

Chapter 2 – Hatching Wars Without End

In the 21st century, the Bush administration has displayed broad lists of over sixty countries where the terrorist group “Al Qaeda” is presumed to be active and hence U.S. military intervention may be required. Waging the *war on terror* has been substituted for the Cold War *containment of communism* as the rationale behind the latest invasions. This drive for U.S. world hegemony has been waged for over half a century.

A reader who has not been alert to the idea that the U.S. government has been on a drive for unlimited hegemonic power may not recall the frequency and scale of U.S. military operations since the close of World War II. So here is a partial roster of wars, large and small operated by the U.S. government since then:

PHILIPPINES (1948-54) CIA directs war against Huk Rebellion.

KOREA (1951-53) U.S. & South Korea fight China & North Korea to stalemate; Atomic bomb threat in 1950, & vs. China in 1953.

IRAN (1953) CIA overthrows democracy, installs Shah.

LEBANON (1958) Marine occupation against rebels

VIETNAM (1960-75) Fought South Vietnam revolt & North Vietnam; 1-2 million killed in longest U.S. war; atomic bomb threats in 1968 and 1969.

CUBA (1961) CIA-directed exile invasion fails.

INDONESIA (1965) Million killed in CIA-assisted army coup.

GUATEMALA (1966-67) Green Berets intervene against rebels.

CAMBODIA (1969-75) Up to 2 million killed in decade of bombing, starvation, and political chaos.

LEBANON (1982-84) Marines expel PLO and back Phalangists, Navy bombs and shells Muslim and Syrian positions.

PANAMA (1989-90) Nationalist government ousted by 27,000 soldiers, leaders arrested, 2000+ killed.

IRAQ I (1990-2003) Blockade, air strikes; 200,000+ killed in invasion of Iraq; no-fly zone, large-scale destruction of Iraqi military.

SOMALIA (1992-94) U.S.-led United Nations occupation during civil war; raids against one Mogadishu faction.

AFGHANISTAN I (1998) Attack on former CIA training camps used by Islamic fundamentalist groups alleged to have attacked embassies.¹

AFGHANISTAN II (2003-present) Invasion and occupation following 9/11 attacks. Taliban regime toppled. Hunt for Osama bin Laden remains unsuccessful. Estimated 3,485 Afghan civilians killed and 6,273 seriously injured as of July 2004.²

IRAQ II (2003-present) Invasion of Iraq by 140,000 soldiers to topple Saddam Hussein, followed by occupation and violent insurgency. 26,568 Iraqi civilians killed and 47,822 seriously injured as of August 2005.³

THE U.S. PREFERENCE FOR MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

The Department of Defense and other proponents of U.S. wars like to speak as though the U.S. wages war only as a last resort. The histories of both Vietnam and Iraq show that non-military, diplomatic procedures were available for resolving disputes with the U.S. and were rejected in both cases. Tragically, these peaceful options were spurned by top U.S. government executives.

“Vietnam, rather than being the exception, is the pattern for the future.” This forecast was made in July 1966 by the editors of *Armed Forces Management*, a Washington-based military trade journal. The editors wrote further: “Reasoning that poverty breeds violence, defense planners expect the incidence of conflict to increase in the future and be concentrated in the Southern Hemisphere – in Africa, along the littoral of the Asian subcontinent and in South America. While the United States eschews the role of global gendarme, it will help those nations, which ask for its help. The prospects then are more American involvement in some of the most primitive areas of the world.”

This prognosis was shared by the Department of Defense, which was planning for U.S. participation in future wars of intervention. In his 1966 and 1967 statements to the Congress on budgets and defense programs, Secretary of Defense McNamara discussed prospects for internal wars in various parts of the world, including Laos, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Iraq, Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Guatemala, Uruguay, the Philippines, Nigeria, the Congo, Ghana, Uganda and Burundi. The Secretary of Defense stated that civil wars in these countries would require military intervention by the United States, akin to U.S. actions in Vietnam.⁴

At one point in their quite separate histories, Ho Chi Minh, for Vietnam, and Saddam Hussein, for Iraq, each sought political accommodation, a *modus vivendi*, with the United States government.

