationships with each other. But, were these oppressed people dying as a result of their oppression? Blacks were lynched, children died in unsafe factories, and genocide was perpetrated on Native Americans.

We admire the philosophically elegant words of Thomas Jefferson and the efficient government infrastructure designed by Alexander Hamilton; we respect our progressive change agents throughout the history of the American experience who contributed so much to a better society.

However, these are our traditions, and they are not immediately or easily transferred to other societies. Perhaps that is why we do not have a strong sub-discipline of comparative international public administration. Every time the U.S. has had the hubris to position a template of a western style of public administration onto a foreign nation-state, it has failed. For example, Iran under the Shah was to be the western jewel of the Middle East, but only resulted in the fundamentalist Muslim religion to retake the country in rebellion and create a decades-long enemy of the U.S. in the Middle East.

We respect almost to a fault the ideology of a separation of church and state and do not understand when other societies see their church and state as one and the same—whether it is a good thing or not within the lenses of our culture; in some nation-states, the people feel comfortable with their clerics in power. We cannot understand why other cultures do not rush to embrace our way of life—but how can this be? Isn't our culture so universally perfect that we cannot perceive other cultures not jumping on the bandwagon enthusiastically making Jefferson and his contemporaries their heroes, too?

Unfortunately, we are so dogmatically ethnocentric in our worldview that we cannot fathom the idea that so many people freely choose Islam over Christianity, autocracy over democracy, and various forms of centrally planned economies over capitalism. Surely, if they only had the

freedom to choose, they would choose freedom as we define it. How could it be otherwise? This is the beginning of our hubris.

U.S. foreign policy is intrusive to other nation-states on many levels, but the most morally compelling reason to intrude into the affairs and encroach upon the sovereignty of other nation-states is our need and national mandate to rescue the unarmed, helpless victims of brutal, totalitarian regimes—and somehow replace these despots with a rule by the people in the Jeffersonian tradition.

But, even our forefathers realized that rule by the people would not always work well in its purest form, and a Hamiltonian view evolved into a rule by authority under constraints of law; and that rule of law can be as violent as it is anywhere in the world as occasioned in our own internal embarrassments of judicial excess, such as the Waco Incident, when the federal authorities intruded on a religious sect with tragic results.

The American ideological world-view was that government action was acceptable because people were accorded due process before their private property was assaulted by tanks, helicopters, and heavily armed federal agents with machine guns. No foreign power entered the U.S. with the high moral mission of saving this doomed religious minority or the women and children that perished for their religious freedom.

What was the motive in waging war on Afghanistan and Iraq: retaliation for the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? Certainly, the terrorists provided the provocation as did the Japanese at Pearl Harbor—even though historians disagree on the original provocations. Some may contend that adversarial U.S. foreign policy related to Japan created the atmosphere of distrust leading to the attack.

And now, that we have engaged in a Middle East conflict that is rapidly becoming a quagmire, how do we conclude that conflict by successfully completing the mission that drew us there in the first place? Is the mission well-defined, and by what criteria will success be evaluated? Will we leave the region in peace and on the road to prosperity, free of terrorism and religious extremism? What is our exit strategy? I contend this crucial fact: no one knows—not us, and not them.

The U.S. entered the Middle East with a faulty plan, too few resources were allocated, there was inadequate support from the U.N. Security Council, and no exit strategy was clear other than a firm resolve to turn over power to a provisional government as quickly as possible. Yet, a power vacuum exists now, and will exist after the turnover. This project will require a continued U.S. military presence which will continue to generate hostility in Iraq and throughout the Middle East.

Where were the faults in the plan? The U.S. made good its military assault, toppled the Hussein regime (no one argues too much that this was not a good thing—maybe the only good thing to come out of this conflict was to rid the world of another evil dictator); but, then the U.S. proceeded to disband the Iraqi Army, and civil police force, and the Baath Party, whose members comprised the elite, educated, and trained civil service workers who kept the

civil government running—the Iraqi public administration establishment. The best and the brightest of Iraq have just been forcefully unemployed by a foreign occupation force, (foreign on so many levels) and alienated permanently from a future peaceful and prosperous Iraq. These are the people whose hearts and minds we needed badly to win. They are the ones best equipped to run the infrastructure of government as professional civil service workers in the absence of the despotic regime of Hussein. Even a despotic regime, like that of Italy’s Mussolini, keeps the trains running.

In many ways, they just followed orders or risked death at the hands of the previous regime; now they could still follow orders—but, maybe orders from a more benevolent regime; and the civil service would have maintained an Iraqi face for all the people to see. Certainly, it would be easier to run a government if the civil service remained intact and the occupational force could have maintained a much lower profile.

A comparison example in the U.S. is illustrative of what has happened in Iraq. If a foreign power had by force of arms removed our President, Congress, the military and all local police forces and then fired the civil service workers, who do the people’s work every day, replaced this national and local infrastructure with a foreign military power, and then picked an arbitrary date, when a provisional government would be brought to power using foreign exiles supported by the already reviled foreign military, then chaos would result. And, now, we expect from this approach a peaceful new beginning for Iraq?

The U.S. military is not ready for this kind of assignment—making war is not the same as keeping the peace and providing security—an absolutely essential component to stabilizing the region. It became apparent to me that the military is not up to this task as I recently taught a strategic leadership course at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Ft. Leavenworth as an adjunct professor for Central Michigan University’s graduate program in public administration and leadership. These young men and women are captains and majors at the mid-point in their careers in the U.S. Army, ready to assume command positions soon after graduation; most of them would be going directly to combat units in the Middle East.

Their confusion was apparent as I taught the course from the philosophical perspective of leading civilians in a shared power concept. The textbook I selected for this graduate course in public administration strategic leadership was John M. Bryson and Barbara C. Crosby’s book *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World* (1992).

The soldiers’ prior orientation to leadership was from the perspective of command and control in a very strict formal hierarchical structure steeped in a long, historical tradition; from standing at attention and saluting your superiors to strictly adhering to the chain of command, or risk losing your career early to a bad fitness report. They are socialized not to question the commands of their superiors—all the way up the chain of command.

Their study of leadership in the CGSC was comprised of a pre-established, approved curriculum on how generals fought past wars, and how they won or lost those wars. No one



was teaching them how to win the peace after the shooting died down. Their job as they saw it was to protect U.S. national interests by maintaining themselves, and the units they commanded, as a lethal fighting force capable of rapidly deployed force projections in multidimensional, asymmetrical battlefield conditions.

Other than passing out candy bars and soccer balls to civilian children, and going door to door as SWAT teams searching for weapons, they are not prepared now or in the near future by experience, education or mission commitment to assume the administrative tasks of civil service in managing the infrastructure of government—keeping the lights on, the water running, processing the day to day details of running a government so the people can see that government continues to serve them—this is the legitimacy and the security necessary for stabilization.

Frankly, I do not believe that what I taught them, and what the Bryson and Crosby textbook taught them, will ever be taken to the field. Bryson, Crosby and I cannot, in a 36 contact hour course, overcome the culture of four years at West Point and eight months of command training in the Army tradition at the Command and General Staff College. Only a major transformation in the culture of the U.S. Army will enable them to wage a war, fight for peace and rebuild a nation all in the same breath.

But, once the Iraqi Army was disbanded, the police and other civil service workers were sent home, and the Baath party was shut down; and given the reality that the U.S. Army is not prepared to engage in these civil functions, there is a vacuum bordering on chaos facing Iraq today, and it is that reality that is causing both fear and hostility leading to the violence in the post-Hussein Iraq.

There are deeper points of diversion when discussing why the differences between the West and the Middle East are so seemingly irreconcilable. The Arab world has by its own choice failed to keep pace with the economic, political, and scientific innovations that characterize the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup>. They have chosen to remain a traditional society while the West has evolved to a modern culture and then continued to evolve to a post-modern culture—and has done so by the power of free thought and philosophical assessment of where society is at and where it should be going. Traditional societies simply do not allow themselves that luxury.

Arabs lack certain individual freedoms because they fear that social chaos will result from their questioning their own most basic assumptions—and those assumptions are based on Islam. Arabs who begin to doubt their fundamentalist beliefs have always been equated with unbelief and the threat of chaos. Arabs are deeply afraid that any hint of uncertainty over their religious fundamentals will lead to a breakdown of the community of believers. (Certainly this is not far removed from the beliefs of fundamentalist Christians.) It is important to note that political and religious institutions and the people connected to them have never been seen as separate, and unlikely ever will.

It is a fact to the Arab mind that the mere presence of infidels in their land creates the threat of people losing their sense of order and identity. It is therefore a fact: Iraqis do not favor any

U.S. presence—as we are the antithesis of their beliefs. Arabs do not fear tyranny (Hussein) nearly as much as they fear chaos (any questions in the minds of the community of believers). They fear any challenge that may lead a Muslim community to doubt and disbelief; and Muslims equate westernization with the breakdown of boundaries. This is what bounced back in the face of the Shah of Iran as he tried to transform a traditional, fundamentalist nation into a modern one. The people revolted and embraced a fundamentalist cleric in a revolution that toppled the Shah and his reforms.

What the Shah and his operators in the U.S. failed to understand is that any attempt to codify customs into a form of statutory law in Arab countries will be largely unsuccessful and will lead to more violence as the fundamentalists fight to reassert themselves and their perception of stability. The key here is that Arabs retain their cultural “tribal” ethic, and tribes have characteristic features—a general ethos, or maybe it could be called a pathos of tradition, and close relationships bordering on the family.

Back to an earlier question: is democracy exportable? Although unlikely, we try anyway to export our ideology. In order to develop democratic institutions, it is vital to have a well-established middle class—people of standing in the community, people who have a stake in the institutions that will manage their society. However, no middle class exists in Arab society that I can see—and developing a distinct class takes a long time.

There are no prerequisites for democracy, no preconditions for freedom, no desire to shed blood for a western concept in the Arab mind. The Arab sense of meaning and ours are a planet apart and not growing any closer any time soon. Iraq is years away from stability, and the final product of our efforts may look more like the pre-war Iraq than the U.S. may have ever intend.

Rebuilding a shattered, war-torn country (like Iraq) requires a synergistic interaction of political credibility, economic reconstruction, social acceptance of the new order, and the provision of a safe and orderly environment. But when a state collapses (either on its own implosion or through outside intervention), security trumps everything. Without security, commerce and trade is impeded, communities cannot be rebuilt, and the population cannot participate safely in politics. It becomes a Hobbesian situation—disorder, distrust, desperation—fear pervades and raw force dominates, and nothing else works.

It is important to consider that modern societies make their own culture, and traditional societies are made by their culture—traditional societies cannot be remade by formula. There is no calculus for injecting democracy, capitalism, and a reverence for individual freedoms. Freedom must be won by sacrifice to be appreciated and revered. Freedom cannot be given to a society by some outside force. Even the former Soviet Bloc countries struggle to this day to understand freedom, democracy and capitalism. It was far easier to tear down the Berlin Wall than to inject the successes of the west across that former boundary that was far more than merely physical.

Democracy, and its related institutions, is based on beliefs that people correctly select their own leaders, and by the process of democracy that selection is credible and the elected

persons have standing in the office to which he or she was elected, and it is assumed that at the conclusion of that tenure, or by judicial action, there will be a peaceful and orderly transition of power. How can this complex understanding be imprinted onto a society with no prior experience, and possibly a great deal of distrust in the process (even Alexander Hamilton distrusted the process)? After more than 200 years, we are still trying to understand our own ideology, and to come to terms with it.

How many years or decades would it take for Iraq, with centuries of traditional culture under the Muslim faith, think itself out of that model and adopt a modern or even post-modern worldview. And, when they finally arrive (if they ever choose to arrive), where will we have evolved to by then?

Muslims live in a contained worldview that is simultaneously secular and religious—but the faith in Islam consumes and precludes other ideas. I suspect that fundamental Christians and orthodox Jews are not much different in their desire to keep the faith, although Jews do not proselytize. All have in common a distrust of any government not controlled or influenced by their ideology of society.

Why must we spread our worldview—exported like wheat? Why can't we coexist with other worldviews and why can't they coexist with us? I believe it is because we are all ideologically blinded by our own ethnocentrism. These are powerful emotions—everyone can believe in everyone else—but, we don't. We will not rest, and they will not rest, until we or they see with a common set of belief systems. I propose that is unlikely, if not impossible. Time has not even started us on that common road.

The only common denominator between us is human emotion—love, hate, fear, faith are all common to humanity; but how we deal with our emotions is socially prescribed for us.

We live in a complex world—and yes, we are free. For example, we are free to drive the ribbons of highways criss-crossing our country; we are free to move without restrictions between states, across political and governmental boundaries—as long as our car is legally registered and insured, and as long as we have a state issued drivers' license, and as long as we obey all state mandated highway laws, particularly those regarding speed. It is this freedom to move about but tempered by government rule that makes life in modern society complicated. We must drive with our government approved seat belts fastened, and if children are with us, they must be secured in a government certified child safety restraint seat. If we are driving a commercial vehicle, it must meet all D.O.T. specifications, and drivers must have special drivers' licenses, and must adhere to strict restrictions on how many hours per day are driven. But, yes, we are free. We have adjusted to intrusions in our freedoms because we agree that the government has standing in controlling certain aspects of our lives.

In the desert of the Arab countries, the hoof prints of the camel are erased in mere minutes by the shifting sand. This was something even T.E. Lawrence understood when he wrote his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* about his experiences as a westerner attached to the Arab tribes. He did not acclimate them to his views, he was assimilated by them. Our society is

complex, theirs is relatively simple. We create our futures; they live the life that Allah dictates to them.

Are we different? Yes, we are as different as night and day—more than just West and the Middle East, Christian and Jew and Muslim. Christians and Muslims proselytize the world. Jews are not evangelical. And opposites do not attract when it comes to politics, culture, and religion.

Maybe this planet is not big enough for all of us. Could it be that we should expect a cataclysmic clash of religious forces in our future rather than a peaceful coexistence? If so, then to the victor goes the planet. Will the Hand of God or the Hand of Allah prevail? Who will we hold responsible for killing peace on Earth?

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# New Orleans 1991/ New York 2004

*Peter A. Mameli*

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It has begun  
Carnival

CARNIVAL!!

Parades, music, excitement  
Life's celebration  
Of continuity  
Over time  
Generations bonding  
To life  
Mardi Gras!  
Fat Tuesday!  
The city erupts  
Jazz blasts  
Throngs mill  
The place becomes  
A giant instrument  
People glow  
People really glow!  
Their insides push out  
And they light  
Like bulbs  
By the unknown  
They beam  
Their energy pours out  
Their purpose pours out  
Into the street  
Out from the inside

Out from the heart  
They live!  
No romancing of death this day

All the way from Baghdad  
I see tracers light the sky  
And I still see the Tomahawks  
Electronically fired into my mind  
Can you hear the screaming?  
Can you feel the anger?  
As the bombs go off  
And off  
And off

Gulf War One  
Gulf War Won?

To Iraq  
Today  
We discuss a new government  
For Iraq?

Take into account  
The anger  
Still  
As people die  
In  
The bog

New Orleans last time  
New York City now  
Violence bridges the waves  
Of time  
Yet we forget  
What they so clearly remember  
History  
And time

We miss their points

We want it to be new  
But

It is old  
Very, very, old

The bog  
Must be understood  
For what it is  
Not what we want  
It to be

It's all war poetry  
I think  
No matter where or when  
It is written  
It is all war poetry  
It really is  
It is

This ain't jazz

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# A New National Strategy – Lessons, Output, and Outcome

*Valerie L. Patterson*

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We perfected a “single sustainable model for national success” designed to put the disbelievers in their places as they fail the test of military superiority because we failed the test of national security.

Thumped our chests and flexed our collective sphincter and military muscles as we became neo-colonizers, “imperialists” on a mission to liberate *and* civilize an indigenous public impervious to all claims of our hegemony.

We perfected the “Abu Ghraib Model” of torture, asserting our exemption from universal laws of convention and humanity, digitally documented, providing ‘reel’ men and women, engaged in paradigmatic stasis, multifaceted eroticism presented as humiliation via incarceration and detention – validation of a single sustainable model.

We created the methodology that clearly and unequivocally identifies and separates all patriots from all terrorists, all insurgents from all freedom-fighters, the “good” guys from the “bad” guys, democracy from brutal dictatorships, moral agency from hubris, right from wrong, truth from honesty, and *proved* that government contracts to rebuild a war ravaged nation can be quite lucrative.



We learned how to pledge allegiance to the art and science of the new “American internationalism” dedicated to the proposition of “convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities,” the new kingdom to come, the dynasty to be – the “fourth” empire that is not German nor germane to classical democratic theory. Begging the question WWJD (What would Thomas Jefferson do)? Held a coronation to crown him king of kings and “Pax Americana”, supreme commander of the globe *and* the Iraqi oil fields, for his will be done, wielding the greatest power ever known.

We learned how to create a lasting legacy of no-bid defense contracts, perfected the tyranny of spurious equivalence, cognitive dissonance, shock *and* awe, imperialist militarism along the way as we completed the mission to liberate an “oppressed” people.

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# The Sanctions Regime against Iraq (1990-2003): Policymaking and Values

*Philippa Winkler*

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## Introduction

Management consultant and organizational psychologist Chris Argyris (1968-2000) posits that managers are often split between espoused and “in-use” values. Espoused values are what we say we believe in. In-use values are the actions that we implement in real life. In the professional (male dominated) world, the two often do not match. If we espouse values of truth and decency, these are often subsumed to pressures of careerism, self-aggrandizement, and ambition. Concentrations of social and economic power, such that exist in the US, produce an ideological structure that seeks to create the illusion of truth, decency and beneficial social change, while covering up an agenda of wealth accumulation by elites (Edelman, 2001). Yet, many defenders of public administration invoke the virtue of the guardian, trustee, or steward of professional autonomy as a way to ensure legitimacy of government (Chapter Three, Stivers, 2002).

Governmental organizations as a whole must espouse values of truth and decency, but how can administrators reason policy logically, when organizational values are acted on rather than personal values? According to Argyris, managers must then rely on self-deception, ‘patterned blindness’ and defensive strategies to overcome cognitive dissonance when personal and public values clash. This is done, usually unconsciously, in order to reconcile the cognitive contradiction between espoused and in use values. The end result is an overall lack of ethos and truth-telling, efficiency and productivity.

I hypothesize that a gap between espoused and in-use values operated in the sanctions policy vis-à-vis Iraq from 1990 to 2003. The espoused objective was that the means (the blockade of a country of 22 million which resulted in the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children) justified the ends (containing Saddam Hussein’s alleged WMD program). The in-use value, or actual motivation for the blockade, was something very different: the weakening of a country which would eventually pave the way for occupation by an outside military force. My method is to identify and contrast espoused and in-use values held by pro-sanctions diplomats at the UN

Commission on Human Rights. Pro-sanctions diplomats portrayed the blockade as a moral good, justified by a constellation of norms such as, the irredeemable quality of evil (as embodied in Saddam Hussein), might is right, and the ends justify the means. These beliefs gave the diplomats a rational way to navigate through an essential clash of values: the right to life of Iraqis versus the right to international security. But the broad-based nature of these beliefs did not allow for subtlety of reasoning. The diplomats I interviewed were not able to reconcile contradictions in a policy that was an expression of hidden, underlying national goals (oil resources, capital, and hegemony).

## Behind the UN Blockade of Iraq: the Oil Factor

The US and UK led the sanctions policy at the UN Security Council. By 1996, France, Russia and China, alarmed at the humanitarian consequences suffered by Iraqi civilians, had withdrawn their support, but had not used veto power at the Security Council to lift the blockade.

In 1996, Leslie Stahl interviewed Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of State, on the subject of sanctions and Iraq, on 60-Minutes (CBS-TV). Leslie Stahl: *“We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died as in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?”*

Madeleine Albright responded, *“I think this is a very hard choice. But the price we think, the price is worth it.”*<sup>1</sup> This utilitarian response reverberated around the Middle East and the rest of the world as evidence of the US’ cold-heartedness vis-à-vis the Arab peoples.

A year later, in remarks at Georgetown University, Washington DC, Marc 26, 1997, Madeleine Albright spoke of the cost-effectiveness of sanctions in broader terms: *“My fundamental purpose is to reaffirm United States policy towards Iraq. That policy is part of a broad commitment to protect the security and territory of our friends and allies in the Gulf. We have a vital national interest in the security of the region’s oil supplies, and we have forged strong friendships with countries in the area who agree with us that nations should respect international law, refrain from aggression and oppose those who commit or sponsor terror.”*<sup>2, 3</sup>

The values that Mme Albright espoused in this statement have been official US policy since World War II, and are steeped in both liberalism (*“respect for international law, refrain from*

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<sup>1</sup> Video Documentary “Paying the Price-Killing the Children of Iraq.” Prod. John Pilger, Channel 4, UK, 2000.

<sup>2</sup>The title of the speech was “Preserving Freedom and Safeguarding Stability,” accessed [www.casi.org](http://www.casi.org), May 18, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Official policy statements with regard to the Middle East by the US cite world peace, stability, military protection of regional allies and national interests since World War II. For example, in a speech in 1979, President Carter spelled out the “New Interventionism” : *“The United States has a worldwide interest in peace and stability. According I have directed the Secretary of Defense to further enhance the capacity of our Rapid Deployment Forces to protect our own interests and to act in response to requests for help from our allies and friends. We must be able to move our ground, sea, and air units to distant areas- rapidly and with adequate supplies.”* (New York Times, October 2, quoted in *The Monthly Review*, Vol 31, No 9, February 1980).

aggression...”) and realism (“we have a vital national interest in the security of the region’s oil supplies”). The reasoning Mme Albright espoused in the interview with Leslie Stahl in 1996 was that the ends (safeguarding global peace and US interests of those of its allies against the alleged Iraqi WMD program) justified the means (the cost of half a million children’s lives). Mme Albright is typical of women who serve the interests of male elites by adopting their reasoning and rationales (Peterson and Runyon, 1999). The kernel of truth in Mme Albright’s remarks lies in her allusion to the oil supplies of the Middle East.

In 1983, a high level envoy, Donald Rumsfeld (Secretary of Defense during President G.W Bush’s Administration) was sent by the Reagan Administration to renew ties with Iraq, then ruled by Saddam Hussein. “*Decisions directives signed by President Reagan reveal the specific U.S. priorities for the region: preserving access to oil, expanding U.S. ability to project military power in the region, and protecting local allies from internal and external threats.*”<sup>4</sup> Rumsfeld was photographed shaking hands with Hussein.

In an astonishingly opportunistic alliance, the Reagan Administration even armed fundamentalist Iran: the Iran-Contragate Congressional hearings later disclosed how the US secretly sold weapons to Iran in order to fund the Contras, a US created guerilla force fighting the socialist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The policy had the effect to “bleed” both Iran and Iraq, not to speak of Nicaragua.

But is access to oil necessary for US survival? In fact, the US does not depend on Middle East oil. Instead, it has pursued, since World War II, a policy of diversifying its oil resources (see chart below):

**Estimated Crude and Products Imports to the U.S. from Leading Supplier Countries**  
**May 2003**      **Imports Supplied**      **Imports %**      **(Thousand % of Domestic Barrels Total Product per Day)**

1 Saudi Arabia	2,287	17.8%	11.9%
2 Canada	2,119	16.5%	11.0%
3 Venezuela	1,638	12.8%	8.5%
4 Mexico	1,540	12.0%	8.0%
5 Nigeria	958	7.5%	5.0%
6 United Kingdom	519	4.1%	2.7%
7 Algeria	377	2.9%	2.0%
8 Angola	356	2.8%	1.8%
9 Norway	303	2.4%	1.6%
10 Virgin Islands*	258	2.0%	1.3%
Other	2,459	19.2%	12.8%

<sup>4</sup> “U.S. Documents Show Embrace of Saddam Hussein in early 1980, despite chemical weapons, external aggression, human rights abuses.” Press Release, The National Security Archive at George Washington University, 25 February, 2003. Accessed Internet, May 20, 2004. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/press.htm>. The evidence, including a photograph of Rumsfeld shaking hands with Hussein, was based on the NSA’s successful Freedom of Information requests and lawsuits by the USG.

