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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to be here and delighted to be asked to share my views with you on this important topic. I teach Middle East politics at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University. I have lived in the Middle East and have traveled extensively in the region. I have been to Iraq twice, most recently last summer, in August 2003. My research includes following Arab attitudes and opinions toward the United States, media issues and public diplomacy.

My remarks today address the following questions:

1. What events caused the change in Iraqi attitudes toward the US and the CPA from the fall of Saddam's regime to the present?
2. Related to this, what factors caused the security environment to deteriorate?
3. Why did Coalition and US government public diplomacy efforts fail to influence the Iraqi public?
4. And, more generally, the overall question of Iraqi and Arab hearts and minds and US Public Diplomacy.

First, it is important to understand accurately Iraqi reactions to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the US presence in the country. Although the majority of Iraqis were delighted to be rid of the Hussein regime and many were and are thankful to the US for accomplishing this, Iraqis were, from the beginning, ambivalent about a foreign military presence in the country and/or an American role in Iraqi politics.¹ The subsequent course of events -- a series of policy mistakes, poor decisions, and the failure to deliver on promises and meet basic obligations -- as well as high expectations on the part of many Iraqis -- have led to the current troubling situation with regard to Iraqi hearts and minds. As a result, it would not be unreasonable to say today that the

¹ A number of prominent individuals who spoke before the war about Iraqis welcoming American troops mischaracterized the complexity of the situation. For example, Fouad Ajami, a Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies said this to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 31, 2002 about how we will be greeted in Iraq: "We shall be mobbed. We shall be mobbed when we go there, by people who are eager for deliverance from the tyranny and the great big prison of Saddam Hussein. ... *We shall be greeted, I think, in Baghdad and Basra with kites and boom boxes*, and we should understand this. And the embarrassment for those in Nablus and Cairo who will then protesting -- will be protesting an American war or an Anglo-American war, whatever label you put on that war, will be enormous." Kanan Makiya, an Iraqi Professor at Brandeis University and a member of the Iraqi National Congress made similar comments before the war. According to George Packer in his article "Dreaming of Democracy" (*New York Times*, March 2, 2003), "When Makiya and two other Iraqis were invited to the Oval Office in January, he told President Bush that invading American troops would be greeted with 'sweets and flowers.'" The problem with Makiya and Ajami's naively optimistic predictions (aside from the fact that they were, in part, politically driven) is that they completely failed to recognize the possibility of two propositions simultaneously being true: 1) Iraqis are happy that Saddam is no longer in power and 2) Iraqis are unhappy with an occupation and foreign troops in their country. The course of the occupation -- how things have gone so far - has only made matters worse. Both propositions, however, are simultaneously true: Iraqis are happy that Saddam is no longer in power but they are also - simultaneously - unhappy with the American presence and occupation. Vice President Cheney quoted Ajami's views about how American troops would be greeted in Baghdad at the VFW 103rd National Convention on August 26, 2002. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>

The Army War College's Report about post-war Iraq (completed in February 2003) was quite perceptive, in comparison. Entitled *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, the report presciently stated that, "Long-term gratitude is unlikely and suspicion of US motives will increase as the occupation continues. A force initially viewed as liberators can rapidly be relegated to the status of invaders should an unwelcome occupation continue for a prolonged time. Occupation problems may be especially acute if the United States must implement the bulk of the occupation itself rather than turn these duties over to a postwar international force." (p. 18) also see p. 35. Available at: <http://www.gulfinvestigations.net/IMG/pdf/reconirc.pdf>

Similar to this more nuanced assessment, when asked in the recent CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll (Nationwide Poll of Iraq) how they viewed Coalition forces at the time of the invasion, Iraqis were equally split with the same percentage of Iraqis viewing Coalition forces as liberators as those who viewed them as occupiers (43%). 9% said as "both equally" and 4% responded "don't know." When asked how they viewed Coalition forces at the time of the poll (late March and April 2004), 71% said as occupiers, 19% said as liberators, 8% said as both and 2% responded with "don't know." See the results of the entire poll at: See the entire poll at: <http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/2004/WORLD/meast/04/28/iraq.poll/iraq.poll.4.28.pdf>

war for Iraqi hearts and minds might already be lost. I apologize for being direct, but only an honest appraisal of the situation is likely to be of any benefit to you.

Security:

The number one issue in Iraq immediately after the war in April 2003 continues to be the number one issue in Iraq today -- fourteen months later: *security*. Security *is key* – it is foundational to any public diplomacy efforts as well as post-war reconstruction, investment, commerce, civic involvement, education and everyday life. Every element of Iraqi society is dependent upon the maintenance of security. The *absence* of security acts as a constraint or bottleneck on what can be achieved.