By the end of World War II in 1945, Vietnamese nationalists had fought Japanese and French conquerors. Iraq, at the end of the 20th century, had been bloodied by wars with Iran and a failed attempt at conquest of Kuwait. Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, judged that their ambitions for economic development would be frustrated by further war making. In order to avoid conflict with the vastly superior U.S. military, both leaders proposed major changes in their relations with the U.S. Both were rebuffed by the U.S. government, which had chosen instead to dictate terms after achieving military domination.

On February 16, 1946, Ho Chi Minh addressed the U.S. in a letter to President Truman. He offered an account of the decades-long struggles of Vietnamese nationalists for independence, and concluded with a proposal to the U.S.:

What we ask has been graciously granted to the Philippines. Like the Philippines our goal is full independence and full cooperation with the United States. We will do our best to make this independence and cooperation profitable to the whole world.

I am, Dear Mr. President,

Respectfully yours,

Ho Chi Minh ⁵

President Truman did not reply, or even acknowledge, Ho Chi Minh’s proposal.

Now in 2004, we learn that Saddam Hussein too had sought a political accommodation with the U.S., in this case by means of “back channel” approaches to the U.S. government.⁶

In February 2003 Hassan al-Obeidi, chief of foreign operations of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, met with Imad Hage, a Lebanese-American businessman in his Beirut office. Mr. Obeidi told Mr. Hage that Iraq would make deals to avoid war, including helping in the Mideast peace process. He said, "If this is about oil, we will talk about U.S. oil concessions... If this is about weapons of mass destruction, let the Americans send over their people..." Mr. Obeidi said Iraq could agree to hold elections within the next two years. Further, Tahir Jalil Habbush, Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, in a showing of cooperation and concession to President Bush, offered to hand over to the U.S. Abdul Rahman Yasin who had been indicted in the U.S. in connection with the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

These proposals were passed on to senior Pentagon officials including Richard N. Perle, an influential Pentagon advisor. Perle, said *The New York Times* account, sought authorization from the C.I.A. to meet with the Iraqis, but the U.S. officials declined to pursue this channel saying they had already engaged in contacts with Baghdad. Said Perle, "The message was 'Tell them that we will see them in Baghdad.' " *The New York Times* reporting included no indication of State Department activity with respect to these Iraqi overtures that apparently had the approval of Saddam Hussein.⁷

In Vietnam, and again in Iraq, the U.S. government preferred to seek power by military means. The Vietnam War cost the lives of 58,000 U.S. servicemen & women. The Vietnamese suffered millions of dead. The toll of deaths and grave injuries taken in Iraq increases daily.

In both Vietnam and Iraq the American government chose war over diplomacy despite the high cost of military operations, both in lives and money. The power extension allowed by the war—including the construction of new military bases abroad—was ample reward. There was also a windfall for the companies supplying military goods and services, Halliburton being a major beneficiary from the war in Iraq. In 2000, the Pentagon's "Base Structure Report" accounts for more than 512 U.S. bases on foreign soil. These bases project U.S. military might into additional foreign lands, preparing for future engagements, and thereby increasing the power of the DoD and the White House.

PLANTING BASES WORLDWIDE

From the middle of the twentieth century until 2004, U.S. wars in Vietnam and Iraq have played a central part in the drive by American state-corporate managers to extend their hegemonic* control. The U.S. war in Vietnam lasted for 15 years and U.S. military operations in and around Iraq, at this writing, have continued for more than ten years. These wars are now being used as the rationale for Pentagon planning of elaborate new military bases and power extension.

What is the cost of wars without end?