Total	12,814	100.0%	66.5%
OPEC Countries	5,619	43.9%	29.1%
Persian Gulf Countries	2,637	20.6%	13.7%
<b>January-May 2003</b>			
1 Canada	1,992	16.9%	10.0%
2 Saudi Arabia	1,911	16.2%	9.6%
3 Mexico	1,557	13.2%	7.9%
4 Venezuela	1,120	9.5%	5.7%
5 Nigeria	819	6.9%	4.1%
6 Iraq	593	5.0%	3.0%
7 United Kingdom	441	3.7%	2.2%
8 Angola	353	3.0%	1.8%
9 Algeria	327	2.8%	1.6%
10 Virgin Islands*	252	2.1%	1.3%
Other	2,428	20.6%	12.2%
Total	11,793	100.0%	59.5%
OPEC Countries	5,052	42.8%	25.5%
Persian Gulf Countries	2,768	23.5%	14.0%

Countries

\*Supplier of products made from crude oil

Source: DOE, Petroleum Supply Monthly, July 2003. Last accessed Internet on February 2, 2005.

According to John Lichtblau of the Petroleum Research Foundation, “about less than 20 percent of our imports come from the Middle East. And since only about half of our oil is imported, our dependency on Middle East oil, overall, is about 8 or 9 percent, which is not very high.”<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Japan, the principle economic competitor of the US, is extraordinarily dependent on Middle East oil.<sup>6</sup> Lichtblau explains, not very convincingly, that the US must protect Middle East oil on behalf of its “allies.”

It’s a pleasant supposition to think of the US spending trillions of military dollars on behalf of its allies. There are, however, underlying Machiavellian ambitions at play. In the world of real-politik, the US must prevent a rival hegemony or a regional superpower, headed by either the Japanese, the Russians, the Chinese, or the European Common Market, or a combination of these, from becoming a pre-eminent world military, political and economic power. The US concern about nations called “competitor peers” is documented in governmental policy statements such as the US Defense Guidance Plan 1994-1999 (1992) and the Hart-Rudmann Commission (2001). When in 2000, Saddam Hussein pegged the Iraqi currency to the euro and signed oil production contracts with Russia and France, the US’ hand was forced. To reassert its hegemony, it had no choice but to invade Iraq and privatize its oil, which had previously been a state-owned and -run

<sup>5</sup> “Over a Barrel,” Transcript (Online Newshour, PBS, September 5, 1996, last accessed Internet on February 2, 2005. [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle\\_east/september96/iraq\\_oil\\_9-5.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/september96/iraq_oil_9-5.html))

<sup>6</sup> Dowty, Alan, “Japan and the Middle East: Signs of Change,” Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 2000.

commodity. But diplomats representing the US at human rights bodies cannot portray Iraq as a pawn in the convoluted sometimes friendly, sometimes inimical, chess game between the dollar, euro and the yen. Before the 9/11 event, the US justified the sanctions against Iraq in terms of international security. To identify the mechanics of the pro-sanctions diplomats' reasoning in the context of the US' espoused value of international security, I interviewed three at the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1999.

## The UN Commission on Human Rights

The UNCHR is a 53 member body, composed of delegates of nation states representing geographical blocs (Africa, Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, Central and Eastern European States, West European and Other States) on a rotational basis. It was formed in 1948 by a mandate of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSAC) to address either specific country situations or thematic issues through a variety of mechanisms: reports, country visits, fact-finding missions. These yield evidence that become the basis for decisions and resolutions made at annual sessions. From the onset of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, the Commission made numerous "decisions" condemning its humanitarian impacts. However, a decision does not carry the same weight as a resolution at the Commission and its subsidiary body, the UN Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Therefore, in 1996, this author convened a small group of nongovernmental activists to the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, where the Commission holds its annual meetings. It was perhaps no coincidence that those who responded to my call for action were women representing women's or women-driven organizations, who were appalled by the plight of Iraqi children under blockade. These groups included: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women for Mutual Security, General Federation of Arab Women, International Educational Development Inc and Desert Concerns.

Nongovernmental representatives must be credentialed at the UN in order to attend sessions; currently there is a waiting list. Nevertheless, the Commission and the Sub-Commission is an observable, relatively open universe at the UN outside the closed doors of the Security Council and the UN Sanctions Committees. According to NGO attorney Karen Parker: "*The main point will be our need to establish what the 'law' is in places where the US cannot veto, and then to have resolutions and studies available for national lawyers to use in redress cases, etc. We are establishing "expert evidence" ...While not necessarily 'dispositive,' it is 'persuasive' as to what the law is.*" The sanctions against Iraq had not been debated at domestic or international assemblies (they had been ignored, for example, at the UN General Assembly, the US Congress, or the UK House of Parliament). The feminist activists sought to force the issue out into the open by asking for a rapporteur (reporter) to visit Iraq. The US and UK delegates actively opposed such a resolution. The anti sanctions activists then took their case to the Sub-Commission, at its annual session a few months later. Their efforts yielded more success. Thanks largely to the efforts of the internationally known attorney Karen Parker, and NGO delegate, the Sub-Commission ruled in 2000 that the UN sanctions against Iraq were illegal. Its resolution was based on Rapporteur Mark Bossuyt's conclusion that:

*"The sanctions against Iraq are the most comprehensive, total sanctions that have ever been imposed on a country. The situation at present is extremely grave. The transportation, power*

*and communication infrastructures were decimated during the Gulf war, and have not been rebuilt owing to the sanctions. The industrial sector is also in shambles and agricultural production has suffered greatly. But most alarming is the health crisis that has erupted since the imposition of the sanctions...*” The genderized impacts of sanctions on women were noted: *“Researchers have also shown that sanctions have an overwhelmingly greater negative medical and social impact on women, as women bear the brunt of the social and economic displacements and upheaval....The sanctions regime against Iraq is unequivocally illegal under existing international humanitarian law and human rights law. Some would go so far as making a charge of genocide...the sanctions regime against Iraq has as its clear purpose the deliberate infliction on the Iraqi people of conditions of life (lack of adequate food, medicines, etc) calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”* The Bossuyt Report, UN Economic and Social Council, E/CN/4/Sub/2/2000/33.

Since the sanctions were deemed illegal, the oil for food program implemented by the Security Council to alleviate the impacts of the blockade was also viewed as suspect. In March 2002, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan implicitly admitted as much when he stated "even if the [oil for food program] is implemented perfectly, it is possible that our efforts will prove insufficient to satisfy the population's need." Footnote: Ibid.

## Findings

**The diplomats' belief system reflected the Hobbesian view of human nature as chaotic, aggressive and needing to be controlled.**

I interviewed three pro-sanctions diplomats for my PhD dissertation. All were high-ranking delegates to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1999. The diplomats, who were from the US, UK and Norway, predictably declared that the sanctions were necessary to contain Saddam Hussein's alleged post-1991 Gulf War ambitions to invade the Middle East region, aided by WMDs. Missing from their accounts, was any blame apportioned to governments (chiefly those of the US and UK) for their support of Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, US and UK policymakers discounted their support of a torturer, Saddam Hussein, during the 80s, thus absolving themselves from any sense of personal responsibility for his subsequent acts. Instead, US and UK diplomats summoned "the nature of the beast" argument: the unredeemable, uncontrollable evil nature of Saddam Hussein which meant that the world would always be faced by the threat of his WMD program. They spoke at "high levels of inference while assuming that the message is obvious, unambiguous, and unassailable" (Argyris, 2000, 5.)

Hussein was dismissed as unredeemable because he was considered different from other dictators for having allegedly used WMDs on the Kurds. Yet the US had itself used WMDs on the Japanese in 1947, and had used fuel air bombs, uranium weapons, napalm and cluster bombs, weapons classified as having indiscriminate effects, in both Gulf Wars in violation of the Geneva Conventions.

The concept of un-redeemable human nature is an outdated patriarchal belief used to justify the selective oppression of others. The fact was Saddam Hussein had proved himself

redeemable by 1998, when UNSCOM gave Iraq a near clean bill of health. (Some UN weapons inspectors now say that no WMD program existed after 1994). All three diplomats insisted that President Hussein continued to pose a threat to the region, thus “*advocating a position with inadequate data or in a way that makes disagreement appear disloyal*” (Argyris, 2000, 5.) So high were the stakes in terms of innocent human lives in Iraq by 1999, that the diplomats could not dismiss critics as disloyal, so much as naïve. But again, Iraqi government had *not* lied about its WMD program.

In the current Western patriarchal discourse, the Hobbesian view allows absolution from personal blame, since blame is allocated to the essential evil of “man,” whether human nature or a particularly evil individual. The diplomats focused the blame for the Iraqi people’s suffering onto Saddam Hussein as a defensive mechanism to distance themselves from responsibility for the impacts of the sanctions. It was to “*discount oneself as the source of problems or errors while attributing the cause either to others or to uncontrollable external conditions...*” This becomes a “*projection of blame onto others or ‘human nature’, ‘the nature of the beast.’*” (Argyris, 2000, 5).

**The US and UK espoused values of the liberal Rousseau-esque Social Contract but their in-use values were realist, not liberal.**

Unlike Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau offered a vision of a redeemable human nature, through the application of a social contract and ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ which became the rallying cry of the 1789 French Revolution. This is the other side of the patriarchal coin; one that emphasizes rationality and freedom of choice. In their interviews, the diplomats cast themselves as rational, well-meaning and basically decent human beings perpetually misunderstood by the ‘Other’. Explaining his role in an African country, the UK delegate said “*A white man looks strange in [name of country] and thus a target. The fact that I am a nice white man is irrelevant.*” As delegates to the UN Commission on Human Rights, they were tasked to promote political and civil human rights on behalf of all human rights victims in countries around the world. As diplomats, they were also charged with representing the national interest of their countries, however deleterious the consequences of that interest are for human rights. This contradiction between Hobbesian and Rousseau-esque standpoints place diplomats in a dualist position at the Commission. The pro-sanctions diplomats were charged by their government to ensure that Commission passed resolutions condemning Iraqi violations of rights. These resolutions were written and approved by the pro-sanctions delegates Commission. No mention could be made of human rights violations of the thousands of Iraqi children casualties under sanctions. Yet, when asked by this researcher, diplomats listed the right to life as a pre-eminent value, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter. Democracy is an espoused value of its signatories, but in-use values in US/UK policy towards the Middle East historically indicated a different pattern of behavior, or “organizational theory-in-use” (Argyris and Schon, 1996). The sanctions were conducted through the auspices of the UN. The UN Security Council and General Assembly espouses the belief in human rights for all, but these UN bodies’ compliance with the violations of Iraqis’ rights, de-legitimized the UN for many during the sanctions regime.

The US and UK said they wanted to spread democracy around the world but in reality, in the



name of national interest, elites pursued a strategy of supporting dictators such as Shah Pahlevi and misogynistic oil monarchies? The US and UK intervened militarily on behalf of the Arab ruling elites against any national liberation movement that promised more equal distribution of wealth, self-determination and progress for women. The US and UK supported the nationalist socialist Ba'ath Party, because it decimated the Iraqi Communist Party.

**Two of the three diplomats did not deny the excessive nature of the deaths related to the sanctions policy.**

The UK diplomat said that Iraq had deteriorated considerably as a result of the Iran-Iraq War. This did not reflect the reality of pre-war assessments which agreed that Iraq enjoyed an advanced standard of living for the region prior to the 1991 Gulf War.

Rousseau believed that excess oppression and inequality removed legitimacy in government. This belief, pervasive in Western patriarchal reasoning, has two implications for US policy towards Iraq: it buttressed the reason for containing Saddam Hussein as demonized, excessive dictator. But this belief could not be applied to ordinary Iraqi civilians and who under sanctions, were virtual prisoners of the excessive policy of sanctions. Imprisoned in their own country, deprived of all freedoms of choice, their genetic integrity compromised for generations to come by the use of uranium weapons - the status of ordinary Iraqis had *de facto* deteriorated to that of slaves. The Iraqis knew they were enslaved by the sanctions, in a much more destructive way than at any other time during the Ba'ath Party government. Outside of Iraq, a public perception had to be carefully fostered to make the pro-sanctions public believe that Iraqis were slaves, but their master was Saddam Hussein, not the US and UK who were imposing the blockade. Key to this manipulated perception was a denial that there had been excessive deaths as a result of the sanctions or that any sanctions-related deaths were attributable to Saddam Hussein.

The notion of excess is used as a marker to determine when realist policies transgress liberal concepts of morality and become de-legitimized. What constitutes excess today is unclear: how many civilian casualties had to die from the sanctions before it was considered a genocidal action? Humanitarian law does not have the answer: it cannot provide exact numbers of civilian deaths in combat that would render the combat illegal. The US and Norwegian diplomats admitted the deaths due to sanctions were in excess. At least one anti-sanctions attorney, Elias Davidsson, considers that one Iraqi life lost due to sanctions constituted a crime. When official estimates of total numbers of casualties were released in 1999 by UNICEF (after my interviews at the UN Commission on Human Rights) the sanctions policy lost its legitimacy.

**The UK and US pro-sanctions diplomats appeared "unconscious" vis-à-vis the people of Iraq.**

My research led me to believe that the pro-sanctions diplomats were caught up in a conflicting matrix of values and beliefs, that were personal, philosophical and political in nature, and that these were fostered by conflicts in Western patriarchal ideology (the Hobbes/Rousseau dualism). The preferred strategy of the realists and liberals in both the US and UK, was sanctions, regardless of the destruction of the lives of Iraqi civilians. Their justification for the

sanctions was based on espoused values - freedom, democracy and saving lives from the potential threat of Saddam Hussein's WMDs. The equation of killing children to save other children, presented no conflict for conscience in terms of actions - the diplomats continued to promote the sanctions at human rights bodies and to condemn Iraqi violations of rights, while ignoring the clear evidence of violations as caused by the UN blockade. Yet in answering a hypothetical question about negotiating for the lives of passengers in a hijacked plane, the three diplomats opted for negotiations with the hijacker to save the lives of the passengers, rather than kill the passengers by taking down the plane. But in the case of Iraq, the diplomats believed that negotiations with Saddam Hussein was a lost cause, and that the only solution was to contain him and to continue the sanctions.

Upon my asking them what they felt about the children of Iraq, all three diplomats admitted they were troubled. The Norwegian diplomat expressed difficulties in reconciling the impacts of the sanctions with his feelings, and was eager to propose a solution (the so-called smart sanctions). The US diplomat was more cynical and offered no hope or alternative solution, because he said that the US and Iraq were at an impasse; the sanctions could go on indefinitely. When an individual is acting on in-use rather than espoused values, he often feels hopeless and cynical (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1993). The UK diplomat had a breezy attitude; he was just doing his job which required making hard judgment calls. All three were unable to produce an argument to explain the moral dilemma, or a proposed solution, or apply ethical standards. They demonstrated an inability to think the dilemma through in a complex manner. They used a simplistic 'trust me, we know what we are doing' argument, which in Argyris' view, is a defense mechanism when there is a gap between in-use and espoused values, or when there is pattern of lies that repeat themselves in organizational practice. In a projection of blame, the US diplomat blamed his superiors for not proposing an alternative solution (and did not suggest one himself): *"I don't know what our policymakers are thinking of...we can't control him [Saddam Hussein]. If sanctions were lifted, he might distribute food and medicine but this would solidify his [Hussein's] power and military strength ...the whole idea is to have a secure grip on power and internal security...You don't know the consequences [if sanctions were lifted] you can't apply ethical standards, the [situation] is too unpredictable...When you commit military forces nobody knew, we could not predict...for example, the Vietnam War...the US policy led to x number of lives [lost] we didn't know the consequences of stopping but we knew [we could] eliminate x number of people... [P]olicymakers knew but were afraid to admit that the domino theory was not valid..."* His argument indicated that he thought that the US' need to maintain control over policy outcome was a more important consideration than ethics. The need for control over outcomes of decisions is a hallmark of patriarchal rationality, and the basis for Games Theory (reviewed in Chapter Three). I asked him whether the US should continue bargaining with Saddam Hussein using the lives of his people, if there was going to be no change in his behavior: *"I know he's a shit...he does shitty things to his people...I am not a big fan of sanctions, [but] there is not enough information on the consequences to justify sanctions..."*

The Norwegian diplomat admitted that *"the more I read about sanctions, the more difficult I find it."* He spoke of seeing a television program of children dying in a Baghdad hospital, by a *"personally involved journalist."* He was not sure how the UN Sanctions Committee worked...*"I think that the Sanctions Committee is supposed to allow food and medicines..."*

but later on said that the Norwegian television reporter was right in saying that the sanctions regime was preventing the free distribution of medicines, not Saddam Hussein, but that Hussein was spending money on palaces. He also believed that the sanctions were “*sometimes a useful weapon*” against Saddam Hussein. He could not answer when I asked him why the US and UK were bargaining with Saddam Hussein, using human lives as bargaining chips, when they believed he was irredeemably bad.

**The US diplomat had the least trouble in reconciling his espoused values with the US’ in-use values.**

The more realist diplomat I interviewed represented the United States. He did not have a problem, emotionally or morally, with the thought that the US would let the siege of Iraq go on indefinitely. He likened the fear of lifting the sanctions to the fear that operated US policy towards the end of the Vietnam War: “*US policy led to x number of deaths because we didn’t know the consequences of stopping [the war] but we knew how many we could eliminate by war... Policymakers knew but were afraid to admit that the domino theory was not valid.*” Because during the Vietnam War, the US continued killing when other outcomes could not be guaranteed, this according to the diplomat, was a tried and true policy that could be done again with respect of sanctions. Argyris’ theory of organizational patterned blindness explains how demonstrably mistaken policy becomes institutionalized. However, in both the case of Vietnam and Iraq, the aim to destabilize and deteriorate whole populations was not a mistaken one; rather these were pre-meditated policies to eliminate alternative models that had challenged US hegemony. I asked the US diplomat whether he thought there was a moral dimension to the blockade. He then contradicted his former argument (sanctions are needed to keep Saddam in his box) by saying “*I am not a big fan of sanctions, there is not enough information to justify the sanctions.*” Even though he might have personally disagreed with the policy towards Iraqi citizens, the US diplomat did not view the indefinite expenditure of lives under sanctions, as a matter for his personal conscience. Ultimately, he did not believe there was an exit strategy to the US’ interventions against Iraq. “*We can’t control him [Saddam Hussein]. He might distribute food and medicines but this would solidify his power and military strength. The whole idea is to have a secure grip on power. You don’t know the consequences [of lifting sanctions] therefore you can’t apply ethical standards. The situation is too unpredictable.*” The over-riding concern for the US diplomat was the loss of control over outcomes, and the concomitant loss of rationality.

**The more liberal-leaning the diplomat, the harder it was to reconcile the gap between their in-use values and their country’s espoused values.**

The UK and Norwegian diplomats had to reconcile liberal notions of international relations, human rights, and particularly the right to life, with the deaths of the Iraqi children. I asked the UK diplomat about Denis Halliday’s resignation in protest of the sanctions. Halliday was the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, and a British citizen. His protest had been written about in the UK media. The UK diplomat responded by saying “*it is not difficult for someone who works in humanitarian action to become emotionally attached to the problems they are dealing with. I, myself, visited Mogadishu two years ago [in 1997] with the International Red Cross. The sheer despair of ordinary Somalis eking out an existence in the ruins of Mogadishu...was terrible to see. The sight of a girl, the same age as my daughter, carrying a*

*gun was quite upsetting...*” Despite this evocation of misery, he went on to insist that the sanctions were preferable as *“peaceful means to resolve disputes before turning to the guns.”* It was an illogical distinction since the outcome of a war and a blockade is the same: death and misery. In this part of the conversation, he projected blame again, characterizing Saddam Hussein as defiant of the UN Sanctions regime and Security Council resolutions, and accused him of using Iraqi civilians as pawns: *“Iraq has been given the opportunity to alleviate sanctions but has not done so...”* Halliday in his view was naïve about this Machiavellian bit of strategy employed by Saddam: *“...Halliday has let his emotions get the better of him and failed to see the whole picture...”* I asked him about the ends and means dilemma of sanctions, was the ends worth the means? *“That’s difficult. Difficult decisions are right bastards but must be taken nevertheless.”*

In a follow up question at a later date, I asked *“If we know that Saddam Hussein is crap [I used the vernacular that I noted he was in the habit of using] and in a sanctions situation he won’t put his people first then what is the nature of our responsibility, if any, towards the Iraqi people caught in the deadlock?”* He answered by fax: *“a very good question. How can we as reasonable people keep sanctions upon Iraq knowing that they affect ordinary people so badly, and the ruling elite manage to remain unscathed? But if we concluded that they weren’t working and thus must withdraw them, then Saddam will have won and his failure to abide by the ceasefire agreements, SCRs etc will have been condoned. We must therefore find a way of providing assistance to ordinary Iraqis. This can be done by the provision of humanitarian assistance in the form of food and medical aid. Note Saddam has regularly tried to disrupt this with various tactics. SCR 986(?) also has provided for a food for oil programme.”*

This answer again illustrates Argyris’ projection of blame onto others as a defense mechanism. It also points to a faulty and circular logic: after admitting to an ethical dilemma, the ‘reasonable’ UK diplomat proposed to solve it with a solution he admitted in the same breath could not work, thus leaving the ethical dilemma precisely as before. In a typical patriarchal mindset, he pursued the theme of winning at all cost over the enemy, as personified by Saddam Hussein. I pressed the point again in another follow up question, *“is it ethically right for the people of Iraq to suffer possibly indefinitely in order to protect the rest of the world from the threat of Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction?”* The British diplomat answered, *“No. It’s not ethically right. Is it ethically right for ordinary Serbs to be killed by NATO bombs? Is it ethically right to give immunity from prosecution to IRA killers in order to get details of the “missing”? No it is not but tough decisions have to be made. It is ethically correct to address the issues in this way but all efforts should be made to alleviate the suffering, reduce the “collateral damage...”* This answer reflected the ambivalence inherent in the just war and humanitarian law arguments, which is, it is not ethical to kill innocents but sometimes it is necessary for ethical reasons. His answer also expressed the Argyris idea of patterned blindness: it has been done before and so it can be done again, thus repeating the same ethical mistakes over and over again without creating an alternative solution. These answers are symptomatic of the Western separation of ethics from policy implementation, resulting in the contradictory yet repetitive claim – one must kill in order to save lives.

The Norwegian representative was less defensive of his country’s policy of sanctions and

more open to its ethical considerations. He began the conversation by describing a television program in Norway which had toured wards of children's hospitals in Iraq. He made sure I had a copy of the Smarter Sanctions policy, designed by the UK to alleviate the suffering of innocent Iraqis under the blockade (it was never adopted as a formal solution, although the lid of how much oil Iraq could pump had been lifted after 1999). The British representative did not mention the British amendment to me at our only interview.