The failure to establish basic law and order is the leading criticism Iraqis make of the CPA and the occupation. There is universal agreement across a wide spectrum of Iraqis – from those favorable to the US to those critical of America, from religious as well as secular elements, from Sunni, Shiite, Kurd, and Turkmen – that security is the main problem facing the country.² This is demonstrated by public statements as well as all of the available polling data.³

² Prime Minister Allawi, President Al Yawer, and Adnan Pachaci (all friends of the US) have stated that security is the primary issue. Allawi made this clear on June 6, 2004, after unveiling the new cabinet, when he said that establishing “a state of law and order” was the first priority. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani also places security as the top priority. He said that the new Iraqi government faces four main tasks: “secure a UN resolution that returns full sovereignty to Iraqis, *return security to the country and put an end to organized crime*, provide public services and alleviate suffering and prepare for elections to take place in early 2005.” See “Full text of Iraqi PM’s address,” BBC News, June 1, 2004 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3767521.stm] and “Sistani gives cautious backing to Iraq Government,” Middle East Online, June 3, 2004 [<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=10160>]

³ See the State Department Study of Iraqi Public Opinion (December 31-January 7), figures provided in *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, Brookings. [www.brookings.edu/iraqindex] June 9, 2004. According to the CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll conducted in March and April 2004, 70% of respondents said that they had been afraid to go outside of their homes during the day for safety reasons. The figure was the same for 2003. 95% of respondents said that they had been afraid to go outside of their home at night for safety reasons. That is up from 88% last year (2003). The “key findings” of the poll are available at:

We must precisely understand what is meant by security however. When Iraqis speak of security they are *not* primarily referring to attacks on coalition forces or the targeting of US soldiers.⁴ *They are referring to the safety of ordinary Iraqis in the pursuit of everyday affairs.* Naturally, Iraqis are more concerned about their own safety than the safety of American soldiers, just as Americans pay more attention to lost American lives than to Iraqi casualties.

The failure of the CPA to provide security against car-jackings, kidnappings, armed robbery, abduction, rape and every kind of theft and banditry imaginable -- in addition to the insecurity caused by attacks on coalition forces -- is the primary complaint most Iraqis have of the occupation. Iraqis simply do not feel safe and many, quite possibly the majority, hold the CPA and the US responsible, as the occupying power, for this situation. I experienced this myself in Baghdad last summer and I see and read about this in the Arabic and English press (print and television) daily.⁵

Causes of the Present Security Situation in Iraq:

The unwillingness or inability of coalition forces to stop the widespread looting following the fall of the regime was a terrible beginning that produced a feeling that no one was in charge, encouraged criminal elements and made the country's reconstruction exceedingly more difficult

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-04-28-gallup-iraq-findings.htm>. Note that somewhat different figures are provided at: <http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/2004/WORLD/meast/04/28/iraq.poll/iraq.poll.4.28.pdf>

⁴ The US media is understandably primarily concerned with attacks on US and Coalition forces and American civilian contractors. As a result, the security situation for ordinary Iraqis is not sufficiently conveyed in much of the US media.

⁵ See Samer Shehata, "Streets of Fear" in *Salon* on November 12, 2003. See http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2003/11/12/fear/index_np.html

as a result of the pillaging of public utilities (e.g. water and electricity) and ministries.⁶ The decisions to disband the Iraqi army and police force after the fall of Baghdad have also directly contributed to the continuing security problem in multiple ways.

The wholesale and immediate disbanding of Iraq's army and police produced two negative outcomes: 1) the country was left without the institutions most capable of maintaining law and order (security personnel familiar with local communities and neighborhoods, fluent in Arabic and knowledgeable of Iraqi culture) and 2) thousands of disenfranchised men, trained in military and security operations, now without jobs or income, unsure of their future in the new Iraq and embittered at the CPA and the US.

A more narrow elimination of Saddam loyalists in both institutions is likely to have proven more effective at maintaining security in the post-war environment. This could have been coupled with (1) the continuous weeding out of individuals at lower levels suspected of abuses under the previous regime; (2) the complete overhaul of both institutions with the aim of fundamentally

⁶ Many have stated that the damage done to Iraqi infrastructure as a result of looting, in Ministries, public utilities and especially the electricity sector, was more severe than the damage caused by the war. Andrew Natsios, the head of USAID, said as much on March 17, 2004 in a briefing at the Washington Foreign Press Center. Natsios said, "In the infrastructure, we had a slower start mainly because we thought we were dealing with, basically, a minimal amount of damage from the war, and damage, certainly. The war damaged very little. *The larger damage was from the looting, which is a serious problem*, but the biggest problem was the lack of maintenance over the last 20 years." See <http://www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2004/sp040317.html>. See also the interview with James Fallows (of the *Atlantic Monthly*) about this and other topics. When asked about the long-term consequences of the looting, Fallows says, "The immediate tangible consequences were to make a mockery of the precision bombing campaign the U.S. had actually carried out. I forget the actual statistic, *but something like 10 times as much of the power grid was destroyed in the couple of weeks after the war as was destroyed by U.S. bombing during the war. The bombing had been very careful; the looting was very indiscriminate*. So all the things that were going wrong then, in terms of hospitals being stripped bare, schools not being able to run, no electric power -- that was from the looting, not from the war. The intangible effect was that, instead of having this postwar sense that, "A new cop is in town, things are in order now, don't dare challenge the U.S.," there was instead what one person described as a magic moment where people realized that nobody was in control and there was disorder. And it has spilled over to the security situation since then." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/invasion/interviews/fallows.html>

changing their cultures and character and; (3) infusing the army and police with newly trained recruits.

