

Paying the Price:

The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War

A Study by the Institute for Policy Studies and
Foreign Policy In Focus

By Phyllis Bennis
and the IPS Iraq Task Force:

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*The first comprehensive accounting of the costs of the war on the
United States, Iraq, and the World*

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Full report with citations available at:
<http://www.ips-dc.org/iraq/costsofwar/>

KEY FINDINGS

I. Costs to the United States

A. HUMAN COSTS TO THE U.S. AND ALLIES

U.S. Military Deaths: Between the start of war on March 19, 2003 and June 16, 2004, 952 coalition forces were killed, including 836 U.S. military. Of the total, 694 were killed after President Bush declared the end of combat operations on May 1, 2003. Over 5,134 U.S. troops have been wounded since the war began, including 4,593 since May 1, 2003.

Contractor Deaths: Estimates range from 50 to 90 civilian contractors, missionaries, and civilian worker deaths. Of these, 36 were identified as Americans.

Journalist Deaths: Thirty international media workers have been killed in Iraq, including 21 since President Bush declared the end of combat operations. Eight of the dead worked for U.S. companies.

B. SECURITY COSTS

Terrorist Recruitment and Action: According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, al Qaeda's membership is now at 18,000, with 1,000 active in Iraq. A former CIA analyst and State Department official has documented 390 deaths and 1,892 injuries due to terrorist attacks in 2003. In addition, there were 98 suicide attacks around the world in 2003, more than any year in contemporary history.

Low U.S. Credibility: Polls reveal that the war has damaged the U.S. government's standing and credibility in the world. Surveys in eight European and Arab countries demonstrated broad public agreement that the war has hurt, rather than helped, the war on terrorism. At home, 54 percent of Americans polled by the Annenberg Election Survey felt that the "the situation in Iraq was not worth going to war over."

Military Mistakes: A number of former military officials have criticized the war, including retired Marine General Anthony Zinni, who has charged that by manufacturing a false rationale for war, abandoning traditional allies, propping up and trusting Iraqi exiles, and failing to plan for post-war Iraq, the Bush Administration made the United States less secure.

Low Troop Morale and Lack of Equipment: A March 2004 army survey found 52 percent of soldiers reporting low morale, and three-fourths reporting they were poorly led by their officers. Lack of equipment has been an ongoing problem. The Army did not fully equip soldiers with bullet-proof vests until June 2004, forcing many families to purchase them out of their own pockets.

Loss of First Responders: National Guard troops make up almost one-third of the U.S. Army troops now in Iraq. Their deployment puts a particularly heavy burden on their home communities because many are “first responders,” including police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel. For example, 44 percent of the country’s police forces have lost officers to Iraq. In some states, the absence of so many Guard troops has raised concerns about the ability to handle natural disasters.

Use of Private Contractors: An estimated 20,000 private contractors are carrying out work in Iraq traditionally done by the military, despite the fact that they often lack sufficient training and are not accountable to the same guidelines and reviews as military personnel.

C. ECONOMIC COSTS

The Bill So Far: Congress has already approved of \$126.1 billion for Iraq and an additional \$25 billion is heading towards Congressional approval, for a total of \$151.1 billion through this year. Congressional leaders have promised an additional supplemental appropriation after the election.

Long-term Impact on U.S. Economy: Economist Doug Henwood has estimated that the war bill will add up to an average of at least \$3,415 for every U.S. household. Another economist, James Galbraith of the University of Texas, predicts that while war spending may boost the economy initially, over the long term it is likely to bring a decade of economic troubles, including an expanded trade deficit and high inflation.

Oil Prices: Gas prices topped \$2 a gallon in May 2004, a development that most analysts attribute at least in part to the deteriorating situation in Iraq. According to a mid-May CBS survey, 85 percent of Americans said they had been affected measurably by higher gas prices. According to one estimate, if crude oil prices stay around \$40 a barrel for a year, U.S. gross domestic product will decline by more than \$50 billion.

Economic Impact on Military Families: Since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 364,000 reserve troops and National Guard soldiers have been called for military service, serving tours of duty that often last 20 months. Studies show that between 30 and 40 percent of reservists and National Guard members earn a lower salary when they leave civilian employment for military deployment. Army Emergency Relief has reported that requests from military families for food stamps and subsidized meals increased “several hundred percent” between 2002 and 2003.

D. SOCIAL COSTS

U.S. Budget and Social Programs: The Bush administration’s combination of massive spending on the war and tax cuts for the wealthy means less money for social spending. The \$151.1 billion expenditure for the war through this year could have paid for: close to 23 million housing vouchers; health care for over 27 million uninsured Americans; salaries for nearly 3 million elementary school teachers; 678,200 new fire engines; over 20 million Head Start slots for children; or health care coverage for 82 million children. Instead, the administration’s FY 2005 budget request proposes deep cuts in critical domestic programs and virtually freezes funding for domestic discretionary programs other than homeland security. Federal spending cuts will deepen the existing \$40 billion shortfall in states budgets by an additional \$6 billion through cuts in federal grants for all state and local programs other than Medicaid.

Social Costs to the Military: Thus far, the Army has extended the tours of duty of 20,000 soldiers. These extensions have been particularly difficult for reservists, many of whom never expected to face such long separations from their jobs and families. According to military policy, reservists are not supposed to be on assignment for more than 12 months every 5-6 years. To date, the average tour of duty for all soldiers in Iraq has been 320 days. A recent Army survey revealed that more than half of soldiers said they would not re-enlist.

Costs to Veteran Health Care: About 64 percent of the more than 5,000 U.S. soldiers injured in Iraq received wounds that prevented them from returning to duty. One trend has been an increase in amputees, the result of improved body armor that protects vital organs but not extremities. As in previous wars, many soldiers are likely to have received ailments that will not be detected for years to come. The Veterans Administration healthcare system is not prepared for the swelling number of claims. In May, the House of Representatives approved funding for FY 2005 that is \$2.6 billion less than needed, according to veterans’ groups.

Mental Health Costs: A December 2003 Army report was sharply critical of the military’s handling of mental health issues. It found that more than 15 percent of soldiers in Iraq screened positive for traumatic stress, 7.3 percent for anxiety, and 6.9

percent for depression. The suicide rate among soldiers increased from an eight-year average of 11.9 per 100,000 to 15.6 per 100,000 in 2003. Almost half of soldiers surveyed reported not knowing how to obtain mental health services.

II. Costs to Iraq

A. HUMAN COSTS

Iraqi Deaths and Injuries: As of June 16, 2004, between 9,436 and 11,317 Iraqi civilians have been killed as a result of the U.S. invasion and ensuing occupation, while an estimated 40,000 Iraqis have been injured. During “major combat” operations, between 4,895 and 6,370 Iraqi soldiers and insurgents were killed.

Effects of Depleted Uranium: The health impacts of the use of depleted uranium weaponry in Iraq are yet to be known. The Pentagon estimates that U.S. and British forces used 1,100 to 2,200 tons of weaponry made from the toxic and radioactive metal during the March 2003 bombing campaign. Many scientists blame the far smaller amount of DU weapons used in the Persian Gulf War for illnesses among U.S. soldiers, as well as a sevenfold increase in child birth defects in Basra in southern Iraq.

B. SECURITY COSTS

Rise in Crime: Murder, rape, and kidnapping have skyrocketed since March 2003, forcing Iraqi children to stay home from school and women to stay off the streets at night. Violent deaths rose from an average of 14 per month in 2002 to 357 per month in 2003.

Psychological Impact: Living under occupation without the most basic security has devastated the Iraqi population. A poll by the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority in May 2004 found that 80 percent of Iraqis say they have “no confidence” in either the U.S. civilian authorities or in the coalition forces, and 55 percent would feel safer if U.S. and other foreign troops left the country immediately.

C. ECONOMIC COSTS

Unemployment: Iraqi joblessness doubled from 30 percent before the war to 60 percent in the summer of 2003. While the Bush administration now claims that unemployment has dropped, only 1 percent of Iraq’s workforce of 7 million is involved in reconstruction projects.

Corporate War Profiteering: Most of Iraq’s reconstruction has been contracted out to U.S. companies, rather than experienced Iraqi firms. Top contractor Halliburton is being investigated for charging \$160 million for meals that were never served to troops and \$61 million in cost overruns on fuel deliveries. Halliburton employees also

took \$6 million in kickbacks from subcontractors, while other employees have reported extensive waste, including the abandonment of \$85,000 trucks because they had flat tires.

Iraq's Oil Economy: Anti-occupation violence has prevented Iraq from capitalizing on its oil assets. There have been an estimated 130 attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure. In 2003, Iraq's oil production dropped to 1.33 million barrels per day, down from 2.04 million in 2002.

D. SOCIAL COSTS

Health Infrastructure: After more than a decade of crippling sanctions, Iraq's health facilities were further damaged during the war and post-invasion looting. Iraq's hospitals continue to suffer from lack of supplies and an overwhelming number of patients.

Education: UNICEF estimates that more than 200 schools were destroyed in the conflict and thousands more were looted in the chaos following the fall of Saddam Hussein. Largely because of security concerns, school attendance in April 2004 was well below pre-war levels.

Environment: The U.S.-led attack damaged water and sewage systems and the country's fragile desert ecosystem. It also resulted in oil well fires that spewed smoke across the country and left unexploded ordnance that continues to endanger the Iraqi people and environment. Mines and unexploded ordnance cause an estimated 20 casualties per month.

E. HUMAN RIGHTS COSTS

Even with Saddam Hussein overthrown, Iraqis continue to face human rights violations from occupying forces. In addition to the widely publicized humiliation and abuse of prisoners, the U.S. military is investigating the deaths of 34 detainees as a result of interrogation techniques.

F. SOVEREIGNTY COSTS

Despite the proclaimed "transfer of sovereignty" to Iraq, the country will continue to be occupied by U.S. and coalition troops and have severely limited political and economic independence. The interim government will not have the authority to reverse the nearly 100 orders by CPA head Paul Bremer that, among other things, allow for the privatization of Iraq's state-owned enterprises and prohibit preferences for domestic firms in reconstruction.

III. Costs to the World

A. HUMAN COSTS

While Americans make up the vast majority of military and contractor personnel in Iraq, other U.S.-allied “coalition” troops have suffered 116 war casualties in Iraq. In addition, the focus on Iraq has diverted international resources and attention away from humanitarian crises such as in Sudan.

B. DISABLING INTERNATIONAL LAW

The unilateral U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq violated the United Nations Charter, setting a dangerous precedent for other countries to seize any opportunity to respond militarily to claimed threats, whether real or contrived, that must be “pre-empted.” The U.S. military has also violated the Geneva Convention, making it more likely that in the future, other nations will ignore these protections in their treatment of civilian populations and detainees.

C. UNDERMINING THE UNITED NATIONS

At every turn, the Bush Administration has attacked the legitimacy and credibility of the UN, undermining the institution’s capacity to act in the future as the centerpiece of global disarmament and conflict resolution. The recent efforts of the Bush administration to gain UN acceptance of an Iraqi government that was not elected but rather installed by occupying forces undermines the entire notion of national sovereignty as the basis for the UN Charter.

D. ENFORCING COALITIONS

Faced with opposition in the UN Security Council, the U.S. government attempted to create the illusion of multilateral support for the war by pressuring other governments to join a so-called “Coalition of the Willing.” This not only circumvented UN authority, but also undermined democracy in many coalition countries, where public opposition to the war was as high as 90 percent.

E. COSTS TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

The \$151.1 billion spent by the U.S. government on the war could have cut world hunger in half and covered HIV/AIDS medicine, childhood immunization and clean water and sanitation needs of the developing world for more than two years. As a factor in the oil price hike, the war has created concerns of a return to the “stagflation” of the 1970s. Already, the world’s major airlines are expecting an increase in costs of \$1 billion or more per month.

F. UNDERMINING GLOBAL SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

The U.S.-led war and occupation have galvanized international terrorist organizations, placing people not only in Iraq but around the world at greater risk of attack. The State Department's annual report on international terrorism reported that in 2003 there was the highest level of terror-related incidents deemed "significant" than at any time since the U.S. began issuing these figures.

G. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS

U.S.-fired depleted uranium weapons have contributed to pollution of Iraq's land and water, with inevitable spillover effects in other countries. The heavily polluted Tigris River, for example, flows through Iraq, Iran and Kuwait.

H. HUMAN RIGHTS

The Justice Department memo assuring the White House that torture was legal stands in stark violation of the International Convention Against Torture (of which the United States is a signatory). This, combined with the widely publicized mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. intelligence officials, gave new license for torture and mistreatment by governments around the world.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bush administration has declared that on June 30, 2004 the United States will “transfer sovereignty” to Iraq. We are being told that this is a great victory for democracy. And yet, after 15 months of war and occupation in Iraq, and even with public support for the war plummeting, there is still little understanding in the United States about the real costs of the war. For many people, informed debate has been difficult since so much of what they have been told by the Bush administration has turned out to be untrue. Even many former government and military officials from both parties and the various high-level investigating panels, now recognize that the central premises of the Bush administration in launching this war were lies: Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction and Saddam Hussein did not have operational ties to al Qaeda.

This report offers evidence that we have paid a very high price for the war and have become less secure at home and in the world. The destabilization of Iraq since the U.S. invasion has created a terrorist haven that did not previously exist in Iraq, while anti-American sentiment world-wide has sharply increased.

