



An Analysis of the Impact of United States Democratization in Iraq (1993-2009)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of United States democratization in Iraq from 1993-2009. The study was set out to achieve two objectives while the concept of democratization was also reviewed. The study adopted ex-post research design while data was gotten from secondary source such as textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, magazines and internet, and the data generated was analyzed through content analysis. The findings of the study showed that United States led democratization has not contributed to the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens as many Iraqi rights were violated and United States tried to cover up the extent of United States torture of Iraqi prisoners, the revelations of abuse in the Abu Ghraib prison were just the tip of the iceberg, clearly showing that United States military presence in Iraq has impacted negatively on democratization in Iraq. Based on the findings the study recommended that; necessary legislations should be put in place as well as practices to enhance the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens and also develop a strategy to strengthen and deepen the watch of those that are prisoners, so that they will be protected against unlawful torture.

Keywords: Torture, sovereignty, military, population, education.

INTRODUCTION

The development of democracy supplied the ideological foundations for the United States (US) opposition to foes such as imperialism, fascism, and then communism. It has also shaped the outlines of the modern international order, as evidenced by the different democratic "waves" that have happened around the world during the past century. American political ideals, ideas, and principles were appealing to the Middle East during and after World War I. According to Pratt (1972), in the aftermath of World War I, despite the fact that the Middle East region was heavily influenced by Europe, American ties, particularly with petroleum corporations, developed significantly. The time between the two World Wars demonstrates that the US remained only marginally active in Middle Eastern events from a political standpoint, but it also built numerous business relationships inside the region. The US government paid closer attention to the region's significant oil reserves and began to reassess its importance to US and allied security interests, but "it was not until the end of the Second World War that the area came to assume real significance in US foreign policy," and her political presence in the region intensified (Ismael, 1986). The crucial foreign engagement has marked every stage of the formation, ascent, decline, and ongoing reconfiguration of the Iraqi state. Iraq's early, poorly developed state bureaucracy was established in the 1920s by British colonial authorities, who recruited Sunni Arab officials from the erstwhile Ottoman imperial regions of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra. An artificial monarchy formed and imposed by Britain led the early state. In a bloody coup, a small nationalist faction of military officers deposed the monarchy, ushering in a decade of political turmoil until the Ba'athists acquired definitive control of government. In the years that followed, the Ba'athists had access to rapidly expanding external oil rents and constructed a modernizing state machinery. It did, however, employ the state to establish an unusually harsh "Republic of Fear." State institutional growth began to peak during Saddam's direct leadership, despite the Iraqi leader's actions prompting an international response. Saddam, most notably, conducted invasions of neighboring Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990. While both wars were extremely costly in many respects, they provided chances for the consolidation of state authority, the expansion of the security apparatus, and the eradication of internal rivals. Iraq was subjected to severe UN authorized sanctions and worldwide isolation from 1991 until 2003. These circumstances provided a means and rationale for increased state power consolidation and the weakening of social movements opposing Saddam's reign. In this sense, Iraq experienced an internationally driven double movement throughout Saddam's 24 years in power, namely the expansion of state security institutions through war and perceived or invoked foreign threats, and the contraction of most other state and societal institutions due to intense international pressures of war and economic isolation. This dual dynamic skewed the shape of Iraq's state and civil society, resulting in a downward circle of sanctions, isolation, and institutional weakness. It also provided Saddam with an incentive to generate some doubt about his regime's supposed possession of weapons of mass devastation. This ambiguity aided and even inspired the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq by March 2003.