Insufficient troop presence⁷ – from the beginning – coupled with the wrong types of forces – (combat soldiers as opposed to trained peacekeepers and military police) -- has also negatively impacted the security situation.⁸ Experts on post-conflict situations have stated that, based on past peace-keeping missions, the ratio of troops/peace-keepers to civilians in Iraq is woefully inadequate. According to James Dobbins, an international security specialist who held senior positions under four US presidents and supervised operations in Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo and Bosnia, the ratio of troops to civilians in post-conflict situations should be approximately 2 peacekeepers for every 100 civilians. The ratio of foreign troops to civilians in Iraq is presently

⁷ General Eric Shinseki (at the time, the Army Chief of Staff) said in February 2003, in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, that “several hundred thousand soldiers” would be needed for a post-war occupying force, based on his experience in post-war Bosnia. Several days later on February 27, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, contradicted Shinseki in front of the House Budget Committee stating that his estimate was “wildly off the mark” and that fewer troops would be needed. Wolfowitz continued, claiming, “I am reasonably certain that [the Iraqi people] will greet us as liberators, and that will help us to keep requirements down.” “See AP, “Army Chief: Forces to Occupy Iraq Massive,” in *USA Today*, February 25, 2003 [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-02-25-iraq-us_x.htm] and Eric Schmitt, “Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force’s Size,” *New York Times*, February 28, 2003. Schmitt writes the following: “In his testimony, Mr. Wolfowitz ticked off several reasons why he believed a much smaller coalition peacekeeping force than General Shinseki envisioned would be sufficient to police and rebuild postwar Iraq. *He said there was no history of ethnic strife in Iraq*, as there was in Bosnia or Kosovo. He said Iraqi civilians would welcome an American-led liberation force that “stayed as long as necessary but left as soon as possible,” but would oppose a long-term occupation force. And he said that nations that oppose war with Iraq would likely sign up to help rebuild it. “I would expect that even countries like France will have a strong interest in assisting Iraq in reconstruction,” Mr. Wolfowitz said. He added that many Iraqi expatriates would likely return home to help.” (my emphasis). Anyone with a passing knowledge of 20th century Iraqi history would know that ethnic and sectarian tension has been one of the defining characteristics of the country’s politics. Interestingly, a December 2002 article from the BBC also states that “Mr Wolfowitz thinks ordinary Iraqis would greet American troops as liberators.” The idea that American troops would be greeted as liberators was apparently in circulation for some time and repeated frequently. and See Brian Mason, “Analysis: Is Wolfowitz Waiting for War?,” December 3, 2002 available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2539443.stm

⁸ See *Establishing the Rule of Law in Iraq* (Special Report 104) April 2003, United States Institute of Peace. The report states: “As in previous peace operations, public order and basic rule of law functions will have to be performed by coalition military forces in the initial phase of the post-conflict period. But regular soldiers are neither trained nor equipped to undertake such duties ... The U.S. military is particularly ill equipped to perform post conflict duties as it lacks a constabulary forces such as Italy’s Carabinieri and France’s Gendarmerie Nationale. These standing forces have characteristics of both military and police. ...The are trained to maintain public order ...conduct investigations, make arrests, direct traffic, and perform other police functions.” p. 11.

less than 1 to 100 (it is approximately .64 to 100 to be more exact). In order for the appropriate ratio to be met, approximately 460,000 troops would have to be in Iraq (assuming, the country's population to be 23 million).⁹ In Iraq, we have been asking too few troops, trained for combat operations and not peacekeeping missions, to act as peacekeepers, something they are not well equipped to do.

Public Services:

Many in the CPA have worked tirelessly to improve the situation in Iraq. Much has been accomplished (e.g. schools refurbished, restoring infrastructure, etc.), but the fact remains, however, that in terms of public services, the overall picture is mixed, with improvements in certain sectors while others have still not returned to pre-war levels.

Telecommunications:

Progress has been made in the area of telecommunications both in terms of telephone and internet access. Although the number of landline telephones has still not reached pre-war levels (833,000 subscribers pre-war compared with 783,263 at the end of May 2004), a significant number of cell phone subscribers have been added as a result of new cell phone service.