**The diplomats demonstrated "a patterned blindness," which is embedded in patriarchal beliefs and articulated by circular arguments.**

The pro-sanctions diplomat did not refer to an economic, North-South, oil agenda behind the sanctions in their discussion with me, even though, Western access to oil is cited in US government policy documents vis-à-vis Iraq. Instead, they chose to present the 'knight in shining armor' defense; that they were making hard choices to defeat an evil leader and his potential threat to the world and millions of innocent children. It was a case of choosing between two paternalisms: "his" children and "our" children (e.g., Clinton's accusation that 'Saddam was sticking it to his children' *Democracy Now*, cited in Chapter Two). In their answers to the Political Values Questionnaire, the diplomat respondents had upheld the principles of justice, negotiations and the right to life as primary values. Yet the US and UK had never negotiated with the Iraqis face to face once; the last time this had happened was during the peace brokered by Generals after the 1991 Gulf War ended. In my face to face interview with the US and Norway diplomats, I asked about the illogic of expecting Hussein, a person portrayed as irrational and evil by the US, to engage in rational choice games, where outward pressure is put on the enemy to make him concede? Surely the children of Iraq were the losers in this so-called game of deterrence? The diplomats hesitated, and were clearly stumped for an answer. It was a revealing moment. I had tapped into cognitive dissonance: two neurons unable to connect. The Norwegian diplomat, clearly stalling for time, commented that it was an excellent question. The silence was significant, "*because individuals are often uncomfortable with issues they cannot discuss, or see themselves being at risk for bringing them out into the open since they conflict with espoused norms of 'proper' behavior and values, they further camouflage them*" (Argyris, 2001, 93).

In a conscious moral dilemma, the subject would feel guilt and remorse, possibly seeking to change the situation. Only the Norwegian diplomat demonstrated an urgency commensurate with the crisis, by talking about remediation through the proposed 'softer sanctions' (which was not to be). The other two diplomats had no answers, but did not admit they did not have one to give, other than to ask me once again to consider what to them, was the worse case scenario, letting Saddam Hussein "out of his box." The diplomats in general appeared unconscious of the inconsistency of bargaining with an un-redeemable leader using the lives of children as bargaining chips. But how was that possible? These were diplomats who were skilled in human rights discourse, and who spent considerable time at diplomatic and human rights circles as part of their duties. Again, I ascribe the diplomats' psychological moral blindness by relating it to the confusing and ambivalent messages built into Western patriarchal philosophy as described in Chapter Three (ends justify means, might makes right, some people are by nature evil and un-redeemable; innocent people must die if the cause is just).

It is true that different understandings of the sanctions may have produced different

conclusions. For example, the British diplomat believed that Iraq's society had deteriorated before the sanctions. All three diplomats blamed Saddam Hussein for not passing on the proceeds of oil for food to his people, and omitted to mention the Iraqi rationing system. But these arguments begged the question: why further place the Iraqi people at the mercy of a dictator, by withdrawing much infrastructure support that would have given civilians energy to resist the Ba'ath? The state of cognitive dissonance is so uncomfortable that the subject may deny that she/he is in a moral dilemma (Festinger 1968). Denial is a strategy therefore that expresses psychological moral unconsciousness. At this point, the subject falls into circularity and blind belief (an idea that cannot be explained by another idea). When I confronted the diplomats with the illogic of bargaining lives with someone they considered un-redeemable, the three diplomats essentially offered a circular logic not based on a set of data: "children must die when hard choices have to be made because sometimes it's necessary for children to die when hard choices have to be made."

When an individual is unconscious to this extent, he/she is acting on behalf of others, whether it is a cult, an organization, a government, or a President, he/she has given over her power of reasoning, indeed the conscious self, to what is viewed as a higher authority and a superior holder of knowledge. It is assumed that the higher power simultaneously collects the facts, makes judgments, metes out either praise or punishment, and gives orders. It is assumed that the higher authority has the right to make those working on behalf of the authority, to feel guilty or ashamed if they are doing something contrary to its wishes, or if they question or even think critically about directives that are leading to genocide. This is the basis of paternalism, (father knows best). The US diplomat found it difficult to explain the stuck quality of the sanctions policy, as a result, I suspect, of either not knowing about, or not being allowed to discuss with me, the option of invading Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein. The Norwegian showed more moral concern, while the UK and US diplomats did not admit to any personal moral concern. This may have been due to the fact that the UK and US were leading the sanctions initiative at the UN Security Council, while Norway was not as closely involved.

What it all comes down to is the most dangerous belief of all; that fealty and loyalty to male elites ultimately in charge of the national interest over-rides consciousness about conscience and altruism. Paternalism was therefore at the root of the ideological and personal values motivating the pro-sanctions policymakers who saw the deaths of half a million Iraqi children as a necessary evil, without perceiving these deaths as posing an ethical conflict or moral dilemma for themselves. When individuals are unconscious of illogic to this extent, it is a clear indication that they are acting as blind followers, whether it is of a cult, an organization, a government, or a President. They have given over the power of logical reasoning, indeed the conscious self, to what is viewed as a higher moral authority and a superior holder of knowledge. It is assumed that the higher power simultaneously collects the facts, makes judgments, metes out either praise or punishment, and gives orders, without checks or balances. It is assumed that the higher authority has the right to make those working on behalf of the authority, to feel guilty or ashamed if they are doing something contrary to its wishes, or if they question or even think critically about directives that are leading to genocide. Unquestioned loyalty in male elites to their superiors is similar to the blind faith shown to an all-seeing, all-powerful and punitive male God and his equally stern prophets/patriarchs.

But the diplomats were uncomfortable when confronted with their inability to provide a logical response to the artificial “Sophie’s choice” dilemma of the sanctions. This could have indicated they were capable of a modicum of individual, logical thinking at odds with the official policy they were supposed to represent. Or, it may have indicated an acknowledgment of another set of values built into a capitalist democracy - human rights and freedoms for all, irrespective of gender, ethnicity and other differences.

Either way, their doubts were still-born because there was no oxygen to allow them to flourish. Loyalty to those engaged in the pursuit of wealth and control over others is part of the job description of diplomats representing capitalist countries.

**The diplomats confirmed that Ends-Means Reasoning, Games Theory prevailed in the US and UK Policymaking about the Sanctions.**

The diplomats, many thousands of other UN employees, and the leaderships of most the world’s countries, knew that children were dying in hospital from cancer pain, without anesthetics and other cancer treatments. When horrific stories of Iraqi parents watching their children die under these conditions (in a country where its standards for public health was near equal to those in Europe), circulated in the world’s media and on the internet, the sanctions deadlock appeared to make no sense nor to have an ending. In the sexist, patriarchal parlance of the UK diplomat, this was a “*right bastard*” of a “*difficult decision*,” – another hard-nosed reality faced by hard-nosed rational men who have manfully shouldered the responsibility of running nation states. In fact the intellectual articulations of the Iraq-US/UK (negotiations at a deadlock, difficult decisions), framed as an apparent Sophie’s Choice, was a smokescreen covering up the intent to go to war and appropriate Iraq’s oil resources. I will now describe this aspect of the deadly Game in greater depth.

Male elites have historically appropriate resources as a way of gaining and maintaining power over others. The “enemy” therefore exists on a perennial basis, whether it is communism, drugs, terrorism, or an individual such as Saddam Hussein. The game cannot exist if it doesn’t contain the concept of the hostile Other. Since the diplomats saw themselves as the “rational good guys,” they were not prepared to talk about the US’ hegemonic policies and US elites’ personal pursuit of capital in the Middle East. Other male elites were cast however, as maniacal greedy power seekers. For example, the UK diplomat discussed his tour of duty in an African country, where he felt “*incredible anger*” against “*gangsters who have no desire to make peace and care for the [country’s population] whilst there is a buck to be made*”. To defeat the bad guys, all strategies of deceit, pain and punishment could potentially be justified. In scenarios worked out by the Rand Institute and other think tanks, arcane mathematical formulations are used to envision how players on both sides will act and react depending on how much pain is inflicted or how many rewards are meted out. The use of mathematics symbolically tells us that this is a game for boys. Terms such as payback, end game, zero sum game, prisoner’s dilemma, chicken, etc, signals the sports motif, another marker that says, women not allowed (unless she is Condoleeza Rice, who told Oprah Winfrey she enjoys chess because it reminds her of a war game). The end goal is not protection of the greater good, but the pursuit of capital, resources and wealth for male elites. In this genderized, racialized, classist world, only a male-based military superior force can win the Game. The concept of

the unredeemable enemy is pivotal in the Game.

But the strategies of coercion, if they are viewed as causing excessive deaths of innocents, are often denied. The UK diplomat could not admit to widespread casualties caused by the UN sanctions, unlike the more realist US diplomat. I asked him to comment on the then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's statement (later corroborated by UNICEF) that half a million Iraqi children had died because of sanctions. By fax, he responded: "*Arrrgh, what a statement that was. I don't remember it. If she said what you say she said then I expect it was a mistake. All politicians slip from time to time. They have a lot to take in - they don't have the luxury of concentrating on just a few issues*". The choice of sanctions as a deterrent against the Iraqi threat, was a satisfactory one according to the UK diplomat, because "*I have yet to come across an example of international human rights law which forbids the use of sanctions, which may or do affect civilians. It would be difficult for a Security Council resolution to be passed if it were contrary to existing law.*" This again shows patterned blindness and loyalty to what is viewed as superior authority. In fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, the feminist-activists successfully lobbied for resolutions at the UN that condemned the Security Council's resolutions on the Iraqi sanctions as illegal under existing law.

### **The Myth of Negotiations – revealing the gap between in-use and espoused values.**

Negotiations in conflicts are supposed to pit two sides against each other using rational arguments, on an implied level playing field. The diplomats answered in their Political Values Questionnaire that pursuing negotiations to their limit in order to avoid war, was the best general rule in international conflict resolution. Negotiations bring to mind the espoused values of fair play and decency. Sanctions were considered a measure short of war by the pro-sanctions diplomats. It was believed that pressure had to be applied on Saddam Hussein to achieve the end of his alleged WMD program.

The Security Council's stance on what would constitute a resolution to the deadlock, was ambiguous and distracting, and I believe, made deliberately so under the leadership of the US and UK in a game designed for only one side to win.

He who creates the rules also dominates the game. In the case of Iraq, the espoused value was good intent negotiations with Saddam Hussein that if Iraq destroyed its WMD program, the sanctions would be lifted. The Iraqis complained that there was never any light at the end of this tunnel. The real game was to keep Saddam Hussein "in his box," no matter how long it took, and how many lives were lost, until the time was right and the political will was there to invade Iraq. This was not the intention of the other members of the Security Council or of the UN Secretary General, who were increasingly opposed to the sanctions and its inevitable outcome of war against Iraq. Other countries were leery of a US/UK bid to appropriate Iraqi oil and they opposed the invasion of March 2003.

The real in-use game that the US/UK were playing with Iraq was to use the blockade as a way of weakening the country's defensive capabilities to the point where it could not defend itself when the time came to remove Saddam Hussein from power and capture the oil resources. Either the pro-sanctions diplomats I interviewed were privy to this game, or were genuinely



puzzled by its espoused illogic, which, in 1999, was that the sanctions would remain indefinitely because Saddam Hussein was too evil a man to let him out of his box. The UK diplomat thought that the sanctions constituted a “*peaceful means to resolve disputes before turning to the guns...the other option to ensure compliance would be to go in again all guns blazing until Iraq did comply.*” The UK diplomat trusted in the intellectual abilities of his government who was pursuing, in his view: “*a bigger agenda here which many right minded people - like Galloway - cannot comprehend*”. George Galloway, Member of Parliament, had been a leading figure in the campaign to lift the sanctions, and had brought a cancer-ridden child from Iraq for treatment in the UK. He was later ousted from the Labour Party for allegedly receiving monies from Saddam Hussein - a charge that has yet to be proven in court. The UK diplomat’s blind loyalty to his government (different from the more nuanced views of the US and Norwegian diplomats) could be attributed to a lack of higher education: “*I should stress I never went to University ...please feel free to come back if I have not been deep enough [in his answers to my questions].*”

**Ambivalence about human rights reflected in the diplomats’ resolutions on Iraq at the Commission.**

The pro-sanctions diplomats were at the Commission to support the Rapporteur Max van Stoel’s report on Iraq, which condemned in a long document the violations of rights done by the Iraqi government, but gave only one paragraph to the humanitarian impacts of the sanctions. Since those impacts came under economic rights (in that the sanctions impaired the ability of the State of Iraq to fulfill them) the US could afford to not mention them. The US has a long standing policy not to ratify the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The US and UK diplomats did not note in their answers to the Political Values Questionnaire, that economic rights had any equivalence or priority over political rights. The Norwegian diplomat thought all rights were important. Although all three espoused the right to life, this was not a value-in-use when it came to the Iraqis under sanctions. I trace this ambivalence to parallel ambivalences in patriarchal Western thought in two dualistic areas of human rights: human right to life versus humanitarian law and just war, and the priority of political rights over economic rights as an espoused value.

**“Patterned Blindness” by pro-sanctions diplomats was clue to another Agenda.**

Argyris points out that often, policymakers are unaware of the dilemma they are in, and *unconsciously* build an edifice of deceit and lies to justify immoral decisions, the concept Argyris calls “patterned blindness” which leads to inaccurate data and conflicting messages. Diplomats employed a number of defense mechanisms, including blaming others, but more important, were trapped in circularity of logic, in which apparently, no solution could be found to rescue the people of Iraq from their fate. The picture the diplomats drew was of the states of US, UK and Norway in a static position, apparently caught on the horns of a moral dilemma, helpless to change the situation, waiting for Saddam Hussein to make a move. This image struck me as bizarre and inconsistent with the usual “can-do” nature of the powerful Western states. It was an inconsistency that provided a clue to another agenda, hidden perhaps from the diplomats themselves at the time of the interviews.

The reasoning that the Iraqis were doomed to sanctions for eternity because Saddam Hussein

was not likely to change his stripes and give up his alleged WMD program, and the equal unlikelihood that the Ba'ath Party would dissolve itself, appeared as the unsolvable dilemma in which the diplomats told me they were facing in 1999. The implication was, of course, that only removing Saddam Hussein would remove the sanctions. A year earlier, in 1998, at higher levels of policymaking than the diplomats I interviewed, another agenda was taking shape which was to remove Saddam Hussein by force (see Chapter Two). In utilitarian games played by States, getting control of the rules of the game gave the US and UK a winning advantage. The changed, but hidden, rules were: the US and UK would lift the sanctions by using force to "take out" Saddam Hussein at a time of their own choosing. Therefore the sanctions policy only *appeared* to be at an impasse. In reality, it was part of an ongoing Game to strip Iraq of its military defenses, to weaken its people and its economy, and not (as was the espoused goal of the Security Council resolutions) to give Saddam Hussein an opportunity to conform to the will of the international community by giving up his weapons of mass destruction program. Scott Ritter, a former Marine and member of UNSCOM, said that the more progress made by UNSCOM in destroying Iraq's WMDs, the less excuse the US had to maintain the sanctions (Ritter, 1999). He claimed that the US withdrew UNSCOM in 1998, because it had outlived its usefulness in the Game. From 1998 to 2000, the US and UK were bombing Iraqi military installations on a regular basis, as well as its civilians in the North and South, the sanctions were crumbling, and the timing was right to plan for war. The shift from the espoused goals of the Security Council resolutions to the espoused goal of war was proclaimed officially after 9/11. The shift had its roots in the Clinton Administration, and was a realist way to respond to the new reality that UNSCOM, in 1998, had virtually declared Iraq free from WMDs.

**Attorney Karen Parker: Concepts of "the Greater Good" and "Might Makes Right" can never be consistent with human rights.**

Karen Parker presents an alternative analysis to that of the pro-sanctions diplomats who were espousing, and outwardly engaging in, a dramatic, artificially created "Sophie's Choice" type of dilemma, in which the deaths of a half a million children was chosen as the lesser evil against the threat of Saddam Hussein's alleged WMD program. This she pointed out, "*sounds like a hard question*" but "*you always have to look at true motives, the larger economic agenda. United States foreign policy is driven by the marketplace, they rarely care about the victims. Ideas like the greater good and might makes right, never have implementation for policy consistent with human rights.*" Ms Parker's six prong legal test of sanctions, to ascertain their legality, reflected what feminist policy looks like when it asks the question, whose ends, whose means?: "*are the sanctions imposed for valid reasons? ...Invalid reasons would include... North-South politics, undue interference with a State's sovereignty rights?*"

I have shown that the sanctions against Iraq were crucially linked to a North-South question. US hegemony believed it had claim over the post-colonial oil resources of Iraq, and that it had the right to replace a government, without the consent of its people, that had outlived its usefulness to the US and UK.

## Alternative Strategies for Policymakers

What then, should policy actors be doing to reconcile their in-use and espoused values? Policy actors should be asked the following questions, drawn mainly from Argyris' body of work.

- Is there a conflict between what policy actors said (espoused values) and what they did (in-use values)?
- What is undiscussible? What makes it undiscussible?
- Are there words that indicate a sense of caring, and are they genuinely meant, when tested against deeds? (Defense mechanisms are “*rewarded by most organizational cultures because the routines indicate a sense of caring and concern for people.*” Argyris, 1990).
- Are there messages or policies that are ambivalent or inconsistent over a period of time? How is that allowed to happen?
- Is the inconsistency discussed and explained logically, and is there a reasonable explanation for it?
  
- Are strategies justified by the following beliefs?
  1. Might is right. The ends justify the means.
  2. The conquest is sanctioned by justifications based on religion (faith in God) or ideology (beliefs in a superior economic system, ethno-centrism, androcentrism, racism).
  3. Leaders of the justified conquest are acting on behalf of their publics, are owed blind loyalty and must not be questioned on the basis of personal conscience.
  4. Sacrifice of children is necessary when might is right and justified by an espoused idealistic motivation.
  5. There are some humans who are irredeemably evil. Human nature is essentially aggressive and must be controlled by military power, for the greater good.
  6. Women and children of the conquering nation are considered weak and must be protected by military, male strength. Women and children of the conquered territory do not have any value as human beings.

Other questions to be posed include:

- What moral arguments (espoused values) are marshaled for a particular course of action and are they consistent with previous actions (values in use) over a period of time? Were messages ambivalent?
- Is there a blame game in operation?
- Is there a whistleblower? Is she/he considered a traitor by the organization she/he belonged to and had punishment been meted out? (“*the attempt to uncover the causes of a systems failure is inevitably a perceived test of loyalty*” Argyris and Schon, 1996, p 49). Has she/he been dismissed as naïve and unrealistic?
- Is there patterned blindness? Are the same arguments are used again and again, but are not extended to their logical conclusions?

- Do problems appear unsolvable and deadlocked? Who suffers as a result?
- Is there a double standard in operation?

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# Reconstructing Operatic Melodrama – Lyricism and War, Lessons for Creating My Opus Sectile

*Valerie L. Patterson*

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While some on principles baptized  
To strict party platform ties  
Social clubs in drag disguise  
Outsiders they can freely criticize  
Tell nothing except who to idolize  
And then say God bless him

Bob Dylan, March 1965, *It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)*

A Newsweek Poll published on August 6, 2005 reported that 61 percent of the Americans polled say they disapprove of the way President George W. Bush is handling the war in Iraq (Newsweek, 2005). This disapproval rating is one that has continued to increase while the President's overall job approval ratings have continued to drop. Well, to embrace the metaphor of government as a "business" being run by an MBA, were government a Fortune 500 company, the Board of Directors would probably be calling for his resignation at this point.

The President's job is safe. But the implementation of his strategic plan to bring democracy to the Iraqi people has encountered numerous obstacles and challenges over that past two years and I am fascinated by what I will refer to as lyrical visioning that has been used to garner support for the plan. Examining several strategies might be useful and educational in a quest to identify lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom.

## Introduction

**"Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."  
(CNSNEWS.COM)**

George W. Bush, March 17, 2003

I first started this essay several months after the war in Iraq began, because of this nagging feeling that no weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) would be found and this unerring belief that Edwin Starr was correct when he proclaimed that “War, huh, yeah, what is it good for, absolutely nothing.” Two years later, when the search for WMDs continued to be unsuccessful, I decided to revisit what I had written and examine the war on Iraq through several lenses. It was my hope that I could identify lessons that would be useful for reflection and ultimately prescription.

Over four years ago I wrote an essay that was published in Public Administration Times, entitled *Would I Lie to You?* (Patterson, 2000). In the essay I argued that as a society we are prone to make rationalizations about why it is acceptable to lie in some circumstances and unacceptable in others.

In that essay, William Jefferson Clinton was the subject and I discussed the hypocrisy of moral outrage at political lies when we all know that “politicians lie.” They lie, distort the truth, present some truth and some fiction – even embellish the truth, for multiple objectives. I am convinced, given the current complexities of a post-modern life, that there are occasions when the public isn’t given the truth for what appear to be legitimate reasons. As a tax-paying citizen I may even feel that I am entitled to the truth, but conventional wisdom suggests that even though all I want is the truth, Col. Nathan R. Jessup would respond “You can’t handle the truth!”

Is there something about leadership, or some leaders, or some situations that make us more willing to accept as true those things we believe are false? Are there scenarios that demand absolute faith in the vision, even though there are shades of doubt? Much has been written about the corporatization of higher education. It is not only higher education that has been influenced by a corporate model; in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – public services, public jobs, the public good, war and even the “truth” are being outsourced and privatized and consumed, to create a unifying vision that combines and commingles two enduring principles – democracy and capitalism. It would be useful to identify how this model is emerging, what values are espoused and supported by this model and its usefulness as an emerging paradigm.

## **Lyrical Visioning**

After several months of research I became convinced that I could not completely support an assertion that the weapons of mass destruction claim was a lie. Thus, I developed a new conceptualization – the “political truth.” I am convinced that I would be challenged were I to suggest that political lies are at the heart of the war effort. To date there have been no weapons of mass destruction found, there is no verifiable link between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Ladin, and none of the September 11 hijackers were from Iraq, so the reasons given for the invasion of Iraq all appear to be false.

Unlike the Clinton/Lewinsky case, however, or Iran/Contra, or even Nixon/Watergate—all acknowledged incidences of lying (reviewed in Pfiffner, 1999), there is no mainstream concurrence that the public was lied to in this case. So what happened then? Conflicting

realities? Mill's law? George Akerlof (2004) in looking at current Bush economic policies applies this theme as well, arguing that the administration has created *fictions* (my emphasis), "where problems are solved the cheap and easy way, by waving a magic wand", instead of facing reality." So was the WMD claim a fiction?

Are presidents held to the prima facie duty of "don't lie," or are they exempted? Would the admonition of "don't ask/don't tell" be useful for a president who is attempting to convince his constituency that "tyrants are intolerable" and are worth going to war to topple?

## The Hook and the Refrain

My quest to determine why the WMD claim is not perceived as a lie led me to examine the State of the Union addresses delivered by the president starting in 2001. I was specifically interested in the following terms: *Iraq*, *terror*, *weapons of mass destruction*, and *Saddam Hussein*. Lyrically, in both Hip Hop and Opera, the hook is important. A hook is "an aspect of popular or commercial music that "grabs" people and makes it easy to like or remember the song" (from Barbieri, 1994). I am arguing that the repetitive utterance of certain words and concepts could explain the acceptance by many Americans that the WMD claim was a truthful assertion, and thus validated and legitimized the decision to engage in a preemptive strike against the people of Iraq.

### State of the Union Address - 2001

In the State of the Union address delivered on February 27, 2001, *Iraq* was not mentioned once. Nor was *Saddam Hussein*. A derivative of the word *terror* was mentioned in the following statement:

"Our nation also needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century – threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants in rogue nations intent upon developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies and friends, we must develop and we must deploy effective missile defenses (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005)."