However, violent crime, including as kidnapping, rape, and armed robbery, has increased as tiny guns have become more widely available, and private militias have developed swiftly. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations condemned US soldiers in 2004 for extensive violations of international humanitarian law, including torture and other forms of ill-treatment of detainees. The problem is exacerbated by the Iraqi government,

which is dominated by inept Shi'ite Islamist fanatics closely aligned with hardline Iranian clergy. Human rights violations are on the rise, mostly at the hands of the only security. Furthermore, Amnesty International has alleged that the Iraqi government has not only failed to provide basic protection for its residents, but has also adopted a strategy of rounding up and torturing innocent men and women.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This paper addressed several objectives which includes to; (1) analyze the impact of United States led democratization on the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens, and; (2) assess the impact of US military presence on democratization in Iraq.

CONCEPT OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Democratization is defined as a shift from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to more competitive (and freer and fairer) elections, from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, and from weak (or non-existent) autonomous civil society associations to more autonomous and numerous associations (Najem, 2003). The progressive evolution of these components (accountability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of and conditioned by state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and international engagements is referred to as democratization (Najem, 2003). Political, economic, social, and cultural democracy are the four key parts of this improved, and much more extensive, idea, according to Tehranian (1940). Popular sovereignty, universal suffrage, protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; majority rule and minority rights; fair representation and periodic elections; peaceful succession; and direct voting (referenda) on critical issues such as the rule of law, habeas corpus, the bill of rights, and citizenship responsibilities.

According to Teorell (2008), democratization processes have been interpreted in one of four ways: structural modernization theory, strategic transition paradigm, actor-centered social forces paradigm, or economic approach (game theoretic). Teorell (2008) agrees that all four models may explain democratization in part, but that they all have significant problems. To be more fruitful, the economic approach must integrate the concept of authoritarian bargains while moving away from an emphasis on redistributive inequalities.

Without understanding what motivates elite actors, the social forces approach has placed too much emphasis on the concept of social class and the strategic approach to elite actors. Furthermore, the modernization theory only applies to the consolidation of democracy, not the transition to democracy, and it should place a greater emphasis on media expansion than on education, economic growth, or industrialization. Democratization, according to Alkifaey (2016), is the process through which countries become democratic, and it takes time, based on a variety of elements connected to society's preparation for democracy.

METHODOLOGY

Given, the problem of the paper, this paper adopted the Ex Post Facto (After the Fact) research design. Materials for this paper was sourced through secondary sources of data which included here are textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, magazines, official documents from the government, internet materials, among others. Content analysis was used to analyse data so generated. This is with a view to identify logical sequence of data as well as trends.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

At this point, tables were presented that help to address the two objectives raised. In other words, this section is aimed at establishing an empirical link of United States and democratization in Iraq.

Table 1: Impact of US led democratization on the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens

Categories of violations of human rights by United States in Iraq **Violations by the United States**

Failure to allow self-determination Political participation of minorities in Iraq has experience exclusion and marginalization

Failure to provide public order and safety The US violated international law and caused untold damage to the people and heritage of Iraq by allowing wholesale looting of Iraq's public, religious, cultural, and civilian institutions and properties.

Unlawful attacks US forces have routinely conducted indiscriminate attacks in populated areas of Iraq, causing widespread and unnecessary civilian casualties.

Unlawful detention and torture	It is regular policy for US forces to indiscriminately arrest and detain Iraqi civilians without charge or due process.
Collective punishment	The US has imposed collective punishment on Iraqi civilians.
Failure to ensure vital services	Despite the US funneling billions of taxpayer dollars to major corporate contributors in secret deals to “reconstruct” Iraq, these essential services remain in disrepair.
Failure to protect the rights to health and life	The US is violating Iraqis’ rights to life and health by failing to ensure access to healthcare and to prevent the spread of contagious disease.
Failure to protect the rights to food and education	The US is required to ensure that the population has physical and financial access to food and education. The education system is in shambles.