The United States military operation in Vietnam sought to overcome the political support of the National Liberation Front by means of high-technology-applied destructive power. U.S. forces spent \$1.8 billion on heavy-construction programs in Vietnam, including about 1,500 separate projects: 6 new deep-water ports; 8 shallow-draft ports; 8 jet air bases; 80 auxiliary airfields; hundreds of miles of pipelines and roads; barracks for more than 600,000 men. At peak, the United States contractors operated

* hegemony – Leadership, preponderant influence or authority, esp. of a government or state – hegemonic, adj. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, G. and C. Merriam Co., 1949.

enough earth-moving, construction, and concrete plants to dig the Suez Canal in 18 months and surface the New Jersey Turnpike every 30 days; a new “Pentagon West” housed the general staff; the Cam Ranh Bay harbor development cost \$110 million and the allied depot was slated to be the largest in the world, with 3 million square feet of covered and open storage space.⁸

All told, the U.S. spent about \$400,000 per enemy killed.⁹ Clearly, the technological and military resources expended in Vietnam were governed by the understanding that “money is no object”.

Currently the bill for the war in Iraq is running at more than \$200 billion.¹⁰

TOWARD HEGEMONY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND BEYOND

In a highly informative dispatch to the *Washington Post*, February 9, 2002, Vernon Loeb reported on the expanding array of U.S. military bases in Central Asia.

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan -- In a remote corner of Central Asia, in a country that didn't even exist a decade ago, the U.S. Air Force is building a base that within months will be home to 3,000 personnel and nearly two dozen American and allied aircraft ...

... It embodies what senior U.S. defense officials say is a major commitment to maintain not just air operations over Afghanistan for the foreseeable future but also a robust military presence in the region well after the war...

“I think it's fair to say there will be a long-term presence here well beyond the end of hostilities,” said Air Force Col. Billy Montgomery, commander of a team of engineers, technicians and planners that is proceeding apace with construction of a tent city, surgical ward, gym, hot showers and kitchen facilities at the airport...

...U.S. officials say the deployment of American forces eastward from the Gulf to the doorstep of China since Sept. 11 also underscores a significant shift in the Bush administration's thinking about the role of the military in projecting American power...

...“America will have a continuing interest and presence in Central Asia of a kind that we could not have dreamed of before,” Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the House International Relations Committee on Wednesday. [Feb 6, 2002]”

Agreements for establishing or using preexisting bases were also made with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Oman and Kuwait.

... more than 50,000 U.S. military personnel now live and work on ships and bases stretching from Turkey to Oman and eastward to the Manas airport, 19 miles outside of Bishkek and 300 miles from the Chinese border.

...Manas ... is a functioning international airport with a long runway originally built for Soviet bombers, navigation aids that are up to

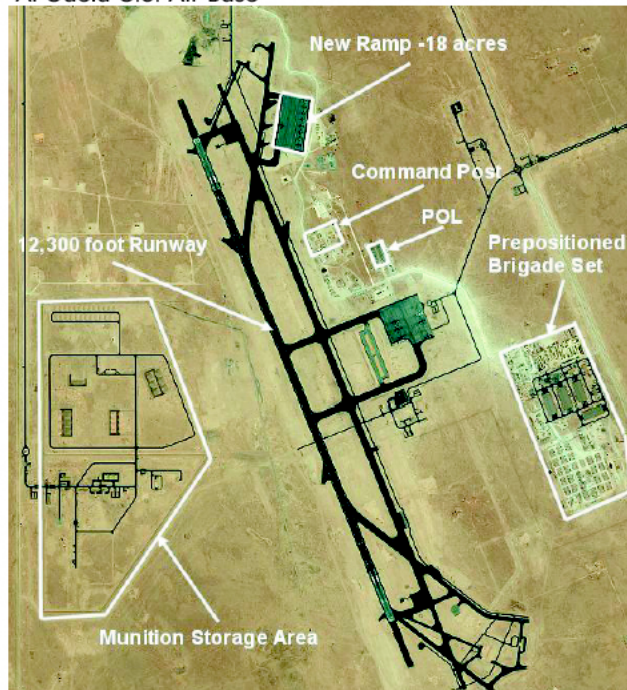
commercial standards, good fuel facilities and a large ramp for parking aircraft. ...