Additionally, the phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was mentioned in that statement as well. This phrase seems prophetic, in light of the resulting conflict.

A second State of the Union address was delivered after the national tragedy that occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. This State of the Union Address was delivered on September 20, 2001. In this address *Iraq* was mentioned once –

"This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005)."

The word *terror* or a derivative was used 33 times throughout the address. The phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was not uttered once. Nor was the name of Saddam Hussein mentioned.

### **State of the Union Address – 2002**

In the State of the Union address delivered on January 29, 2002, *Iraq* was mentioned twice in paragraph twenty –

“Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens – leaving bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections – then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

The word *terror* or a derivative was used 36 times throughout the address. The phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was used twice (referring to Iraq) –

“States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

and –

“We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

*Saddam Hussein* was not mentioned in the address.

### **State of the Union Address – 2003**

In the State of the Union Address delivered on January 28, 2003, *Iraq* was uttered 21 times, clearly taking on the role of the hook. Compelling evidence was presented that the United Nations should fulfill its charter and demand that Iraq disarm, that the job of inspectors is to verify that Iraq’s regime is disarming, that methods used in Iraqi torture chambers had been documented by international human rights activists, that Iraqi methods to obtain forced confessions include torturing children while their parents are made to watch, and that the world had waited 12 years for Iraq to disarm (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

Other compelling arguments presented suggested that –



“Our nation and the world must learn the lessons of the Korean peninsula, and not allow an even greater threat to rise up in Iraq. A brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression...with ties to terrorism... with great potential wealth... will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

Additionally –

“The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary he is deceiving (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

The word *terror* or a derivative was used 23 times throughout the address. The phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was used four times in reference to Iran and Iraq, with the President asking –

“Year after year, Saddam Hussein has gone to elaborate lengths, spent enormous sums, taken great risks, to build and keep weapons of mass destruction – but why?” answering – “The only possible explanation, the only possible use he could have for those weapons, is to dominate, intimidate, or attack (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

In the 2003 State of the Union Address the name of Saddam Hussein was invoked 19 times. The most significant and controversial utterance, in my opinion, was the following –

“The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high strength aluminum tubes for nuclear weapons production. Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

This statement was found to be based on flawed intelligence that was unsubstantiated. The fallout related to the use of the intelligence, the exposure of the intelligence as flawed, what some perceive as the treasonous outing of a CIA agent, are all controversies that continue to this day, but the overarching point is that the consistent and continued invoking of the country of Iraq, associated with the hysteria of terror and terrorist activity and the imagery of Saddam Hussein as a brutal, unrestrained despot and dictator, with a history of “reckless aggression and ties to terrorism,” was very effective in swaying the opinion of the masses to support the vision and goal of the invasion.

#### **State of the Union Address – 2004**

The State of the Union Address in 2004 was delivered on January 20<sup>th</sup>. *Iraq* was uttered 24 times, the first being the following statement –

“Since we last met in this chamber, combat forces of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Poland and other countries enforced the demands of the United Nations, ended the rule of Saddam Hussein, and the people of Iraq are free.

(C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

The phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was used three times, with the president interestingly asserting that (especially in light of the fact that to this day no weapons of mass destruction have been found) –

“Already, the Kay Report identified dozens of weapons of mass destruction related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the United Nations (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

*Saddam Hussein* was mentioned four times as having his evil regime dealt with, and that “for all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein’s regime is a better and safer place (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

### **State of the Union Address – 2005**

The State of the Union address for 2005 was delivered on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. *Iraq* continued to serve as the hook and the refrain, being uttered 27 times. *Terror* or a derivative of the word was mentioned 27 times as well. *Saddam Hussein* was mentioned once. The phrase *weapons of mass destruction* was only mentioned once, with the President asserting that –

“There are still regimes seeking weapons of mass destruction – but no longer without attention and without consequence (C-SPAN: State of the Union Transcript at C-SPAN.org, 3/15/2005).”

### **Veritas or Something Else?**

“I have never lied to you, I have always told you some version of the truth” (Harry Sanborn (Jack Nicholson) in *Something’s Gotta Give*, 2003).

What about truth and lies? The Latin word for *truth* is *veritas*, one of the values held high in the academy. Along with *veritas*, the following are all derived from *vēr(us)*: *veridical*, which means truthful; *verify*, where you prove the truth of or confirm; *verily*, meaning “in truth;” *verisimilar*, which means having the appearance of truth; *verisimilitude* – the appearance or semblance of truth; *verism*, which is the theory that rigid representation of truth and reality is essential to art and literature; *veritable* – being truly or very much so; and *verity* – the state or quality of being true (Webster, 1989). Is truth a sine qua non of ethical leadership?

It would be useful to consider two definitions of the word *lie*. *Webster’s Unabridged Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1989) offers the following:

1. A false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive;
2. Something intended or serving to convey a false impression.

Nuyen (1999) makes a distinction between lying and deception, arguing that there are

situations where deception may be justified, that, all things being considered, “it is better to deceive than to lie.” Nuyen (1999) suggests that there is “asymmetry that favors deception, and that ... deception can be defended if there are good reasons, or morally defensible reasons for not telling the truth.”

As I argued in 2000, Presidents lie, but many are unwilling to acknowledge the lies as falsehoods. I have previously suggested in this commentary that there is no clear consensus that the WMD claim is considered a lie. In completing a search of an academic index for articles on political and presidential lies, of the articles found, the Clinton/Lewinsky case received more attention than any other presidential lies, and this search extended back to the 1980s.

### The People, Lyrical Visioning and the Hook

A CBS/New York Times poll taken in January of 2005 revealed the following:

**"Before the war with Iraq, when talking about what they knew about the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, do you think the members of the Bush Administration were telling everything they knew, most of what they knew, hiding important elements of what they knew, or mostly lying?"**

	<b>Telling Everything</b>	<b>Telling Most</b>	<b>Hiding Elements</b>	<b>Mostly Lying</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
1/14-18/05	8	29	36	23	4
2/12-15/04	5	35	39	16	5
1/12-15/04	6	27	39	21	7
12/14-15/03	3	26	45	16	10
11/10-12/03	6	34	40	15	5

(From PollingReport.com, CBS News Poll, 2/22/2005)

This was a poll of 1,118 adults with a margin of error of plus/minus 3. There are no clear trends in direction. Although the results suggest that between late 2003 and January 2005 the percentage of individuals believing that the administration was telling everything has gone up, percentage believing the administration was telling most has gone down, as has the percentage believing that the administration was hiding elements. However, the largest increase in change in the difference in percentages between 2003 and 2005 is in those believing that the administration was mostly lying.

### Pfiffner’s Taxonomy

Pfiffner (1999) does acknowledge that there are times that presidents do not tell what he refers to as the “absolute truth.” He goes on to suggest that not all lies are created equal and that some lies are worse than others. The three categories of lies Pfiffner presents are *justifiable lies*, *lies to prevent embarrassment*, and *lies of policy deception*. In his article he provides

examples of presidential lies that fit each category. There are probably other scholars whose research focuses on the presidency, who probably would suggest that the taxonomy could be expanded and other categories of lies identified, but for the purposes of this commentary I will examine the WMD claim using the categories identified by Pfiffner and others (Pfiffner, in 2004 offers a very useful examination of whether the President misled the country).

A justifiable lie could be one where the intent is to protect national security interests and the innocent, and philosophically can probably be categorized as teleological. Well, the WMD claim appears to fall into this category, if it is true that Saddam Hussein really posed a threat to the national security of the people of the United States and the only way to convince these people, who don't understand the magnitude of threat, is to claim that he must be removed from power because he has weapons of mass destruction (that he really *doesn't* have); then it would be justified to lie to the public to gain support for the war. The major problem here is that the weapons haven't been found yet, but the fact that they have not been found doesn't mean that they won't, or that they didn't exist at one time.

	<b>Justifiable Lies</b>	<b>Lies to Prevent Embarrassment</b>	<b>Lies of Policy Deception</b>
Weapons of Mass Destruction	Yes	No	Yes/No

Pfiffner's second category involves lies that are told to flavor a policy position to garner support, so the political leader may misrepresent his/her position or a previous action to maximize development/creation of a coalition of support. As a political figure, there could have been behavior that was engaged in that, if revealed in light of present policy, could serve as an "embarrassment." Pfiffner argues that even though these would be lies, it could be understood how a politician running for office might feel a lie would be justified in these circumstances. The WMD claim doesn't fit into this category, and the only related scenario that seems relevant would be discrepancies in military service or lack of military service during a time of war. The author in his article provides examples of less serious lies and what he calls serious breaches of the public trust of which Nixon/Watergate and Clinton/Lewinsky are provided as examples.

The third categorization involves saying the country is doing one thing when it was doing another. These kinds of lies, Pfiffner argues, mislead the public about the direction of government policy, and this can be problematic in a democracy, especially when the action government is taking is not responsive to the wishes of the governed. This appears to be the most serious form of presidential lying, and Pfiffner (1999) makes a very critical and crucial point here that impacts principled leadership when he argues that this kind of deception deprives the public of the information necessary to make informed political decisions. The WMD claim doesn't appear to fit this category, or does it? There are some who argue that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" is really about gaining control of and ultimately privatizing the Iraqi oil fields. So if the goal was an economic one, rather than one based on a fundamental American value – say democracy, for example, then it could be considered a lie of policy deception. If the claim was a lie, it is clear that the "war" did have a favorable impact on the Bush re-election in 2004. Of course, any rational person would consider it unthinkable that

the real reason for going to war with Iraq was control of the Iraqi oil fields or to win a second term as president, rather than rid the world of the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

## Conclusion

Historical events have been portrayed for years in cinema. For some, history is learned through film. I have decided that the events as they unfold in Iraq for me have become operatic melodrama, that in the spirit of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (see Rennie, 2002, for example), the events in Iraq are tragic, heartbreaking, inspirational, lyrical, and educational. The following are lessons that I have identified from my assessment of the war in Iraq:

1. One of the lessons learned is the usefulness of lyrical visioning to create imagery that conveys truth from possible falsehood;
2. A second lesson is that as the world becomes more complex, the ability to discern truth from falsehood becomes more complex;
3. A third lesson is that it may be necessary to use deception to achieve principled ends.

Lyricism and rhetoric have been used on multiple levels to secure the support needed by the administration to wage war on Iraq. Survey results suggest, however, that, with no end in sight, absence of a plan for troop withdrawal, weekly casualties among the ranks of American troops, costs in the billions of dollars and continued terrorist attacks, a new "hook" may be needed to stem the mounting dissatisfaction and disapproval of the President's handling of the war.

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# It's Raining in Iraq

*Alexander Dawoody*

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## List of Characters

- Kifah**                    A young Iraqi man in his early twenties living with his two elderly parents in the slum Shiite area of Baghdad known as “Saddam’s City.” Kifah attends the University of Baghdad, studying Arabic Literature. He has no political affiliation, but he dislikes Saddam’s regime and hopes for a day when Iraq is free and democratic.
- Interrogators**        Agents of Saddam’s Security Police entrusted with the task of gathering information from detained suspected political activists who are critical or in opposition of the Baath regime. The types of information sought are the names of these detainees’ associates in their political organizations, the locations of their leadership, and funding sources. The methods used during the interrogations range from intimidation and threats to physical and psychological torture, rape, and deprivation of food and sleep. Often, individuals are detained and tortured without evidence, rather based on rumors or bogus reports by some security agent who wants to be promoted. By increasing the number of reports against opposition groups, regardless of the accuracy of these reports, they gain esteem. The regime itself encourages this behavior and rewards those agents who are active in their reporting.
- Old Man**                Kifah’s father. A Shiite peasant in his early 70s who was born and raised in the southern marshes of Iraq, then moved to Baghdad with his wife in 1958. He was in search of work after the military coup that established the Republic of Iraq. Once he moved to Baghdad, he lived in an area known as “Al-Thawra,” a slum city that was built for the migrating Shiite peasants from the south by Iraq’s former Prime Minister Abdul Kareem Kassim in 1958. Saddam renamed this city after himself in 1980 both as a measure of

humiliation to the city's Shiite residents and also to win their favor. After Saddam's downfall in 2003, the city's residents renamed it as the "Sadr City," after the Shiite clergy Ayatollah Muhammad Baker al-Sadr, who was killed by Saddam's security police in 1980. Kifah's father has no political convictions and no interest in politics.

- Old Woman** Kifah's mother. She was born and raised in the southern marshes of Iraq as well and moved to Baghdad with her husband in 1958. She is a few years younger than her husband. Like him, she is a Shiite, illiterate and apolitical. However, she dislikes Saddam Hussein and his government because of Saddam's persecution of the Shiites and their clergy.
- Yassamin** A young, single Shiite woman living with her family next to Kifah's House in Saddam City, Baghdad.
- Rayssan** Kifah's university classmate and trusted friend. A Sunni Arab who is living with his family in the poor Fadhl neighborhood in Baghdad. Rayssan also dislikes Saddam's regime and, like Kifah, is not member of any political organization of the opposition because of fear of retaliation by the Iraqi Security.

## Scene One

The year is 2002. The place is an empty room in a building operated by the Iraqi Secret Police in Baghdad. Kifah is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, blindfolded, with his hands tied to the back of the chair. Standing on either side are two interrogators. Kifah appears frightened and has been beaten. He was picked up from his classroom in the university by two Iraqi Security agents and detained for interrogation on suspicion of being member of a Shiite opposition group.

- Interrogator I** "You have wasted a lot of our time. You have been sitting here for nearly nine hours now without telling us anything useful. So, either you are going to talk or we will make this experience more unpleasant for you."
- Interrogator II** (Yelling at Kifah) "Start talking, bastard, son of a dog. This is not a teahouse. Stop wasting time."
- Kifah** "Please, sir, I answered everything that you have asked me. I do not know what else you want me to say."
- Interrogator I** "Do not toy with us. I know that you are keeping important information from us. Spare yourself another beating and start talking."
- Kifah** "Then please tell me what I am supposed to say, and I will say it. I really do not know what to say in order to satisfy you. In all honesty, I am not



concealing anything. I have told you everything that I know. To this I swear in the names of God, the Prophet Muhammad, and Imam Ali.”

**Interrogator I** “All that you have told us thus far is useless personal information about yourself that we already know. We need to know more. For a start, tell us the name of your organization and those who are associated with you in this organization. Give us a list of names. If not, then we will have no choice but to drag others into this investigation on your behalf.”

**Kifah** (Shaking in fear) “Others? What do you mean by others?”

**Interrogator II** “He means bringing your loved ones here and have them humiliated right in front of your eyes. Are you willing to see us go that far?”

**Kifah** (Weeping while imagining his parents being arrested and tortured by the security police) “Please, sirs, no. Please, no. Please have mercy. I ask you this in the name of Allah. Please do not drag my family into this. Do whatever you want to me. Beat me, torture me, pull out my eyes, cut off my arms, and even shoot me. But, please, for God’s sake, spare my family any pain and suffering. They are innocent and have done nothing.”

**Interrogator II** “That all depends on you and on your cooperation. Talk and your family will be spared. Be stubborn, and they will be arrested, brought here, and tortured right in front of your eyes.”

**Kifah** (Becoming angry and defiant while imagining his parents being tortured by the security police) “Have you no shame? Have you no decency? Are you willing to torture innocent, frail, old people for no reason at all just to punish me? Why do you have to bring others into this? You have me. Do with me as you wish. But, please, leave my family alone and out of this.”

**Interrogator II** (Shouting while slapping Kifah on his face) “Shut up, bastard. You are in no position to tell us what to do. If we want to bring your stupid family here we will do so without any hesitation, whether you liked it or not.”

**Interrogator I** (Addressing his partner) “May be we should bring his mother here. It seems that this bastard is not willing to talk.”

**Kifah** “Talk, talk, talk! I told you all that I know.”

**Interrogator I** “Tell us more. Tell us who else is associated with you? What organization are you affiliated with?”

**Kifah** “I have no affiliation with any organization. I am a poor student. My main concern is education, not politics.”

**Interrogator II** “If you are not interested in politics, then why are you criticizing the government in public?”

**Kifah** “That is not true.”

**Interrogator II** “Do you deny then the poison you were spreading in speaking ill of our revolution and government during your gatherings with some misguided students at the teahouses?”

**Kifah** “That is not true. Whoever reported me is lying.”

**Interrogator I** “We know about what you said, word for word. We also have the exact dates, places, and the names of those who were with you when you said these things.”

**Kifah** “I may have expressed some opinion about some news item or event. But at no time did I speak ill of the revolution, our leader may God bless him, or our government.”

**Interrogator II** “We are not interested in the silly, insignificant opinion of a dog like you. If you want to defy the will of the Iraqi people and speak ill of the country’s leadership, then that is your misfortune. You chose to be the enemy of the people, and for that you will burn in Hell for eternity. What we want to know is how many other dogs like you are there who are plotting against Iraq?”

**Kifah** “I am not plotting against Iraq. I love Iraq and will die for it.”

**Interrogator II** “Shut up, traitor” (and once more slaps Kifah’s face).

**Interrogator I** (Laughing with sarcasm) “So, are you going to talk or we have to bring your mother here and beat her in front of you?”

**Kifah** (Crying and afraid for his mother’s safety) “I will talk. I will talk. Please leave my mother out of this.”

**Interrogator I** “Well, start talking.”

**Kifah** “No one is associated with me. I am a party of one. I am just a hot headed, misguided young man who does not know better. I am stupid. Please do not hurt my mother” (crying loud).

**Interrogator I** “You are lying.”

**Kifah** “I am telling you the truth. I swear to God.”

- Interrogator II** “God? Since when did you traitors start believing in God?”
- Kifah** “I am not a traitor.”
- Interrogator I** “Anyone who plots against Iraq and Saddam Hussein is a traitor.”
- Kifah** “You call it as you may. I am telling you, I am not a traitor.”
- Interrogator I** “If you have no connection with the opposition, where did you get their newspapers that we found in your room?”
- Kifah** (Fearing for his parents) “My room? Did you go to my house?”
- Interrogator I** “Of course.”
- Kifah** “How about my parents? Are they all right?”
- Interrogator I** “They are all right for now, but that may change. If you refuse to talk, then they will not be all right. So, where did you get these newspapers?”
- Kifah** “I bought them.”
- Interrogator I** “Who sold them to you?”
- Kifah** “A small bookstore in the Kurdish area in the north.”
- Interrogator I** “Do you mean that you went to Kurdistan and bought these newspapers from a bookstore there?”
- Kifah** “Yes.”
- Interrogator II** (Shaking his head with anger and speaking to his partner) “Those bastard Kurds. They live on the northern Iraqi soil but invite the imperialist forces to come there and isolate them from the rest of Iraq. We will get them one day. We will get them and teach them a lesson that they will never forget.”
- Interrogator I** (Asking Kifah) “Where in Kurdistan did you go?”
- Kifah** “To the city of Irbil.”
- Interrogator II** “Are you associated with the Kurdish parties?”
- Kifah** “No. I am a Shiite Arab. I am not a Kurd nor do I support the Kurdish political parties.”
- Interrogator I** “Why not? Are you against the Kurds?”

- Kifah** “No, I am not. I like all Iraqis, Kurds, Arabs, Sunni, Shiites, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Mandaeans, Turkomans, Yazidis, Christians, Jews, who ever.”
- Interrogator I** “Jews? Do you like Jews?”
- Kifah** “Yes. Why not?”
- Interrogator II** (With anger) “Then you must be a Zionist dog.”
- Kifah** “I am not a Zionist. Just because I like Jews as human beings does not make me a Zionist.”
- Interrogator I** “Jews are the enemies of Arabs, Islam and Iraq.”
- Kifah** “That is not true.”
- Interrogator II** “Do you deny what the Zionist entity is doing to our people in Palestine? Do you condone the rape of Palestine and still call yourself an Iraqi?”
- Kifah** “Some Arab governments have done far worse to their people. Yet, I do not hate all Arabs in reaction to what these governments have done.”
- Interrogator II** “Shut up” (slapping Kifah once more on the face).
- Interrogator I** “When did you go to Kurdistan?”
- Kifah** “During the summer when I did not have classes.”
- Interrogator I** “Who sent you?”
- Kifah** “No one. I went on my own.”
- Interrogator II** “Why did you go?”
- Kifah** “I wanted to find a job and save some money for my family.”
- Interrogator I** “Why did you have to go all the way to Kurdistan in order to find a job? Couldn’t you find a job here in Baghdad?”
- Kifah** “I had three jobs here in Baghdad. But the money was not enough to buy food for my family or pay the rent. In Kurdistan, the pay is higher and the currency is the U.S. dollar, which is worth more than the Iraqi Dinar.”
- Interrogator II** “You are nothing but a selfish bastard. While millions of Iraqis are suffering because of sanctions, you chose to join the Kurdish traitors so

you can get some American money. I should shoot you right now like a dog.”

**Kifah** “I was only looking after my family. The sanction is not my fault.”

**Interrogator I** “Whose fault is it then?”

**Kifah** (Mumbles to himself).

**Interrogator II** “Shut up, traitor” (kicks Kifah, knocking him off the chair to the ground).

The two interrogators then walk to the corner of the room, talking among themselves. A few minutes later, they return toward Kifah. One of them lifts up the chair and returns Kifah to his previous position.

**Interrogator I** “What kind of a job did you have in Irbil?”

**Kifah** “I was working in a restaurant.”

**Interrogator I** “A waiter?”

**Kifah** “Yes.”

**Interrogator II** (Laughing with sarcasm) “Wonderful. You left Baghdad to become a waiter in Kurdistan. Wow. That is progress.”

**Kifah** “I am not ashamed of working any job to support my family. It is the workers who built this country with their blood and sweat.”

**Interrogator I** “Are you a Communist?”

**Kifah** “Being a worker does not make me a Communist.”

**Interrogator I** “Shut up with your nonsense. Now, tell us. How long did you stay in Kurdistan?”

**Kifah** “Just three months.”

**Interrogator I** “Three months? Why? Were you able to make enough money in three months?”

**Kifah** “No, I did not make enough money. But I had to return because of school. I also missed my family and did not want to cause them any problems with the authorities because of my absence.”

**Interrogator I** “Don’t you think that was a bit late at that time?”

- Kifah** "Yes."
- Interrogator II** "Did anything happen to your family by the authorities while you were gone?"
- Kifah** "I do not know. They did not tell me anything."
- Interrogator I** "That is because nothing happened to them. We do not punish the innocents because of the guilt of a few criminals. This is a country of laws and values."
- Kifah** (Mumbling to himself)
- Interrogator I** "Where did you stay while you were working in Irbil?"
- Kifah** "In a hotel."
- Interrogator I** "Where there any other Arabs from Baghdad or elsewhere in Irbil?"
- Kifah** "I think there were a few political activists who had escaped from the government."
- Interrogator II** "Such as?"
- Kifah** "I think there were some members of the Iraqi Communist Party. Others were supporters of the Allawie or Chalabi. I can tell because each group had a bookstore there."
- Interrogator I** "Did you meet members of any Shiite organizations or see their bookstores?"
- Kifah** "I was not aware of any. I guess they prefer going to Iran."
- Interrogator II** "How do you know?"
- Kifah** "One of our neighbors was a Shiite activist. One day he disappeared but later we heard rumors on the streets that he managed to escape to Iran."
- Interrogator II** "Was he with the Dawah Party?"
- Kifah** "I do not know."
- Interrogator II** "Who told you about his activities or his escape to Iran?"
- Kifah** "I heard it on the street. It was just a rumor."