Currently, there are close to 400,000 cell phone subscribers in the country making the total number of telephones in operation in Iraq higher than the pre-war figure.¹⁰

⁹ See James Dobbins (et. al.), *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand), 2003. For comparisons of ratios of peacekeepers to civilians in other post-conflict situations, see Barbara Slavin and Dave Moniz, "How Peace in Iraq became so elusive," July 22, 2003, *USA Today*.

¹⁰ See the CPA's *Administrator's Weekly Report: Essential Services May 22-28, 2004* available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/ES/consolidated/June4_ES.doc

Electricity

Though there have been improvements in telecommunications, electricity remains the greatest obstacle in terms of public service provision. Electricity is the single-most important public service that directly affects Iraqi's opinion of the US occupation as it has a direct impact on many aspects of daily life. It is crucial for refrigeration, air-conditioning, water and sewerage systems, lighting, security, effective hospital operations, commerce and almost all elements of everyday life. Iraq today has still not reached pre-war levels of electricity. For some, electricity has become the metric for measuring the CPA's success or lack thereof in terms of delivering public services.

The Department of Defense estimated pre-war levels of electricity production in Iraq to be 4,400 megawatts daily. The CPA estimated the seven-day average of peak electricity production for the week of May 22-28, 2004 to be 3,946 megawatts, still well below pre-war levels.¹¹ This corresponds to Iraqi impressions revealed through polling data. In the USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll (administered at the end of March and the beginning of April to 3,444 Iraqis), for example, 100% of Iraqis surveyed said they "go without electricity for long periods of time." This figure is up from 99% in 2003.¹²

As summer temperatures rise, demand for electricity increases. The CPA's stated goal is to produce 6000 megawatts by July 1, 2004.¹³ This amount is needed to satisfy peak Iraqi summer

¹¹ See the CPA's *Administrator's Weekly Report: Essential Services May 22-28, 2004* available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/ES/consolidated/June4_ES.doc

¹² See <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-04-28-gallup-iraq-findings.htm>

¹³ *Iraq Index*, op. cit, p. 20.

demand, according to some estimates.¹⁴ At the end of May 2004, 9 of 18 Iraqi governorates received less than 8 hours of electricity per day. Eight governorates received between 8 to 16 hours of electricity per day. This includes Baghdad which received 9 hours and Basra which received 10 hours of electricity per day, approximately.¹⁵ Residents of Baghdad reported 3-4 hours of electricity followed by 3-4 hours without power. Some residents reported that the availability of electricity was unscheduled or erratic. Only one governorate – Dahok in the far north -- received more than 16 hours of electricity per day during the week of May 22-28.

After security, electricity is the second leading criticism of the CPA and the occupation among Iraqis. It remains a topic of conversation and bitter complaint, with many Iraqis incredulous that the most powerful country in the world cannot restore electricity to prewar levels in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country, one year after the war. Some Iraqis believe this is a deliberate policy on the part of the US. I heard this myself in Baghdad last summer. The failure to deliver electricity at prewar levels – one year later -- has negatively affected Iraqi attitudes toward the CPA and the US.

Water

Clean water and adequate sewage treatment remain serious problems in Iraq. There have been some accomplishments; most notably the recently completed 240 kilometer sweet water canal in southern Iraq at a cost of \$38 million dollars by US AID. Bechtel, the private contractor, “fixed two pumping stations and 14 treatment stations, and dredged and cleaned the canal and adjacent

¹⁴ See the Iraq Country Analysis Brief (March 2004) by the Energy Information Administration of the Department of Energy, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/iraq.html>

¹⁵ See the CPA’s *Administrator’s Weekly Report: Essential Services May 22-28, 2004* available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/ES/consolidated/June4_ES.doc

reservoir.”¹⁶ Despite these achievements, much more work is necessary in order to make a substantive difference in everyday Iraqi life.¹⁷

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Before the war, Iraq pumped 3 million cu.m. (cubic meters) of water per day from 140 water treatment facilities. Today, facilities operate at about 65 percent of that capacity, mainly because of electricity shortages and the looting of water plant generators used to pump water and sewage.”¹⁸ US AID reports the same figures and states that “Baghdad's three sewage treatment plants, which together comprise three-quarters of the nation's sewage treatment capacity, are inoperable, allowing the waste from 3.8 million people to flow untreated directly into the Tigris River. In the rest of the country, most sewage treatment plants were only partially operational prior to the conflict, and shortages of electricity, parts, and chemicals have exacerbated the situation.”¹⁹

Standing water was blamed for more than 100 cases of Hepatitis E in Sadr City in Baghdad at the end of March 2004. A World Health Organization official said that “Frequent power cuts stop water pumps that keep sewage from flooding the streets. Even worse, the sewage can get sucked into drinking water supplies once the pumps start again.”²⁰

¹⁶ Iraq: Briefing Paper on Water and Sanitation, May 24, 2004. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=41227>

¹⁷ According to the USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll, 55% of respondents said they have “been without clean drinking water for long periods of time.”