The authors of this report at the Institute for Policy Studies and Foreign Policy In Focus believe that a central precondition to an informed debate over next steps in Iraq is a comprehensive accounting of the costs of this war and occupation—costs that will continue to accrue for the people of the United States, Iraq, and the world long after June 30. Most Americans are somewhat aware of the body count for the United States and its allies, now amounting to 952 dead and 5,134 wounded. Yet, most are not aware that the number of Iraqis killed is more than 10 times the number of Americans who have lost their lives. Most don’t know or haven’t thought about how many children could have obtained health insurance or how many elementary school teachers could have been hired with the \$151 billion spent on the war so far. Most don’t know the enormous financial burden shouldered by the majority of U.S. military families. Most don’t know that the billions spent on the war have expanded an already huge budget deficit that will greatly burden the next generation. Most are barely aware of the legion of other costs—economic, human, environmental and more—born by millions of people in Iraq and around the world.

Conversely, most Iraqis, the people in whose name the Bush administration fought the war on false pretenses, understand the costs of war and occupation for their society. In the latest polls, conducted by U.S. occupation authorities themselves, Iraqis overwhelmingly oppose the continuing occupation. Indeed, the majority of Iraqis now state that the occupation has made them less secure.

Iraq: Paying the Price

This report attempts to look comprehensively at the human, economic, social, security, environmental, and human rights costs of this war and the ensuing occupation. An Iraq Task Force of the Institute for Policy Studies spent several months scouring sources as diverse as professional engineers, economists, non-profits with expertise in Iraq, the United Nations, the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority, and the most accurate journalistic accounts we could find. The accounting of costs for the United States (Chapter 1) was the easiest to gather, although there are conflicting assessments on some aspects, such as the short- and long-term impacts of the war on the U.S. economy. By contrast, in looking at the war's consequences for Iraq (Chapter 2), even such basic facts as how many people have been killed since the fighting began are only partially available, and we try to help the reader by carefully explaining the sources and limitations of the data. Yet, as difficult as it is to get accurate statistics on a country in the midst of war and occupation, a good overall assessment has been possible. The costs to the rest of the world (Chapter 3) was perhaps the most difficult to quantify, as some of the broader consequences are just now emerging. Yet, we think we offer some useful and provocative categories to begin to understand such longer-term costs.

At IPS and FPIF, we were deeply moved on February 15, 2003, when millions of people in over 600 cities around the world demonstrated against the impending war. On that day, in diverse corners of the world, the majority of people spoke with one voice, only to be dismissed on March 20, when the Bush administration launched its war against Iraq. In that sense, democracy at home and around the world suffered a severe blow with the launching of this war.

It is our conviction that democracy is strengthened through informed debate. If this report helps stimulate broader debate and discourse in this country and around the world about the costs and legitimacy of the war and occupation in Iraq, then we will consider this report a success.

The authors

June 24, 2004

I. COSTS TO THE UNITED STATES

A. Human Costs to the U.S. and Allies

U.S. MILITARY DEATHS

Between the start of war on March 19, 2003 and June 16, 2004, 952 coalition forces have been killed, including 836 U.S. military personnel.¹ Of the total, 694 were killed after May 1, 2003, the day President Bush landed on the USS Abraham Lincoln under a banner proclaiming “Mission Accomplished.” Over 5,134 U.S. troops have been wounded, including 4,593 since May 1, 2004.² But the Pentagon has not included the number of injured and ill soldiers sent home who were involved in “non-hostile” events in its public reports. Tallies from each branch of the services bring the number of these injuries to over 11,000, raising the total number of injured and sick soldiers to over 16,000 from Operation Iraqi Freedom.³

CONTRACTOR DEATHS

Neither the Pentagon nor the State Department keeps a tally of private military contractors killed in Iraq, leaving it up to companies to record their losses.⁴ Independent groups have put out estimates that range between 50 to 90 civilian contractors, missionaries, and civilian worker deaths.⁵ These included 36 identified as Americans.⁶

Losses reported by corporations include 30 employees and subcontractors working for Texas-based Kellogg Brown and Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton, the U.S. military’s main logistics contractor in Iraq, and 13 civilians working for San Diego-based Titan Corp, which does translation work for the Army in Iraq.⁷ Private security contractors, who have been thrust into greater combat roles as attacks have increased, have also paid a price including deaths from the firms Blackwater Security Consultants, Steele Foundation, DynCorp, and Global Risk Strategies Limited.⁸

JOURNALIST DEATHS

Iraq is currently the most dangerous place in the world to work as a journalist. The total number of international media workers killed in Iraq is 30, including 8 who worked for U.S. companies. Of the total, 21 have been killed since President Bush formally declared the end of the war in May 2003.⁹ U.S. forces are responsible for at least nine deaths, including employees from the BBC, Reuters, ITN, U.S. ABC network, Arab TV stations al-Arabiya and al-Jazeera and Spanish station Telecinco.¹⁰ In addition, the United States has put journalists in danger by conducting strikes against known media locations. Another level of threat to journalists has come from insurgents who appear to be systematically targeting foreigners, including journalists, and Iraqis who work for them.

The deliberate or inadvertent killing of media workers and/or the destruction of media infrastructure by parties of a conflict are in direct violation of international law. Protocol I of the 1949 Geneva Conventions prohibits parties to an armed conflict from attacking civilian objects, and parties are required to take precautionary measures to prevent and limit civilian casualties in the course of any attack, including the provision of effective advance warning.¹¹ The mistreatment and/or killing of media agents erodes internationally accepted standards for the treatment of journalists in war zones and jeopardizes the future safety of U.S. and international media workers, as well as their capacity to deliver information to the world effectively.

B. Security Costs

The U.S. action in Iraq has failed to stabilize the country, and moreover, has severely damaged America's reputation in the region and around the world.

Retired Marine General Anthony Zinni, former commander of the U.S. Central Command¹²

TERRORIST RECRUITMENT AND ACTION ON THE RISE

The war against Iraq has left U.S. citizens more vulnerable to terrorist attacks at home and abroad. According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the best known and most authoritative source of information on global defense capabilities and trends, the war in Iraq has accelerated recruitment to al Qaeda and made the world less safe. It estimates worldwide al Qaeda membership now at 18,000 with 1,000 active in Iraq. It concludes that the occupation has become the organization's "potent global recruitment pretext," has divided the United States and UK from their allies, and has weakened the war on terrorism.¹³

The State Department issued a report in April 2004 which claimed that international acts of terrorism had actually declined in 2003, but on June 10, 2004, the Department was forced to acknowledge that the report contained statistical mistakes. The original report, entitled "Patterns of Global Terrorism," cited 190 acts of terrorism around the globe in 2003, claiming a decrease from 198 attacks in 2002 and a 45 percent decline in terrorist attacks since the start of Bush's presidency in 2001.¹⁴

On June 23rd, the State Department re-released the report with corrected statistics showing a vastly different picture than officials painted during the first release: 625 terrorism-related deaths, instead of 307; the largest number of terror-related incidents deemed "significant" then at any time since the U.S. began issuing these figures; 3,646 people injured from terrorist-related bombings and shootings, not the originally

reported 1,593; and, a dramatic climb in terror-related incidents reported in the Middle East.¹⁵

The State Department report did acknowledge that “significant incidents,” meaning incidents where victims were killed, injured, or kidnapped, increased from 60 percent of total attacks in 2002 to 84 percent in 2003. It also stated that anti-U.S. attacks around the world increased from 77 in 2002 to 84 in 2003, not including attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq.¹⁸ There were 98 suicide attacks around the world, more than any year in contemporary history.¹⁹ The weight of the evidence strongly suggests that a war portrayed as part of the war on terror has instead fueled anger against the United States and its perceived allies and endangered the lives of innocent people around the world.

LOW U.S. CREDIBILITY THREATENS SECURITY

Credibility in the International Community: Discontent with America and its policies has intensified rather than diminished at home and around the world while perceptions of American unilateralism remain widespread in European and Muslim nations. Surveys in eight European and Arab countries demonstrate broad public agreement that the war in Iraq has hurt, rather than helped, the war on terrorism. This view was held by wide margins—more than 20 percentage points—in every country surveyed (save Great Britain, at 14 percent): France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, Jordan and Morocco.²⁰ The war in Iraq has alienated the United States from many traditional allies just at a time when allies are crucial to U.S. security. The international sympathy for the United States after the September 11 attacks has largely disappeared, while anti-American sentiment has sharply increased and U.S. credibility as a free and fair country has diminished.

A poll conducted by the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority in mid-May 2004 found that 92% of Iraqis surveyed thought of the Coalition Forces as occupiers. Only 2% saw them as “liberators.”

Credibility in Iraq: A poll conducted by the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority from May 14 to May 23, 2004 and released on June 15, 2004 found that 92% of Iraqis surveyed thought of the Coalition Forces as occupiers. Only 2% saw them as “liberators.” The poll also shows that most Iraqis say they would feel safer if Coalition forces left immediately. An overwhelming majority of about 80 percent say they have “no confidence” in either the U.S. civilian forces or the Coalition forces. This poll also shows that 67 percent of Iraqis surveyed believed that violent attacks have increased in Iraq because “people have lost faith in the Coalition forces.”²³

Further, this most recent U.S.-sponsored poll was bad news for the newly appointed Iraqi interim Prime Minister, Iyad Allawi, a former exile once backed by the CIA. The poll, conducted just prior to Allawi being named to the post of Prime Minister, showed that 61 percent of Iraqis said they either strongly oppose or somewhat oppose him. Only 23 percent said they somewhat support or strongly support Allawi.²⁴

Since the release of photographs showing U.S. military police mistreating Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison, President Bush is increasingly being compared to Saddam Hussein in Iraq and in the international online media.²⁵ “From university professors to cab drivers, Iraqis argue they are victims of a Judeo-Christian crusade against the Muslim world,” wrote conservative columnist Arnaud de Borchgrave in May 2004.²⁶

The Bahrain Tribune, a daily newspaper in the oil-rich Persian Gulf emirate, wrote, “Bush seized all Saddam’s properties and inherited everything Saddam had, including his torturing tools and methods.” The Hong Kong-based *Asia Times*: “Once it could not find weapons of mass destruction to justify its invasion of Iraq, the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush claimed that the liberation of Iraqis from the most inhumane rule of a dictator was a good enough reason for taking military action against that country. Now reports of the U.S. military’s abuse of Iraqi prisoners in that notorious prison threaten to deprive the United States of even that wobbly claim.”²⁷ New revelations of legal opinions from the Justice and Defense Departments justifying torture of terrorist suspects has further eroded U.S. standing around the world.

Credibility in the U.S.: A poll conducted in late May 2004 by the Annenberg Election Survey showed declining support among Americans for the war; Bush’s approval rating on Iraq stands at 39 percent and disapproval at 57 percent.²⁸ Some 54 percent believe that “the situation in Iraq was not worth going to war over” while only 40 percent say it was worth it. When asked about the larger war on terror, the Annenberg Election Survey found that Bush has 46 percent approval and 50 percent disapproval.

SECURITY COSTS DUE TO MILITARY MISTAKES AND LOW MORALE

The misjudgments of Paul Bremer and his Pentagon masters, far from steering Iraq towards freedom and democracy, have brought it to just beyond the brink of anarchy.

Financial Times editorial²⁹

Several former U.S. military leaders have been critical of the Bush Administration’s strategy in Iraq. For example, in remarks to a Washington, DC audience in May,

retired Marine General Anthony Zinni, former commander of the U.S. Central Command, outlined Bush administration mistakes that have left the United States at greater security risk today than before the war. These included abandoning the existing policy of containment, manufacturing a false rationale for war, abandoning our traditional allies, propping up and trusting the Iraqi exiles, and failing to plan for post-war Iraq.³⁰

The magnitude of these mistakes, and the dangerous realities on the ground created by them, has led to low troop morale. An army survey found 52 percent of soldiers reporting low morale, and three-fourths reporting their officers poorly led them.³¹

Many military families have complained that U.S. troops lack sufficient protection equipment, including safety gear such as body armor. A mid-October study by the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper found about half the soldiers complaining of insufficient training and equipment.³²

Illustrating poor planning in preparation for war, reports noted that as many as 51,000 American soldiers and civilian contractors in Iraq were not equipped with body armor as late as October 2003—seven months after war started in Iraq.³³ Reservists and newly rotated troops particularly suffered from a lack of gear. Rep. Edward Schrock, R-VA, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a 24-year Navy veteran who served in Vietnam commented, “It’s just unthinkable we would send any units into a war zone not fully equipped. It’s incumbent on this government to provide the reserve units with 100 percent of the same equipment before we send them over there—and obviously they haven’t done that.”³⁴

Despite widespread outrage over the lack of proper equipment, the U.S. military did not announce until June 7, 2004 that all American troops in Iraq were equipped with bullet-resistant vests.³⁵ In the meantime, many families resorted to purchasing armor for family members out of their own pockets, at a cost of \$600-\$1,000 each.