- Interrogator I** (Becoming angry) “I needs names.”
- Interrogator II** “Give us names. Who gave you this information?”
- Interrogator I** (Yelling) “What was the name of the person who escaped to Iran? Start talking.”
- Kifah** “I do not know. I do not know. Please God help me” (starts crying)
- Interrogator II** “When you were in Kurdistan, did you join any organization?”
- Kifah** “No.”
- Interrogator I** “Did you become a Communist?”
- Kifah** “No.”
- Interrogator I** “But the newspaper that we confiscated from your room was issued by the Iraqi Communist Party. Why did you buy their newspaper if you did not join them?”
- Kifah** “I just happened to see their bookstore one day on my way to work, so I bought their newspaper out of curiosity.”
- Interrogator II** “A curiosity so strong that you had to bring the newspaper with you when you returned to Baghdad?”
- Kifah** “That was mere stupidity. I do not know why I did that.”
- Interrogator I** “You are a liar.”
- Kifah** “I am sorry. Please believe me. I meant nothing by bringing that stupid newspaper with me. I am not a Communist, never was, and never will be. Please believe me” (starts to shake).
- Interrogator II** “Then you must have joined the Allawie group?”
- Kifah** “No, I do not like those people.”
- Interrogator I** “Why not?”
- Kifah** “Because I do not know much about them. I think they are with the CIA.”
- Interrogator II** “Then you must have joined Chalabi’s group?”

- Kifah** “If I did not join Allawie’s group, why would I want to join Chalabi, an opportunist thief?”
- Interrogator I** (Gleefully talking to his partner) “All these silly and insignificant organizations are puppets of the foreigners. They lack the courage to stay in Iraq, so they go and hide with the Kurds, under the Americans’ protection. What cowardice.”
- Kifah** “I agree.”
- Interrogator II** “You agree?”
- Kifah** “Yes, I do.”
- Interrogator II** “How can you agree with us when you are opposing this government and speaking ill of it?”
- Kifah** (Frightened) “I do not dare to speak ill of our government. May God save our country and our government. May God protect Saddam Hussein. If you are referring to the conversations that I had with a few friends in the teahouses, those were nothing but silly. That is all.”
- Interrogator II** “Then give us an example of these silly conversations.”
- Kifah** “I remember talking about the sanction, the Iran war, and the Kuwait war. Nothing of substance. Just conversations to kill time. They meant nothing.”
- Interrogator I** “These wars were imposed on us.”
- Interrogator II** (Agreeing with his partner) “The Iranians were plotting against Iraq by supporting the terrorists in the Kurdish north and the Shiites parties. And, we went to Kuwait because they were siphoning our oil and demanding money from us after we spilled our blood defending them against Iran.”
- Interrogator I** “Don’t forget, Kuwait is and will always be part of Iraq. Even the former King of Iraq, King Ghazi, and the former Prime Minister Abdul Kareem Kassim said so.”
- Interrogator II** (Returning to Kifah) “Now, tell us more about what you did when you were in Kurdistan.”
- Kifah** “What else do you want to know?”
- Interrogator I** “What else you did you do beside work while you were in Kurdistan?”



- Kifah** "There is not much else to tell. I worked, saved money, and read a few silly newspapers. That was all."
- Interrogator II** "Did you see any foreigners there?"
- Kifah** "I saw some individuals who appeared to be Westerners, but I do not know what they were doing there or who they were."
- Interrogator I** "Who is Sheren?"
- Kifah** "My finance. Why?"
- Interrogator I** "Shut up. We are the ones who are asking questions."
- Kifah** "I am sorry."
- Interrogator I** "Is Sheren Kurdish?"
- Kifah** "Yes. I met her while in Kurdistan. She is the daughter of the restaurant owner I was working for."
- Interrogator I** "Did you plan to bring her to Baghdad with you?"
- Kifah** "I do not know. We have not planned for the wedding yet."
- Interrogator II** (Laughing with sarcasm) "A Shiite and a Kurd, what a combination?"
- Kifah** (Getting a bit angry) "What is wrong with that?"
- Interrogator II** "Shut up. I told you once before. We are the ones asking questions here, not you."
- Interrogator I** "Tell us. How did you go to Irbil from Baghdad?"
- Kifah** "I went to Kirkuk first by bus and I stayed with a relative there. From there I hired a person with a motorcycle who knew the back roads out of government control and helped me go to Irbil."
- Interrogator I** "What is the name of that person with a motorcycle?"
- Kifah** "I do not know."
- Interrogator I** "Who directed you to him?"
- Kifah** "Ordinary people. I just asked a few pedestrians if they knew of people who were able to help me get to Irbil, and they directed me to a teahouse"

where tobacco smugglers were gathering. I went there and one of them agreed to take me to Irbil for fifty Iraqi Dinars.”

**Interrogator I** “How did you know that Kirkuk had such a place to begin with?”

**Kifah** “I learned through rumors in the teahouses here in Baghdad.”

**Interrogator II** “Who are those relatives in Kirkuk that you mentioned?”

**Kifah** “Just some distant relatives, sir. They were not aware of my scheme and I told them that I just came for a visit. Please, sir, do not punish them because of me. They did not know where I was going or planning. Please, sir, I beg you.”

**Interrogator I** “We will get to your relatives in Kirkuk later. Now, tell us who brought you back to Baghdad from Kurdistan?”

**Kifah** “My future father-in-law.”

**Interrogator I** “Where is he now?”

**Kifah** “He went back to Irbil.”

**Interrogator II** “Did he bring you as far as Baghdad?”

**Kifah** “No. He drove me to Khanaquine through Sulaymaniyah. From Khanaquine I took a bus to Baghdad on the normal route.”

**Interrogator II** “Is Sheren still waiting for you?”

**Kifah** “Yes.”

**Interrogator II** (Laughing) “I guess she has to wait for a long time until we decide your fate.”

**Kifah** (Whispering to himself) “Fate is in God’s hand.”

**Interrogator II** “Did you say something?”

**Kifah** “No. I just was praying.”

**Interrogator II** “If you want to pray, then pray that we kill you quickly instead of prolonging your agony.”

Interrogator II then turns his head toward the door in the right side of the room and shouts to people in the next room “Bring him in.” A few minutes later, an agent brings an old man to

the room and has him stand in front of Kifah. The man was still bleeding from his face and legs and had difficulty standing. Interrogator I then removes the blindfold from Kifah.

**Kifah** (Weeping and crying loud as he looks at the old man standing in front of him) "Father, oh dear father. What have they done to you? Oh father, my dear father. Please forgive me, father, for what I have caused you."

**Old Man** (With a shivering voice) "Do not cry, my son. You have done nothing wrong, and you did not cause my arrest."

**Interrogator II** (Yelling at both Kifah and the old man) "Enough of this nonsense. Now, Kifah, are you going to talk, or you want to see your father beaten in front of your eyes?"

**Kifah** (Tearfully begging the interrogators) "Please do not hurt him. I told you all that I know. What else do you want?"

**Interrogator II** "Tell us about your contacts here in Baghdad."

**Kifah** "I have no contacts, I swear."

**Interrogator II** "You must have contacts. Otherwise, you would not bring that newspaper with you to Baghdad all the way from Irbil."

**Kifah** "I told you. That was nothing but a stupid mistake. I did not bring the newspaper for others to read or inspire anything. I am telling you the truth."

**Interrogator II** "You are still toying with us. We gave you enough chances to come clean and let us know of your contacts. But, you continue to be stubborn. Obviously the lives of those who you are protecting are more important than yours and that of your father."

**Kifah** "Please, sir, do not get my father into this, and believe me, I have no contacts. Do you want me to make up names?"

**Interrogator II** "We want you to give us names. We will find out if you make them up or they are real. So, spill. What are these names?"

**Kifah** "I cannot just make up names and have innocent people arrested or killed."

**Interrogator II** "That is not your concern."

**Kifah** "I can't. I just can't. I am sorry" (crying)

**Interrogator II** "Then you leave us no choice."

Interrogator II then pulls a pistol from under his shirt, approaches the old man and shoots him in the head. Both Interrogators leave the room, leaving Kifah in disbelief at the murder of his father in front of his eyes. He sits in his chair, with his hands still tied, looking at his father's dead body on the floor. He bites his lips, closes his eyes, and weeps in silence.

## Scene Two

It is March 2003. The place is the living room of Kifah's house in Saddam City, Baghdad. Sitting on a small prayer rug in the middle of the room is Kifah's mother. Next to her is a samovar with boiling water. On top of the samovar sits a pot of tea. Kifah, who a few hours ago was released from a yearlong detention, is sitting next to his mother. The room is modestly furnished, the floor is covered with an old rug, and the walls are decorated with pictures of Shiite icons, Imam Ali and Imam Hussein. There are also a few bushels of dates hung on the wall to ripen.

**Old Woman** (Crying, as she just learned from her son of the fate of her husband) "Oh my God, oh my God. Why? Why?"

**Kifah** (Lifting up his head with tears in his eyes) "Please do not burden yourself any more with sorrow, mother. What has been done is done. We must accept God's will and be patient."

**Old Woman** (Screaming) "Be patient? Be patient? They killed a 70 year old man for nothing and you are telling me to be patient?"

**Kifah** "What else we can do, mother? Do you want me to be killed too?"

**Old Woman** "God forbid, my son. What I want is for God to hear our prayers and the prayers of every mother in Iraq. Enough is enough. We have suffered long enough. It is time for God to bring us to his mercy. May God strike you down, Saddam, son of a dog."

**Kifah** "Lower your voice please, mother. We don't want the secret police to hear you."

**Old Woman** "I do not care if they hear me or not. Let them come and take me to where my husband went" (weeping).

**Kifah** "Mother, please."

**Old Woman** "Oh Saddam. How many children you turned into orphans? How many families have you destroyed? How many mothers have you hurt? Why? Why?"

**Kifah** "Mother, please. Be careful. The walls have ears."

**Old Woman** "I do not care any more. I don't care any more. May God strike dead this tyrant. Oh beloved husband, did you suffer long before you joined the holy imams? How could they do this to you, an old man? Oh Imam Ali where are you? Oh Imam Hussein where are you? Oh Imam Mahdie where are you? Oh Prophet Muhammad where are you?" (Continues crying)

**Kifah** "They will come, mother. They will come to our rescue. God will not abandon us."

**Old Woman** "Then why did He abandon your father? Why did God abandon the children of Iraq? Thirty-five years of this nightmare. When will God decide that enough is enough? Why does no one care? Why does no one care about the cries of Iraq?"

**Kifah** "All in due time, mother. All in due time. Our day of freedom will come. Father did not die in vane. Saddam and his regime will be finished."

**Old Woman** "God willing, my son. God willing."

Kifah and his mother then hear gunshots coming from next door. Yassamin enters the room, smiling and walking toward the old woman to hug her. Kifah looks with wonder, contemplating the reason for her visit and gesture, as well as the gunshots.

**Yassamin** "Rejoice, auntie, rejoice."

**Old Woman** "What, my dear, what happened? Why all the gunshots? Are you getting married? Is there a wedding in the neighborhood?"

**Yassamin** "Yes, auntie, yes. There is a wedding. But it is not my wedding."

**Old Woman** "Then whose wedding is it?"

**Yassamin** "It is Iraq's wedding. Iraq is getting liberated. It is going to rain peace in Iraq, auntie. It is going to rain peace."

**Kifah** (Standing, while in disbelief) "What are you talking about, Yassamin?"

**Yassamin** "Didn't you hear? They declared war on Saddam. They are coming to overthrow the Baathists. Finally, auntie, finally this nightmare is coming to an end."

**Old Woman** "Who declared war? Are you telling me the truth? Do not lie to an old woman. Please tell me the truth."

**Yassamin** "I am telling you the truth, auntie. In a few days Iraq will be free, we all will be free. Saddam will be no more. America declared war on Saddam."

- Old Woman** “Did you say America? For a minute my heart was becoming filled with joy imagining Saddam was overthrown. But since you said it was the Americans who declared war, then I have to return to my continued disappointments. Saddam is going nowhere.”
- Yassamin** “Why, auntie? Why are you disappointed? Don’t you want to see Saddam, this son of the Devil gone?”
- Old Woman** “Yes, my child, I do. But these same Americans declared war on Saddam when he went to Kuwait. Then, they left him sitting on his throne and on our necks. The Americans disappointed us before. Why should I trust them this time? They will probably come, drop a few bombs on our houses as they have been doing since the Kuwait war, and then leave. They are burning us from the sky and Saddam is burning us on the ground.”
- Yassamin** “No, auntie. This time is different.”
- Old Woman** “Why is it different?”
- Yassamin** “Well, for one thing, the American President Bush seems to be serious about this.”
- Old Woman** “He seemed serious before too during the Kuwait war.”
- Yassamin** “That was a different Bush.”
- Old Woman** “How many Bushes are there in America?”
- Yassamin** “This Bush is the son of the Bush of Kuwait. I do not think he will forgive Saddam for trying to kill his father.”
- Old Woman** “Did Saddam attack Kuwait again?”
- Yassamin** “No.”
- Old Woman** “Then why did the Americans and this new Bush declared war?”
- Yassamin** “They say that Saddam is threatening America.”
- Kifah** (With curiosity and suspicion) “With what, his long and boring speeches? How could Saddam be threatening America? America is too far away from Iraq.”
- Old Woman** “Son, do not be naïve. Saddam is the Devil and he is capable of every evil.”

- Yassamin** "I think this time the Americans are serious about getting rid of Saddam. They put up with him for a long time. It is time for him to go."
- Old Woman** "May God hear from your mouth, my child. May God hear from your mouth."
- Kifah** "I don't like the Americans coming here to Iraq. They are not coming after Saddam. He is just an excuse. They are coming for oil. That was their reason as well for the war in Kuwait. Oil is the only thing they care about."
- Yassamin** "It is not as though the Iraqi people have control of the oil now in order to cry about it. Saddam controls the oil. If the Americans want it and they will rid us of Saddam in the mean time, then let them have it. It is a small price to pay for our freedom."
- Old Woman** (To Kifah) "Son, it was not the Americans who killed your father. It was this thug Saddam and his henchmen. I hope the Americans will come. I hope they will come. It is time for Saddam to face up to someone bigger than him instead of picking on poor, defenseless people like us."

Sound of gunfire and airplane bombs. Kifah, his mother, and Yassamin sit quietly looking up and listening with a mixture of fear and joy. Suddenly, a bomb hits the house. Part of the ceiling collapses over the old woman's head. She dies immediately. The mixture of joy and fear turns to fear. Kifah and the Yassamin start crying, while covered with debris and blood. The old woman lies on the floor without moving.

- Kifah** (Looking at the dead body of his mother and uttering these words to Yassamin while weeping) "It's raining in Iraq, Yassamin. It's raining, indeed. But, raining peace it is not."

### Scene Three

It is March 2005, two months after the Iraqi elections for National Assembly. Kifah graduated from the university but is unable to find a job. He is sitting on a wooden bench in a teahouse in Sadr City (formally known as Saddam City) in Baghdad with his former classmate, Rayssan. Both are drinking tea, smoking hookah, and talking about the events in Iraq since 2003.

- Rayssan** (Sipping tea then puffing through the hookah) "So, how is your wedding plan coming along?"
- Kifah** (Smoking hookah as well and watching the pedestrians crossing the street) "It is going well despite the circumstance."

- Rayssan** “What circumstances?”
- Kifah** “Well, to begin with, I am still unemployed. Although that does not seem to be an issue to my future in-laws. Yet, it is an issue for me as a matter of self-respect and the practicality of starting a family.”
- Rayssan** “That makes sense. You cannot rely on relatives to start a family. You need a job first before having any wedding. Did you try getting a job in Irbil once again?”
- Kifah** (Puffing in the hookah) “No, not yet. I am trying to get a job here in Baghdad with my degree. If all fails, then I will try elsewhere, including Kurdistan. I will work anything, even though I prefer to get a job that matches my degree. But where do I get such a job? I applied everywhere and have no answers so far.”
- Rayssan** “You are not alone my friend. Many Iraqis are out of work. There are more people with a doctorate degree that drive taxis in Baghdad than anywhere else.”
- Kifah** (Takes a sip of his tea and waits for a few moments before continuing to speak) “The other issue is the geographical distance between my future in-laws and I. It takes me four hours to travel to Irbil from Baghdad. I wish they lived closer in order for me to visit them more often.”
- Rayssan** (Laughing while pretending to joke) “I agree. Four hours traveling is long.”
- Kifah** “I also miss my parents. I wish they were alive to witness my wedding.”
- Rayssan** “Do your in-laws accept that you are Arab and a Shiite?”
- Kifah** “Why do you ask?”
- Rayssan** “Well, since they are Kurds and Sunnis.”
- Kifah** “I do not think that is an issue. Kurds and Arabs, Shiites and Sunnis have been intermarrying for generations now in Iraq. We are one people sharing one country. Only the narrow-minded look at us as divided along ethnic and sectarian or religious lines.”
- Rayssan** “But you have to admit, these issues are still factors that divide many of us.”
- Kifah** “Not me. I have no concern for them at all.”
- Rayssan** “So, when is the wedding? Is it going to be here, in Baghdad, or in Irbil?”



- Kifah** “We have not set a date or a place yet. As I said, I have to find a job first. My in-laws prefer for the wedding to be in Irbil. I do not mind. And since my parents are no longer here, it does not matter if the wedding was in Irbil or in Baghdad. My in-laws are very nice as well in refusing to take a dowry.”
- Rayssan** “Dowry! Such a backward idea. It is as though you are buying your wife. What kind of nonsense is this? Whoever came up with it?”
- Kifah** “I do not know. I think we inherited it from the old tribal system.”
- Rayssan** “Unfortunately, we are still very tribal in our affairs. Even the occupation deals with us on a tribal basis, choosing Al-Yawar, as an example, from the tribes of Mosul to be our president, or stuffing the former Iraqi Governing Council with tribal chiefs or representatives.”
- Kifah** “I think the occupation deals with us more on an ethnic and sectarian basis than tribal. If you remember Bremer’s former Iraqi Governing Council and his election laws, they were designed to divide the Council’s seats or the National Assembly based on who is a Kurd, Sunni, or a Shiite.”
- Rayssan** (Puts aside the hookah and finishes drinking his tea) “Perhaps they know us better than we know ourselves. You have to admit, for a long time in Iraq we had power concentrated only with the Sunni Arabs. I am a Sunni Arab, and believe me when I say this to you, this was the norm. We excluded the poor Kurds and the Shiites from everything as though this was not their country.”
- Kifah** (Slightly raising his voice and appearing a bit upset) “Saddam did that, not the Iraqi people. Iraqis are not divided along ethnic and sectarian lines. If the Americans emphasize such divisions, they are leading us down a dangerous road of conflict and civil war by playing one against the other. If Iraqis have such divisions, you would’ve witnessed continuous civil wars between us. The fact that we continue to coexist together as one people is a testimony to our unity.”
- Rayssan** (Trying to change the subject) “So, did you vote in the latest elections for the National Assembly?”
- Kifah** “Of course. We waited for a long time for these elections. They are our chance to finally end Saddam’s regime once and for all and choose our own government according to our own will. Do you remember the comical elections during Saddam’s time? We had only one candidate, Saddam, and we had to vote for him or else. Then the hypocrite had the audacity to announce the results of the elections as though Iraqis had voted for him with a 99.9% of the votes. What a joke!”

- Rayssan** (Looking with a smirk on his face, surprised of what he heard from his friend) “Who is being naive here? Do you consider these latest elections true reflection of the people’s free will?”
- Kifah** (Takes one more puff of the hookah before pushing it aside) “I take it you did not vote.”
- Rayssan** (With enthusiasm) “That is correct.”
- Kifah** (Appears confused) “Why not?”
- Rayssan** (Getting loud and emotional) “How could I vote under such conditions? First, a car bomb explodes every day all over Baghdad. Second, most of the political parties, with the exception of a few Shiite and Kurdish organizations, boycotted the elections since Iraq is still under occupation. Third, the elections took place under a decree issue by Bremer, not the Iraqi people or their representatives. Fourth, Only parties that supported the occupation were allowed to run. Fifth, ordinary Iraqi citizens were not allowed to run. Sixth, I did not know anything about most of the parties on the ballot, such as their leaders, platform, or agenda for Iraq. How could I vote for something that I do not know anything about? The only groups that I recognized were Ayatollah Sistani’s group, the Kurdish group, and the Communists, and I support none of those.”
- Kifah** (Calmly, using his hands to support his speech) “Well, this was the first step in a long way toward democracy. It was not perfect, but it was the first step.”
- Rayssan** (Shouting with disgust) “Democracy? What are you talking about? What kind of democracy is this when the only people we are allowed to vote for are the same people who arrived in Iraq from abroad with the occupation, such as Chalabi, Allawie, and Jafari? These are the same people that were appointed by Bremer in the previous Iraqi Governing Council. Now, they are entrusted to write our constitution, surrender what is left of Iraq’s sovereignty to the occupation, and make permanent America’s presence here. No my friend, you are mistaken. This was not a democracy but a mockery that manipulated the Iraqi people’s yearning for self-determination and freedom. This was nothing but a joke and a staged event to put a new face on the occupation.”
- Kifah** (Shouting back, and appearing upset) “Would you say someone like Ayatollah Sistani is an American agent?”
- Rayssan** (A bit calmer) “No. Why?”

- Kifah** (Also a bit calmer) “Then how do you explain Sistani’s blessings of these elections?”
- Rayssan** (Waits for a few minutes in silence before answering) “With due respect, my friend, Sistani is nothing but a pacifist collaborator. He was a collaborator with Saddam’s regime before and now he is collaborating with the occupation.”
- Kifah** (Becoming angry again) “Please watch your tongue. Sistani is a patriot and a holy man. If he were not, millions of Shiites would not have followed his decrees.”
- Rayssan** (With sarcasm) “Those who follow Sistani are more interested in beating themselves silly to mourn Imam Hussein than to gain independence and freedom for their country. I have more respect for the young Sadr than Sistani. Sadr is a true Iraqi patriot. Sistani is an Iranian and never was part of this country even though he lived in Iraq most his life.”
- Kifah** (Yelling) “Sadr? Are you serious? Since when do you Sunnis admire a Shiite clergyman?”
- Rayssan** (Laughing) “What happen to your talk about one Iraq and against sectarianism? It seems that was nothing but hot air.”
- Kifah** (Scowling as he stares seriously at his friend) “What do you mean?”
- Rayssan** (With a low tone of voice) “Well, just a few minutes ago you said Iraqis are one people and then you criticized the Americans for dealing with us on a sectarian and ethnic basis? Now, you seem to emphasize sectarianism. Which is it?”
- Kifah** (Calmly but breathing heavily) “I stand by what I said. What I meant by my question is how someone like you considers a clergyperson, whether Shiite or Sunni, to be a political leader? I have known you for a long time now, and it was you who always expressed concern about mixing politics with religion.”
- Rayssan** “When the issue is national liberty, all segments of the society are obligated to stand against the occupation, clergy included. The greatness of the Revolution of 1920 against the British occupation of Iraq is that it involved all Iraqis, Sunnis, Shiites, Arabs, and Kurds, and the clergies of all branches led it.”
- Kifah** “It seems that you accept mixing politics and religion only when it serves your point of view. You oppose Sistani’s interference in politics because it does not match your view. Yet, you accept Sadr’s involvement in politics

because he serves your purpose. How could any Iraqi support Sadr? I am a Shiite, the same as Sadr. Yet, I oppose him and his gang of the Mahdi militia. They are nothing but thugs and common criminals. I suppose you support the insurgency as well?”