¹⁸ Iraq: Briefing Paper on Water and Sanitation, May 24, 2004. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=41227>

¹⁹ <http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/watsan.html> (website updated June 7, 2004).

²⁰ Quoted in “IRAQ: Inadequate sewage disposal blamed for hepatitis outbreak,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 1, 2004. See http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=41360&SelectRegion=Iraq_Crisis&SelectCountry=IRAQ

Unemployment

Accurate employment figures are incredibly difficult to obtain for Iraq. Mass unemployment continues to be a serious problem, however and should be viewed, in part, as a security issue. In addition to fueling frustration and resentment toward the US occupation, large pools of jobless men could become a source of potential recruits for the insurgency.

Last summer (2003), the CPA estimated that unemployment was above 50%.²¹ In January 2004, Dr. Ali Allawi, the Iraqi Trade minister at the time, stated that unemployment and underemployment were between 50-60% of the labor force.²² In February, Thomas Foley, director of private sector development for the Coalition Provisional Authority, claimed that things had improved. Foley said that the "Ministry of Planning has released a 28 percent number, which conforms with two CPA numbers that put unemployment (rates) in the mid-20s."²³ In March, the CPA estimated unemployment at between 25-30%²⁴ while the Economist Intelligence Unit put the figure at 60% for the same month.²⁵

The White House's Office of Management and Budget, which described unemployment as "a persistent source of insecurity and instability for the country," estimated unemployment to be between 20-30% of the workforce in March.²⁶ According to the June 9, 2004 *Iraq Index*, unemployment is estimated to be between 28-45%.²⁷

²¹ http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2004/n02182004_200402185.html

²² "Iraq Unemployment," BBC News, January 6, 2004.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/3372029.stm>

²³ http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2004/n02182004_200402185.html

²⁴ http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/GoodMorningAmerica/Iraq_anniversary_jobs_040314.html

²⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Iraq, March 1, 2004.

²⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Iraq, March 1, 2004.

²⁷ www.brookings.edu/iraqindex

There is neither sufficient time nor space to compare the level of other public services and infrastructure in Iraq before the war and at present. It should be noted, however, that Iraqi expectations were far greater than what has been achieved to date.²⁸ No one, for example, expected it to take this long to experience significant improvements in public services and daily life.

Many see these as small matters which the US should have solved by now. Both Iraqis and others do not make evaluations of the present based on the possibility that things might -- and probably will -- be much better five years from now. They base their evaluations on what conditions are like today. Real people experience and think in days and months. Decades and generations are the time-frames of historians and academics.

How Many Iraqis Experience the US Presence

How some Iraqis experience the US military presence in their country has also negatively affected many Iraqi hearts and minds. Stories of house raids in the middle of the night with heavily armed troops kicking down doors, frightening women and children and humiliating family members in the process circulate in Iraq and have embittered Iraqis who experience such raids and who are neither involved in criminal activity or the insurgency, as well as others.

Long, seemingly arbitrary detentions with little or no information provided to the detainees' families has been a grievance voiced by many. On some accounts, Iraqis also resent US military

²⁸ This is another way of saying that the CPA has not met Iraqi expectations. 64% of respondents in the CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll said that "the actions taken by the CPA have turned out worse than expected." 22% believed that the CPA's actions have been better than expected, 12% responded with "don't know" while 1% did not answer the question. See <http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/2004/WORLD/meast/04/28/iraq.poll/iraq.poll.4.28.pdf>

convoys in urban areas and checkpoints. Convoys are thought to be dangerous as they become targets for the insurgency. Civilian casualties, of course, are an altogether different matter.

Iraqis have an overall negative impression of US military forces according to the various polling data. Recent CPA polling found that 80% of Iraqis have an unfavorable opinion of US troops.²⁹ The USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll produced similar findings. 58% of Iraqis surveyed said that US forces had conducted themselves either “fairly badly” or “very badly” (up from 29% in 2003 and compared with 34% who reported that US forces had conducted themselves either “very” or “fairly well”).³⁰ Another worrying finding was that the number of respondents who said that attacks against US forces in Iraq could be justified increased sharply from last year. In 2003, 42% of respondents in Baghdad said that attacks against US forces “cannot be justified at all.” That figure fell to 14% in 2004. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who said that attacks on US forces could be somewhat justified jumped from 11% in 2003 to 26% in 2004. 67% of respondents in the same poll said that US forces do not try “at all” to keep ordinary Iraqis from being killed or wounded during the exchange of gunfire. 18% of respondents said that US forces try “only a little.” A high percentage of Iraqis also said US forces show disrespect for Iraqi women and the Iraqi people during interrogations and searches and disrespect for Islam during the searches of places of worship.