With growing complaints from soldier’s families and the outcry from the American public, Congress has been prodded into action. The Department of Defense Authorization bill for FY 2005 seeks to address the many deficiencies seen in the Pentagon’s pre-war planning, including an additional \$400 million for body armor in and other “force protection” provisions. “There is no excuse for us to send our soldiers into harm’s way without this most basic protection,” said Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY).³⁶

Concerns are now surfacing at the Pentagon that the dangerous conditions on the ground in Iraq, coupled with more frequent and longer combat tours, will drive more

soldiers to leave the Army rather than reenlist, especially if the possibility of being sent back to Iraq is high.³⁷

SECURITY COSTS DUE TO LOSS OF FIRST RESPONDERS

National Guard troops make up almost one-third of the U.S. Army troops now in Iraq, and 81 National Guard members have been killed there.³⁸ Overall, some 135,000 Guard troops have been placed on assignment around the world since September 11, 2001. This spring alone, 35,000 new Guard troops were sent to Iraq. Coming from New York, Louisiana, Idaho and Tennessee, these call-up orders emptied a quarter to a half of each of these states' National Guard troops.³⁹

The deployment of these Guard troops puts a particularly heavy burden on their home communities because many of them serve as so-called "first responders," including police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel. A poll conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum found that 44 percent of police forces across the nation have lost officers as a result of deployment to Iraq. Eighty percent of U.S. law enforcement agencies are staffed with 20 or fewer officers.⁴⁰ Hence, a few officers deployed at the same time can dramatically disrupt a municipality's ability to respond to emergencies.

There are also strong fears about how the absence of so many Guard troops may affect states' ability to handle natural disasters. The problem is not just the shortage of personnel, but also equipment. For example, in Montana, the Guard is seeking commercial helicopters to handle the job of fighting small forest fires. Normally, it would use the Guard's Black Hawk helicopters, which can carry more than twice as much water as commercial helicopters, but these have been withdrawn from use due to a deployment alert. In Mississippi, the unit designated to handle hurricane damage has sent 21 helicopters to Iraq, leaving just five for post-storm rescues and transport of cargo and troops.⁴¹

USE OF PRIVATE CONTRACTORS

An estimated 20,000 private contractors are working in Iraq.⁴² To put this in perspective, at the end of the Persian Gulf War, the ratio of soldiers to contractors was 100:1; in the Iraq War, this ratio has now become 10:1, according to Peter Singer, author of a book on the privatization of military jobs.⁴³ And despite the upcoming June 30 transfer of limited authority to an interim Iraqi government, the numbers are set to rise. Recently, the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority Program Review Board, which controls Iraqi oil money spending, approved more than \$500 million in new funds for private security forces and facilities.⁴⁴

The expanded use of private contractors in Iraq poses a variety of potential costs for the United States. It means that work that has been traditionally carried out by the military, from training the Iraqi army to guarding installations and convoys, is now contracted out to private companies that often lack sufficient training and are not accountable to the same policy guidelines and review systems as military personnel.⁴⁵ The General Accounting Office and the Pentagon’s Inspector General both have found that there is “little or no government oversight over contracts and contracts being granted, renewed, and increased with virtually no inspection of written documents nor work performed.”⁴⁶

The lack of contractor oversight and training not only increases the likelihood that taxpayer money will be misused. It also increases the chances that unaccountable contractors will violate international laws and standards, abusing Iraqis with impunity and further damaging the United States’ reputation and credibility. Responding to the flood of recent criticism following the Abu Ghraib scandal and the May 7 killing of a Halliburton employee, the U.S. government is now requiring security contractors to have a copy of the U.S. government’s guidebook “Rules on the Use of Force.”⁴⁷ There is no evidence, however, that the U.S. military can verify or enforce that contractors read, understand, and comply with the rules.

C. Economic Costs

In 2002, White House Economic Advisor Lawrence Lindsey was fired after predicting that an Iraq war would cost between \$100 and \$200 billion. As it turned out, Lindsey was right on target. Congress has already approved two wartime emergency spending bills totaling \$126.1 billion for Iraq. Now the combination of unanticipated resistance and higher-than-expected troop deployments has led to an administration request for an additional \$25 billion to cover operations through this year. In addition to the \$25 billion, Congress promises another supplemental appropriation after the election. The appropriation of this interim installment of funds, which has already passed in the

Box 1

Breakdown of Economic Costs of War: (in \$billions)

	Military Operations	Reconstruction	Total
April 2003 Emergency Supplemental ⁴⁸	53.3	3.3	56.6
November 2003 Emergency Supplemental ⁴⁹	51.1	18.4	69.5
June 2004 Emergency Supplemental ⁵⁰	25.0	0	25.0
Total			151.1

House, will lay the groundwork for the continued presence of 138,000 troops throughout 2005.

To put these figures in perspective, the monthly cost of the Iraq and Afghan wars now rivals the average monthly cost of the Vietnam War. Operations costs in Iraq are estimated to be between \$4 billion and \$5 billion per month while the average cost of U.S. operations in Vietnam over the eight-year war was \$5.1 billion per month, adjusting for inflation. While fewer troops are in Iraq, the weapons they use are more expensive and they are paid more than their counterparts who served in Vietnam.⁵¹

LONG-TERM IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY

As the occupying power, the United States is obligated under international law to provide for the human needs of the Iraqi people and to pay the immense costs of reconstruction, including the bulk of future U.N. peacekeeping expenses. On the basis of the U.S. military's prediction of a three-year military occupation at \$50 billion per year plus reconstruction costs, author Doug Henwood projects the bill will add up to a low-end average of \$3,415 for every U.S. household.⁵²

University of Texas economist James Galbraith predicts that in the long term, the Iraq war will be "a dagger at the heart of [the] U.S. economy." While war initially tends to boost an economy, he says that the characteristics of this one—go-it-alone, underestimated in terms of costs, losses and challenges and without the requisite tax increases to pay for it—is likely to worsen national external debt and inflation, possibly triggering worldwide commodity shocks. Import consumption, he predicts, will rise, and U.S. trade deficits, which are already staggering, will grow. The war, in short, is likely to contribute to international monetary disorder and a decade of economic troubles.⁵³

OIL PRICES

Gas prices topped \$2 a gallon in May 2004 and crude oil prices are the highest since the 1991 Gulf War. Analysts cite four reasons for the price hike: higher demand around the world, global dependence on fossil fuels, lack of alternative energy options, and the deteriorating situation in Iraq. On May 17, the combination of climbing oil prices and the assassination of the leader of the Iraqi governing council sent stock prices falling around the world. The indexes in Germany, France and Japan approached new lows for the year.⁵⁴

According to a mid-May CBS survey, 85 percent of respondents said they had been affected measurably by higher gas prices, and 56 percent said they had been affected a great deal. The direct effects fall hardest on low-income Americans, who spend a larger share of their paychecks filling their tanks. Everyone feels the indirect effects, as

they work their way through the economy as a whole. According to Mark Zandi of Economy.com, if crude oil prices stay around \$40 a barrel for a year, U.S. gross domestic product will fall by 0.5 percent, or in excess of \$50 billion a year.⁵⁵

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MILITARY FAMILIES

Since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 364,000 reserve troops and National Guard soldiers have been called for military service.⁵⁸ The Pentagon is becoming increasingly dependent on these support soldiers to supplement full-time troops, placing reservists in jobs of both frontline combat and military policing. Thus, reservists are serving long, successive tours in Iraq—each tour often lasting 20 months. For many families remaining back home, this has meant struggling to survive on military salaries that are significantly lower than civilian salaries. Studies show that between 30 and 40 percent of reservists and National Guard members earn a lower salary when they leave civilian employment for military deployment.⁵⁹ Facing the loss of a breadwinner for extended periods, military families are dealing with economic hardships that are leading to unemployment, bankruptcy, hunger, and poor housing conditions.

Sixty percent of reserve soldiers are self-employed or work for small or medium businesses, and these reservists are especially likely to fall victim to the adverse economic effects of military deployment.⁶⁰ Although federal law prohibits discrimination against part-time soldiers, requiring that employers guarantee jobs for their employees once they return from deployment, these laws have been only loosely followed by small companies that are struggling financially. At the moment, Congress offers no tax credit to small businesses that suffer economically when their employees are called for service, often forcing companies to downsize and cut the jobs of the part-time soldiers. Furthermore, some companies are illegally filling the positions of the reservists when they leave for war, causing many reservists to face unemployment when they return from war.⁶¹

As of April 2004, the House of Representatives passed legislation allowing part-time soldiers to prematurely withdraw money from retirement savings without paying the usual 10 percent penalty. However, according to Rep. Tom Lantos, this legislation is insufficient as it does not compensate for the huge gap between military and civilian salaries. Lantos has unsuccessfully pushed for laws requiring federal agencies to pay reservists the difference between their military and civilian pay and offering incentives for state and local governments and private employers to provide the same relief service to reservists.⁶²

As a result of their decreased salaries, more military families have been forced to rely on emergency food support programs. Retired Colonel Dennis Spiegel of the Army

Box 2

The Cost of War in One State: Ohio

Excerpted from the *Columbus Dispatch*⁶⁵

It used to be that war was good for the U.S. economy.

Economists credit World War II, for example, with helping lift the United States out of the Great Depression.

The same boost isn't being felt this time around.

Uncertainty created by the war in Iraq had put a lid on the business spending and pulled the economy down, more than offsetting big increases in war-related government spending.

Ohio's unemployment rate, which was around 5.8 percent late in 2002, jumped to 6.3 when the war began and has remained higher than 6 percent since.

With the recent war in Iraq and the previous Gulf War—relatively short conflicts—there hasn't been enough spending to overcome the negative drags on the economy, said Paul Poast, an Ohio State University senior lecturer who teaches a class on the economics of war.

He also noted that in past wars, civilian production plants had to be converted to military needs. Today, there are established military contractors to handle the demands of war.

One visible effect of the war is represented by the thousand of Ohioans who had to leave their full-time jobs to fulfill their military obligations.

As of [mid-March], more than 6,500 Ohio reservists were on active duty in the military, sometimes leaving employers scrambling to find replacements or to pick up the slack.

"The sacrifice that our soldiers and airmen had to make was great, but the same sacrifice was made by their employers," said James Sims, deputy director of public affairs for the Ohio National Guard.

Emergency Relief reported a "several hundred percent" increase in requests for access to food stamps and subsidized meals between 2002 and 2003. Just in Thurston County, Washington—site of the military base Fort Lewis—more than 250 military families depend on the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program to provide food stamps. In response to the growing demand, hunger associations nationwide have collaborated with the National Guard to provide emergency relief to military families that have never before experienced prolonged periods of low income.⁶³

Military families are also grappling with problems of inadequate housing. Reports have estimated that more than 60 percent of the military housing units on and off military bases in the United States are in need of renovation. However, traditional housing renovation/replacement programs are

estimated to cost \$30 billion and take over 30 years.⁶⁴ Given the budget problems faced by the Bush administration, military housing renovation programs are not a priority of the government. Thus, families of soldiers who are risking their lives in Iraq continue to live in substandard living conditions.

D. Social Costs

WAR SPENDING IMPACT ON U.S. BUDGET AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

The Bush administration's combination of massive spending on the war and tax cuts for the wealthy means less money for social spending. The administration's FY 2005 budget request proposes deep cuts in critical domestic programs. It also virtually freezes funding for domestic discretionary programs other than homeland security. Among the programs the Bush Administration seeks to eliminate: grants for low-income schools and family literacy; Community Development Block Grants; Rural Housing and Economic Development; and Arts in Education grants.⁶⁶ In addition, if the proposal is passed as written, across-the-board cuts to domestic discretionary programs would remain in place through FY 2009.⁶⁷

While some in Congress are moving to block some of these cuts, officials who oversee federal education, veterans, healthcare, and other programs have been warned by the Bush White House to prepare for cuts in FY 2006 if the administration remains in office.⁶⁸ According to preliminary White House plans for 2006, defense and foreign aid spending, due in part to the war in Iraq and the "war on terrorism," will grow while remaining discretionary funds for domestic programs would drop by 0.7 percent from \$368.7 billion in 2005 to \$366.3 billion in 2006.⁶⁹ Indeed, a leaked memo from the White House to domestic agencies outlines major cuts following the election, including funding for education, Head Start, home ownership, job training, medical research and homeland security—all programs the President has been touting during the campaign.⁷⁰

The administration's budget priorities have privileged a war of choice over essential human needs at home. More than half of all U.S. jobs pay below the level necessary for self sufficiency.⁷¹ While job growth has improved somewhat in recent months, U.S. workers are still suffering from the loss of millions of high-paying manufacturing jobs. The average age of a homeless person in the United States is 9 years old.⁷² Today, a worker making minimum wage cannot afford housing at fair market rent any where in the United States.⁷³ The jobless situation has depressed wage growth, caused real wages to fall for some, thus eroding living standards for many working families.⁷⁴ Every 46 seconds a child in the United States is born into poverty. Every minute a child in the United States is born without health insurance.⁷⁵ The Bush vow to "leave no child behind" in education remains underfunded by at least \$14.1 billion, with the new budget threatening to reduce funding by an additional \$9.4 billion.⁷⁶

The \$126 billion already appropriated and the \$25 billion pending for the the war in Iraq could have purchased any of the following desperately needed services in our country:

- close to 23 million housing vouchers;
- health care for over 27 million uninsured Americans;
- nearly 3 million new elementary school teachers;
- 678,200 new fire engines;
- over 20 million Head Start slots for children;
- health care coverage for 82 million children.⁷⁷

The National Priorities Project, a non-partisan research institution, has compared the approximately \$150 billion appropriated for Iraq for FY 2003-2005 to expenditure levels of important domestic programs over the same time period. For example, the war expenditures dwarf the \$8.8 billion allotted for Environmental Protection Agency programs for state and local governments, the \$21.7 billion for federal job training and employment, and the \$13 billion for Community Development Block Grants, which fund affordable housing and economic opportunity programs for low income and poor people.⁷⁸

Further, state governments are saddled with costs and lost revenues totalling \$175 billion over fiscal years 2002 through 2005, and are trying to cope with the federal budget cuts to necessary programs.⁷⁹ The more than \$150 billion in war costs could provide desperately needed relief to citizens teetering on the edge of survival at home. Under the Bush administration's FY 2005 budget proposal states will be hit with a \$6 billion shortfall in federal grants to all state and local programs other than Medicaid.⁸⁰

Another long-term cost for the United States will result from the diversion of research support away from social needs to the military. According to the House Committee on Science, Democratic Caucus, nearly all of the 4.7 percent increase in R&D spending contained in the administration's FY 2005 budget request would go to only two departments: Defense and Homeland Security. The rest of the R&D budget, funding advances in such fields as health care and new clean energy sources to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, will actually shrink.⁸¹

SOCIAL COSTS TO THE MILITARY

The overwhelming power of the U.S. military toppled the Saddam Hussein regime in record time. The ensuing insurgency and prolonged occupation has, on the other hand, put severe strains on the force.