**Rayssan** (Standing up) “Of course I do. They are heroes who are dying for our independence. Even the United Nations justifies such a struggle for independence.”

**Kifah** (Yelling again) “Heroes? Heroes? Now you have gone too far. How could you describe a bunch of Baathist criminals and Wahabi terrorists as heroes? Are you happy about the violence, killings, car bombs, and beheadings that they are doing in Iraq? Who is dying as a result of these killings? Innocent Iraqis, that’s who.”

**Rayssan** (Sits again, but crosses his arms and answers Kifah while looking to the ground) “The insurgency is not responsible for these killings. These are the acts of non-Iraqis, whoever they are. The Iraqi insurgency is only responsible for attacks on the occupational forces and their puppet Iraqis, not innocent Iraqi civilians.”

**Kifah** (Reaching to his friend and holding his hand) “One of the reasons I opposed Saddam’s regime was the killing and violence. We need to overcome the mentality of force and learn how to solve conflicts peacefully. This is Sistani’s message. Nothing can be accomplished through violence.”

**Rayssan** (He pulls his hand out and starts shaking his index finger to Kifah) “Then tell that to the Americans who starved us for 12 years through sanctions because of a lie about weapons of mass destruction. Tell that to the 200,000 Iraqi civilians who perished because of the American war and occupation.”

**Kifah** (While smiling between sentences to calm the situation) “Do not confuse my stance against violence as an acceptance of the occupation. I am, more than anyone else, opposed to the American occupation of Iraq. The looting of our historic treasures, the torture of the prisoners in Abu Ghraib, the lack of electricity and clean water in our cities, the massive unemployment and poverty, and the dismantling of the Iraqi Armed forces, all are caused by this occupation. But, we have other choices than violence to correct these things. We cannot fight America. It is a great power and has large resources. But we can awaken its conscience. This is what Gandhi did in India by awakening the British conscience, not by engaging the British violently.”

**Rayssan** (Pulls back and stretches his legs while speaking slowly and calmly) “I am afraid you are an idealist, my friend. Non-violence will never work in Iraq.”

Besides, America only understands the language of force. Look at Vietnam and look at the Philippines. If it was not for the heroic scarifies of the Vietnamese people, America might still be there. But, they were forced to leave, not through non-violence as it was the case in the Philippines, but through armed struggle. Yet in the Philippines, America is still there.”

**Kifah** (Nodding first, then looking deep into his friend’s eyes in order to get his point across) “Yes, America left Vietnam, but at what cost? Are you willing to see Iraq suffer the same things? Didn’t we suffer enough under Saddam? No, my friend. There are better ways. Violence is never it.”

**Rayssan** (With sarcasm) “How could we win with non-violence when the occupation dismantled the army and the militias except for those of the Kurds and the Shiites? Do you think the Kurdish and Shiite militias and the occupation forces will sit idly by when confronted with a peaceful demonstration demanding true independence?”

**Kifah** “Any thing is possible. First, we as a people must come to understand each other through reconciliation. Then, we need to overcome the culture of violence and start thinking about resolving differences peacefully, even in our homes. We are notorious for resorting to violence even within our own families, tribes, neighborhoods, and regions. This is not entirely our fault. But, we learned it in time through our traditions and heritages. Saddam was a perfect example of this mentality.”

**Rayssan** (With curiosity) “What do you mean?”

**Kifah** (Sitting on the edge of the chair, facing Rayssan) “Not just Saddam, but the Kurdish parties who are acting as mafia, killing one another, or at least they did so until a few years ago, are the same as Saddam. Also others, such as the Communists who killed innocent civilians in Mousl and Kirkuk when they were in power in 1958, the Baathists of 1963, who killed thousands of Communists, the Nasserites after them, even the Shiite parties. All those people and Saddam have one thing in common: violence. And, they have imposed a culture of violence on us because we allowed them to do so. They did not come from a vacuum, but from within us and from within our traditions.”

**Rayssan** (Appears confused and dismayed) “So Saddam came to power because of us?”

**Kifah** “Yes. The same people who were cheering for Saddam and condoning his crimes are now killing innocent Iraqis and the US soldiers.”

**Rayssan** (Taking a deep breath before replying) “You are partially correct. Saddam did not come from a vacuum. But neither he nor his regime represented the

Iraqi people. He was an odd phenomenon, and those who cheered him are now cheering the occupation.”

**Kifah** (Shaking his head as a sign of disagreement, but continues to be calm) “I disagree. If it was not for the culture of violence that is embedded in us, Saddam would never have lasted this long. He may have surfaced for a short time, but could not remain in power for three decades. Remember, Saddam was only one person and could not govern and install his police state without help. Who helped him? Us, the Iraqi people. We helped create a monster who turned against us. In a way, we deserve Saddam because we created and sustained him, as we created many Saddams before him, and as I am sure we will create more in the future. We cannot get rid of Saddam as a phenomenon until we look deep inside ourselves and change from within. The first and most important thing we need to change is this mentality of violence.”

**Rayssan** (Again, trying to defuse the tension and change the subject) “So, where do you think they are holding Saddam now?”

**Kifah** (Shakes his shoulders, as the issue does not concern him) “I do not know, and I do not care.”

**Rayssan** (Attempting to be serious and convincing to merit a response and to continue the conversation but without tension) “Do you think they are going to put him on trial after last year’s comic arraignment? That arraignment was a joke. Saddam was toying with the young, inexperienced judge that Allawie appointed.”

**Kifah** (Getting a bit irritated) “Saddam is finished. He is not important any more. Whether they are going to put him on trial or have him face the death penalty is irrelevant. What will that serve except for some theatrics and satisfying the spirit of revenge in others? The important thing for us as people is to finish what had produced Saddam and the likes of Saddam. We need to end violence, the culture of violence, and the mentality of violence from among our people. As long as we believe and value violence, we will always invite it upon ourselves, whether by outsiders or by the likes of Saddam. Only through non-violence can we truly be free and claim our independence. Thus, it must rain peace in our hearts. It must rain peace in our lands. It must, my friend, rain peace and non-violence in Iraq.”

Suddenly, a car bomb explodes near the teahouse, killing Kifah and a few others who were sitting in the teahouse or walking in the street. Rayssan is severely injured but survives the attack. He looks at his dead friend and weeps.

**Rayssan** (Bleeding while lying on his back among the debris and looking to the burned and dismembered body of his friend shattered to pieces on the

ground) “You are correct, my dear friend. We need to end this cycle of violence in order for us to be free. It must rain peace in our hearts. It must rain peace in Iraq.”

**The End**

# An Interpretive - Phenomenological Critique of the Science of (New?) Public Management: A Polemic

*Terence M. Garrett*

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*...All social sciences are objective meaning-contexts of subjective meaning-contexts... All scientific knowledge of the social world is indirect. It is knowledge of the world of contemporaries and the world of predecessors, never of the world of immediate social reality. Accordingly, the social sciences can understand man in his everyday social life not as a living individual person with a unique consciousness, but only as a personal ideal type without duration or spontaneity. They can understand him only as existing within an impersonal and anonymous objective time which no one ever has, or ever can, experience. From Alfred Schütz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967: 241).*

## Introduction

Theorists of the “Public Management (PM) Movement” challenge to public administration do not examine thoroughly the social-structural causes of the failure of the pyramid in the modern organization. In fact, the pyramid is assumed as a “given” where the lower members of the scalar chain are simply assumed to fall in-line and obey the orders of their superiors. PM scholarly efforts generally represent attempts at fostering the dominant management ideology based on scientific rationalism and the marketplace. Through the work of phenomenological theorists such as Edmund Husserl, Ralph Hummel, Alfred Schütz and others, I will examine aspects of the public management milieu as it is currently constructed. The primary tension within most organizations exists within the incompatibility of knowledges based on management science and worker realism (the central problem for public management). This tension is known as the *knowledge analytic*,<sup>1</sup> a conceptual device that is useful for practitioners engaged in the art of management to recognize the shortcomings of management science. Furthermore, the Public Management (PM) movement is popular with many academicians and practitioners today. PM encourages the management pyramid ubiquitous in the private and public sectors, past and present, while simultaneously sharing many aspects of Frederick Winslow Taylor’s Scientific Management. PM and its newer variation, the New Public Management (NPM), are authoritarian and executive-level centered in structure despite their pretensions otherwise and continue to undermine the ability of the



U.S. and other Western democracies to develop a public administration that is truly democratic.

An alternative to PM (old and new versions) is the New Public Service (NPS) concept developed by Janet and Robert Denhardt (2003). NPS is an attempt to overcome the marketplace culture, mechanisms and vocabulary that dominate today's public administration. The Denhardts advocate public service ideals that are anathema to the privatization impetus found in the public management movements past and present.<sup>2</sup> The political theory of reinvention, central to the New Public Management movement, has negative implications for democratic governance (deLeon and Denhardt 2000). Conversely, the NPS has possibilities for a more democratic public administration. However, it will have to overcome long odds with the PM and NPM movements that have emphasized the rationality of traditional bureaucratic and market solutions, respectively.

The focus of this paper is on the scientific rationalism of PM and NPM. The NPS is presented as an alternative theoretical construct to demonstrate simply that NPM and PM do not have to be the driving impetus in public administration research and practice. Due to time and space limitations, the NPS will have to be explored elsewhere at more length.

## Identifying the Phenomenon

Public management (PM) today is the subject of much recent scholarly inquiry. Public management as a phenomenon has been described as a means of implementing policies and programs through authoritative institutions of government, emphasizing "methods of organizing for internal control and direction for maximizing effectiveness" (Gordon and Milakovich 1998, 8). Terry (1998) notes that public management approaches are identified as (1) quantitative/analytic management; (2) political management; (3) liberation management; and, (4) market-driven management (195). Different rational-scientific approaches have been attempted throughout human history by managers to control workers in order to accomplish tasks of authoritarian or democratic design. American public administration has not been immune from these approaches. Indeed, we will be examining the impact of a few theories<sup>3</sup> from the rational-scientific school that is predominant in modern public management. Today "New Public Management" is the latest movement in modern American governance. Kelly (1998) notes<sup>4</sup> that the New Public Management consists of elements including: Total Quality Management, rational choice and public choice theories. Rosenbloom (1998) distinguishes between traditional management and new public management (NPM), but in essence, they are disseminated from the same source: rational science-whether traditional science or the science of economics. His perspectives on public administration indicate that the NPM approach shares much in common with the traditional management approach. Today, largely because it is the latest trend, traditional bureaucratic "science" is being displaced in some instances by the science of marketplace economic theory.

The key to understanding PM is to focus upon the control of the organization by executives in charge of a bureaucratic agency. A simple reading of the indexes in the past few years of

publications such as the *Public Administration Review* and *PA Times* will produce examples of the phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> PM has captured the imagination of a wide variety of its proponents as well as its opponents. A debate has begun pertaining to the question of how public management ought to be made more scientific for executives in agencies. Robert Behn (1995) posits that there are three 'big questions' concerning public management. These questions, which encompass micromanagement, motivation and measurement, are necessary to begin the attempt to make public management scientific, or more like the hard sciences such as physics and astronomy. Behn (1998, 210) believes that public managers can help improve on the seven failures of governance: organizational, analytical, executive, legislative, political, civic, and judicial. Behn's model of Public Management promises that more application of scientific techniques by managers will make public administration more accountable to the public.<sup>6</sup>

John Kirlin (1996), responding to Behn, has developed a useful typology of factors that affect public administration and public administrators. Kirlin argues that democratic (and other values) make scientific public management too instrumental for understanding the complexities of public administration. Brian J. Cook (1998) argues that the restriction of public management to the top echelons of the public administration pyramid would inculcate "an instrumental bias in the conceptual foundations of the recruitment and training of individuals who will occupy such positions" and that this action would restrict public administrators to fulfill the "political nature of their roles" (228). Curtis Ventriss (1998), extending Kirlin's logic by providing a 'radical democratic' critique of contemporary public administration, points out the undemocratic nature of American public administration in both practice and theory. Ventriss, using a democratic-neo Marxist theoretical analysis, adds to the debate the idea that social contradictions, inherent in public administration and society at-large, remain unquestioned by many practitioners and academicians in the field. He cites the works of political theorists Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci, which complements his critique of capitalist domination. Kirlin's, Cook's and Ventriss's works aid us in recognizing the ubiquity of the marketplace in our analyses of American governance, particularly the latest trend: New Public Management.

The most challenging aspect of the Public Management movement from a democratic perspective is that attention is drawn away from those who matter the most: citizens working within the agency and ultimately the citizen-public for whom the citizen-bureaucrats are working. Hummel and Stivers (1998) have brought up the point that government isn't us. Those in government including bureaucrats, executives and elected representatives use instrumental reason thereby inadequately taking care of the ordinary people for whom they ostensibly *re-present* (29). Instrumental reason, or technical rationality, predominates in American governance (Adams and Balfour 1998).

The blueprint for the New Public Management movement is represented in the national bestseller *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector* (1993) by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. The NPM concentrates on only the executive-level decision-making in a government, further promoting the ideology of the ubiquitous marketplace in the American political culture, and displacing human beings in

organizations by making them supposedly neutral or “objective” instruments for systematic domination. We will be examining a few of the works of new and old public management in the following section.

### **Variations on the Same Theme?: Public and New Public Management**

Some theorists of the NPM assume uncritically that executives and managers lead (always) and the “other” organizational participants simply follow. The implication here is that by treating organizational participants as mechanical components in the bureaucratic machine (via Taylorism and Weber’s pyramid) an executive can adjust services and products according to the dictates of the public. Through the ideals of the marketplace, the NPM lexicon treats “public” as “customers.” Customers, per se’, are thusly categorized in an objective fashion. There is no further need of discussing other aspects of human existence, particularly when democratic values and personal needs are non-existent. One simply “buys” a product or “buys into” a service and that is effectively the end of the relationship. The life-world of a democracy beyond the market transaction is essentially ignored.

We can begin to see the problems of the marketplace rationalization in a careful reading of Osborne and Gaebler’s tome. Particularly instructive is the chapter titled “Customer Driven Government: Meeting the Needs of the Customer, Not the Bureaucracy” (1993, 166-194). Osborne and Gaebler compare briefly the effectiveness of the GI bill program with veteran’s hospitals. They state “First, customer-driven systems force service providers to be accountable to their customers” (181). What is missing from their analysis is the fact that the GI bill program was an option given to a special class of adults with a ready-made solution: universities and colleges were already in place and were eager and able to accommodate the influx of veterans after the wars were over. Hospitals, in general, were not. Osborne and Gaebler then state that five to eighteen year-olds should have the ability to make a completely optimal-rational decision concerning their common education, much like eighteen to twenty-five year-olds do for their higher education. The rest of the market rationalization is as follows:

Second, customer-driven systems depoliticize the choice-of-provider decision.

Third, customer-driven systems stimulate more innovation.

Fourth, customer-driven systems give people choices between different kinds of services.

Fifth, customer systems waste less, because they match supply to demand.

Sixth, customer-driven systems empower customers to make choices, and empowered customers are more committed customers.

Finally, customer-driven systems create greater opportunities for equity (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993, 181-185).

It is apparent from above the nature of the one-sided rationalization of the marketplace: customers buy and agencies sell. There is a loss of citizen/public reciprocity. The agency-head becomes the new marketplace entrepreneur and ideally provides the material comforts

for the customer, who is no longer the citizen. Politics is denuded from the entire operation. This concept is elaborated more fully by Box (1999):

Market-driven new managerialism can run counter to self-governance, as it is structured around the idea of happy consumers rather than involved citizens. This is a problem because government is not a business from which customers can voluntarily decide whether to purchase a product. It is, rather, a collective effort that includes every person within a defined geographic area (city, county, district, state, nation), and membership is involuntary unless a resident moves out of the jurisdiction. Mandatory membership carries with it a sense of the right to be involved if one so wishes in the process of deliberating and deciding on creation and implementation of public policy (35-36).

In a similar vein, there was a notable management movement in the recent past to eliminate the need for politics through the influential work of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1947), whose legacy is still alive today. Taylor's work as applied in practice, more aptly today called "Taylorism," was an attempt to reduce workers into cogs in a machine ostensibly for their own (and most certainly management's) benefit. The effects of private entrepreneurs on society are still found in many ways, including automobile production lines, meat-packing industries, tire manufacturing plants, and fast-food restaurants, to name a few examples. To wit:

This paper will show that the underlying philosophy of all of the old systems of management in common use makes it imperative that each workman shall be left with the final responsibility for doing his job practically as he thinks best, with comparatively little help and advice from the management. And it will also show that because of this isolation of workmen, it is in most cases impossible for the men working under these systems to do their work in accordance with the rules and laws of a science or art, even where one exists.

The writer asserts as a general principle ... that in almost all of the mechanic arts the science which underlies each act of each workman is so great and amounts to so much that the workman who is best suited to actually doing the work is incapable of fully understanding this science, without the guidance and help of those who are working with him or over him, either through lack of education or through insufficient mental capacity. In order that the work may be done in accordance with scientific laws, it is necessary that there shall be a far more equal division of the responsibility between the management and the workmen than exists under any of the ordinary types of management. Those in the management whose duty it is to develop this science should also guide and help the workman in working under it, and should assume a much larger share of the responsibility for results than under usual conditions is assumed by the management (Taylor 1947, 25).

We readily see here the *inconvenience* of the *old system* for managers: workmen shall be left with the final responsibility for doing his job practically as he thinks best, with comparatively little help and advice from the management. Under Taylorism, management will supplant the ability of the worker to make judgments regarding their work. The Tayloristic system entails the notion that with the "isolation of workmen, it is in most cases impossible for the men

working under these systems to do their work in accordance with the rules and laws of a science or art, even where one exists.” There is an inherent need here on the part of management for order and predictability. The incoherence of the masses needs to be controlled under the auspices of science in order to increase production through rationality. With Taylorism there is accountability to managers and to a lesser degree, workers. Taylor offered his theory in the fashion of a benevolent despot. *We* (entrepreneurs, managers and workers) will all gain if *you* (the workers) conform to the laws of production.

Taylor offers the workers a seductive promise: if you do as I want, your wants and needs will be met completely. This is the promise of cooptation as follows:

Under scientific management the "initiative" of the workmen (that is, their hard work, their good-will, and their ingenuity) is obtained with absolute uniformity and to a greater extent than is possible under the old system; and in addition to this improvement on the part of the men, the managers assume new burdens, new duties, and responsibilities never dreamed of in the past...

...In addition to developing a *science*...the management take on three other types of duties which involve new and heavy burdens for themselves.

These new duties are grouped under four heads:

*First.* They develop a science for each element of a man's work, which replaces the old rule-of-thumb method.

*Second.* They scientifically select and then train, teach, and develop the workman, whereas in the past he chose his own work and trained himself as best he could.

*Third.* They heartily cooperate with the men so as to insure all of the work being done in accordance with the principles of the science which has been developed.

*Fourth.* There is an almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between the management and the workmen. The management take over all work for which they are better fitted than the workmen, while in the past almost all of the work and the greater part of the responsibility were upon the men ...The development of a science ... involves the establishment of many rules, laws and formulae which replace the judgment of the individual workman and which can be effectively used only after having been systematically recorded, indexed, etc. (Taylor 1947, 36-8).

On the surface, Public Management<sup>7</sup> and the NPM do not take on the same features of Taylorism as stated above. Taylorism takes into account the individual in the workplace, but does so at *the worker's* expense through exploiting *the worker's* labor. The wished-for result of Taylorism is the total and absolute control of the worker and the fruits of his labor *within the organization*. We can see the temptation of science on theorists and practitioners of public administration and public management, particularly the latter, in present-day theories.

With Public Management we see embodied in the work of Robert Behn (1995, 313) a few aspects of Taylorism. First, Behn would like to break the cycle of micromanagement from the other branches of government, particularly the legislature, thus breaking the shackles of representative government. Behn maintains the notion that elected officials, with their

propensity to impose restrictions on the effective, efficient and economical operation of government agencies, impede public managers. Public managers would be able to show their agencies and the public they serve their inherent benevolent-despotism,<sup>8</sup> compensating for failures in representative government. The implication here is that politics are imperfect and that public managers “can contribute to the working of the system by compensating for some of the failures of the legislature, the judiciary, and their elected chief executive” (1998, 209). Secondly, Behn examines the idea of science as it pertains to motivation, or how can public managers motivate people to work energetically and intelligently towards achieving public purposes? Behn submits that “the task of the manager is to make the human machine run smoothly and on time” (1998, 212). The echoes of Taylorism are certainly well pronounced here. Finally, Behn would have public managers engaged in the science of measurement, with the rhetorical question posed: How can public managers measure the achievements of their agencies in ways that help to increase those [public purpose] achievements? We can see from the discussion above that measuring outcomes scientifically would effectively render individual organizational participants as tools in the counting process.<sup>9</sup> In this last aspect, Behn again mirrors the work of F.W. Taylor. Furthermore, Behn argues, if the study of public management is to become “scientific,” it needs to focus on these and other big questions.

Public management as a political/social attempt to control workers by managers has taken on ever-larger implications for the citizen-public in terms of issues involving the worker’s freedom in a democratic setting. Within the NPM lexicon, customers, formerly citizens, will have to take responsibility for participating in government decision-making seemingly with comparatively little help and advice from the *government*. Executives and managers are using the public’s perceived dissatisfaction with government and public institutions as a wedge to force concessions from workers serving the public, largely using scientific/economic rationalizations. The results of this coercion, which we have seen has had its advocates for most of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, have yet to be determined completely. In the next section we will be examining the impact of science on public management and administration.

## **A Critique of Science, Public Management, and Phenomenology**

Nobel prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman (1985) has a note of caution about what constitutes “science.” He coined the phrase “cargo cult science” and described it as follows:

In the South Seas there is a cargo cult of people. During the war they saw airplanes land with lots of good materials, and they want the same thing to happen now. So they’ve arranged to make things like runways, to put fires along the sides of the runways, to make a wooden hut for a man to sit in, with wooden pieces on his head like headphones and bars of bamboo sticking out like antennas--he’s the controller--and they wait for the airplanes to land. They’re doing everything right. The form is perfect. It looks exactly the way it looked before. But it doesn’t work. No airplanes land. So I call these things cargo cult science, because they follow all the apparent

precepts and forms of scientific investigation, but they're missing something essential, because the planes don't land (Feynman 1985, 340).

As shown in the previous section, "science" as it is currently constructed in the "social sciences" is not a substitute for the art of public administration. Feynman's story is instructive as to the problem of ascertaining whether science should or can be applied to complex phenomena. Human beings are too complex to be dissected and categorized as if organisms in a petri dish.<sup>10</sup> There is also the problem of the "subjects" examining "objects," i.e., other human beings with the scientist attempting to be objective in her analysis. Current renditions of science applied to the analysis of human organizations that describe the phenomena partially describe the reality of organizations and are only snapshots in time, failing to produce an accurate portrayal once and for all (see Gell-Mann 1994, 264). The rationality project of the NPM promotes scientific assumptions that cannot adequately or completely explain the reality of modern organizations.