“I don’t see anything that we’re doing that indicates that we’re going to be here for three months,” [Air Force Brig. Gen. Christopher] Kelly said. “I see what we’re doing and the kind of guidance I’m getting from higher headquarters that indicate that we’ll be here for a long period of time. How long, I don’t know.”

The scale of this worldwide campaign is revealed in the three maps that follow. The first focuses on Afghanistan and is aptly titled, “Preparing For A Long Stay” (First published, Jan 8, 2002.)¹¹ The second map shows U.S. deployments in the array of countries in the Middle East and Central Asia.¹² The Central Asia base expansions locate U.S. military power within 300 miles of China. U.S. airpower is amplified by the aircraft and facilities on the island of Diego Garcia, a British military base island in the Indian Ocean that is shared with the U.S.

The third map is based on an aerial photograph of the U.S. military base at Al Udeid in Qatar. The second map of U.S. deployments locates Al Udeid airbase at the southeast corner of Arabia. This particular base has special importance as it includes two runways, each more than two miles in length, plus an array of storage and command facilities that are suited for a military command center for the whole Central Asia area. The Al Udeid base facilities are sufficient to equip the major part of an entire armored division. The implied strategy is that the troops can be readily flown in to a target area and could quickly take control and operate all the major equipment that otherwise would require a long period for transportation from the United States.¹³

Al Udeid U.S. Air Base



Source: Digital Globe June 13, 2002

These U.S. bases represent a huge investment and will not be abandoned voluntarily. For these bases allow the Pentagon to project ever more force over more territory and hence set the stage for numerous acts of regime change and their subsequent guerilla wars.

UNIFORMED FORCES AND CORPORATE WARRIORS

The Pentagon's *Directorate for Information Operations and Reports* gives us the following information on U.S. Active Duty Military Personnel as of March 31, 2003:

US Active Duty Military Personnel	
US and Territories	1,161,229
Total Europe	117,883
Total - Former Soviet Union	167
Total - East Asia and Pacific	98,624
Total - North Africa, Near East, and South Asia	17,279
Total - Sub-Saharan Africa	377
Total - Western Hemisphere	1,721
Total - Undistributed	17,237
Total Iraqi Freedom	269,363

But these “U.S. Active Duty Military Personnel” are not the whole military force that the U.S. government deploys directly. The other part are the “estimated 10-20,000 “private contractors” working overseas for the Defense and State departments, many of them in combat zones.”¹⁴ National Public Radio, on November 7, 2003 detailed some of the activity of “Private Military Firms” that have been operating with “an estimated \$100 billion a year in revenue.” “Private contractors,” NPR reported, “now help the U.S. military and State departments with everything from security and satellite mapping to laundry and food service.” NPR’s Eric Westervelt reported that “not all the jobs are mundane”... “DynCorp employees do everything from guarding Afghan President Hamid Karzai under a State Department contract, to making vaccines for smallpox and anthrax.”

Peter Singer, author of *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* detailed for the first time many of the salient features of “the rise of the privatized military industry.” Indeed, the appendix to that book includes a listing of 60 Private Military Firms and their websites. His account of these firms even includes a detailed listing of the military equipment (and cost in U.S. dollars) for one of these firms engaged to fulfill a particular contract.¹⁵

The corporate warriors also take casualties that are rarely reported in the news accounts of U.S. military personnel. Thus, Mr. Westervelt reported that “slain contractors are not counted in the official tally of the U.S. war dead. We don’t know how many private contractors have died in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere because the companies and federal agencies won’t disclose that.” Characteristically, reported Westervelt, (NPR) “The US State Department and DynCorp officials repeatedly declined to be interviewed on the record, saying the contracts don’t authorize them to talk to the media.”