Without a draft to boost personnel levels, U.S. military personnel have had to spend far more time enduring the highly dangerous and rigorous conditions of Iraq than was expected. To date, the average tour of duty in Iraq has been 320 days, compared, for example, to only 156 days during the Persian Gulf War.⁸² According

to military policy, reservists are not supposed to be on assignment for more than 12 months every 5-6 years. Instead, the Army has made frequent use of “stop-loss” orders, which allow them to extend the stay of all soldiers after their formal contracts expire without consent. Thus far, the tours of 20,000 troops have been extended and 3,500 troops from South Korea are being added to that roll. In early June 2004, the Army extended the possibility of extended tours to all soldiers who are deployed in the future.⁸³

The extended tours of duty create potential costs both in terms of the mental well-being of the troops and also the U.S. military’s ability to recruit and retain personnel. A recent survey conducted by the Army found that over 50 percent of soldiers described morale as low; an equal number said they would not re-enlist.⁸⁴ A March 2004 report/poll produced by the *Washington Post*/Harvard University/Kaiser Foundation found that 50 percent of Army spouses foresee “major retention problems” in the near future and an additional 25 percent felt there would be “minor retention problems.”⁸⁵

Michael Duggan, Legislative Director for the American Legion, one of the nation’s largest veterans groups, has expressed concern about the negative impact of these lengthy deployments on soldiers’ mental health, and points out that the effect of stop-loss orders can be particularly difficult for reservists and their families.⁸⁶

Facing potential troop losses, the U.S. Army and National Guard have responded with aggressive recruitment efforts, warning inactive reservists that they will be sent back to Iraq unless they re-enlist in the active reserves or join local guard units. These intimidation efforts, which have been used in much of the country, have been criticized by soldiers who recently returned from Iraq. “It’s devious, it’s deceptive, it’s dishonest, it’s valueless,” said MariAnn Curta, who recently completed a nine-month tour in Iraq. “I can’t believe they’d pull this kind of fast trick on kids who already served.”⁸⁷

COST TO VETERAN HEALTH CARE

Veteran healthcare is a continuing cost of war.

Paralyzed Veterans’ of America Legislative Director Richard Fuller

Though there are many issues and costs for soldiers who return from duty, health-care is at the top of the list. As of June 16, 2004, 5,134 U.S. soldiers have been injured during the course of the war, with about 64 percent of these unable to return to duty and in need of immediate assistance from the Veterans’ Affairs (VA) healthcare sys-

tem.⁸⁸ But as was the case in the Persian Gulf War, many others are likely suffering from undetectable injuries or ailments that will only surface years from now.

As many as 22,000 soldiers from Iraq have already sought care in the VA system. Soldiers aren't guaranteed treatment, however, as some injuries don't qualify. Disability rulings average 171 days and more than 3,000 vets are waiting for their first visit to the doctor. The department lacks a modern computer system, one that can track a new applicant's service record.⁸⁹

Currently, VA healthcare is not prepared for the swelling number of claims from returning soldiers from Iraq. The Bush administration's initial proposal for discretionary veterans' benefits for FY 2005 was \$3.8 billion short of what was needed,

As of June 16, 2004, 5,134 U.S. soldiers have been injured during the course of the war, with about 64 percent of these unable to return to duty and in need of immediate assistance from the Veterans' Affairs healthcare system.

according to leading veterans' organizations. The Congressional budget resolution passed in the House of Representatives in May boosted Bush's Veterans proposal by \$1.2 billion to \$31 billion to fund benefits but a \$2.6 billion funding gap remains.⁹⁰ With 235,000 troops rotating through Iraq, healthcare for these massive numbers will be a growing expense.

Another major cost will be the care for amputees. The lives of many U.S. soldiers have been saved by improvements in body armor covering the chest and abdomen, but these protections do not cover a soldier's extremities. Increases in numbers of amputees are the result. Arriving home, these disabled veterans require extensive rehabilitation. Walter Reed Medical Center alone has treated over 70 amputees, including roughly 15 with multiple-limb amputation. The administration took one proactive step in allotting \$13 million to a recuperation center at Walter Reed Medical Center.⁹¹ Yet the VA Technology Assessment Program notes that a lower limb prosthesis can cost up to \$60,000; given the lack of funding, the high cost of this basic requirement of care is likely to drain resources from the larger task of comprehensive research and rehabilitation for our nation's disabled veterans. Those whose injuries from war qualify them for disability compensation must wait an average of six months to two years to receive compensation. (*see cite 89.*)

When injured soldiers attempt to transition back to civilian life with their new physical disability, they are met with a multitude of obstacles. Testifying before the House Total Force Subcommittee, Corporal Victor Thibeault was particularly concerned about the lack of aides who specialize in easing the transition.⁹² Transitional support, and the lack of it, is a major issue for these veterans.

In addition to direct care, funds are needed to improve the effectiveness of current health screenings. In the fall of 2003, the General Accounting Office reported on the Army and Air Force's compliance with the Defense Department's pre-screening regulations. They found that 38 to 98 percent of personnel records reviewed were missing one or both of the pre- and post-deployment health assessments. The review also found that as many as 36 percent were missing two or more required immunizations.⁹³ Without proper health screening, soldiers may be sent into a war zone with undetected health problems. Further, lapses in health record maintenance virtually guarantee that returning soldiers will face challenges in obtaining swift and effective health care.

MENTAL HEALTH COSTS

Landstuhl Regional Medical Hospital in Germany is the main transfer point and treatment center for medically evacuated U.S. soldiers from Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. The hospital has treated about 12,000 soldiers who have been deployed to the "war on terror," most returning from Iraq.⁹⁴ According to hospital commander Col. Rhonda Cornum, 8-10 percent of soldiers sent to Landstuhl are treated for "psychiatric or behavioral health issues." That number represents only a fraction of the mental toll of the war as it excludes any physically wounded soldiers who might suffer psychological trauma but are classified differently, as well as those whose mental problems are not diagnosed until they return to the United States.

A report issued by the Army in December 2003 faulted the handling of mental health issues for troops and called for the appointment of a "czar" to coordinate services in Iraq and Kuwait. Problems identified in the report, the first ever to assess mental health during combat, included:

- ***Extensive Mental Health Problems:*** Soldiers screened positive for traumatic stress (15.2 percent), anxiety (7.3 percent), and depression (6.9 percent).
- ***Greater Need for Services:*** Almost half of soldiers surveyed reported not knowing how to obtain services. Of those soldiers wanting help, only one-third had received any assistance.
- ***Need to Monitor Soldiers for Suicide:*** There were 23 confirmed suicides among Army troops in Iraq in 2003, a rate of 15.6 per 100,000 soldiers. This number represents an increase from the Army 8-year average of 11.9 per 100,000 soldiers but still less than the U.S. national average of 17.6 for all U.S. males in 2001.⁹⁵

E. Human Rights Costs

The human rights costs to the United States of the Iraq war are inextricably linked to the structural and legal changes following the September 11 attacks. President Bush's declared "war on terror," led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, and expansion of the powers of law enforcement.

Since September 11, government officials, including local police, have used an array of tactics to limit dissent including censorship, surveillance, detention, denial of due process and use of excessive force. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, "Police have beaten and maced protesters in Missouri, spied on law-abiding activists in Colorado and fired on demonstrators in California, and campus police have helped FBI agents to spy on professors and students in Massachusetts."⁹⁶ Attorney General John Ashcroft's Justice Department has further asserted the right to seize protesters' assets and detain and deport immigrants under anti-terrorism statutes rushed through Congress after the attacks.⁹⁷

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO ASSEMBLY AND FREE SPEECH

While political protest surged in the lead up to military action in Iraq, many protest activities were met with increased limits on freedom of speech and assembly in violation of the First Amendment. In the name of terrorism-prevention and public safety, authorities have denied anti-war groups permits to march, positioned permitted demonstrators far from the target of the protest, and denied access to permitted demonstrations through strategically placed barricades and personnel.⁹⁸

The capacity of local, state or federal officials to call upon terrorism-prevention to alter the time, place, and manner of political activity opens the gates for unhindered curtailment of First Amendment protections and the human right to free speech.⁹⁹

In February 2003, the city of New York denied United for Peace and Justice, a coalition of local and national organizations, a permit to march in front of the United Nations, a site with symbolic meaning because of its evolving role in the debate about the looming war. Despite a legal challenge, public outcry, and the routine approval of similarly-sized parades, the city, citing security concerns, denied the group's request to march anywhere in Manhattan, only issuing a permit for a stationary rally several blocks from the UN.¹⁰⁰

After the February 2003 rally, the New York Civil Liberties Union filed suit, claiming the New York City Police Department infringed upon protesters' civil liberties by setting up metal barricades to contain protesters and using excessive force, including charging horses, pepper spray, and unprovoked searches and arrests. Police also denied

protesters access to First Avenue, preventing them from reaching the site of the protest.¹⁰¹

Organizers planning demonstrations in New York to coincide with the August 30 to September 2, 2004 Republican National Convention are facing similar challenges. As of June 17, 2004, New York City had failed to issue a single permit despite applications being submitted a year prior.

To explain the delay police and city officials have cited everything from terrorism to “lawn care” as major reasons for denying a permit to United for Peace and Justice for 250,000 people on the Great Lawn in Central Park.¹⁰² Deputy Police Commissioner Paul Browne said police were concerned “that al-Qaeda may want to use a large political event as a target as they did in Madrid...as a way of infiltrating a political climate and the outcome of the election.”¹⁰³

Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said the city is obligated to ensure protesters can demonstrate. “Of course, there is an overlay of national security concern whenever the president comes to town, and that is always a factor, but national security cannot glibly be invoked to stifle protest,” said Lieberman.¹⁰⁴

The pattern of restricting protesters’ First Amendment rights when the President visits a city extends beyond New York. One class action lawsuit filed claims that the Secret Service set up “free speech zones” in 12 cities when the President came to town. At protests, critics of Bush’s policies have been routinely quarantined out of range of the President and the media,¹⁰⁵ while the general public and even those who are demonstrating in support of the President have been allowed to gather at the site of the President’s appearance, a clear violation of equal protection rights and freedom of speech.¹⁰⁶

Bill Neel, 65, was arrested in Neville Island, PA on Labor Day 2002, for refusing to relocate to a chain linked fence area a third of a mile from the site of Bush’s appearance. At his trial, police Detective John Ianachione testified that the Secret Service instructed local police to confine “people that were there making a statement pretty much against the president and his views.”¹⁰⁷

GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE OF ANTI-WAR ACTIVITY

Just six weeks after the September 11 attacks, Congress passed the “USA PATRIOT Act,” an overnight revision of the nation’s surveillance laws that vastly expanded the government’s authority to spy on its own citizens, while simultaneously

reducing checks and balances on those powers like judicial oversight, public accountability, and the ability to challenge government searches in court.

The federal government has extended the reach of its surveillance goals to the local level. In an October 15, 2002 classified memorandum to local law enforcement officials, the FBI instructed local law enforcement to loosen local rules prohibiting the collection of information about anti-war protesters and to report suspicious activity to local counter-terrorism squads.¹⁰⁸ The memo warned local officials of possible violence at upcoming antiwar demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco but admitted that the FBI had “no information indicating that violent or terrorist activities are planned.”¹⁰⁹ The FBI asked police to watch out for protest tactics, including Internet use, fund-raising activities, and “peaceful techniques (that) can create a climate of disorder.”¹¹⁰

The Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, Washington, DC and other city police departments have been authorized to use a variety of tactics, including keeping files on anti-war protesters, videotape demonstrations, and infiltrate rallies with plainclothes officers.¹¹¹

In February 2003, Judge Charles S. Haight Jr. of New York’s Federal District Court modified a 1971 court order called the Handschu agreement that had restricted the New York Police Department’s ability to conduct surveillance of political groups. Police officials had said they needed greater flexibility in investigating terrorism, and the judge agreed to ease the rules, citing “fundamental changes in the threats to public security.”¹¹²

Beginning with the February 15, 2003 anti-war rally, NYPD started interviewing activists on their group membership, views on the Middle East and the war, and whereabouts on September 11, 2001.¹¹³

After hearing evidence of the way the NYPD was exercising their expanded power in August 2003, Judge Haight criticized police officials for the way demonstrators were interrogated, citing what he called a “display of operational ignorance on the part of the NYPD’s highest officials.”¹¹⁴ However, the Judge did not impose new restrictions on the police in the wake of the interrogations but said that lawyers could return to court and seek to hold the city in contempt if they believed that a violation of the rules also violated an individual’s constitutional rights.¹¹⁵

In response to the Atlanta Police Department’s surveillance of anti-war protesters in 2003, Georgia State House Majority Whip Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta) said, “This use of police resources is highly questionable and can very much have a chilling effect on

people's sense that they can exercise their constitutional rights without appearing in somebody's database...this harkens back to some very dark times in our nation's history."¹¹⁶

The surge of public outcry against federal and local changes to surveillance practices has led to local calls for tighter restrictions of police surveillance powers. As of June 17, 2004, 333 Cities have passed local resolutions against provision of the USA PATRIOT ACT that violate constitutional rights such as free speech and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure.¹¹⁷

The ACLU of Colorado on April 17, 2003 announced the settlement of a landmark lawsuit challenging the Denver Police Department's practice of monitoring and recording the peaceful protest activities of local residents. The Denver police, who for decades had kept files on peaceful critics of government policy with no connection to criminal activity, agreed to end the political spying in what the ACLU called "a First Amendment and civil liberties victory for people in Denver."¹¹⁸

Under this agreement, the collection of intelligence on activists is forbidden without specific evidence of serious criminal activity and it limits dissemination of information from intelligence files and provides for internal safeguards and review.¹¹⁹

Box 3

The Price of War Profiteering

The U.S. government's Iraq reconstruction process has cost both Iraqis and Americans. Instead of boosting Iraqi self-determination by granting contracts to experienced Iraqi businesses, the U.S. government has favored U.S. firms with strong political ties. Major contracts worth billions of dollars have been awarded with limited or no competition. Employees of the U.S. contractors have been lightning rods for terrorist attacks. As a result, USAID reports that 20-25 percent of funding for Iraq redevelopment projects is now being siphoned off to pay for the costs of security.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, U.S. auditors and the media have documented numerous cases of fraud, waste, and incompetence. The most egregious problems are attributed to Halliburton, Vice President Richard Cheney's former firm and the largest recipient of Iraq-related contracts.