Source: Computed by the researcher based on data from the report by the Center for Economic and Social Right documents

From table 1 showing the impact of US led democratization on the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens. Political participation of minorities in Iraq has experience exclusion and marginalization. The US violated international law and caused untold damage to the people and heritage of Iraq by allowing wholesale looting of Iraq’s public, religious, cultural, and civilian institutions and properties. US forces have routinely conducted indiscriminate attacks in populated areas of Iraq, causing widespread and unnecessary civilian casualties. It is regular policy for US forces to indiscriminately arrest and detain Iraqi civilians without charge or due process. The US has imposed collective punishment on Iraqi civilians. Despite the US funneling billions of taxpayer dollars to major corporate contributors in secret deals to “reconstruct” Iraq, these essential services remain in disrepair. The US is violating Iraqis’ rights to life and health by failing to ensure access to healthcare and to prevent the spread of contagious disease, and the Iraq educational system is in shambles.

Failure to Allow Self-Determination

Following the United States' violations of human rights in Iraq in the decades following the UN's founding, it became widely recognized in law and practice that imperialism and foreign occupation were opposed to the right of self-determination, which was widely regarded as the cornerstone of the post-World War II international order. An occupying power gains no sovereign powers, no title to land, and no authority over people under international law. The legal imperative, on the other hand, is to put an end to the occupation and allow people to exercise their national and human rights.

To this purpose, Iraqi opposition to US occupation, including armed resistance, is legal as long as the resistance techniques target occupation forces rather than civilians or other protected people, as defined by international law. True legal sovereignty and self-determination necessitate the free exercise of political choice, full responsibility for internal and foreign security, and complete authority over social and economic policies, among other things. None of these issues are addressed in the US proposals for "restoring Iraqi sovereignty" on June 30th. According to senior American political and military officials, US policy entails selecting or appointing Iraqi leaders and officials while postponing elections and other forms of popular participation; maintaining control over military and security matters and expanding the country's military base network; and continuing to transform Iraq's economy and society along free market lines with disproportionate involvement of US corporations (Antonia, 2004). The promised "transfer of sovereignty" is illusory under these conditions, a type of political theater that has nothing to do with the legal requirements for Iraqi self-determination. As a result, the US will continue to be obligated as an occupying power after June 30th, and any agreements signed with the new Iraqi authorities to the contrary will have no legal force.

Failure to Provide Public Order and Safety

Occupation law makes it clear that an occupying authority must protect property, particularly religious, charitable, and educational institutions, as well as the arts and sciences, health, and public welfare institutions. In effect, the occupying force assumes entire responsibility for preventing looting and preserving public order, just as the previous administration did. The occupation forces of the United States have completely failed in their mission. Every part of Iraq's important infrastructure was plundered in the first two weeks of April 2003, including ministries, museums, libraries, hospitals, power plants, schools, and universities (Amnesty International, 2003). Despite warnings from NGOs, UN agencies, and even internal government reports, US soldiers failed to safeguard these properties even while they were physically present on the scene (Amnesty International, 2003). There have been numerous allegations of occupation troops assisting looters (David, 2003). There have been numerous allegations of occupation troops assisting looters (David, 2003). There were numerous losses, including precious cultural assets, crucial public data, and the physical infrastructure required to keep life-saving services running (Ken, 2004). Many Iraqis saw the entire incident as a public humiliation that hampered efforts to rebuild the country. Even today, key infrastructure is being looted, with water, electricity, and other utilities being stripped of their components and shipped to Jordan to be sold as scrap (James, 2014).

On a daily basis, the occupying power is also responsible for guaranteeing public safety. Yet, by dismissing the entire Iraqi army, police, and security forces without a back-up plan quickly after the war, the US set the circumstances for greater crime and disorder (Richard, 2004). The predicted and well-documented effect has been a significant increase in violent crime, such as rape, kidnapping, theft, and sexual crime (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Unlawful Attacks