As Charles Lewis, of the Center for Public Integrity observes: “We don’t have transparency, bottom line. In the 21st Century in the United States, we’re giving out ... billions of dollars in contracts and we don’t know who’s getting the money, how much it’ll cost and how many years it’ll take and what essentially they’re doing and even who are these people. We’re kept in the dark ... And the State Department, in six months of Freedom of Information requests, did not give us anything.”¹⁶

The invention of a privatized military industry, paid for by American citizens but not accountable to them at all, had an important start with President Kennedy’s anti-Castro Bay of Pigs effort. Military-political plans for the United States were aimed at being prepared for fighting “two and a half” wars at one time. Apart from a nuclear war, these were to include a conventional European war, as with the U.S.S.R., a Southeast Asian war and a lesser military engagement in Latin America (hence the one half). Under President Nixon these goals were revised downward to “one and a half” wars, in addition to a nuclear exchange. That was the military expression of the U.S. national policy goals that reached out for Pax Americana and “world hegemony.”

These confident estimates were shaken twenty-five years later by the failure to score a military win against the guerrillas and the armed forces of impoverished countries in Indochina. One of the major byproducts of the U.S. war in Vietnam was a greater readiness among many Americans to question the idea that unlimited military power was purchasable at will by the government of the United States.

But, since 9/11 this popular questioning of the privatization of the military and of the ability to deploy brute force against insurgencies has been deemed “unpatriotic”. If we forget the lessons of history, are we doomed to repeat them?

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Many nationalist and under-class revolts in less developed countries have relied on guerrilla warfare. Such tactics were also part of Europe's military effort against occupation forces during World War II; in Ireland the method was used against British rule. The history of guerrilla warfare indicates that *three elements determine the success of this technique: first, the existence of a group of indigenous people prepared to make major personal sacrifices on behalf of a common cause; second, support for the guerrilla fighters by a population or part of a government; and, third, the ability of the guerrilla forces to look like the noncombatants surrounding them.* Wherever these three conditions are met, the history of guerrilla warfare shows that no available military technology has been able to overcome the guerrilla forces militarily, regardless of the scale of military power that was applied—unless the occupying power employed the instruments of genocide and total population transfer. This has been the case where guerrillas have operated in small as well as large countries, and against opponents with a relatively moderate tradition of using military power, as well as against opponents with a tradition of using military power as a terrorist weapon. Guerrilla techniques have been successful against opponents with rudimentary as well as sophisticated military technology.¹⁷

During the last decades, major armed forces have been repeatedly frustrated by guerrilla-type operations that fulfill the three conditions noted above. This was also starkly revealed in the frustration of the German Army during the Second World War against the Yugoslav guerrillas, and by the frustration of British armed forces in their opposition to the guerrilla organization of the Irish Republicans.¹⁸

U.S. Forces were similarly frustrated during the Vietnam war, which caused many Americans to question the idea that unlimited military power was purchasable at will by the government of the United States. For example, initial predictions claimed that a few weeks of bombing in North Vietnam would end the war. However, the war continued despite daily American bombing that exceeded the tonnages in Europe during WWII. One of the “neoconservative” goals for the current war on Iraq has been to shake off the legacy of Vietnam. However, the laws of guerilla warfare will hold in Iraq just as they did in Vietnam.

THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

There is no question that in every department of weapons technology, American armed forces in Iraq, as in Vietnam, enjoy overwhelming superiority.

By 1969, U.S. forces had bombarded North and South Vietnam with *3 million tons* of high explosives (80 percent in the South). This compares with 2 million tons of high explosives dropped during the Second World War in the European and Pacific theaters of operations combined. American soldiers in Vietnam carried six times the firepower of G.I.'s in the Second World War, and U.S. forces spent about \$400,000 per enemy killed (including 75 bombs and 150 artillery shells per corpse).¹⁹

The guerrilla opponent in Vietnam demonstrated military staying power despite the fact that he possessed few heavy weapons, no navy, no air force, and nothing like the technically elaborate military and industrial infrastructure that supported American and allied armed forces.²⁰