Halliburton Chronology

Based on research by the Center for Corporate Policy (www.corporatepolicy.org)

2002: *Halliburton 2002 Annual Report:* "We expect growth opportunities to exist for additional security and defense support to government agencies in the United States and other countries. Demand for these services is expected to grow as a result of the armed conflict in the Middle East."

11/15/2002: Long before the start of the war, the Office of the Secretary of Defense awarded a classified \$1.8 million task order to Halliburton for Iraqi oil field planning.¹²¹

3/24/2003: The Pentagon announced that a contract had been awarded on March 8 to Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) to extinguish oil fires and evaluate and repair Iraq's petroleum infrastructure. The no-bid, "cost-plus" contract was estimated to cost up to \$7 billion over 2 years, with profits of up to 7 percent.¹²² The administration argued that only KBR could begin implementing the plan on extremely short notice, but CBS News later reported that other qualified companies had attempted to bid on the contract but were shut out of the process.¹²³

4/22/2003: Reports reveal that KBR did not actually extinguish Iraqi oil well fires during the war, per the March 8 Defense Department contract, but instead subcontracted the work to two other U.S. firms, Boots & Coots International Well Control and Wild Well Control.¹²⁴

10/2003: A Pentagon inspection report documents unsanitary conditions at mess halls and kitchens run by Halliburton in Iraq. The report complains that Halliburton had been ordered to fix these conditions but had failed to do so.¹²⁵

12/10/2003: Army Corps documents show that Halliburton charged \$2.64 a gallon for fuel it imported from Kuwait—more than twice the cost of fuel imported from Kuwait by the Iraqi state oil company and the Pentagon's Defense Energy Support Center. The over-charge by Halliburton's Kuwaiti subcontractor, Altanmia, amounted to approximately \$61 million.¹²⁶

Box 3 cont'd.

- 12/19/2003:** Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers, cleared KBR of wrongdoing in the Kuwait fuel delivery contract in a ruling technically known as a “waiver” because it lifted a requirement that Halliburton provide data justifying its pricing.¹²⁷ Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) called the Flowers ruling “incomprehensible” and said “it appears the administration is deliberately sabotaging the government’s ability to audit Halliburton.”¹²⁸
- 1/13/2004:** A Defense Contract Audit Agency memo to the Army Corps of Engineers labeled as “inadequate” KBR’s system for estimating the cost of ongoing work in order to justify payments.¹²⁹
- 1/15/2004:** The Defense Department’s top auditor asked the Pentagon to open a formal investigation into whether Halliburton overcharged for fuel deliveries into Iraq.¹³⁰
- 1/19/2004:** Despite the widening probe into Halliburton by Defense Department auditors, the Army Corps of Engineers awarded the company a competitively bid contract valued at \$1.2 billion to continue to rebuild damaged oil infrastructure in Southern Iraq (this replaced Halliburton’s previous oil infrastructure contract).¹³¹
- 1/23/04:** Halliburton revealed to the Pentagon that two of its employees took kickbacks valued at \$6 million in return for awarding a Kuwaiti company lucrative work supplying U.S. troops in Iraq.¹³²
- 2/2/2004:** It was revealed that KBR over-charged \$16 million for meals served to troops in Iraq at Camp Arifijan, a large U.S. military base in Kuwait. KBR’s Saudi sub-contractor, Tamimi Global, billed for 42,000 meals per day in July but served only 14,000 meals per day.¹³³
- 2/4/2004:** Halliburton notified the Department of Defense that it had over-billed by an additional \$11.4 million in 2003 at four other dining sites in the region, for a total of nearly \$28 million.¹³⁴
- 2/13/04:** The General Accounting Office, in a briefing to investigators of the House Government Reform Committee, said that Halliburton had claimed it would cost \$2.7 billion to provide food and other logistics services to U.S. troops, but lopped \$700 million off the estimate, without explanation, after questioning by the Defense Department.¹³⁵
- 5/16/04:** Pentagon auditors announced that they were recommending the withholding of nearly \$160 million in reimbursements for meals that Halliburton had charged the government but never served.¹³⁶
- 6/14/04:** The General Accounting Office issued a report charging that the Pentagon had violated procurement laws by issuing the Nov. 2002 task order to Halliburton to develop plans for Iraqi oil. This task order had paved the way for Halliburton to receive the \$7 billion, no-bid contract to extinguish oil fires and rebuild Iraq’s oil infrastructure.
- 6/14/04:** Four former Halliburton employees issued statements charging that the company had routinely wasted money. They claimed, for example, that the company had paid \$45 each for cases of Coke and \$100 per bag of laundry, while instructing personnel to abandon nearly new \$85,000 trucks in the desert when they got flat tires and to overstate hours worked in company timecards.¹³⁷

II. COSTS TO IRAQ

Iraq and Iraqis have paid by far the highest price for the U.S. war and occupation. With the collapse of earlier justifications regarding non-existent weapons of mass destruction and non-existent operational ties between Iraq and al Qaeda, the Bush administration turned to “democracy for Iraq” to justify the war. The image we were presented with was one of happy Iraqis welcoming U.S. troops with rice and flowers and immediately going back to work to rebuild their new, democratic, free-market country.

Reality was very different. While the removal of the brutal dictator Saddam Hussein was no doubt a welcome development for many Iraqis, the costs of the war have been extremely high and are likely to continue. Tens of thousands of Iraqis are dead or grievously injured. The streets of Baghdad and other cities remain dangerous war zones. Clean water, electricity, and even gasoline in this oil-rich country are all in even shorter supply than during the dark years of economic sanctions. Women face new restrictions and new dangers. Thousands of Iraqis have been and remain imprisoned, often mistreated or even tortured, in U.S.-controlled jails. Democracy, freedom, and human rights appear out of reach. And Iraq remains occupied by 150,000 foreign troops, with all of the indignity that military occupation brings. Iraqis are indeed paying a high price.

A. Human Costs

IRAQI CIVILIAN DEATHS

The U.S. military refuses to monitor or even estimate the number of Iraqi civilian casualties. As Gen. Tommy Franks described the Pentagon’s approach earlier in Afghanistan, “we don’t do body counts.”¹³⁸ Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the U.S. military’s deputy director of operations, said U.S. forces do not have the capacity to track Iraqi civilian casualties.¹³⁹ Iraq Body Count, a group of academics and researchers, has compiled a comprehensive account of civilian casualties during the war. IBC researchers have determined that as of June 16, 2004, somewhere between 9,436 and 11,317 civilians have been killed as a direct result of the U.S. invasion and ensuing occupation of Iraq.¹⁴⁰

IRAQI CIVILIANS WOUNDED

Historically, the number of wounded in war is about three times as many killed, suggesting that roughly 35,000 Iraqis may have been wounded as of June 2004. However, Iraq’s hospitals and health system have been understaffed and overwhelmed throughout the war, meaning that the actual number could be even higher. Medact,

an organization dedicated to alleviating the health effects of war, estimates that at least 40,000 Iraqis have been injured.¹⁴¹

IRAQI INSURGENTS KILLED

During “major combat” operations, between 4,895 and 6,370 Iraqi soldiers and insurgents were killed.¹⁴² The nature of the fighting has made it difficult to distinguish civilians from fighters. The Pentagon provides day-to-day estimates of insurgent deaths, but Iraqis on the ground claim that occupying forces unfairly categorize civilians as insurgents. For example, during the spring 2004 siege of Fallujah, over 600 Iraqis were killed. Rahul Mahajan, a journalist reporting from Fallujah during that period, estimated that the dead included 100 children and 200 women.¹⁴³ However, the U.S. commander of the operation, without visiting any hospitals or cemeteries, insisted that of the 600 killed, “95 percent of those were military age males.”¹⁴⁴

EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM

For over a decade, the U.S. military has coated its armor-piercing missiles in depleted uranium (DU), a toxic and radioactive metal. Many scientists and observers attribute the mysterious Gulf War Syndrome among U.S. soldiers and the rapid increase of cancer in southern Iraq to the use of DU.¹⁴⁵ For example, the number of serious child birth defects in Basra has increased sevenfold since 1991.¹⁴⁶ The Pentagon estimates that U.S. and British forces used 1,100 to 2,200 tons of weaponry made from DU during the March 2003 bombing campaign, far more than the roughly 375 tons dropped during the 1991 Gulf War.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, whereas during the first Gulf War much of the DU was dropped on desert battlefields, in 2003 the vast majority of the toxic weapons were deployed in heavily populated urban areas such as Baghdad.¹⁴⁸

B. Security Costs

THE RISE IN VIOLENCE AND CRIME

Occupying forces are obligated under international law to provide for the basic needs, including security, for the civilian population under occupation. However, U.S. troops have either neglected or failed to meet this responsibility. U.S. troops have failed to protect Iraqis from the escalation of violent crime that has plagued Iraq since the U.S. invasion. Criminal acts such as murder, rape, and kidnapping have skyrocketed since March 2003, forcing children to stay home from school and women to stay off the streets at night.¹⁴⁹ Although comprehensive crime statistics are not available, Baghdad’s central morgue documented a dramatic increase in gunshot deaths from ten in July 2002 to 470 in July 2003, an indicator of Iraq’s new lawlessness.¹⁵⁰ During the first year of occupation, there were over 4,279 violent deaths in Baghdad, averag-

ing 357 violent deaths each month, not counting victims of car bombs or military. By contrast, the 2002 average was only 14 each month.¹⁵¹

FAILURE TO TRAIN IRAQI POLICE AND ARMY

Although the CPA has recruited roughly 200,000 Iraqi army, police and civil defense troops, they have largely failed to provide security for the Iraqi people. Many Iraqi police have refused to work with coalition forces, citing a lack of preparation, equipment, and respect from U.S. troops. Many police officers claim that U.S. troops are unwilling to cooperate with Iraqis in fighting crime.¹⁵² Even U.S. Major General Paul D. Eaton, formerly in charge of training Iraqi police and military forces, admitted to the Associated Press that efforts to develop effective leadership within Iraqi security forces “hasn’t gone well. We’ve had almost one year of no progress.”¹⁵³

SMUGGLING

In addition to an increase in violent crime, the UN Office on Crime and Drugs has documented an increase in smuggling. The UN agency has reported that smugglers are taking advantage of pre-war networks that the government of Saddam Hussein used to profit from and circumvent the UN-imposed oil embargo and are now being used to steal and smuggle oil and copper throughout the country.¹⁵⁴ The report also noted that given Iraq’s “porous borders, geographical location,—situated near one of the major drug routes for the smuggling of opiates from Afghanistan,—and an established tradition of smuggling, a strong possibility of an increase in drug trafficking [throughout Iraq] exists.”¹⁵⁵

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Living under an occupation force that employs indiscriminate tactics against insurgents but fails to provide the most basic security has devastated the Iraqi population. The slow pace of reconstruction combined with the denial of democracy has created an environment conducive to extremism.¹⁵⁶ While most Iraqis rejoiced in the ouster of the repressive regime, the celebration quickly turned to anger at the U.S. occupation. A poll conducted by the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in May 2004 found that 80 percent of Iraqis say they have “no confidence” in either the U.S. civilian authorities or in the coalition forces. The poll also indicated that 55 percent of Iraqis would feel safer if U.S. and other foreign troops left the country immediately.¹⁵⁷

C. Economic Costs

UNEMPLOYMENT

By the summer of 2003, the unemployment rate in Iraq had doubled, from 30 percent before the war to 60 percent.¹⁵⁸ This rapid increase in unemployment was

largely the result of the CPA's decision to disband Iraq's military and dismantle much of Iraq's state bureaucracy in the guise of a "de-Ba'athification" campaign. The CPA's own Labor Ministry estimated that the Ba'athist purge combined with the army demobilization put 750,000 people out of work.¹⁵⁹ In the words of one U.S. Army officer, high levels of unemployment fueled the insurgency by putting "too many angry young men, with no hope for the future, on the street."¹⁶⁰ The CPA has tried

The CPA's own Labor Ministry estimated that the Ba'athist purge combined with the army demobilization put 750,000 people out of work.

to respond to this by involving Iraqis in reconstruction and they now claim that unemployment is down to 25-30 percent. However, these figures have been widely disputed, particularly since the Bush administration concedes that less than one percent of Iraq's workforce of seven million is currently involved in the reconstruction process.¹⁶¹

CORPORATE WAR PROFITEERING

Most of Iraq's reconstruction has been contracted out to American companies, rather than Iraqi or regional companies. Several of these companies, such as Halliburton and Bechtel, have close ties to officials within the Bush administration.¹⁶² More importantly, the work that has been done has been substandard, extremely expensive, and has proceeded far too slowly. For example, Bechtel's work on schools in Iraq was described in a leaked Army report as, "Lousy paint job. Major clean-up work required. Bathrooms in poor condition." Inspections of facilities found that school bathrooms in supposedly "repaired" schools were overflowing with sewage.¹⁶³

The recipient of the largest U.S. contracts, Halliburton, has provided particularly sluggish, uncoordinated, and over-priced services in Iraq.¹⁶⁴ (see Box 3, pp. 22-23.) Congressional committees such as the House Government Reform Committee have discovered that many of the companies responsible for oversight of Iraqi reconstruction contracts had direct business ties and conflicts of interest with the companies they were meant to be overseeing.¹⁶⁵ Besides wasting U.S. taxpayer funds, such practices have had a deleterious impact on Iraq's economy, preventing local involvement in reconstruction and keeping unemployment high.