The impact of house raids, wrongful detention, the disproportionate use of force, and civilian casualties goes well beyond the individuals directly involved. Every house raid on law-abiding families turns an entire street against coalition forces, every wrongful detention creates a

²⁹ The CPA poll is quoted in Edward Cody, “Iraqis Put Contempt for Troops on Display,” *Washington Post*, June 12, 2004.

³⁰ See the entire poll at: <http://i.a.cnn.net/cnn/2004/WORLD/meast/04/28/iraq.poll/iraq.poll.4.28.pdf>

neighborhood opposed to the occupation and every civilian casualty produces an extended family embittered against the United States.

The logic of militarily defeating an insurgency with a foreign army runs counter to the logic of winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the general population. Counter insurgency operations necessarily result in urban fighting, damage to neighborhoods and civilian casualties. Nervous soldiers under attack, risking their lives, who have seen their buddies killed are understandably more interested in staying alive than in winning Iraqi hearts and minds. Political success, however, cannot be achieved primarily through military means. The case of Fallujah is particularly illustrative of this.

Fallujah: The Iraqi Reaction:

The overwhelming majority of Iraqis perceived US military conduct in Fallujah as unjustified, collective punishment and the disproportionate use of force against a civilian population. From the perspective of the war for the hearts and minds, the events of Fallujah were disastrous, infuriating most Iraqis, galvanizing opinion decidedly against the US and inflaming anti-American sentiment.

The murder of four security contract workers on March 31 in the city and the gruesome mutilation of two of their bodies was unconscionable. The response of the US military, however, was universally denounced across the country. An entire town of nearly 300,000 residents was under siege for more than a week while the US Marines used heavy weaponry in civilian areas. The result was, as reported in the English and Arabic press and as seen on television, more than

600 casualties (and over 1200 wounded), many of whom were women and children.³¹ Scenes of families burying their dead in the courtyards of their homes, in soccer fields and in hospital parking lots (because it was unsafe to bury the dead in cemeteries), elicited outrage and widespread condemnation from all quarters of Iraqi society. Images of scores of wounded pouring into hospitals with insufficient medicines and supplies, produced feelings of solidarity across Iraq with the residents of Fallujah. This was seen as a battle between David and Goliath with the US military being Goliath. Dozens of convoys of food, humanitarian supplies and medicine *from all over Iraq*, including from the Turkmen minority in Kirkuk, Chaldean Christians in Baghdad and from the country's Shiite majority – from the poor communities of Sadr city and other Shiite towns in the south -- demonstrated the extent to which Iraqis of all stripes sympathized with the residents of Fallujah.³²

At the time, Iraq's human rights minister as well as the interior minister resigned in protest against US military conduct, calling it a clear violation of human rights.³³ The current President – Ghazi Al Yawer (who was also on the Iraqi Governing Council at the time) also threatened to resign during the crisis if fighting did not end. He described what was occurring as “genocide.”³⁴

³¹ See Dan Murphy, “Siege of Fallujah Polarizing Iraqis,” in *Christian Science Monitor*, April 15, 2004. Murphy writes, “...the fighting in Fallujah ...has turned the muddled center of Iraqi public opinion – where people were ambivalent about the occupation but not actively opposed – decisively against US-led Coalition Provisional Authority and its local allies.” He goes on to quote an advisor to the CPA who tells him: “Fallujah has created a major polarization of Iraqi public opinion. There is no middle ground any more. Two weeks ago Iraqis wanted to see us make promises and deliver on them- rebuild, improve – but then they saw pictures of US bombs falling on mosques in Fallujah. Now they want us out.”

³² Deborah Pasmantier (AFP), “Baghdad's Muslims rush aid for Fallujah residents, Sadr city sends food, medicine,” April 14, 2004.

³³ “Turki resigns from Iraqi Governing Council,” See <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=9596> [April 9, 2004]

³⁴ Al Yawer said, ““If the Fallujah problem is not resolved peacefully in a way that preserves the dignity of its people, and if America does not fulfill its promises... and if they insist on using excessive force, then I will submit my resignation.” He also stated, “How can a superpower like the United States put itself in a state of war with a small city like Fallujah. This is genocide.” See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1084808.htm> April 10, 2004.

Adnan Pachachi (a former Ambassador and the nominee to the post of President who declined the position because he was afraid he was viewed as too pro-US) said at the time, “We consider the action carried out by US forces as illegal and totally unacceptable. We denounce the military operations carried out by the American forces because in effect, it is (inflicting) collective punishment on the residents of Fallujah.”³⁵ The siege of Fallujah embittered many Iraqis against the US and the occupation, even among our friends, and solidified anti-coalition and anti US-sentiment.