Targeting protected individuals and property, as well as conducting indiscriminate assaults in civilian areas, are both war crimes. Nonetheless, it is well established that US forces regularly execute indiscriminate attacks in inhabited areas, resulting in unnecessarily high civilian casualties. Several eyewitnesses have described situations in which US soldiers killed and injured civilians in the course of military operations or in reaction to resistance forces' attacks. Over 40 people were reported killed during a wedding reception near Al Qaim, while over 600 people were killed in Fallujah, half of whom were women and children (Scheherezade, 2004). Even top British occupation commanders in Iraq have spoken out against the excessive use of US weapons (Rayment et al., 2004). Medical personnel and facilities are also afforded particular safeguards under the Geneva Conventions, ensuring that health services continue to function even in times of war. US military have routinely breached these principles. There have been numerous accounts of US attacks on clearly designated medical staff, ambulances, and hospitals, including sniper attacks near hospitals (Jamail, 2004). Injured people have been denied access to life-saving treatment as a result of these war crimes.

Unlawful Detention and Torture

The occupying power cannot arbitrarily imprison a protected person or deprive him or her of fundamental due process. Nonetheless, widespread arrests appear to be regular procedure for Iraqi occupying forces. Men who happen to be living, working, or walking in the local proximity of a house raid target are likely to be bound, hooded, and imprisoned. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that 70-90 percent of the 43,000 Iraqis arrested under occupation were innocent bystanders swept into detention in this illegal manner (Higgins, 2004). Iraqi detainees are not only denied basic due process, but they are also kept in communication for weeks or months without their families' knowledge (Fisher, 2004). Thousands of people have "disappeared" into a dark hole of incarceration, where they face severe and cruel treatment, including torture (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Furthermore, US forces have detained family members of sought suspects as hostages, which has been criticized as a war crime (Mohamad, 2004). Despite repeated denials by top US officials including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the well-documented maltreatment of detained Iraqi prisoners, which includes murder, rape, sodomy, physical assault, and sexual humiliation, plainly comes within the basic legal definition of torture (Rumsfeld, 2004).

The Bush Administration knew about systemic torture for a long time but kept it hidden until the public release of damaging images and videotapes. According to reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross, human rights organizations, and the Pentagon, these crimes are widespread not only in Iraq, but also in other countries where the US has set up detention centers for alleged terrorist detainees (Amnesty International, 2004). Far from being isolated incidents, these acts of torture and abuse are the inevitable result of the US government's policy shift since 9/11 to use torture as a method of interrogation and to secretly transfer suspected terrorists to repressive countries in the knowledge that they will be brutally tortured (Dana Priest & Joe Stephens, 2004). There is minimal chance of being held accountable for atrocities committed under the occupation. The Bush administration is attempting to absolve itself of responsibility for the torture issue by prosecuting only low-ranking officials in military courts (Danner, 2004). Since Paul Bremer granted blanket immunity to all occupying officials and military troops under CPA Order 17, Iraqis have been barred from pursuing any war crimes proceedings against US forces. This immunity will persist even after the promised "transfer of sovereignty" (Ahmed, 2004). Furthermore, private contractors, who have been implicated in some of the most heinous acts of torture, are completely unaccountable, immune from punishment in Iraqi and US courts, as well as military courts-martial (Adam, 2004). Around 20,000 contractors, including mercenaries, who were formerly employed by armies and intelligence services in countries like South Africa during apartheid, Chile during Pinochet, and Israel, are now operating freely in Iraq. According to a May 2004 report by the Senate Armed Services Committee, the number of contract security workers in Iraq "may more than triple during the next several months" (Shane, 2004).