During the long Vietnam War, American armed forces did not stint on research and development for counter guerrilla operations. The array of new-weapon development to facilitate the counter guerrilla operations in Vietnam ranged from simple items like new lightweight weapons, footgear and protective clothing to elaborate devices to “smell” a possible opponent concealed in a jungle, antipersonnel bombs of diverse sorts with highly destructive effect, and the operation of great fleets of helicopters. The inability of the most elaborately equipped and research-supported armed force in the world to overcome the guerrilla forces of a small, poor country helps to define a limit on the capabilities of military technology.²¹

Even as there have been widespread complaints from the troops in Iraq that they lack basic equipment, the U.S. military has continued to pour money into high tech hardware. While U.S. troops were welding scrap metal onto their under armored Humvee vehicles, the American military has deployed robots “to detect and destroy remote controlled bombs that have been planted against troops and convoys ...” and spent \$5 million to buy 20 *packbot systems*, “small robots with acoustical sensors used to support missions against snipers”.²²

There is, however, only so much that technology can do. In *The Permanent War Economy* I stated that to overcome a guerrilla opponent, the elements of successful guerilla warfare, (a group that is motivated to die for their cause; support for the group among members of the population and; the ability of group members to blend in with the surrounding population) must be removed.

If the surrounding population is destroyed, then there is no “sea” in which the guerrillas can “swim.” In Vietnam the United States finally turned to removing or destroying the populations in areas under guerrilla control. The breakthrough to a new level of frightfulness in the pursuit of power in Vietnam is illustrated by the destruction of the countryside by bombardment and chemical defoliation and the concentration of Vietnamese peasants into towns and cities where they could be more readily controlled.^{23 24}

Early in 1965, I made a point of visiting the Secretary of Defense to call his attention directly, to the characteristics that make guerrilla warfare succeed, and to warn him of the prospect of a military “non-win” for U.S. forces in Vietnam, as a consequence of the “counter-insurgency” operations. It is important to understand why such analyses and the evidence supporting them were disregarded. On one count, the Pentagon directorate was confident that they could invent new military and social technology that would overcome the advantages specific to a guerrilla army. But a second factor was also operative: a will to succeed against guerrilla warfare that was so strong as to compel the operators of the U.S. war of intervention to overlook the inherent advantages of the guerrilla fighters and to seek to overwhelm them either in terms of numbers or

firepower or both. The Pentagon chiefs deceived themselves and the nation about U.S. military capability in Vietnam.²⁵

In *Pentagon Capitalism* I cited the 1964 case of mortar attacks conducted against U.S. air bases:²⁶

The military operations at that time, though small in scale and limited in number, gave the clue to the guerrilla form of the military-political method being used by the Vietcong. In 1964, various mortar attacks against U.S. air bases clearly came from populated farm areas. Subsequent search operations by South Vietnamese and U.S. forces failed to disclose any trace of the mortars, the men who carried them, or the containers in which mortar shells were transported to the site. The disappearance of these men and their materiel in that area, without a trace, was possible only because the population was shielding them. It was physically impossible to move these weapons into that area, mount them, fire them, dismantle them and move away without being visible to a considerable number of local peasants. Evidently, the local peasants preferred to protect the guerrilla operators.²⁷

These attacks bear a striking resemblance to those that took place in Iraq during November 2003.

The attackers used four donkey carts disguised as hay wagons to haul homemade multiple rocket-launchers close to several of the most heavily defended sites in the city, including the 20-story Palestine and Sheraton hotels on the banks of the Tigris River, and the Oil Ministry, which manages the resources on which Iraq's hopes for resurgent oil wealth depend. ...

The donkeys were tethered to trees, with the rockets inserted inside homemade launchers linked to car batteries and time-fuses, and hidden under hay. But these "contraptions," as one American officer called them, were armed with powerful battlefield rockets. Several feet long and as big around as a fire hose, they were said by American officers to have been either Soviet-made 107-millimeter or Brazilian-made 122-millimeter rockets, two types that were stockpiled by Mr. Hussein's army before the American invasion. They have a range of up to 10 miles.