The ultimate in rational thinking is the most abstract discipline beyond science, and that is mathematics. Husserl asserts the following concerning the impact of the arithmetical world (as an abstract existence) on the life-world of everyday experience (reality):

*...the world in which I find myself and which is also my world-about-me, that the complex forms of my manifold and shifting spontaneities of consciousness stand related: observing in the interests of research the bringing of meaning into conceptual form through description; comparing and distinguishing, collecting and counting, presupposing and inferring, the theorizing activity of consciousness, in short, in its different forms and stages. Related to it likewise are the diverse acts and states of sentiment and disapproval, joy and sorrow, desire, and aversion, hope and fear, decision and action. All these, together with the sheer acts of the Ego, in which I become acquainted with the world as immediately given me, though spontaneous tendencies to turn toward it and to grasp it, are included under the one Cartesian expression: Cogito. In the natural urge of life I live continually in this fundamental form of all "wakeful" living, whether in addition I do or do not assert the cogito, and whether I am or am not "reflectively" concerned with the Ego and the cogitare....*

I am present to myself continually as someone who perceives, represents, thinks, feels, desires, and so forth; and *for the most part* herein I find myself related in present experience to the fact-world which is constantly about me. But I am not always so related, not every *cogito* in which I live has for its *cogitatum* things, men, objects or contents of one kind or another. Perhaps I am busied with pure numbers and the laws they symbolize: nothing of this sort is present in the world about me, the world of "real fact." And yet the world of numbers also is there for me, as the field of objects with which I am arithmetically busied ... *The arithmetical world is there for me only when and so long as I occupy the arithmetical standpoint.* But the natural world, the world in the ordinary sense of the word, *is constantly there for me*, so long as I live naturally and look in its direction.... If my *cogito* is active only in the worlds proper to the new standpoints, the natural world remains unconsidered; it is now the background for my

consciousness as act, but it is not the encircling sphere within which an arithmetical world finds its true and proper place. The two worlds are present together but disconnected, apart, that is, from their relation to the Ego, in virtue of which I can freely direct my glance or my acts to the one or to the other" (Husserl 1969, 93-94).

Husserl's phenomenological ideas are instructive here as we get to the core of the problem of public management theories based on scientific rationalism. Scientists lose track of the world of facts (reality) in the arithmetical world (science and rationalism). This concept is further articulated in the following:

...We are not concerned at present with removing the preconceptions which trouble the pure positivity (*Sachlichkeit*) of research, with the constituting of a science 'free from theory' and 'free from metaphysics' by bringing all the grounding back to the immediate data, nor with the means of reaching such ends, concerning whose value there is indeed no question. What we demand lies along another line. The whole world as placed within the nature-setting and presented in experience as real, taken completely 'free from all theory,' just as it is in reality experienced, and made clearly manifest in and through the linkings of our experiences, has now no validity for us, it must be set in brackets, untested indeed but also uncontested. Similarly all theories and sciences, positivistic or otherwise, which relate to this world, however good they may be, succumb to the same fate (Husserl 1969, 100).

Positivistic theory, a dominant component of public management, is useless in making one-and-for-all determinations concerning complex human behavior. Additionally, the further one gets from away from the ordinary world, the more abstract and unrelated the data describing complex human phenomena become. Husserl's theory becomes ever more relevant for us in the sense that managers engaged completely in the positivistic-thinking of the arithmetical world can be disruptive or insensitive to the needs of others when attempting to deal with the citizen-public or with citizen-workers rather than engaging in the experiential world of "real fact."

As demonstrated with the earlier renditions of Taylorism, workers lose their ability to be creative in their work by being denied the ability to think, and ultimately knowing completely, about their work. Similarly, under the New Public Management, the citizen-public is relegated to role of customer, effectively losing their ability to be involved in politics. This situation is further exacerbated by the promotion of the scientific method and economic rationalism. Arithmetical world facts are heaped upon the public when it politically suits elected officials and public managers to do so. Hummel and Stivers (1998) point to this aspect of rationalism in their discussion of the political philosopher Hannah Arendt's work:

...[P]olitical questions, Arendt argued, are not factual....Arendt was insistent that public life is possible only where human beings, different yet equal, listen to one another as they speak about that which is of concern for them. The public space is constructed out of this shared expression of care, not on the basis of consensus.

We see in Arendt's argument the connection between the kind of knowledge we depend on in public debate and the kind of governing processes we get as a result.



Arendt believed that reliance on reason-based scientific knowledge would shut down public discussion: Who can argue with the results of the scientific method? Public questions are different from scientific or technical questions . . . (Hummel and Stivers 1998, 42).

Citizens and workers are effectively losing the ability to engage in politics by managerial movements that deny the need for total group involvement.

The knowledge of lower-level government agency participants (and, indeed, of nearly all organizations, public and private) is generally ignored by those individuals on top of the organizational pyramid. There is a conceptual framework available for interpreting differences between *knowledges* (plural) provided by Carnevale, Hummel (1996) and further developed by Garrett (2001). Based largely upon the work of the philosophers Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Carnevale and Hummel (1996) describe the *knowledge analytic* as follows:

The assumption...that executives and managers have knowledge and workers don't is simply not borne out by further analysis. It is a *management ideology*: a way of thinking about knowledge that furthers management interests and prevents profound questions from arising, not only about work, not just about respect and reward, but about necessity of having workers who know what they are doing (Carnevale and Hummel 1996, 19).

With Carnevale and Hummel's conception of the "knowledge analytic" we see an elaboration of the problem of Public Management. The PM construct fails to capture the totality of the modern organization. In addition to knowledges of workers, managers, and executives, Carnevale and Hummel note the knowledges of investor idealism and consumer/client realism. The central tenet of NPM that promotes citizens as "customers" further disengages the public from participating in *public* administration. For example, an investor such as a taxpayer not directly receiving a public organization's service or as a recipient of a service, i.e., a welfare recipient, places different demands on an organization. The former has an indirect stake in the agency's activities, whereas the latter is directly affected by what occurs in the organization. Both are kept in the dark as to the day-to-day functioning of the government organization. The old public management promoted citizen-disconnect in the executive's interest through bureaucratic rationality but the NPM further exacerbates the situation by reducing a public service to a mere marketplace transaction. Workers, too, are unable to fully and constructively engage with the citizen-public. Conversely, the NPS would directly involve both citizens and workers in public organizations through democratic discourse. Worker knowledge presently remains dominated by the scientific-oriented management and the mathematical-induced idealism of executives. Public Management and the NPM based on positivism continue the devaluation of other knowledges in the modern organization.

## Conclusion

I began this essay with a quote from the phenomenologist Alfred Schutz. The first part of his quote is worth repeating here: *All social sciences are objective meaning-contexts of subjective meaning-contexts*. I may further add that politics in organizations, as in life, are ubiquitous. The Public Management movement in all of its incarnations, carried to its fullest extent, attempts to completely deny the entrance of politics into the organizational construct. Public Management will be unable to capture completely the life-world of human organizations. However, due to the variations of *knowledges* between members of organizations and of society in general and the inability of organizations to overcome the problems inherent to the knowledge analytic, the PM movement will make the ideal-typical rationality project difficult to surrender to the democracy of the New Public Service.

This does not mean that promoters of PM and NPM will not continue attempting to push their vision of scientific rationality through the organizational hierarchy on society. That is why executives, managers, public administrators, citizens and academicians need to continue to promote democratic participation by the public and within government agencies. The NPS, not fully developed here and worth further exploration elsewhere, and an understanding of the implications of the knowledge analytic may shed light on how to get to democratic practice and the “public” in administration. Science may yet yield a positive impact on the art of public administration, but not as it is currently constituted in the Public Management Movement popular in the academy today.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> For a more extensive elaboration of the concept of the knowledge analytic see T. M. Garrett's "The Waco, Texas, ATF Raid and Challenger Launch Decision: Management, Judgment and the Knowledge Analytic," in *ARPA*, March 2001, 31/1:66-86.

<sup>2</sup> O.C. McSwite, a harsh critic on entrepreneurial values, comments that "market processes...have undercut the common ground necessary for the propagation of stable social values" (2000, 64).

<sup>3</sup> Readers familiar with the work of Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan (1979) may recognize in this essay that I am using a theory of the "Interpretive" paradigm, i.e., phenomenology to analyze a "functionalist" paradigmatic theory, i.e., public management (which may be classed further as logical-positivist).

<sup>4</sup> See also Linda Kaboolian in *PAR*, May/June 1998, as "The institutional reforms of the New Public Management are heavily influenced by the assumptions of the public choice approach, principal-agent theory, and transaction cost economics" (190).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the "Symposium: Leadership, Democracy, and the New Public Management" in the May/June 1998 edition of *Public Administration Review*.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps a more radical conception of the public management ideology is captured by Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., of the University of Chicago. Lynn equates PM to private management and welcomes the intrusion of the "new economics of organization" based largely upon rational choice.

<sup>7</sup> Terry (1998, 194) refers to the Public Management Movement as "neo-managerialism [consisting] of an updated version of an older tradition embodied in the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor."

<sup>8</sup> See Spicer (1998) as "we can find Frederician ideas on both sides of what is one of the most important debates in American public administration. This apparent paradox arises because of a conflict, which Frederick, as an advocate of 'enlightened despotism,' never had to face. This is the conflict or, more constructively, the tension between the values of enlightened expertise and those of democratic accountability" (300).

<sup>9</sup> Stone (1997) makes a convincing argument that counting is inherently political. In this case (both with Behn and Taylor), the power-wielders are the managers and the affected workers/citizens are the recipients of the effects of the (mis?)counting.

<sup>10</sup> See Gell-Mann (1994) for a physicist's perspective on statistical analysis on complex adaptive systems, such as human beings and organizations. Gell-Mann maintains that "the apparently hard-headed practice of ignoring values difficult to quantify is often advertised as being value-free. On the contrary, it represents the imposition on any analysis of a rigid system of values, favoring those that are easily quantifiable over others that are more fragile and may be more important. All our lives are impoverished by decisions based on that kind of thinking" [e.g., economists and political scientists have a propensity for leaving fragile values to the political process] (324.)

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# “Hit the Bricks, Buddy”: Nepotism and the Dark Side of Reinventing Government

*Randall Miller*

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## **Introduction**

### **Managerialism and the Dark Side of Reinventing Government**

A “modern managerial” model of management is described by James Burnham (1941), where the control of private businesses is shifted from owners to professional managers, who are considered more competent to lead today’s large organizations. This private sector concept has been most recently brought into the mainstream of popularity in the public sector during the 1990’s by Osborne and Gaebler’s book *Reinventing Government* (1992). The central theme of “managerialism” (also referenced in updated versions of the model as “new public management” or “reinventing government”) is “management rights” (Shafritz & Russell, 2003, 302 ). Under this principle, managers should be granted enough freedom of action and extensive decision-making authority in their positions to most efficiently accomplish their goals in the course of their obligations. Additionally, the model advocates an expansion of managers’ decision-making activities beyond managing to encompass active policy-making or “entrepreneurship” for an organization.

Ideologically, “policy entrepreneurs” are expected to develop their own vision of what their organization should become. The vision should be transformational in nature and lead to a substantial change in organizational culture and/or mission. Originating in the private sector, where the need for accommodation of competing interests is not essential, such freedom of action can prove to be quite profitable. However, in the public sector this entrepreneurialism presents a substantial risk for reckless or even abusive use of power by public administrators in the pursuit of their personal agendas. The “due process rights” of citizens are often sacrificed for the sake of political favoritism, and representativeness can possibly be overshadowed by nepotism.

Graham (1974) advances the basic constitutional principle of due process as “one of the most basic ideas of American public law” (99) and the central rationale appropriate to

administrative decision-making in situations of power and discretionary authority. It permeates all of public administration. He says the concept of due process is binding on administrators and requires them to exercise fairness, rationality, and reason in all of their actions. Due process comprises the enduring “rules of the game” in public service. Graham considers it “presumptuous” for any political executive to arbitrarily suppose his/her determination of discretionary authority is a personal prerogative independent of administrative due process.

Denhardt (2004) challenges the reinventing government’s glorification of individual entrepreneurial self-interest over established governmental processes and the democratic efforts of interest groups. He insists, “The ‘shadow’ side of the entrepreneur is characterized by a narrow focus, an unwillingness to follow rules and stay within bounds, and a preference for action so strong as to threaten accountability.....the notion of accountability is extremely important” (143). While entrepreneurial managers can be innovative and productive, they can pose a “difficult and risky problem” (143). Their “single-mindedness” and tendency to circumvent or ignore rules can make them difficult to control, possibly becoming “loose cannons.”

The case study central to this article represents a transgression of public trust that emerges from reinventing government’s dark side. It is an illustration of how worthwhile demographic concerns in government can be corrupted into the spoils of favoritism through the peril of discretionary authority. As a consequence, due process procedures in the selection and hiring of firefighters are circumvented by political corruption. This article opens with a brief review of relevant literature, documents the details of the case study, and then concludes with a discussion of the lessons of this experience.

### **The Practice of Public Administration**

Rosenbloom (1983) describes the practice of public administration as a consideration of three competing approaches: managerial, political, and legal. Each approach represents the inherent values of each separate branch of government. The managerial approach depicts the executive branch’s emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. The political approach is founded on the ideas of political representativeness, responsiveness, and accountability. It is reflective of the legislative branch. The legal approach embodied in the judicial branch has procedural due process, individual rights, and equity as its central values. Rosenbloom insists that a definition of public administration must include a consideration of all three approaches. He maintains that any preference for one approach is dependent on the government agency, its mission, and policy applications.

Rohr (1985), on the other hand, declares that constitutional law always supercedes administrative/managerial theory in the public sector. He says public administration is an instrument of the Constitution rather than of elected office. Therefore, Rohr believes administrative theory based on a strict adherence to constitutional principles will preserve professional autonomy for the public administrator. Accordingly, Rohr maintains that without “principled” autonomy, public administration cannot exist as a profession.

Werner (1983, 257) emphasizes that “expert management” or “competent management” in the mastery of public administration dominates the profession. She supposes that efficiency and economy have replaced the “early definition of faithful execution”, burying it “under the managerial paraphernalia of the twentieth century” (257). Werner advises a return to published rules and regulations for personal conduct, sensible in-service training programs, careful recruitment procedures to “screen out undesirables and improve the caliber of personnel” (258), internal audits to fix accountability, and a structured hierarchy within public agencies to control irregularities.

Conventional ethics theory and the practice of administrative ethics maintain that public administrators are obligated to carry out the orders of their superiors, who represent the government they serve (Thompson, 1985). Additionally, they are expected to be neutral and refrain from exercising independent moral judgment in the performance of their duties. However, this “ethics of neutrality” does not restrict them from using their own judgment in the implementation of policy. But, their judgment should adhere to the intent of elected officials and the Constitution.

Thompson submits a variation of the ethic of neutrality that he terms “suspended neutrality”, but which he insists is still neutrality of action and obedience to the will of the organization. In this variation, the administrator may express his/her views with his/her superiors and contest proposals in the formulation of policy. Notwithstanding, once a policy decision is final, he should faithfully support and implement the policy as intended.

### **The Ethical Responsibility of Public Administrators**

In describing the ethical responsibility of public administrators, Brown (1983) insists they obligate themselves to the ethos of the profession: to act morally and productively. He says the concept of professionalism implies quality of performance and standards of excellence, which construes a commitment to being productive. Brown defines the word “ethical” as “conformity to accepted or approved standards of conduct” (340). He implies “ethos” goes far deeper in meaning to distinguish the character of an individual or society and identifies it as “the modern version of the work ethic” (340). The ethos of professionalism is a continued pursuit of excellence that is productivity in action.

Zimmerman (1982) gives examples of practices that create ethical problems in government. He cites the acceptance of a favor or gift, favored treatment, use of public equipment or facilities or personnel for private purposes, disclosure or use of confidential information for personal benefit, incompatible employment, and a conflict of interest in a proposed law or contract. Kramer (1999) describes how rank and file employees are particularly dependent upon their leaders for access to resources (pay increases, promotions, space, training, equipment, etc.) in hierarchal organizations like the fire service. Trust is the cornerstone of an organization that links power and legitimacy. If trust is damaged or violated, the organization’s “civic order” is similarly damaged. Rule violations violate organizational trust. Even unethical behavior, which falls short of breaking rules violates the trust between employees and supervisors and disrupts the organization’s civic order. This damaging effect can likewise extend to the community at large.



Wood (1955) identifies selection and employment procedures as distinct causes in the corruption of public personnel. In dealing with the problem, he recommends “professionalization of the bureaucracy” (256) and a “return to the Constitution” (257) with its guidelines for administrative procedures. He says earlier interpretations of the Constitution utilized inherent standards of personal conduct to limit corruption in government.

In the authorization of discretionary authority in recruiting and hiring activities, Emmerich (1952) insists merit and fitness become the sole criteria in the selection process. He considers the patronage system obsolete and dangerous and that decentralized departments based on operation and location are particularly susceptible to patronage pressures. Fire and police departments are usually decentralized organizations that operate with a degree of autonomy. Emmerich believes such a merit system needs to be extended to include all such departments.

### **From Individual Corruption to Systematic Corruption**

Caiden & Caiden describe how individual corruption can expand into “systematic corruption” where wrong-doing becomes the normative organizational behavior through “informal organizational short-cuts; the occasional accommodation of personal favor; mutual ‘understandings’ ” (186). The resulting routine exploitation of public office culminates in an erosion of public trust. They offer several disadvantages of “systematic corruption” beginning with an obstruction of organizational change that restricts access to the organization and concludes in a closed society of benefits. It widens class, economic, and social divisions, which contribute to societal strain and prevents cohesion within a community.

Systematic corruption prevents policy change, particularly in “immediate market considerations” (188). Ironically, a more efficient “market place mode of operation” is a justification of the reinventing government movement. It blocks administrative reform in favor of induced and profitable delays. In the process, it diverts public resources to the private benefit of a few. Finally, the effects of systematic corruption permeate into the community.

Eventually, systematic corruption replaces the expected purposes of an organization with flawed expectations and practices and punishes those who resist the institutionalized corruption. An important point to be made at this time is that collusion is involved in most corrupt practices. As the number of corrupt instances increases, so does the number of participants within the organization. Eventually, it becomes unlikely that even the most severe offenders will be penalized for wrong-doing, the systematic corruption continues into the future with an ever-changing cadre of offenders, and corruption becomes legitimized through prevalence.

Werner (1983) states that corruption can be viewed as dysfunctional and as having a self-perpetuating nature. She says it, “feeds upon itself, blocking organizational change and societal reform” (198). Unchecked, corruption will continue to grow and “spill over” into increasing portions of an organization or society until it becomes the paradigm for the public at large.

## The Case Study

### From Spoils, to Merit, to Discretion

As a young firefighter on a municipal fire department in Illinois, I initially worked directly for a fire chief as the department's fire administration manager. The chief had over twenty-five years of service on the department. During my entire fire service career of more than 18 years, our department had eight different fire chiefs. I worked closely with five of them. The chief mentioned above was among the least educated of those occupying the position. But, without a doubt in my mind, he was the most effective. He was also an honest man of integrity; a determinant of ethical behavior to be reintroduced at the end of this paper. Accordingly, I trust his recollections of the conditions of employment from the time of his earliest employment and since, as well as the department's history.

Prior to implementation of the department's merit procedures in the 1960's, all appointments to the fire department were made through political affiliation and were dependent on the tenure of the governing administration. Each general election determined the composition of the workforce on the department. If the incumbent city government was reelected, the fire department's personnel remained essentially the same. Alternatively, a radical change in the status quo brought about wholesale displacement of fire department personnel. The morning after such an election, firefighters would report for duty at their assigned firehouses and possibly find their fire clothing missing from designated locations. When they proceeded to the kitchen or watchroom to inquire about the situation, they would be met by a stranger in possession of their fire clothing telling them to "Hit the bricks, buddy. I'm in, and you're out."

The "bricks" referred to the brick streets throughout the city. So, metaphorically, the firefighter was receiving notice of termination and delegated to walking the streets looking for employment. This process comprised the official dismissal procedure that could possibly greet a firefighter every four years. I had heard the phrase used routinely in the firehouses with the connotation of "leave the area" or "go away." The chief, mentioned earlier, informed me that it was also a satirical and derogatory reference to working conditions during those days of the political spoils system. Additionally, he said the phrase carried an indirect reference that, if a firefighter was not happy with current working conditions, he could always find another job. Thereafter, whenever I heard the phrase "Hit the bricks, buddy," spoils systems in government came to mind and continue to do so today.

The implementation of formal personnel merit procedures in the 1960's based on job qualifications replaced the spoils system of selection and hiring in our fire department. A system of graded, job-related hiring examinations was offered to anyone in the general public. The testing consisted of a written exam, followed by a physical agility test. If successful in these first two challenges, the remaining firefighter candidates would interview with three members of the Fire and Police Commission. Members of the commission were appointed by the mayor and served four-year renewable terms and had ultimate authority to appoint, promote, discipline, and terminate commissioned firefighters and police officers. The purpose of the commission was to eliminate political influence from personnel matters in the

fire and police departments as much as is possible in city government. The fire candidates received an interview score from the commissioners, which was combined into a final score with the other two scores from the written and physical agility scores, plus military veteran points if appropriate.

An eligibility “hiring list” would be commissioned and a published ranking of the candidates in numerical order based on total scores. When openings occurred on the fire department, candidates would be offered employment in successive order from the top of the list, until the list was exhausted or the two-year eligibility period expired. The commission was authorized by state law to select anyone from the top three candidates on the “existing” list for each opening authorized during the list’s two-year eligibility period. Over time, tradition had unofficially eliminated this “rule of three” option. Thus, employment on the fire department was always offered in sequential order from the top of the “hiring list”. Candidates offered tentative employment would then proceed to take a polygraph exam, followed by a psychological examination, and a final obstacle of a medical examination. This “traditional” system remained in effect with some minor modifications until 1989, when the city ordinance governing the process was changed (Bouyea, 1996, November 7).

The new ordinance established an “employment pool” from which any candidate could be selected regardless of their final score, based on the presumption that all candidates in the employment pool had to meet minimum standards for the position of firefighter. In accordance with reinventing government precepts, the police and fire chiefs were given discretionary authority in hiring police officers and firefighters with the expectation of better meeting the needs of the department and community, and to maintain a more balanced workforce. The legitimate purpose of the change was to bring the ethnic and gender makeup of the fire department more in line with the city’s existing demographics, as espoused in J. Donald Kingsley’s (1944) original concept of Representative Bureaucracy, which was later refined by Samuel Krislov in 1967 and 1974 (Shafritz and Russell, 2000). In doing so, the Fire and Police Commission was basically relegated to a role of a rubber stamp for the police and fire chiefs’ selections.

This new hiring process, however, produced an adverse consequence on minority hiring. Through the subjective candidate selection process by a politically appointed fire chief, the department remained overwhelmingly white and male into the 1990's, despite a concerted effort to balance the ethnic and gender makeup on the fire department to better approximate the demographics of the city’s population. Community and city council concern prompted repeated efforts for effective solutions, but each one failed in accomplishing any established goals of integration.

### **Putting Out the Fires of Nepotism**

On October 6, 1996, an article entitled “City Puts Out Fires Started by Charges of Nepotism” (Bouyea & Adams, 1996, Oct. 6) appeared in the local newspaper The Peoria Journal Star. It announced that the city manager had rescinded the conditional employment offers to six relatives (sons) of fire department firefighters after receiving an anonymous letter citing inequity in hiring practices. The letter charged that the six relatives were offered positions

despite other candidates having higher test scores. After verifying the charges, the city manager withdrew the offers, saying that the sanctioned hiring process was not followed and that the process would begin anew. He said he took the action in order to ensure the credibility of the city's hiring process and to keep its image from being tarnished. He further indicated that he was authorized to withdraw the offers based on his authority as city manager.