Collective Punishment

Many of the US occupation's usual activities are in violation of the prohibition on collective punishment of civilians. In addition to widespread arrests and detention, mass layoffs, and a failure to guarantee public safety, the US has impeded freedom of movement by setting up checkpoints and roadblocks, demolishing civilian dwellings, and isolating entire towns and villages. The entire community was enclosed with razor wire after US forces were attacked on the road around Abu Hishma in November 2003, and people were barred from entering or leaving without US-issued identification cards (Filkins, 2003). Home demolitions have sometimes been used as a kind of collective punishment, according to human rights organizations. "Destroying civilian property as a retaliation or deterrent amounts to collective punishment, a breach of the 1949 Geneva Conventions," according to Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Israeli military tactics in the occupied Palestinian lands are similar to these illegal activities. "Israeli defense experts briefed American commanders on their experience in guerilla and urban warfare," according to the New York Times, which is a euphemism for Israeli operations in Jenin, Gaza, and elsewhere that have been universally condemned as war crimes (Filkins, 2003). Given the international and especially regional indignation over Israel's routine committing of war crimes as part of its occupation of Palestine, the United States' reliance on these same tactics has grave and frightening implications for the occupation of Iraq.

Failure to Ensure Vital Services

The occupying authority has a clear obligation to provide the population's fundamental requirements by maintaining power, water, transportation, and other essential services. Many Iraqis rely on these services to work, eat, and survive, and they have already been severely harmed by 12 years of war and sanctions. Despite the relaxation of sanctions and the awarding of billions of dollars in reconstruction contracts to (mainly) US businesses, key

services are still in disarray, frequently worse than they were before the occupation. Iraqi firms and specialists capable of repairing these assets at a minimal cost have been left out of the rehabilitation process (Ariana, 2004). Despite the fact that much of Iraq's infrastructure was built by Russian, German, and French corporations, the US refuses to import spare parts from these countries, preferring contracting with American firms to reconstruct complete installations (Antonia, 2004). According to the UN, it will take another four to five years for 90 percent of the population to have access to electricity at the present rate of repair. Electricity shortages wreak havoc on health and sanitation systems, as well as stymie overall economic progress. The inability of US occupation authorities to uphold their legal commitment to maintain public services contrasts sharply with the Iraqi government's successful reconstruction effort following the 1991 Gulf War, which was accomplished with extremely limited resources.

Failure to Protect the Rights to Health and Life

The occupying power is responsible for upholding the right to health, ensuring access to medical care, and preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Even the US-appointed Ministry of Health officer in charge of Iraq's public hospitals claims that health facilities are in worse state now than they were during the war or under the sanctions. Hospitals are notorious for their filthy conditions (Gettleman, 2004). The availability of medicines, drugs, and basic supplies such as gloves, painkillers, syringes, gauze, and oxygen has been steadily declining (Morter, 2004). The basic health infrastructure is still shattered and in a state of disarray. Due to Bechtel's failure to complete a contract to rehabilitate Baghdad's Rustamiya sewage treatment plant, one and a half tons of untreated sewage are thrown into the Tigris River every day. One-third of the population still lacks access to safe drinking water, and most Iraqis cannot afford bottled water. A World Health Organization-supported sentinel disease surveillance in the summer of 2003 discovered that diarrhea had grown threefold from the previous year. Unsanitary conditions in Iraq are generating outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as hepatitis and cholera, according to UN officials. Failure by the United States to defend Iraqis' right to health ultimately leads to extensive breaches of their right to life. In 2002, deaths related to diarrhea and severe respiratory illnesses accounted for 70% of all childhood deaths. Due to deteriorating health services and rising poverty throughout occupied Iraq, this figure is very definitely greater now. It's important remembering that over 500,000 children under the age of five died as a result of contaminated water, insufficient health care, medical supply shortages, and simple poverty throughout the sanctions period.

Failure to Protect the Rights to Food and Education

The occupying force must ensure that the populace has access to appropriate food and education on both a physical and financial level. Iraqis are even hungrier now than they were before the occupation. Approximately eleven million Iraqis are classified as food insecure by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, owing primarily to unemployment and rising food and other basic necessity prices since the implementation of "free market" policies. The CPA is considering "monetizing" and phasing out the national food rationing system, on which 60% of Iraqi families rely entirely for basic sustenance, despite warnings that this will cause inflation and render basic commodities unaffordable (Nathaniel, 2003). Similarly, the school system in Iraq is in tatters. Educational possibilities have been further harmed by the occupation, which has exacerbated the effects of 12 years of penalties. Due to a lack of teachers, old school buildings, and poverty, up to two-thirds of Baghdad's school-age children do not attend school full time. Due to well-founded fears of insecurity and kidnapping, girls are especially reluctant to go. An internal US Army assessment of schools that Bechtel was intended to renovate as part of a nearly three-billion-dollar deal discovered "poor work," including unsafe debris in playgrounds, disintegrating walls, shoddy paint jobs, and broken toilets (Larry, 2003).