IRAQ'S OIL ECONOMY

Iraq's oil-based economy, already seriously eroded as a result of U.S.-imposed sanctions, continues to suffer under the occupation. Although Iraq possesses the second-largest oil reserves in the world, the ongoing anti-occupation violence has prevented Iraq from capitalizing on its oil assets. During the past seven months, there have been an estimated 130 attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure, including a particularly damag-

ing attack on June 14, 2004 in the run-up to the so-called “transfer of sovereignty.”¹⁶⁶ In 2003, Iraq’s oil production dropped to 1.33 million barrels per day, down from 2.04 million one year earlier, before the U.S. invasion.¹⁶⁷ By June 2004, oil production still had not reached pre-war levels.¹⁶⁸

D. Social Costs

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Thirty years ago the Iraqi health system was considered the finest in the Middle East. Wars and over a decade of sanctions put the health sector in shambles. Making matters worse, many hospitals lost critical equipment during 2003 post-invasion looting.¹⁶⁹ Although the war led to the lifting of the sanctions which permitted imports of medical equipment and medicines, Iraq’s hospitals continue to suffer from lack of supplies and an overwhelming number of patients.¹⁷⁰ There are shortages in basic items like cough syrup and also in critical items such as diabetes medications, anti-cancer drugs, intravenous lines, tuberculosis test kits and ventilators.¹⁷¹

After the U.S. invasion in the summer of 2003, some sixty percent of Iraqis were reliant on government handouts for food.¹⁷³ Soon after the United States declared an end to combat operations on May 1, 2003, a nutritional assessment carried out by UNICEF in Baghdad found that acute malnutrition or wasting, measured by a child’s weight for height, had nearly doubled from four percent a year ago before the war, to almost eight percent.¹⁷⁴

EDUCATION

Similar to other sectors of Iraq, the Iraqi education system has languished over the past 20 years. According to statistics from the Iraqi Ministry of Education, 64 percent of school buildings required maintenance and rehabilitation before the war even began. During and after the latest war, more than 3,000 schools were looted, destroyed or burned in southern and central Iraq and 60 in Baghdad suffered bomb damage.¹⁷⁵ The Ministry estimates that it will take about 4,500 new schools to meet the needs of the current student population. Out of more than 15,000 existing school buildings, 80 percent now require significant reconstruction. More than 1,000 schools need to be demolished and completely rebuilt. Another 4,600 require major repair.¹⁷⁶ The war caused varying degrees of damage and post-war looting resulted in widespread loss of ceiling fans, lighting, furniture, school desks, fences, doors, glass, blackboards, cabinets, electric cables, school radio stations, telephones, refrigerators, air coolers and conditioners.

Before the war, attendance in primary schools was mandatory. UNICEF estimates that close to 90 percent of primary school age children attended school. In May 2003,

primary school attendance was less than half what it was before the U.S. invasion.¹⁷⁷ The upswing in violence in mid-April 2004 forced many schools to close in Baghdad and Fallujah, and parents have been forced to keep their children away from school for fear that they will be killed or kidnapped.¹⁷⁸

ENVIRONMENT

During the war and occupation, water and sewage systems were destroyed, thousands of bombs were dropped leaving unexploded ordnance strewn across the country, the fragile desert ecosystem was damaged by tanks and U.S. temporary military outposts, well fires spewed smoke across the country, and ocean ports were clogged from bombed ships.¹⁷⁹

Since the U.S. occupation began, significant quantities of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) have been encountered, especially in and around heavily targeted areas such as Baghdad and Basra. In March 2004, the Mines Advisory Group, one of the world's leading humanitarian mine clearance organizations, announced that it had cleared more than one million mines and items of UXO in Iraq since the beginning of the war. Even with these efforts, MAG estimates that there are still 20 casualties per month due to mines and UXO.¹⁸⁰

As previously mentioned, the environment in Iraq has also been severely damaged through exposure to depleted uranium, whose residue remains behind when DU-filled weapons are fired, and which has been linked to a range of serious diseases including leukemia and other cancers, birth defects and other problems among Iraqi civilians and GIs during the first Gulf War. (*see note 145*)

ELECTRICITY

PBS' Lehrer News-Hour televised an interview on June 18 with Aiham Alsammara, Minister of Electricity, in the Iraqi interim government. Alsammara noted that Iraqis' access to electricity remains significantly lower than what was available before the war. Total electrical production country-wide is in the range of 4,000 megawatts of power, only two-thirds of the 6,000 megawatts that U.S. occupation authorities promised, and resulting in a "three hours on, one hour off" arrangement for electrical power.

E. Human Rights Costs

While President Bush claimed, "Iraq is free of rape rooms and torture chambers," the photos of Abu Ghraib Prison told the world a different story.¹⁸¹ The International Committee of the Red Cross documented the U.S. military engaging in harsh prisoner interrogation techniques such as "hooding, beating with hard objects...stripp[ing] [prisoners] naked for several days while being held in solitary

confinement...[and] threats...of reprisals against family members...and imminent execution.”¹⁸² Such actions fall within the definition of torture established by the international Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which the United States is a signatory. Torture is defined in the Convention as “an act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person,” for a purpose such as obtaining information or a confession, punishment, intimidation or coercion.

The Red Cross also reported that between 70 percent and 90 percent of inmates at Abu Ghraib were in fact innocent, victims of “lack of supervision of battle groups” who made the arrests.¹⁸³ Other sources, including leaked U.S. military memos, show that the U.S. military is currently investigating the deaths of 34 prisoners who have died as a result of interrogation techniques.¹⁸⁴ “Torture is the only thing you can call this,” says one senior military official.¹⁸⁵ Other reports suggest that the abuse extends beyond Abu Ghraib, revealing overall flaws in the new Iraqi justice system.¹⁸⁶

F. Sovereignty Costs

Despite the claim that on June 30 the United States will “transfer sovereignty” to Iraq, post-transfer Iraq will remain an occupied country. Neither the existence of the interim government nor the new Security Council Resolution 1546 changes the reality of 138,000 U.S. troops and another 20,000 coalition troops occupying the

Box 4

Women’s Human Rights

A July 2003 report from Human Rights Watch states that “women face grave dangers in Baghdad.” With rising instability, women and girls in Baghdad told Human Rights Watch that the insecurity and fear of sexual violence or abduction is keeping them in their homes, out of schools, and away from work and looking for employment. According to HRW, “many of the problems in addressing sexual violence and abduction against women and girls derive from the U.S.-led coalition forces and civilian administration’s failure to provide public security in Baghdad.”¹

According to Houzan Mahmoud, the UK representative of the Organisation of Women’s Freedom in Iraq, “from the start of the occupation, rape, abduction, ‘honour’ killings and domestic violence have become daily occurrences. A lack of security and proper policing have led to chaos and to growing rates of crime against women. Women can no longer go out alone to work, or attend schools or universities. An armed male relative has to guard a woman if she wants to leave the house.”² The International Federation of Journalists has documented that “credible threats have been made against Yanar Mohammed, head of the Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq who publishes the *Al Nisa* magazine and runs the www.equalityiniraq.com website. She has been a leading campaigner through the magazine and website for equality for women. “This colleague has come under attack because she is fighting for basic human rights,” said Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary.³

The inquiry into the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal, launched by the U.S. military in January 2004, headed by Major General Antonio Taguba, documented mistreatment of women held at the prison. Among other references, the report confirmed that a letter describing the abuse of women held there, smuggled out of Abu Ghraib by a woman known only as “Noor,” was accurate. The Taguba investigation also found that guards have videotaped and photographed naked female detainees.⁴ The Bush administration has refused to release photographs of Iraqi women forced at gunpoint to bare their breasts but according to *The Guardian* newspaper, “among the 1,800 digital photographs taken by U.S. guards inside Abu Ghraib there are images of a U.S. military policeman ‘having sex’ with an Iraqi woman.”⁵

¹ Climate of Fear: “Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad,” Human Rights Watch, Vol. 15, No. 7 (E), July 2003.

² “An Empty Sort of Freedom,” Houzan Mahmoud, *Guardian*, March 8, 2004.

³ International Federation of Journalists, “IFJ Calls for Protection After Death Threats to Journalist Campaigning for Women’s Rights in Iraq,” February 23, 2004.

⁴ Taguba Report, May 2004. The report was prepared by Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba on alleged abuse of prisoners by members of the 800th Military Police Brigade at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad. Available at: <http://www.agonist.org/annex/taguba.htm>

⁵ Luke Harding, “The other prisoners,” *Guardian*, May 20, 2004. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1220509,00.html>

country, or the reality of U.S. economic and political control of Iraq's political and economic life.

POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY

The new interim government reflects the continuation of U.S. control over Iraq. It was created through negotiations between the U.S. occupation forces and the original Iraq Governing Council, which was itself selected and put in power by the United States. UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, charged with selecting the members of the Interim Government, acknowledged the U.S. pressures on him that made his job impossible and stated that "Mr. Bremer is the dictator of Iraq. He has the money. He has the signature. Nothing happens without his agreement in this country."¹⁸⁷

UN Resolution 1546 states in Article 1 that the "sovereign Interim Government of Iraq" will assume "full responsibility and authority by June 30, 2004." But Article 1 also adds that the government will have authority only "while refraining from taking any actions affecting Iraq's destiny beyond the limited interim period until an elected Transitional Government of Iraq assumes office"—which, according to article 4(a), will only happen "by 31 December 2005." That means that the interim government will not have the authority to reverse or undo the major decisions imposed on Iraq by the U.S. pro-consul Paul Bremer, including laws privatizing Iraqi resources, restricting press freedom, or allowing foreign corporations to control the reconstruction process.

Resolution 1546 endorses the interim government and turns the U.S. and "coalition" forces into a UN-mandated "multinational force." But it does not change the nature of the occupying forces, nor does it grant the Iraqi interim government the right to veto U.S. military operations. The changes Washington and London negotiated with other Security Council members were aimed at pacifying European opposition, not providing real sovereignty for Iraq.

While the UN Resolution mirrors the Bush Administration's assertions that the transfer of power on June 30 will hand Iraqi sovereignty over to the Iraqi people, plans for continued U.S. presence in Iraq prove otherwise. These plans include maintaining one of the largest U.S. embassies in the world, with nearly 1,000 American staffers supervising the \$18.4 billion reconstruction fund appropriated by Congress.¹⁸⁸ The embassy will be supplemented by U.S. diplomatic offices in four additional regions of Iraq.¹⁸⁹ More seriously, two hundred U.S. and international advisors will also remain as "embedded consultants" with various Iraqi ministries.¹⁹⁰ Militarily, the United States is planning for the long term as they focus on constructing 14 "enduring bases." These are being designed as encampments for the thousands of American troops expected to serve in Iraq for at least the next two years.¹⁹¹

With control over much of the funds for Iraq and effective control over the military situation, these U.S. advisors, while not directly in charge, will likely exert strong influence over the decisions of Iraqi ministers.

ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY

Over the past year and a half, the Bush Administration has broken its obligations as an occupying power under The Hague and Geneva Conventions to provide for basic life necessities without fundamentally altering Iraq's economic laws. CPA head Paul Bremer has passed nearly 100 Orders that, among other things, give U.S. corporations virtual free reign over the Iraqi economy while largely excluding Iraqis from a reconstruction effort which has failed to provide for their basic needs.