Public Diplomacy:

Public Diplomacy is extremely important, although under-funded, and the US government has a number of highly successful programs long since in existence. However, we must be conscious of the limitations of public diplomacy from the outset. It is not a cure-all for America’s problems in the Arab and Muslim world. The primary determinant of public opinion toward the US are American policies and actions, whether in Iraq or elsewhere. Public diplomacy is not a silver bullet and will not provide a quick-fix solution to the problem of how Arabs and Muslims, including Iraqis, view the United States. Furthermore, in order for public diplomacy to be effective it must be done intelligently.

The Office of Public Diplomacy has done some excellent work recently, including increasing funding for cultural and academic exchanges and traditional diplomatic outreach efforts. Some of the new public diplomacy initiatives undertaken, however, (including certain publications like *HI*, the Arabic Language magazine for youth, television commercials or mini-documentaries

³⁵ “US-picked Iraq leaders blast Fallujah offensive,” ABC Online:
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1084808.htm>

produced for the Muslim world about Muslims in America, Radio *Sawa* and *Al Hurra* Television, for example) reflect a profound misunderstanding of the basic problem. The overwhelming majority of Arabs and Muslims love freedom and democracy as much as we do. The problem is that from their perspective, U.S. Middle East policy is guided by neither of these two noble principles.

While some have claimed that anti-Americanism stems primarily from misinformation from local media and distorted Hollywood images of American values, the core problem results from specific U.S. foreign policies. Arabs and Muslims are profoundly angered by three policies in particular: a bias toward Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the Iraq war and the continuing violence and instability there; and Washington's consistent support for authoritarian regimes friendly to U.S. interests.

While public diplomacy can be effective, no amount of marketing, slick packaging or explaining our message loudly can solve this problem. Yet advertising and broadcasting are precisely the models that are primarily being used in new big-ticket public diplomacy efforts.

For example, the Office of Public Diplomacy produced 1.3 million copies of a pamphlet entitled the *Network of Terrorism*.³⁶ The publication has been translated into 36 languages and is now the most widely disseminated document ever produced by the State Department. Staggering illiteracy rates in the Arab and Muslim world, however, doom this massive undertaking to failure. According to the CIA World Factbook, for example, illiteracy in Morocco is about 43 percent for men and 68 percent for women. The figures for Egypt are 36 percent for men and 61

³⁶ See <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/terrornet/>

percent for women; 44 percent and 71 percent in Pakistan; and 52 percent and 85 percent for Afghanistan. If people cannot read, even the best of documents is sure to be ineffective.

Another new initiative well underway which has received much attention is the FM Arabic language radio station "Sawa." The new station, the Middle East Radio Network (MERN), is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week service that began broadcasting in March 2002. Named "sawa" -- meaning "together" in Arabic -- the station is aimed at Arab listeners under 30 years old and is supposed to be more effective than the Voice of America because it will broadcast on AM and FM rather than shortwave, insuring a larger audience. I have listened to Sawa in Egypt and Jordan and my friends in the Middle East listen to Sawa regularly. While everyone enjoys the excellent choice of music, which accounts for the station's large listening audience, anecdotal evidence as well as personal experience suggests that it is having little to no impact on Arab public opinion. People are listening to the music and tuning out the four minutes of news that are broadcast every hour.

The BBC World Service did a program about Radio Sawa in which they interviewed young people in Jordan and Joan Mauer, Radio Sawa's Communications Director in Washington. The BBC Reporter asked three young Jordanians in Amman about the station -- Samir, Dina and Nisreen. All said they listened to it. This is what they said:

"SAMIR: I listen to the music, *bas* I turn to another station once the news starts.

HATTAR (BBC Reporter): Why do you do that?

SAMIR: *Because its like listening to Israeli radio. Its biased. I feel like its propaganda to serve the Israelis and the others...(UNINTELLIGIBLE)*

HATTAR: Dina, do you want to talk about your impression regarding this station?

DINA: I have the same to say basically, because when you listen to what they say on the news, like they say Arab extremists, or Palestinian extremists, that is not fair at all. *Basically they're like, you know, a mouthpiece for the Americans.* And I think sort of they're brainwashing Jordanians, I think Syrians, whoever, you know is listening to these people.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, I've been listening to Radio Sawa since the first day it start launching to Jordan and I like to listen actually to the music.

HATTAR: Nisreen, what part of the radio you like to listen to mostly?

NISREEN: I think the songs, because they are so much updated and they have the mixture of the Arabic and foreign songs as well. But I think its biased somehow because maybe its sponsored by the USA or funded by them. Sometimes the news are shallow, not accurate.

ELIAS: *Well, sir, if we're talking about entertainments, songs and music, Sawa is number one. But if we're talking about news and media, the material they are providing is very cheap and they should be more balanced.* I think, I think there is one thing they can do to improve their news department. They have to live among Arabs and with Arabs to hear their problems. *We don't need advices and we don't need their point of view. When you are launching a news, you have to tell news, not sending message to people.”*³⁷

The most costly new initiative is the satellite television station directed at the Arab world named *Al Hurra* (the Free One). The idea behind an American station directed at the Arab world reflects an obsession with Al-Jazeera, the highly successful Qatari-based satellite television station that gained notoriety in the U.S. for its broadcast of the Osama bin Laden videotapes.