Table 2: The impact of United States military presence on democratization in Iraq

United States military presence on democratization in Iraq	Outcome of United States military presence on democratization in Iraq
The United States military imprisonment of Iraqis	US military forces have imprisoned Iraqis since the invasion
United States military abuses on Human rights	Human rights abuses are increasing, largely at the hands of the only security branch
The United States military abuses on women in Iraqis	Iraqi female detainees have been illegally detained, raped and sexually violated by United States military personnel

Source: Computed by the researcher based on data from <http://www.brookings.edu/iraq-index>

Table 2 showing the impact of United States military presence on democratization in Iraq. The United States military imprisonment of Iraqis; US military forces have imprisoned Iraqis since the invasion. United States military abuses on Human rights; Human rights abuses are increasing, largely at the hands of the only security branch. The United States military abuses on women in Iraqis; Iraqi female detainees have been illegally detained, raped and sexually violated by United States military personnel.

The United States military imprisonment of Iraqis

Since the invasion, US forces have imprisoned approximately 50,000 Iraqis, yet only about 1% of them have been convicted of any crime. More Iraqis were imprisoned under Saddam Hussein than were held by US combat forces. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have accused US soldiers of violating international humanitarian law on a large scale, including torture and other forms of ill-treatment of detainees. Despite the Bush administration's mainly successful efforts to conceal the scope of US torture of Iraqi detainees, the Abu Ghraib revelations were only the top of the iceberg. Given that the vast majority of those held at Abu Ghraib were not terrorists or guerrillas, but rather regular young Iraqi males apprehended in huge sweeps by US occupation forces, public fury at the US grew even more (Amnesty International, 2013). The United States has not been able to develop much confidence as a force for human rights among the Iraqi people, due to both the misery imposed by American soldiers and the early unwillingness to allow for direct elections.

United States military abuses of human rights

Human rights violations are becoming more common, largely at the hands of the government's only security agency. These Special Forces, who are largely made up of Shi'ite militias, have become killing squads that kill hundreds of civilians each month, mostly Sunni Arab men. Even the insurgency's death toll, which has mostly targeted Shi'ite Arab civilians, has been exceeded. "Not only has the Iraqi government failed to provide minimal safety for its citizens, it has adopted a policy of rounding up and torturing innocent men and women," according to Amnesty International's report. Its refusal to prosecute torturers has contributed to the disintegration of the rule of law. "It is particularly appalling that many convicts have been sentenced to death after unjust trials and on the basis of confessions they claim they were compelled to make under torture," Hadj Sahraoui added. Iraqi authorities have declared a halt on executions as a first step toward removing the death sentence for all crimes, breaking a terrible cycle of torture. Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in December 2005 in places where Sunni Muslims are the majority to protest arbitrary incarceration, detainee torture, the deployment of the anti-terror law, and what they regard as government discrimination towards the Sunni population. "The removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003 should have been followed by a process of fundamental human rights reform, but almost from the beginning, the occupying forces began torturing and other gross violations against detainees, as the Abu Ghraib scandal involving US forces and the beating to death of Baha Mousa in the custody of British soldiers in Basra graphically demonstrated," Hadj Sahraoui said. Despite individual investigations, the UK and US have failed to examine systematically the extensive human rights breaches committed by forces from those nations, and to hold those responsible accountable at all levels. Iraqi victims of US human rights breaches have been unable to seek redress in US courts. The Iraqi authorities have occasionally admitted torture and other forms of ill-treatment, but they have tended to dismiss them as isolated incidents or, in a few high-profile cases, have announced official investigations whose results, if any, have never been made public. Electric shocks to the genitals and other parts of the body, partial suffocation by having a bag placed tightly over the head, beatings while suspended in contorted positions, deprivation of food, water, and sleep, and threats of rape or that their female relatives will be detained and raped are among the methods of torture reported by detainees. Women inmates are particularly susceptible, according to the report, which cites many examples in which women claim to have been sexually abused while in custody. Iraq is plagued in human rights violations following the US-led war that overthrew Saddam Hussein's cruel rule. Thousands of Iraqis are held without charge or are serving prison sentences imposed after unfair trials, torture is rampant and goes unpunished, and the new Iraq is one of the world's top executioners.