The Bremer Orders give preference to U.S. corporations over the development of the Iraqi economy in a variety of ways, including:

- denying Iraq the ability to give preference to Iraqi companies or employees in the reconstruction effort. On a more basic level, state-owned Iraqi companies were actually prohibited from bidding;
- permitting the full privatization of Iraq's state-owned enterprises and 100 percent foreign ownership of Iraqi companies;
- allowing foreign products to flood the Iraqi market which has, in turn, forced local producers out of business;
- preventing restrictions on capital flows; and,
- failing to require that contractors provide services first and receive payment second.¹⁹²

UN Resolution 1546 does not specifically address these Orders, forcing many observers to conclude that they will remain in force and be strengthened by the language quoted from Article 1 above. Additionally, the Resolution reinforces U.S. influence over the Iraqi oil industry. A previous UN resolution (1483) created the "Development Fund for Iraq," (DFI) to administer proceeds from the export sales of Iraq's oil, as well as funds remaining from the UN Oil-for-Food Program and other assets seized from the defunct regime. While the Bush administration was very vocal in the media saying that Iraqi oil belongs to the Iraqi people, the DFI was placed under the control of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Resolution 1483 also called for the creation of an International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), to promote transparency and financial accountability of the DFI. Though billed as "the eyes and ears of the international community," it took near-

ly six months for CPA to set up the IAMB. As of June 2004, no audit has been completed for the nearly \$20 billion in income or the \$11 billion that has been dispersed.¹⁹³

On the surface, UN Resolution 1546 seems to give the Iraqis more control over the oil revenue, stating “the Development Fund for Iraq shall be disbursed solely at the direction of the Government of Iraq.” However, it specifies how funds should be deposited into the Fund, and mandates the extension of the IAMB. Iraqis will take little solace in the fact that they now are afforded one voting member on the IAMB board.¹⁹⁴

Further weakening Iraqi sovereignty over the oil, President Bush signed Executive Order 13303 in May 2003 and reaffirmed it in May 2004 which revoked international environmental protections for oil spills or other ecological disasters, and granted blanket immunity to U.S. corporations that gain possession or control of Iraqi oil or products through any means. There is no cutoff date for the immunity, which renders “the judicial process ... null and void.” Hence, if any damages occur from oil companies, Iraqi citizens have no legal recourse.¹⁹⁵

The new UN Resolution also keeps in place immunities granted to oil companies under Resolution 1483, but it excludes those coming in under contracts signed after June 30, meaning U.S.-chosen companies are granted protections but those chosen by the Iraqi people are not.

III. COSTS TO THE WORLD

A. Human Costs

COALITION DEATHS

While Americans make up the vast majority of military and contractor personnel in Iraq, other U.S.-allied “coalition” troops have also suffered war casualties in Iraq. As of the end of May, the total non-U.S. coalition casualties numbered 116.¹⁹⁶ The Pentagon does not track non-U.S. citizen military or civilian contractors killed or wounded in Iraq, but independent estimates range from 14 to 44 non-U.S. contractors killed as of April 14, 2004.¹⁹⁷

DIVERSION OF RESOURCES

In addition to the direct human costs, the Iraq war has drained scarce international resources, leaving the world community unable to effectively respond to emergencies including the humanitarian crises in Sudan, Chechnya, or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. United Nations attention, peacekeepers, diplomatic talent, political support, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development monies all are scarce as the world focuses its attention on Iraq.

B. Disabling International Law

International law has been significantly undermined by the war in Iraq. The UN Charter’s prohibition against war allows only two exceptions: if the Security Council itself calls for armed action (Chapter VII, Article 42), or in self-defense (Article 51) “if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations” (and then only until such time that “the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security”). Neither the terms of Article 42 nor of Article 51 were met in the case of Iraq, particularly since no evidence has emerged to prove the extensive pre-war claims made by the Bush administration or those made by Prime Minister Tony Blair in Britain regarding the “imminent” threat ostensibly posed by Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction.

PRE-EMPTIVE WAR

In waging war in Iraq, the administration has sought to legitimize the notion of pre-emptive or preventive war as the basis for its international relations. In addition

Box 5

Non-U.S. Coalition Casualties

United Kingdom	59
Italy	18
Spain	11
Bulgaria	6
Poland	6
Ukraine	6
Slovakia	3
Thailand	2
Denmark	1
Netherlands	1
Estonia	1
Latvia	1
El Salvador	1

to undermining the restrictions on war imposed by the United Nations Charter, however, the war has set a dangerous precedent for other countries to act as military aggressors, seizing any opportunity to respond militarily to claimed threats, whether real or contrived, that must be “pre-empted.”

UNILATERALISM

Just two weeks before the war, President Bush stated that “when it comes to our security, we really don’t need anybody’s permission.”¹⁹⁸ The unilateral U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq thus led to what must be termed an aggressive or preventive war. Aggressive war is outlawed both by the Nuremberg Charter, which prohibits the “planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties,” and the United Nations Charter, which is the primary international treaty proscribing war. Iraq was not a preemptive war—because that would require an imminent threat, which we know did not exist in Iraq. In fact, years before the war in Iraq began, contesting views were already common that challenged the “imminent threat” claim. Those views existed within U.S. intelligence agencies, as well as among academic experts, outside analysts, other countries’ intelligence resources and many more arenas.

THE RULES OF WAR

The tactics of the war also violate major tenets of international law, primarily those of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions regarding protection of civilian populations in time of war, treatment of populations under military occupation, and the laws of war themselves regarding proportionality and illegal weapons and tactics. The bombing of civilian population centers and religious sites violates Geneva’s requirements. Use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons violates the Convention’s prohibitions against disproportionate use of force since it is known that the effects of DU extend far beyond the target site, targeted military personnel and targeted moment to harm water systems, agricultural and residential land, and civilian populations for many years.

During the occupation of Iraq, the U.S. military has violated the prohibitions in the Geneva Convention regarding collective punishment, including through the use of imposed curfews, closures of whole towns and neighborhoods, demolition of houses, and the arrest or kidnapping of family members of wanted militants to use as hostages to force the wanted men to turn themselves in. Extrajudicial killing of Iraqi opposition political leaders remains a violation of the Geneva Convention’s prohibition against such assassination by an occupying power.

C. Undermining the United Nations

The United Nations itself was a major victim of the U.S.-led war. While the Bush administration had attacked the legitimacy and credibility of the UN from the moment it took office in 2001, those attacks escalated in the run-up to the Iraq war when the UN, from the Security Council to the General Assembly to the Secretary General and the secretariat, continued to defy the U.S. call to war.

MAKING THE UN IRRELEVANT

In his September 12, 2002 speech at the General Assembly, Bush continued his claim that the UN would be “irrelevant” if it did not join the war. “Are Security Council resolutions to be honored and enforced or cast aside without consequence? Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding or will it be irrelevant?”¹⁹⁹ A month later he followed that up with a warning that the UN must act to join his war, or risk becoming a “debating society.”²⁰⁰

As the war came closer and the global organization still refused to back the U.S.-UK attack, the attacks on the United Nations grew sharper. On February 9, 2003, President Bush told a Republican audience that “it’s a moment of truth for the United Nations. The United Nations gets to decide, shortly, whether or not it is going to be relevant, in terms of keeping the peace, whether or not its words mean anything.”²⁰¹ A month later, on March 6, 2003, Bush taunted the UN, saying “The fundamental question facing the Security Council is, will its words mean anything? When the Security Council speaks, will the words have merit and weight? If we need to act, we will act, and we really don’t need United Nations approval to do so.”²⁰²

Bush’s aides waged even sharper attacks on the United Nations. Three days after the United States launched its war on Iraq, then-Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle, celebrated what he saw as a key accomplishment of the war in an article titled “Thank God for the Death of the UN.” He cheered at the prospect that the war would expose “the intellectual wreckage of the liberal conceit of safety through international law administered by international institutions.”²⁰³

UNDERCUTTING DEMOCRACY AND DIPLOMACY

In the U.S. effort to win Security Council support for the war, the Bush administration undermined always-tenuous UN democracy and diplomacy by threatening member states to cease their opposition to a UN endorsement of the war. In a move which may have been used against many other countries as well, the U.S. ambassador to South Africa sent a March 18, 2003 letter to the deputy foreign minister explicitly demanding that South Africa not participate in or support any effort to call to convene an emergency General Assembly meeting on the Iraq war. The language was

harshly threatening: “Given the current highly charged atmosphere, the United States would regard a General Assembly session on Iraq as unhelpful and as directed against the United States. Please know that this question as well as your position on it is important to the U.S.”²⁰⁴

REJECTION OF INSPECTIONS

The United States refused to accept the reports of the UN arms inspectors as legitimate. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the Bush administration has refused to allow UN inspectors back into the country, despite the fact that the United States signed on to UN resolutions continuing the mandate of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and despite the fact that UNMOVIC, working outside of Iraq, has continued to find new information regarding Iraq’s destroyed weapons programs. In its rejection of UNMOVIC, the United States continues to undermine the legitimacy of the UN as a centerpiece of global disarmament.

THE ILLUSION OF UN INDEPENDENCE

The Bush administration’s pressure on UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who was ostensibly empowered to select an interim government in Iraq, led to the selection of a government ultimately chosen and vetted not by the representative of the international community but by the occupying power and its own chosen minions. Although Brahimi was essentially invited by the White House to take the UN position, an invitation only then issued by Secretary General Kofi Annan, he described “terrible pressure” from the U.S. occupation forces that kept him from selecting the candidates he favored for the interim government in Iraq.²⁰⁵ Although the idea of an outside force selecting a “sovereign government” already stands outside any understanding of democratic or international legitimacy, the result of the refusal of the United States to allow even Brahimi, whom the White House had approved, to function further undermines the already stretched credibility and legitimacy of the UN.

UNILATERAL “MULTILATERALISM”

Washington’s decision to go back to the United Nations at all, after dismissing the global organization as “irrelevant” when it stood defiant of war, reflected a thoroughly tactical, rather than law-based, approach to the UN. The Bush administration has now imposed on the UN the demand that the multinational organization accept as “sovereign” a government possessing only the fiction of sovereignty, a government which was not elected, and a government that was put in place and is still dependent for its survival on the occupying forces controlling its country. Such a decision undermines not only the UN as a whole but the entire notion of national sovereignty as the basis for the United Nations Charter.

CUTTING DEALS

The Security Council's acceptance of the U.S.-UK resolution endorsing the U.S.-imposed "interim government" in Iraq and changing the name of the U.S.-dominated occupation force to a "multi-national force" reflects new pressures, including bribes and threats, on the UN as a whole and specific pressures on individual Council members. While more details will likely emerge later, it is already clear that Germany plans to leverage its support for the U.S.-UK position into obtaining U.S. backing for their longstanding goal of a permanent Security Council seat. In early June the German Chancellor's foreign policy advisor told journalists that they already "have four of the five permanent members" as well as the necessary 2/3 support of the General Assembly, and therefore in the fall 2004 session Germany will "push through" a resolution for a seat. Berlin is unlikely to have made such a public announcement unless it had received some level of assurances from Washington regarding support for its campaign for a permanent seat.²⁰⁶

D. Enforcing Coalitions

The U.S. effort to create what the Bush administration called a "coalition of the willing" to endorse the Iraq war in the face of UN opposition led to a further undermining of the UN's authority over issues of global peace and security. Individual countries were pressured to join the coalition, turning it into a "coalition of the coerced."

COALITION OF THE COERCED

On March 18, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell released a list of 30 countries that he claimed had agreed to be publicly identified as members of the U.S.-led coalition. However, according to the *Washington Post*, officials of at least one of these countries, Colombia, were apparently unaware that they had been designated as a coalition partner. It is not known how many other governments first learned of their membership in the coalition through the media, thus substituting coercion and subterfuge for actual diplomacy.

SUPERFICIAL SUPPORT

Other nations, including Hungary and the Netherlands, allowed their names to be placed on the coalition list, while at the same time reassuring their citizens that they will not actually support the military action in any substantive way. In this way U.S. pressure on governments to join the coalition undermined democracy in many of those countries, since public opposition to the war ranged as high as 90 percent, thus forcing "willing" governments to go to war against the wishes of their own populations.

E. Costs to the Global Economy

The war in Iraq was sold to the American public as quick and inexpensive, requiring little U.S. investment and soon effectively paying for itself through Iraqi oil revenues. In fact, the war has been anything but cheap, and the economic costs to the world are perhaps the gravest.

WASTING BILLIONS

Although the United States has paid for the vast majority of the direct dollar costs, the consequences of those expenditures are global. By pouring \$151.1 billion into the war and occupation in Iraq (costs through the end of this year), the U.S. government diminished the resources available for real economic, humanitarian and reconstruction aid around the world.

To put the U.S. war costs in perspective, consider that:

- The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that it would only need \$24 billion annually to cut world hunger in half. That would translate to 400 million people currently malnourished gaining access to sufficient food, many for the first time in their lives.²⁰⁷
- The director of UNAIDS needs only \$10 billion annually to launch a truly global, comprehensive program to respond to HIV/AIDS.²⁰⁸
- The UN Children's Organization UNICEF estimates that it would take a mere \$2.8 billion annually to provide immunization for every child in the developing world.²⁰⁹
- To provide clean water and functioning sewage systems to the world's population, the World Water Council estimates an annual cost of \$37 billion.²¹⁰

Combined, these efforts to provide basic food, HIV/AIDS medicine, childhood immunization and clean water and sanitation, would cost \$74 billion dollars a year. That means that the \$151 billion the United States is spending for war in Iraq could provide those basic necessities to impoverished people around the world for more than 2 years.

SELECTIVE DEBT RELIEF

The war has also drained resources that otherwise might have been available for debt reduction for the poorest nations. At the June 2004 G8 summit, there were high hopes that leaders would agree to a British plan to cancel the debts of heavily indebted poor countries, most of them impoverished African nations. These countries' combined foreign debts are estimated to be about \$90 billion. While this is small relative

to the war expenditures, this debt forces desperately poor countries, many of them wracked by AIDS epidemics, to shift resources away from health care and other basic needs in order to make interest payments to wealthy northern countries. However, the U.S. government rejected the proposal to cancel the debts of the poorest countries in favor of continuing the existing, insufficient debt reduction scheme being carried out by the World Bank and the IMF. The Bush Administration has a higher priority when it comes to debt cancellation—Iraq. Despite the fact that Iraq is an oil-rich country, the U.S. government is pushing other nations to grant the country 100 percent debt cancellation.²¹¹ This selective access to debt reduction not only hurts the world's poorest, but further undermines the U.S. government's international credibility.