The city manager stated that he did not object to firefighters' sons and daughters applying and being hired onto the department, but the city should not make exceptions for them, which are not offered to others, who meet qualifications. Compounding the breach of process was the fact that three of the six firefighters' sons offered jobs failed their polygraph examinations and were allowed to retake the tests with a polygraph technician of their choosing. Additionally, one of the offending candidates was the deputy chief's son. A councilman who previously sat on the Fire and Police Commission said the testing process did not allow retaking a failed polygraph. Before the city manager intervened, the commission had voted to approve the fire chief's selections.

The fire chief insisted that it was merely coincidence that all six were relatives of active and retired firefighters. He said the candidates passed all of the extensive testing. He stated, "The only question is the perception of the public". The chief added, "Were these people given special treatment? Only to the degree that the city was being fair to them....Were they the 'best' candidates? I don't know" (A1). The city manager said that to allow the process (hiring the firefighters' sons) to go on would give the perception that nepotism is alive and well in city government. He commented that when he looked at the applicants in the employment pool, he had questions about the process. And, he decided to act in the favor of fairness. He said other candidates are not usually given a second chance, and added, "The system will maintain its integrity" (A1).

### **"Purely Coincidental"**

An editorial entitled "Fire Department Nepotism" described the incident in detail and insisted the fire chief owed the city council a full accounting of the suspicious hirings. After passing initial tests, approximately 28 men and women were eligible for six openings (Editorial, 1996, Nov. 6). Conditional job offers were extended to four firefighter sons and several minorities. When all of the minority candidates (who were not relatives of firefighters) failed their polygraph, the fire chief selected two more firefighter sons from the 28 for the remaining positions. Three of the six relatives failed the polygraph test and were allowed to retake it using an examiner of their choosing. The minorities were not offered the same opportunity. The city manager related that he knew of no other time that firefighter applicants were permitted to retake their polygraph. To make matters worse, the city manager said some of the relatives who had low scores on the two objective tests (physical agility and written exam) received high scores in subjective interviews with the fire chief and accompanying fire officers.

The fire chief insisted that it was purely coincidental he chose six firefighters' sons, whose fathers were either currently on the department or retired from it. The article paraphrased the chief's sentiments on the issue by stating, "He acknowledges the public may think special

treatment was at work here, but their perception would be wrong” (A4). The fire chief was quoted, “This is a completely subjective process. Name recognition is going to mean something; it has to” (A4). The city manager followed through on his decision to re-administer the selection process and have the top candidates retested and re-interviewed. He promised the city’s “long-buried, patronage-ridden, corruption-driven past” would not reestablish itself. The editorial finished with a strong pronouncement that both the Fire and Police Commission and the fire chief owed the public some answers.

### **An Ethical Quandary**

The following day, Thursday, November, 7, 1996, another newspaper article (Bouyea, 1996, Nov. 7) began an almost daily publication schedule of related material on the alleged nepotism. It reported that the Fire and Police Commission voted the previous day to refuse the city manager’s request to withdraw the job offers from the firefighters’ relatives. More background and details of the incident were also supplied to the public.

In 1996, the fire department was authorized to fill 13 positions. During the summer, six white paramedics and one minority firefighter were hired onto the department. For the six remaining positions, the fire chief selected 15 white males (10 were firefighters’ relatives). Of those candidates, he selected six relatives for the final six openings contingent on their passing polygraph, medical, and psychological examinations.

In the article, the fire chief continued his denial of favoritism or anything dishonest or illegal in his actions. As far as all six selections being relatives he argued, “Name recognition, whether you like it or not, has a bearing on your life” (A1). The commission, who had initially approved his selections, notified the city manager that it felt the city’s hiring ordinance was properly followed and refused to withdraw the offers. One commissioner commented, “I believe we followed procedure and had the authority to act” (A13). The commission’s chairperson declared that the commission was planning to address inequities in the polygraph procedure by allowing all recent candidates who failed the test due to deception to retake it. The lone dissenting commissioner in the voting believed the commissioners were more concerned about criticism over their initial decision to offer the jobs than any impropriety surrounding the issue. This commissioner was quoted, “The commission got so hung up on the fact they didn’t do anything wrong that they can’t see what’s right” (A13).

The city manager indicated he would not challenge the commission’s decision, but vowed another such incident would not occur again. He criticized the subjective decision making process, but also said he did not want to hire people strictly on test scores. The article closed with a quotation by the assenting commissioner, “Going by highest score is not the best way to select a candidate,” he/she said. To put (the applicants) into an objective rank order ... goes against the grain of this ordinance” (A13).

Two days later a special meeting was called by the city’s mayor. It was announced in the newspaper that the Fire and Police Commission was expected to rescind the job offers only two days after refusing the city manager’s request (Bouyea, 1996, Nov. 8). The mayor called the meeting after hearing the commission’s decision to retain the job offers for the six

relatives. He stated, "I'm terribly disappointed with their decision. I insisted that they have another meeting to discuss this, and I will ask them to reconsider" (A7). The commission's unwillingness to rescind the offers also surprised several city council members. One councilperson expressed his thoughts by saying, "They overlooked the wishes of the council and the wishes of the city manager...I'm starting to question whether the commission is a rubber stamp of the fire and police departments or if they are intent on addressing the good of the city." He continued, "People are saying that all you have to do to get hired by the fire department is to be a relative" (A7).

### **"Name Recognition"**

The drama continued on Saturday with an editorial. Its title summarized its message: "Third Chance for Commission...to rescue the city's integrity by withdrawing job offers made to firefighters' sons" (Editorial, 1996, Nov 9). In doing so, the editorial said the action would send a strong, if belated, message that preferential treatment won't be given to anyone seeking a job in city government. It delineated other reasons for rescinding the offers including the issue of race, the potential for lawsuits and countersuits, and the challenge to the authority of the city manager. But, the preeminent justification was the proclamation that the community must not award jobs on the basis of nepotism.

The following excerpts from the editorial most accurately and completely depict the ethical quandary produced by this situation and its possible consequences:

By saying that "name recognition, whether you like it or not, has a bearing," [the fire chief] may as well have acknowledged that the six firefighters whose hirings he asked the commission to OK were selected, in part, because of their names. And that the three who were permitted to retake lie detector tests they failed, with examiners they got to pick – apparently that's unprecedented – because of who they were. And not given the same opportunity because of who they weren't. Talk about affirmative action programs for good ol' boys.

The commission, which is supposed to be a check against such shenanigans, should have said no when the names first came to it...

That being said, withdrawing the job offers may not pull the city out of a potential legal morass. Rescinding the job offers may invite a lawsuit from those already invited to join the fire department. But letting the offers stand might invite a suit from those who weren't permitted to arrange their own substitute polygraphs. Just what the city needs – another lawsuit. What a mess!

[The fire chief] has shown such poor judgment throughout this matter that the city manager would be justified in asking him to defend his continued tenure with the city.

As for the Police and Fire Commission, in 1989 the City Council stripped it of much of its authority to develop hiring lists and make job offers. That makes it easier for patronage to infect the process. But it is clear that the commission is supposed to be a check-and-balance against a return to the old days of preferential hiring, before the public safety departments were professionalized (A5).

### **A “Pickle” of a Predicament**

On Sunday, November 10, 1996, the newspaper reported that the Fire and Police Commission voted 4-2 to rescind the job offers made to the six relatives of firefighters (Bouyea, 1996, November 10). The candidates’ names would be returned to the employment pool and the hiring process would be resumed. The city manager made a statement, which insisted more objective standards would be used, but the fire chief must have some leeway to fill the needs of the fire department. Since the 1989 city ordinance creating a hiring pool, the fire chief has been authorized to select anyone from the employment pool at his sole discretion.

A couple of days later, on Tuesday, November 12, 1996, one of the firefighters’ sons, who was selected in the initial group of 15 but was not one of the final six candidates, publicly stated in an article in the same newspaper that the testing process should be returned to a hiring list ranked by test scores, because it eliminates any charges of preferential treatment (Bouyea, 1996, November 12). He added, “The city needs to make sure the playing field is level and no other reasons should be taken into consideration for a job” (B2). He also suggested a more difficult written exam to make the employment pool smaller, which he said, would make the selection process easier since there would be a higher percentage of qualified candidates.

The scandal’s sequence of events was once again described and further details of the procedure outlined in the article. Normally, after selecting candidates from the pool, the fire chief asks the city manager to send a memorandum to the commission verifying procedures have been followed and that the positions be filled. A conditional offer of employment is then made on the recommendation of the fire chief. The Fire and Police Commission’s chairperson indicated in the newspaper article that in the past candidates’ names were not included on the memo to the commission. However, in this particular case, he said the fire chief informed the commission in advance that the offers were being made to firefighters’ sons. Critics of the current employment pool process were quoted as desiring a return to a more objective selection process as practiced in the past. Conversely, an article on the following day (Adams, 1996, November 13) blamed the people involved in the scandal over the selection process.

When the nepotism case went to court in December (Smothers, 1996, December 13; Editorial, 1996, December 16; Meidroth, 1996, December 17), a final editorial chastised the fire chief for a lack of “good sense” in his actions, especially in light of a sexual discrimination and harassment lawsuit against the city settled earlier in the year for three million dollars. The fire chief was admonished for putting the city in a “pickle” when he allowed “name recognition” to influence fire department hirings. The editorial finished by saying perhaps the fire chief did not have the good judgment required of top administrators.

Focusing on the fire chief’s “name recognition has a bearing” (A13) statement, a county judge ruled in favor of the Fire and Police Commission in rescinding the job offers to the six relatives of firefighters (Anonymous Article, 1997, April 17; Meidroth, 1997, October 24). This judgment, along with an earlier decision in July, marked the end of lawsuits filed against the city (Okeson, 1997, July 3).

### **The Consequences, or the Lack Thereof**

Any reference to or an announcement of the fire chief being disciplined or reprimanded for his actions never appeared, and he continued as fire chief for approximately two years. He retired to accept a political appointment as state fire marshal under a governor, who lost his party's candidacy in the subsequent election. This same former governor is currently under indictment for illegal activities and abuse of power in his tenure as both Secretary of State and Governor.

The newly elected governor replaced the State Fire Marshal within six months of assuming office giving the fire marshal about two and a half service years in the office before his firing. The former fire chief then publicly sought to replace the retiring city manager. Upon receiving no public interest or support, he faded from public life and into retirement.

The scandalized hiring process remains intact. The position of fire battalion chief was removed from the department's union bargaining unit in 1989 and delegated to a similar discretionary promotional process in 1992. Following a declining interest in promotion to the position that was expressed by a continued absence of fire captains taking the battalion chief's examination, the position was returned to the department's union bargaining unit after a ten year hiatus. Despite the battalion chief's promotional process remaining discretionary, the position is now sought after. Union protection from the political actions of both the fire chief's position and city hall has been the most often-stated reason expressed by members of the department for the renewed interest.

## **Discussion**

### **Efficiency versus Effectiveness**

This case study illustrates the opportunity for indiscretion that is inherent in the reinventing government movement. Managerialism with its empowerment of managers can be an appropriate and viable doctrine in the private sector from which it originates. Profit is the governing principle in the private sector, and appropriately so. Profit is the requisite for survival in a free market. Executives empowered to make discretionary decisions are awarded an advantage in seeking more "efficiency of operation" that is synonymous with "effectiveness of operation" in private enterprise. Efficiency means effectiveness, which translates into profit.

However, efficiency and effectiveness are differentiated in the public sector. As Rohr (1985) states, public administration is an instrument of the Constitution, and constitutional law supersedes administrative, or management, theory. Accordingly, management theory in the public sector should strictly adhere to constitutional principles just as management theory in the private sector should adhere to free market economic principles.



The practice of democratic government is not an economic venture. It is a matter of “due process” in which effectiveness must always preempt efficiency (Graham, 1974). Democratic theory in government is not synonymous with capitalistic economic theory. Capitalism relies on profit. Democracy centers on due process. It’s a question of apples and oranges. What is productive in economic circles may not be practical or desirable in the political arena.

The concept of “management rights” with its emphasis on entrepreneurial discretion exceeds the practicality of operational discretion in government. An “ethics of neutrality” doctrine allows operational discretion in the implementation of policy by public administrators, and Thompson’s (1985) “suspended neutrality” advocates an administrative voice in the development of policy contingent on the acceptance of constitutional doctrine. Brown’s (1983) “ethos” of professionalism promotes the pursuit of productivity in government by public administrators within approved standards of conduct, lessening the “opportunity, incentive, and risk” (Zimmerman, 1982) of corruption.

Individual incidences of petty and borderline corruption (referred to as “white corruption” by Werner, 1983) that do not necessarily constitute illegal activities can evolve into “systematic corruption” where wrong-doing becomes legitimized as the organizational norm (Caiden & Caiden, 1977). Systematic corruption permeates into the community immobilizing it through a deterioration of trust that damages its “civic order” (Kramer, 1999), and results in dysfunctional, ineffective government. Conversely, Kramer’s “system trust” based on properly functioning organizational sanctions and standards that require fiduciary stewardship on the part of public managers promotes equity in the exercise of government.

Denhardt’s (2004) description of the “shadow side of the entrepreneur” is a warning that should be heeded. The conception of entrepreneurship simultaneously fosters innovation and risk. While risk-taking is often acceptable in the private sector where private capital is waged, the adventurous spending or investing of public money violates responsible stewardship of public funds. Likewise, profit is more highly prized than the due process of individuals in private business.

A shadowy entrepreneur of the private sector demands little concern for individual rights if his activities are profitable within the law. Public administrators do not enjoy this luxury. Every action of the public servant must be made with procedural equity and the conservative welfare of the citizenry at the forefront of consideration. The essence of constitutional law is entirely due process and takes precedence over any productivity or efficiency issue. Capitalism is strictly profit driven without the need for conservatism in its actions. The occasional and insignificant indiscretion of the profit-producing manager is overlooked in business. The same behavior in government is not acceptable.

As practitioners in government service are aware, indiscretions on the part of public officials as illustrated in the case study are commonplace as evidenced by the increasing emphasis on codes of ethics in government. Institutionalizing entrepreneurial values of the reinventing government movement through discretionary authority is simply inviting the fox back into the chicken coop. Jacksonian spoils will once again dominate public service and reinvigorate a patronage system always primed to reap the rewards of sanctioned collusion and corruption of

a spoils system thought relegated to the past. This is the dark side of reinventing government that we invite into our governance when we embrace undue managerial discretion. This is the dark side we must keep in mind when we attempt to reinvent government for efficiency's sake.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

In the years since my retirement, my thoughts occasionally return to the fire department that captured most of my adult life. I think of the gradual but continual progress we made in the professionalization and reputation of the department only to have it undone by one man's tenure in office. It was a regime born of corruption that was forged from its inception by the inherent flaws of managerialism that will always allow unscrupulous individuals to flourish in government.

Had the principled fire chief I referenced at the beginning of this article been fire chief during our experimentation in reinventing government, I doubt that such a scandal would have occurred, and the department would have maintained its developing reputation of equal opportunity. He was a man of integrity, who believed in his role as a public servant dedicated to the welfare of the community. I believe he would have resisted the temptations and pressures of political favoritism. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Instead, reinventing government opened the door for unscrupulous behavior by spawning a culture based on managerial discretion that produced an administration of its own image and an agent willing to further the cause. Managerialism can be a viable concept in the public sector when an organization's leaders are principled individuals. But, should government chance a roll of the dice?

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*Fiction*

# Bree Michaels: A Glimpse into the Life of an Elementary School Principal

*Diane Ketelle*

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My day starts early. I get to work around 6:30 AM. It is a good time for me because I can walk the halls and think. Usually the only person who beats me to work is Fred, the custodian. Sometimes he waits for me in the parking lot to report the latest news. We were "graphittied" last night, or there were a lot of towels in the bathroom toilets, or the kids are leaving too much litter in the cafeteria. I try to listen to what he says even if I don't want to know. Sometimes I feel like Fred is my partner. I've had lonely times since I got to Lakeview, and I can count on Fred to talk to me about what he is real around here.

Eventually I get to my office, where I sit down and write "*The List*." *The List* is a tool I developed early in my first administrative job. On *The List* I write things I hope to accomplish. The real point of *The List* isn't in writing it. The point comes at the end of the day when I take the list out of my pocket and draw lines through what I got done and acknowledge what I didn't. The work of a school principal can be isolating; *The List* serves as a form of personal self-validation. I create *The List* for that moment when I can pull it out and draw lines through items accomplished. It is as if through that symbolic action I am saying to myself, it's okay, today you managed.

After writing *The List*, I head out to the playground. From down the hall I hear three giggling girls yell, "Good morning, principal lady!" The sound of their voices makes me laugh. As I move toward the playground, I pick up trash in my way. I think, note to self: remind everyone to pick up trash. When I get to the playground, the children are running and squealing and enjoying themselves. If I could choose a single soundtrack for my life it would be happy children playing. I am jolted by a voice behind me. "I need you at the bus, Bree." It is Robert, the bus driver, and he sounds serious. I turn and follow him at a pace that turns into a near run. I don't know what the problem is, but I know the sooner I get to the bus, the sooner I can start to handle whatever has happened. As we head for the bus, Robert explains that Sunny is having a "fit" and he won't get off the bus. Robert goes on to tell me that Sunny's mom told him that the family had had a bad weekend. Sunny is seven, and one of eight children. Apparently his father promised to visit over the weekend and never showed

up. Sunny hadn't taken it well. He seems to be having a meltdown. With that information I mount the bus. Sunny is easy to find, since the other children had gotten off and he is in his seat screaming his head off. I sit down next to him and let a minute go by as I consider the situation. I think about how he must be feeling and how he doesn't really care what I need. I take a deep breath and say, "How about coming with me to talk for a little while?" That reasonable approach has no impact on Sunny. I put my arm around his shoulder and he leans into me crying so hard I can feel my blouse getting wet. I try again, "Let's get off the bus." "I can't" he says, "I just can't."

"Sure we can."

It is at that point that I decide to pick Sunny up. I am a little surprised that, when I reach for him, he wraps himself around me, the way babies cling to their mothers. We head down the hall to my office. It is a short walk and no children see us. Sunny isn't crying now; he is whimpering. As we make our way, we pass Page, a first grade teacher who is always eager to help.

"Is he giving you a hard time?"

"No, he's having a hard time."

When I get to the office, Mona, the school secretary says, "Oh, not Sunny again. Did he hit you?"

"Everything is fine. He is going to sit here for a minute, while I check the hallways and make sure everyone is in class."

When I get back to the office, I hear Mona talking with Sunny. I only catch the tale end, "...so that's why you shouldn't do that to Ms. Michaels." I think, note to self: have a firm talk with Mona soon. Then I walk Sunny into my office. At that point he is calming down, but I have a decision to make. Should I call his mom? Should I talk with him and send him to class? Should I keep him with me until I feel he is going to be able to manage himself for the day? Some teachers at this school seemed to think that these sorts of incidents required punitive action, but Sunny's behavior didn't merit suspension, and I knew what I should do.

The morning recess bell surprised me. I had been talking with Sunny, and I couldn't believe how much time had gone by. Mona stuck her head in and asked if I could talk with Lorna, a fifth grade teacher. I knew Lorna was angry because she thought Gwen, the other fifth grade teacher, was hoarding glue sticks. I had encouraged them to talk and resolve this, but I knew I was going to have to meet with them together to find out what was going on.

After a brief talk with Lorna, I head out to the playground with Sunny. As I stand in the middle of the yard, Donna, a kindergarten teacher, walks over, "I can't believe Sunny got recess after his performance on the bus this morning." I tell myself change takes time.

When the morning recess bell rings, Sunny runs over to my side, uncertain of what to do next. I ask him, “Are you ready to go to class?” He stands next to me silent and unresponsive. I take his hand. “Let’s go to my office and talk a little more before you go back,” I offer. As we enter the office, I ask Sunny if he would like to draw a picture about how the morning has gone. He agrees, and that gives me time to check my e-mail. I checked my messages earlier, but didn’t begin to send answers. As he drew, I answered several messages, and only stopped when Sunny said, “Look, Ms. Michaels!” I turned around, and my eyes fixed on Sunny’s huge smile before scanning downward to the picture he had drawn. It was totally black. Uncertain of how to respond I ask, “Can you tell me about your picture?”

“It is night.”

“It is very dark.”

“It gets dark at night.”

“Are you in the picture anywhere?”

“Yes, but you can’t see me. It is too dark.”

“Would you like to make another picture?”

“Sure.”

I watch as Sunny takes the crayons and begins, to my relief, to draw a picture of a car. When he is finished, we both agree he should go to class and I walk him down to Clare Dixon’s room. Clare is one of the best teachers on my staff, and I explain to her what happened, and she is sympathetic in welcoming Sunny back to class. As I walk back to the office, I remind myself that I had meant to spend the first two hours of the morning in classrooms. I decide to check in with Mona and then make some informal classroom observations. When I get back to the office, Mona tells me Ernest was on his way over. Ernest is the superintendent. “Did he say why he was coming over?” I ask. “No, just that he is on his way.”

I have a little time before Ernest would arrive and I use it to finish answering my e-mails and I check my voicemail messages – 20 voicemail messages already today. I know I don’t have time to respond to them all now, so I take detailed notes and try to consider which will be high priority. Ernest pulls up in his Ford pick-up right in front of the school. He parks in the red zone, because, as everyone knows, the rules don’t apply to him. A red zone in Lakeview means, “No Parking for Everyone Except Ernest.” Today Ernest is wearing cowboy boots. I like his cowboy boots, and I always feel our conversations go better when he wears them, so I am especially happy to see how he is dressed. As he approaches I say, “Hi Boss, what’s up?”

“I’ve got to talk with you about something,” he says, as he clarifies with his movement and direction where this meeting will take place. He sits down in my swivel chair, a habit of his I find childish and annoying. Did he really need to sit in my chair in order to communicate to me who’s in charge?

“Look, Bree, I’ve heard things about what you’re doing with the special education kids and I’m worried. Let me be clear. You are probably my best principal. You are smart, interesting, well educated, and let’s face it, easy on the eye.” His last comment seemed to negate everything else.

“What have you heard, Ernest?”

“I heard that you closed down your Special Day Class and you have fully included those kids in regular classrooms.”

“Would doing that be a crime?”

“Come on, Bree, are you doing this?”

I sit quietly in my chair considering the situation. I am thinking that Ernest finding out what I am doing is a problem for me. Things were working great. I was just getting the inclusion plan implemented, and I was going to bring him over once it was running smoothly. I sat carefully measuring my words.

“You know, Ernest, I have created a lot of room at this school to talk about lots of things. Student achievement is up, the climate is positive, teachers can usually have productive dialogue – why are you on my back?”

“Not all my principals can do what you can do. This inclusion thing could create a big mess for me. Do I think you can pull it off? Sure I do. Do I think all the other principals can pull it off – no way in hell. It is dollar signs and I don’t have money for the kind of training we need in this district to implement full inclusion or the litigation big mistakes would cost.”

I think for a minute and then say, “Why not let me pilot inclusion? This school could be the model. Come on, Ernest – cut me a little slack. I’ll deliver for you – I always do.”

“I don’t like it, Bree. I’ll think about it, but don’t go doing things over here that I don’t know anything about.”

“Message received.”

“Put the kids back in the Special Day Class.”

“I’ll try and get to that. It has been crazy today.”

Ernest looks at me intently. He knows I wouldn’t necessarily do what he asks and I know I would never really cross him. It is a marriage made in heaven. As I walk out to the front of the school with him, I watch him get into his truck. When he opens the door to his pick-up, he waves and says, “You’re alright, Bree.” I waive back and say, “So are you,” really uncertain as to whether I mean it. I look down at my watch. It is almost noon; I’m thinking



about trying to accomplish something on *The List* in the afternoon as I walk back into the school.

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