Only luck appeared to have averted far more serious damage. At least 50 of the rockets failed to fire. Those that did struck with great force. Four holes as big as soccer balls were punched in the outer walls of the Palestine Hotel, throwing concrete chunks and glass into three upper floors and filling corridors with thick, grimy dust.

At the adjacent Sheraton, a rocket severed the cables of an external, glass-encased elevator and sent it plunging to the ground, smashing the glass roof of the atrium and sending shards showering into the lobby. Miraculously, there were no injuries.

An upper floor of the Oil Ministry caught fire, but there were no reported injuries in a building that, unlike the hotels filled with foreign journalists

and other outsiders, was virtually deserted at the start of a Muslim prayer day.²⁸

The three conditions required for successful guerilla warfare are reinforced when there is a population that is subjected to great oppression and deprivation in living conditions. This is precisely what has been taking place in Iraq.

Useful details are personally offered by Patrick Dillon, a former U.S. Army medic in Vietnam, now a filmmaker and writer, who visited Iraq during 2003. He calls attention to the fact that the city of Baghdad prior to the 2003 invasion had sixteen sewage treatment plants, of which fourteen were bombed out. Such plants require reliable electric power and chemicals by which sewage can be treated with chlorine. In the absence of this capability, 3 billion gallons of untreated sewage move into the Tigris River every day.

Drinking water is sold by the bottle and price gouging is a common practice. For the vast majority of people there's nothing left to drink but polluted water, therefore infectious disease spreads rapidly and there is a notable increase in infant mortality.

Dillon reports that the people of Baghdad are a population reduced to a stone-age economy – but without a state; therefore without an administrative machine to regulate even the most elemental conditions required for an orderly life. Dillon sums up the condition with the judgment that the population of Baghdad is being reduced to the image once formulated by Pol Pot for the people of Cambodia. Remember, this is being done to a population that had been taught that they were the inheritors of creators of modern culture – the written word and major branches of science and engineering.²⁹

There is no comprehensive estimate of the scale of Iraq's weaponry stockpiles available to guerilla forces. One indicator of what may be involved is related to the Iraqi government's official debt to the Russian government. Iraq owes Russia about \$8 billion (Associated Press, Dec 22nd, 2003). It is likely that the debt owed to Russia was mainly for the purchase of weapons of every sort produced by the Soviet military industry.

"The CIA has estimated that the weapons dumps found so far in Iraq hold 600,000 tons of all kinds of ammunition and weapons." The Iraqi government's weapons dumps have also included "several hundred shoulder-fired missiles, many in weapons dumps the location of which remain secret." ... "The American military is pressing the search for the missiles, offering a reward of \$500 for each one. The Pentagon has been surprised by how many of the weapons, mostly Russian designed SA-7's the Iraqi's have turned in ... Altogether, 317 shoulder-fired missiles have been handed over to the military since May 1, (2003) according to unclassified United States military figures. The military has paid more than \$100,000 in rewards the figures show."³⁰

While "American commanders insist they are making headway in bringing order to Iraq, ... the indications are that the fight will be difficult and prolonged." The American commanders indicate that "most ambushes are initiated by a combination of rocket propelled grenades or improvised explosive devices..." The report continues, "The use of small-arms fire and rocket propelled grenade attacks, command-detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and mortar rounds continues to increase; especially the frequency of attacks which utilize command detonated improvised explosive devices daisy-chained together, buried or hidden along roads or highways." (*New York Times*, October 19th 2003).

A dispatch from Iraq to the *New York Times* by John F. Burns on December 26, 2003 included the following, "as fought by the soldiers, this war has little in common with the glories memorialized in the camp's name, drawn from Saint-Mare Église, the Normandy town where the 82nd Airborne paratroopers dropped on D-Day in June 1944. Here the

enemy is shadowy and fleeting, and prepared to use any tactic however brutal to kill and wound Americans..."This camp is at the heart of the so-called Sunni Triangle known as such for its domination by Sunni Muslims, who remain Mr. Hussein's strongest loyalists. About 90% of all insurgent attacks have been in this area.