RISING OIL PRICES

As mentioned in Chapter I, the war is also at least one causal factor in the increase in oil prices. This development has already shaken world stock markets and consumer confidence. If oil prices remain high for a prolonged period, the strain on nearly every sector of the global economy could be severe. According to the British magazine *The Economist*, “If oil is only \$10 a barrel higher than it would otherwise have been, and stays there a while, prices in general will rise, output and incomes will be reduced, and unemployment, at least for a while, will be raised. That vicious combination of higher inflation and lower growth—stagflation, to recall a term from the 1970s—is about the worst scenario an economic policy-maker can contemplate.”²¹²

One industry that is already feeling the pinch is the airline industry. The International Air Transport Association announced that if oil prices remain \$36 per barrel or higher, world airlines will face increased costs of \$1 billion or more per month, further damaging an industry still struggling to recover after September 11.²¹³ Meanwhile, the Bush administration has failed to pursue an energy strategy that would reduce the nation's oil dependence through development of more fuel-efficient automobiles and renewable energy resources.

F. Undermining Global Security and Disarmament

RISE IN GLOBAL TERRORISM

While the Bush administration has claimed that the war in Iraq has “made Americans safer”, people around the world are more insecure than ever. Bush administration officials have acknowledged that terrorism is a greater threat today than it was before the Iraq war. The State Department's annual report on international terrorism, released in April 2004, falsely claimed that terrorist attacks declined in 2003. In fact, Secretary of State Colin Powell admitted two months later that the data in the report was wrong, and that the actual number of terrorist attacks had increased, not

decreased, in 2003. California Rep. Henry Waxman, the ranking Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee, said the 2003 State Department report did not include attacks that happened after the report's November 11 printing deadline. Those left out included the bombings of two synagogues, the British consulate, and a bank in Istanbul later that month. In a letter to Powell, Waxman accused the Bush administration of manipulating figures to show a decline in terrorist attacks ahead of the elections in November.²¹⁴ Indeed, forced to print a correction, the State Department released corrected numbers on June 23, 2004 that showed dramatically higher terrorism-related casualties. (*See page 4.*)

A NEW HAVEN FOR TERRORISTS

While the Ba'athist regime in Iraq was brutal and repressive at home, international terrorism was not its hallmark. The U.S. State Department's annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" have not held Iraq responsible for an international terrorist attack at least since 1993 when some officials blamed Baghdad for a disputed (and failed) attack on ex-President George H.W. Bush. Now Iraq has apparently become what the country never was before: a focal point of international terrorist organizations that have been galvanized by the U.S. occupation. As a result, people around the world are at greater risk. In particular, citizens of countries whose governments are supporting Washington's war (as well as Americans) face even higher levels of risk.

SETTING A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

Global security is also threatened because of the copycat threat of U.S. unilateralism and assertion of the legitimacy of preventive or preemptive war. The United States thus provides a model for other unstable countries and regions to turn towards preventive or preemptive war as a legitimate option. The U.S. war in Iraq could provide a legitimating example for a possible Indian decision to attack Pakistan, for Rwanda to go to war against Congo, for Armenia to attack Azerbaijan, or for any other potential aggressor interested in escalating a local conflict.

GLOBAL INCREASE IN MILITARY SPENDING

While it is difficult to isolate out costs of the Iraq war from the broader U.S. "war on terrorism," it is still useful to document the global increases in military spending since the start of the Iraq war and occupation. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2002 world military spending was \$795 billion. With the skyrocketing costs of the war in Iraq, worldwide military spending has soared to an estimated \$900 billion in 2004. The United States accounts for nearly three-fourths of the worldwide growth in military spending due largely to Iraq war expenditures and other efforts to cement U.S. global military dominance. According to SIPRI, most countries in the Middle East have also increased military spending due

to heightened tension in the region over Iraq and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Planned military increases by the United States are likely to ensure a continuing rise in world military expenditures over the next few years, with other major powers also seemingly inclined to raise spending to try to keep pace.

MISSING ILLICIT MATERIALS

The United States justified its preventive strike on Iraq under the guise of non-existent weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). But the Iraq war has actually increased the challenges facing global efforts at non-proliferation and disarmament. The UN’s UNMOVIC and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arms inspectors reported in June 2004 that a number of sites in Iraq known to have contained equipment and material that could have been used to produce banned WMDs and long-range missiles were either cleaned out or destroyed. The material, some of it discovered in a scrapyard in the Dutch port of Rotterdam, had been earlier identified and tagged by UN arms inspectors when they were still working in Iraq.²¹⁵

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

The looted sites included the Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Center, where the IAEA had catalogued and placed under seal tons of partially enriched and natural uranium. In the post-invasion looting, the Center was stripped of computers and much equipment; it is unclear whether potential nuclear materials were also taken. According to the *Washington Post*, “the war has dispersed the country’s most dangerous technologies beyond anyone’s knowledge or control.”²¹⁶ The Tuwaitha Center had been sealed off by the IAEA, but an expert familiar with UN nuclear inspections said the Marines apparently broke the IAEA seals designed to ensure the materials would not be diverted for weapons use or end up in the wrong hands.²¹⁷ The UN arms inspectors had been forced to withdraw from Iraq on the eve of the U.S. invasion; once the Marines left Tuwaitha, the Center was vulnerable to looting because of the broken seals.

G. Global Environmental Costs

POISONING THE REGION’S WATER

While environmental damage from the war is concentrated within Iraq, devastating Iraq’s land, water and people, spill-over is inevitable as water, sand and air move across Iraq’s borders. The Tigris River, for example, flows down to the Shaat al-Arab entry point where Iraq, Iran and Kuwait all empty into the Persian Gulf. Hence, contamination of the Tigris threatens not only Iraq but neighboring countries and those further away as well.

A June 2004 analysis notes that “the Tigris River water is a concentrated cocktail of pesticides, fertilizers, oil, gasoline and heavy metals, reports Dr. Husni Mohammed, an Iraqi who holds a PhD in Environmental and Biological Science and has researched the condition of the Tigris. Raw sewage mixes with particles from antiquated piping and U.S.-fired depleted uranium munitions, he says, plus remnants from untold amounts of other chemicals released by American and Iraqi weaponry used since the 1991 Gulf War.”²¹⁸

H. Undermining Human Rights

On a global scale war in Iraq has undermined human rights. The dismissive attitude towards the Geneva Conventions—both White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales’ statement that the Conventions are “quaint” and the more fully articulated rejection of the Conventions that concluded that they do not apply to prisoners held in the Guantanamo prison facility—began during the immediate post-September 11 period and particularly in the Afghanistan war—continued during the Iraq war.

NEGLECTING DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

According to Amnesty International, “the poor and the marginalized are most commonly denied justice and would benefit most from the fair application of the rule of law and human rights. Yet despite the increasing discourse on the indivisibility of human rights, in reality economic, social and cultural rights are neglected, reducing human rights to a theoretical construct for the vast majority of the world’s population. It is no mere coincidence that, in the Iraq war, the protection of oil wells appears to have been given greater priority than the protection of hospitals.”²¹⁹

TORTURING PRISONERS

On the anniversary of his “mission accomplished” announcement, Bush stated that “life for the Iraqi people is a world away from the cruelty and corruption of Saddam’s regime. At the most basic level of justice, people are no longer disappearing into political prisons, torture chambers...”²²⁰ That statement came in the middle of the widening torture scandal involving U.S. interrogators and guards at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

SETTING AN ABYSMAL EXAMPLE

The widely publicized humiliation, torture, and brutalization of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. intelligence officials and guards gave new license for torture and mistreatment by governments around the world, particularly U.S. allies, who found a new reply to whatever small-scale U.S. pressure might be brought to bear regarding human rights violations. Those governments would simply reply that what they were doing wasn’t

nearly as bad as what the Americans were doing in Iraq, so who were Americans to tell them anything?

The refusal of the U.S. investigators to examine responsibility for the torture above the level of the prison commander, including top generals as well as the top leadership of the Pentagon and the White House, legitimizes any other nation's refusal to hold its own top officials accountable for human rights violations carried out by underlings.

IGNORING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

The refusal to investigate further up the administration hierarchy was particularly damaging to international human rights norms because of specific statements in the legal memorandum requested by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld that "President Bush was not bound by either an international treaty prohibiting torture or by a federal anti-torture law because he had the authority as commander in chief to approve any technique needed to protect the nation's security."²²¹ While that memo was drafted in reference to the "war on terrorism," specifically regarding prisoners held at Guantanamo, the consistent administration claim that the Iraq war is "ground zero" of the war on terrorism makes it inevitable that such findings would be viewed as applicable in Iraq as well.

The Justice Department memo assuring the White House that torture was legal stands in stark violation of the international Convention Against Torture, of which the United States is a signatory.

The Justice Department memo assuring the White House that torture was legal stands in stark violation of the international Convention Against Torture, of which the United States is a signatory. While the U.S. press has focused on the divergent definitions of torture between the White House and the military, both U.S. versions violate the only internationally recognized definition: that in the Convention Against Torture. That convention defines torture much more broadly as "an act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person." All of the competing U.S. definitions stand in violation of that Convention.

The fact that the Bush administration ignored existing treaty obligations and created its own legitimation for the use of torture outlawed under international law, gives every government in the world the right to similarly embrace its own use of torture against its own citizens or the populations of countries or territories it occupies, as "exceptions" to the global prohibition.

WEAKENING THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The scandal demonstrated the weakness, as well as the potential, of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Kept out of the Abu Ghraib loop by virtue of the Bush administration having “unsigned” the Rome Treaty, the ICC still provided an unused example of how international jurisdiction might have been brought to bear to hold U.S. and “coalition” troops, as well as political leaders in those countries and currently unaccountable private military contractors, accountable to the international community as a whole for their violations of the laws of war and the Geneva Conventions.

The public U.S. refusal to abide by the recommendations of the International Committee of the Red Cross regarding violations of the Geneva Conventions in the Pentagon’s detention facilities in Iraq undermines the prestige of the world’s leading humanitarian organization and sets a dangerous precedent for other recalcitrant governments.

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Paying the Price: The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War

Hot facts from the study by the Institute for Policy Studies and Foreign Policy In Focus

- Total number of coalition military deaths between the start of war and June 16, 2004: **952** (853 U.S.)
- Of those 952, the number killed after President George W. Bush declared “an end to combat operations” on May 1, 2003: **693**
- Number of U.S. troops wounded in combat since the war began: **5,134** (Number ill or injured in “non-combat” incidents estimated to be over 11,000)
- Number of U.S. troops wounded in combat since President George W. Bush declared “an end to combat operations” on May 1, 2003: **4,593**
- Number of civilian contractors, missionaries, and civilian workers killed: **50-90**
- Number of international media workers killed: **30**
- Iraqi civilians killed: **9,436 to 11,317**
- Iraqi civilians injured: **40,000 (est.)**
- Iraqi soldiers and insurgents killed prior to “end of combat operations” May 1, 2003: **4,895 to 6,370**
- The bill so far: **\$126.1 billion**
- Additional amount to cover operations through 2004: **\$25 billion**
- What \$151 billion could have paid for in the U.S.:
 - Housing vouchers: **23 million**
 - Health care for uninsured Americans: **27 mil.**
 - Salaries for elementary school teachers: **3 mil.**
 - New fire engines: **678,200**
 - Head Start slots: **20 million**
- Estimated long-term cost of war to every U.S. household: **\$3,415**
- Amount contractor Halliburton is alleged to have charged for meals never served to troops and for cost overruns on fuel deliveries: **\$221 million**
- Kickbacks received by Halliburton employees from subcontractors: **\$6 million**
- Percentage of Americans who now feel that “the situation in Iraq was not worth going to war over.”: **54**
- Percentage of Iraqis who said they would feel safer if U.S. and other foreign troops left the country immediately: **55**
- Percentage of U.S. soldiers in Iraq reporting low morale: **52**
- Percentage of soldiers who said they would not re-enlist: **50**
- Percentage of wounded unable to return to duty: **64**
- Number of soldiers whose tours of duty have been extended by the Army: **20,000**
- Percentage of reserve troops who earn lower salaries while on deployment: **30-40**
- Fraction of National Guard troops among U.S. force now in Iraq: **1/3**
- Percentage of U.S. police departments missing officers due to Iraq deployments: **44**
- Effect on al Qaeda of the Iraq war, according to International Institute for Strategic Studies: **“Accelerated recruitment”**
- Estimated number of al Qaeda terrorists as of May 2004: **18,000 with 1,000 active in Iraq**
- Percentage of Iraqis expressing “no confidence” in U.S. civilian authorities or coalition forces: **80**
- Iraq’s oil production in 2002: **2.04 mil. barrels/day**
- Iraq’s oil production in 2003: **1.33 mil. barrels/day**
- Price of a gallon of gasoline in the U.S. in May 2004: **more than \$2**

Paying the Price: The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War by Phyllis Bennis and the IPS Iraq Task Force: Sarah Anderson, John Cavanagh, Karen Dolan, Erik Leaver, Miriam Pemberton, Amy Quinn, Marc Raskin, Michael Sochynsky, Adam Waxman, and Emira Woods. Released June 24, 2004. Full 54-page report available online at <http://www.ips-dc.org/iraq/costsofwar>

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