Many in the U.S. have claimed that Al-Jazeera is anti-American and that its biased news reporting intentionally inflames passions against the United States. But Al-Jazeera has become an easy scapegoat, its power overestimated and its content grossly misrepresented.

³⁷ Transcript of BBC World Service – “Outlook,” September 24, 2002. Also available at: <http://www.electronicintifada.net/v2/article712.shtml>

First, the model of the Arab television viewer that Al Jazeera's critics accept when decrying the station's influence is hopelessly simplistic. The station's critics assume that Arab television viewers are passive receptacles, blank slates, watching Al Jazeera and accepting everything the station has to offer.³⁸ Clearly Arab television viewers, like media viewers elsewhere, are capable of critical thought, evaluation and skepticism and, as a result of consuming years of state controlled media, Arab viewers are especially adept at critical media consumption.

Moreover, Al Jazeera is not inherently anti-American. In the fall of 2001, a Columbia University professor of Journalism and I conducted an informal study of Al-Jazeera for WBUR, the Boston Public Radio station. We compared coverage of the war in Afghanistan on Al-Jazeera and "NBC Nightly News" and concluded that Al-Jazeera was neither pro-Taliban nor anti-American and just as professional as the American news coverage. In fact, the station has often been critical of Arab regimes and has gotten into trouble as a result.

Arabs and Muslims view the new U.S.-funded radio and television stations with suspicion and skepticism, as they view all government-owned media. Many already have access to Western radio channels, including the BBC and the VOA, making the new station simply redundant. And polling evidence suggests that very few people in the Arab world are actually watching *Al Hurra*.

No matter what channel delivers the U.S. message, evidence suggests that Arab audiences are not likely to believe it. The widely reported results of the Gallup poll conducted in nine predominantly Muslim countries and released in February 2002 clearly demonstrate that Arabs and Muslims simply do not trust the U.S. government. Asked whether they found the U.S.

³⁸ (without intelligence or the ability to reflect and be critical)

trustworthy, the overwhelming majority of respondents said no.

Only 17 percent of Turks answered favorably. Only 7 percent in Kuwait, 5 percent in Jordan, 3 percent in Saudi Arabia and 1 percent in Pakistan said they found the U.S. trustworthy. If you don't trust the messenger, you will not trust the message.

Poorly conceived, quick-fix solutions are bound to fail. Yet while the primary problems are policy-related, public diplomacy -- if done properly -- can be effective in influencing public opinion among Arabs and Muslims.

Some of the most successful efforts to build bridges between the United States and the Middle East have been through the Fulbright and Hubert Humphrey Fellowship programs, the Visitor Exchange Program and the U.S. universities -- the American University in Cairo and the American University in Beirut -- which are now among the best academic institutions in the region.

Traditional public-diplomacy efforts work and need to be funded more generously. But in addition to increased funding for institutions and programs like these, the State Department should consider at least two new measures, which will be both highly effective and cost-efficient.

First, the U.S. should increase funding for basic and primary education in the Arab and Muslim world through literacy programs and English-language training. Education in the region is a major problem and literacy rates are abysmal in many of these countries. If one cannot read, one's exposure to a range of information is severely limited. And there is no better way of gaining the enduring gratitude of parents who do not have the resources to educate their children.

U.S.-funded classrooms would be highly visible and funding education would be a highly effective form of public diplomacy, as long as the U.S. did not try to impose a curriculum on the schools.

Second, the U.S. government should establish American Studies Centers at universities in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan or Lebanon, Pakistan and Indonesia. It is tragic that before September 11, 2001 not a single American Studies Center existed in Egypt, or anywhere in the entire Middle East to my knowledge. Today, two such centers exist in Egypt. Establishing American Studies Centers at universities throughout the region would train professionals who are knowledgeable about the U.S. and American culture, history and politics. These centers would produce local experts, opinion-makers and educators who would be called upon by local media to explain the U.S. and American society -- just as Middle East experts are called upon daily in the United States. For greater credibility, the centers should be hosted at national universities and funded through the endowment model, with few or no strings attached. This would provide freedom and independence, which would, in turn, ensure credibility.

We might not agree with all of the ideas of the educators and professors at these institutions, but the fact that they will have studied in the United States and be knowledgeable about American society, politics and history would help to ensure that the information they provide to their societies will not be based on ignorance.

While American policy has the single biggest role in shaping Arab and Muslim opinion toward the U.S., public diplomacy remains important. But we must do it effectively to make the most of our resources. Choosing real public diplomacy and delivering tangible benefits to ordinary

people (substantive programs that deliver real value added) are sure to be more effective than even the most expensive advertising and broadcasting campaigns.

Thank You.