Along Highway 1, the expressway stretching westward past Falluja, shepherds wave at passing American convoys, then use doctored cell-phones to detonate 122-mm artillery shells fashioned into crude bombs and buried in the median strip or under overpasses. Recently, troops at Camp Saint-Mare said a man sent his eight year old son to throw a grenade into the back of a Humvee, severely wounding an American soldier.

John F. Burns reported that most soldiers "seem to think it is winnable although not perhaps for several years, longer if ordinary Iraqis keep denying the American-led coalition intelligence on the insurgency. ... The soldiers' talk abounded with accounts of near-misses, of grenades tossed out of seemingly friendly crowds, of roadside bombs exploding beside Humvees." All these reports are characteristic of the experience of American soldiers confronting a guerilla opponent.

Post traumatic stress disorder is the name that professional psychiatrists gave to the pattern of suffering that was so widespread among U.S. Vietnam war veterans. This included recurring anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares and depression severe enough to disrupt a soldier's life, and is often suffered long after the military experience is over. Soldiers suffered alienation from both intimates and from the world at large. Soldiers in Iraq have not gone unscathed.

Though military researchers have estimated that twenty-five percent of the soldiers on the front lines of a war will experience combat stress, it seems possible that for Iraq the numbers will be even greater...

'These troops know no frontline,' says Alfonso Batres, the clinical psychologist in charge of readjustment counseling services for the 206 Vet Centers around the country. 'Its just like Vietnam. They have to be on guard with everyone; they're always facing an unknown. In some ways, fighting a conventional war is a lot easier on the psyche.'³¹

Back at home, soldiers with *post traumatic stress disorder* have troubles adjusting to civilian life. Thus, as journalist Sarah Corbett has noted, sharp noises such as a dropped cafeteria tray or a backfiring car can cause these men and women to react as though under attack, diving for cover or searching for assailants. The full extent of such damage done to U.S. soldiers who have served in Iraq, will not be known until long after the troops come home.

As America's state managers devised military plans for world hegemony, they came to believe that the American production machine could deliver invincible military power that they could wield anywhere on earth. That included the world's largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, whose very existence under their control has been judged to be a fearsome instrument for power wielding. All the while, American state managers were unable (unwilling) to contemplate limits to their military power. To their dismay, their war in Vietnam was a failure. But they continue to pursue the same strategy in Iraq. Their multi-billion dollar budgets were no match for the weapons of guerilla warfare. But polite discussion has not permitted confronting these realities in American schools and the media.

While the terrible costs of this U.S. drive for global hegemony can often seem far away, viewed through the lens of a compliant media, half a century of permanent war economy has wrought a heavy toll close to home: in the shape of deindustrialization and the hollowing out

of U.S. infrastructure. We will explore this damage, as well as possible strategies for change, in the following chapters.

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- ¹ *International A.N.S.W.E.R.*, “A Century of U.S. Military Interventions”.
- ² www.unknownnews.net/casualties.html
- ³ www.unknownnews.net/casualties.html
- ⁴ Seymour Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism*, (Mcgraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 139-140.
- ⁵ *Vietnam: The Definitive Documentation of Human Decisions*, ed. Gareth Porter (E.M. Coleman, 1979), vol. 1, p. 95. This volume contains the full text of the February 16, 1946 letter by Ho Chi Minh, cited in *After Capitalism*, p 116.
- ⁶ “Iraq Said to Have Tried to Reach Last-Minute Deal to Avert War”, *New York Times*, November 6, 2003.
- ⁷ Idem. See also Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*, (Harper Collins, 2004), pp. 175-176.
- ⁸ Seymour Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism*, (Mcgraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 143-144.
- ⁹ Ibid.
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