In 2012, the government executed 129 inmates, but hundreds more remained on execution row. Yet, when US President George W Bush started the "shock and awe" campaign in March 2003, which overthrew Saddam Hussein's administration in just four weeks, he justified the military action partially on human rights grounds, citing the Iraqi leader's many heinous crimes.

However, as this research reveals, the decade since has brought little improvement, despite the fact that tens of thousands of Iraqis have died, largely as a result of the political and sectarian bloodshed that followed the military struggle and continues to this day. As the evidence demonstrates, the US-dominated coalition of occupying troops generated its own legacy of human rights abuses for which complete accountability has yet to be established, and failed to apply new standards that fundamentally challenged Saddam Hussein's repressive mindset.

The United States military abuses on women in Iraqis

United States military forces have illegally imprisoned, raped, and sexually assaulted Iraqi female detainees. According to the New Statesmen (UK), women who stay at home in traditional roles are more likely to be imprisoned as bargaining chips by US forces intending to exert pressure on male relatives (Hilsum, 2004). "Noor," a female prisoner, smuggled out a note in December 2003 alleging that US soldiers at Abu Ghraib were rapping women inmates and forcing them to strip naked. Several of the women were now expecting their first child (Hassan, 2004). The US military's classified investigation, led by Major General Antonio Taguba, has validated "Noor's" note and that sexual abuse against women occurred at Abu Ghraib. Images of naked male and female detainees, a male Military Police guard "having sex" with a female detainee, detainees (of unspecified gender) forcibly arranged in various sexually explicit positions for photographing, and naked female detainees were among the 1,800 digital photographs taken by US guards inside Abu Ghraib, according to Taguba's report.

The Bush administration has refused to reveal images of Iraqi women detainees at Abu Ghraib, including those of women forced to expose their breasts under duress (despite the fact that these photographs have been presented to Congress) (Luke, 2004). After being imprisoned in July, UK Member of Parliament Ann Clwyd (L) confirmed an allegation of an Iraqi woman in her 70s being tethered and ridden like a donkey at Abu Ghraib and another coalition detention center. "She was kept for roughly six weeks without charge," Clwyd claimed. During that period, she was called a donkey and ridiculed" (Luke, 2004). According to Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, American forces broke into Mithal al Hassan's home in the middle of the night and arrested both her and her son. "After that, the soldiers raided the flat." Mithal was sentenced to eighty days of terror in the company of other women

captives who, like her, were subjected to assault and torture as part of a vendetta. She's found her tormentors on the internet since then" (Sgrena, 2004). Many women are hesitant to report rapes due to a culture of honor. This is demonstrated by "Selwa's" account. Selwa was transported to a detention center in Tikrit by US military soldiers in September 2003, where an American officer burned a mixture of human feces and urine in a metal container and gave Selwa a hefty club to stir it. "The fire from the saucepan felt extremely powerful on my face," she says. To demonstrate how she disturbed the excrement, she leans forward and sweeps her hands through the air. She recalls, "I grew quite fatigued." "I told the sergeant that I wouldn't be able to accomplish it." "There was another man nearby." "If you don't, I'll instruct one of the soldiers to fuck you," the sergeant said in my ear. Selwa was unable to continue the story (McKelvey, 2005).

Raghada, an Iraqi girl, claims that her mother, who was imprisoned at Abu Ghraib, was forced to eat from a toilet and was urinated on. Iman Khamas, the head of the International Occupation Watch Center, a nongovernmental organization that collects information on human rights abuses under coalition rule, says: "one former detainee had recounted the alleged rape of her cell mate in Abu Ghraib" (Ciezdlo, 2004). "She had been rendered comatose for 48 hours," the prisoner stated, according to Khamas. "She was raped 17 times in one day by Iraqi police in the face of American soldiers," she alleged (Hassan, 2004). "Nadia," another woman, claimed she was raped by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison. Painful memories that left her psychologically and physically traumatized continue to "imprison" her. Attorney Amal Kadham Swadi, one of seven female lawyers now defending women detainees at Abu Ghraib, began piecing together a picture of widespread abuse and torture by US guards against Iraqi women held without charge. She realized that this was not only true at Abu Ghraib, but was "happening all over Iraq," as she described it. "The sexualized assault and abuse perpetrated by US forces goes much beyond a few isolated individuals," says Amal Kadham Swadi (Luke, 2004). There is no way of knowing how many female captives there are. "According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 30 women were kept in Abu Ghraib in October 2003, but that number had dropped to zero by May 29, 2004." Swadi paid a visit to an inmate at the US military installation in Baghdad, Al-Khakh, and a former police compound.

"Several American soldiers had raped her, and she had tried to fight them off, and they had wounded her arm," the captive said. These and other occurrences are being kept hidden for domestic consumption in the United States. President George W. Bush has stated that these actions were the fault of a few individuals, not military strategy. However, a 53-page report obtained by *The New Yorker*, prepared by Major General Antonio M. Taguba and not intended for public release, points to the Army jail system's culpability in sexual torture. Taguba discovered multiple instances of "sadistic, flagrant, and wanton criminal abuses" at Abu Ghraib between October and December of 2003. (Hersh, 2004). Victims appear to have been silenced as part of the Bush administration's cover-up. Professor Huda Shaker al-Nuaimi, a political scientist at Baghdad University who is a volunteer for Amnesty International and is interviewing female inmates, reports that the woman who smuggled the letter out of Abu Ghraib is now presumed dead. "We suspect she was raped by a US guard and became pregnant as a result." I went to her residence after she was released from Abu Ghraib.

Her family, according to the neighbors, had relocated. "I thought she'd been murdered" (Hassan, 2004). It is commonly known that the United States has a rape culture: one in every six women in the country has been the victim of a sexual assault, either attempted or accomplished. Photos purported to be of raped Iraqi women by US forces are surfacing on the internet, with some later erased, reinforcing the climate of sexual violence. As of this writing, actual photographs can be viewed on the *La Voz de Aztlan* website, which states that many of the photographs have since been posted on pornographic websites.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- 1) The findings of the study reveal that US-led democratization has not contributed to the protection of Iraqi citizens' rights, since numerous Iraqi rights have been infringed.
- 2) Despite the US's mainly successful efforts to conceal the magnitude of US torture of Iraqi detainees, the Abu Ghraib revelations were only the top of the iceberg. In this context, the US military presence in Iraq has had a negative impact on Iraqi democratization.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that US-led democratization has not contributed to the protection of Iraqi citizens' rights, as numerous Iraqi rights have been infringed. The research also claimed that the US attempted to conceal its use of torture against Iraqi detainees, claiming that the Abu Ghraib revelations were only the tip of the iceberg.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Necessary legislations should be put in place as well as practices to enhance the protection of the rights of the Iraqi citizens.
- 2) Develop a strategy to strengthen and deepen the watch of those that are prisoners, so that they will be protected against unlawful torture.

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