

THE COSTS OF THE IRAQ WAR

Judith Reppy
Revised 30/11/07

Introduction

Four years after the United States invaded Iraq, it is time to take stock. At present, there are approximately 175,000 U.S. troops in Iraq; we have spent an estimated \$604 billion dollars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with more to come; as of 30 November 2007, more than 3879 American troops have died in Iraq and over 28,000 have been wounded in action and thousands more in accidents; and Iraq is still not pacified.

All wars are horrible, and we can never know at the time what the full cost will be. Sometimes, we may judge the cause worthy of the costs—four years ago the Bush administration justified the invasion as necessary to eliminate the threat of Iraq acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Later the rationale shifted to liberating the Iraqi people and building democracy in the Middle East, then to the need to counteract terrorism. But while there have been some clear achievements—the end of Saddam Hussein’s rule—the costs have been very high.

This paper focuses on the costs to the USA, but we should recognize that the heaviest burden has been borne by the Iraqi people. Internal security is all but non-existent in many parts of the country. For example, over 7690 Iraqi military and police forces have been killed since June 2003, and the number of attacks by insurgents country-wide averaged over 4700/month for the first eight months of 2007.¹ The DOD does not keep track of Iraqi deaths: in November 2003, Donald Rumsfeld said, “We don’t do body counts on other people.” Later the policy was revised, with selective reporting of enemy body counts.² There is no credible official count of civilian deaths. The Army’s disdain for counting enemy and civilian deaths is in part a legacy of the Vietnam War, where body counts were manipulated and discredited, but it also serves to avoid the obvious disparity in the number of deaths between coalition forces and Iraqis. Iraqi Body Count estimates total Iraqi deaths since March 2003 at between 61,000 and 67,000, surely a low-end estimate: the UN puts the figure at over 34,000 violent deaths in 2006, alone. Other credible estimates range as high as 650,000 between 2003 and June 2006.³

¹ <http://icasualties.org/oif/IraqiDeaths.aspx>; accessed 30/11/07; Department of Defense *Measuring Stability and Security In Iraq*, September 2007, p. 19. At <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/Signed-Version-070912.pdf>. Accessed 30 /11/2007.

² Bradley Graham, “Enemy Body Counts Revived,” *Washington Post*, 24 October 2005, A1.

³ Gilbert Burnham et al., “Mortality after the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey,” *The Lancet* (12 October 2006). There has been a systematic effort to discredit the methods used in the survey of mortality, but they have been defended as close to best practice, by the UK Ministry of Defence Chief Scientific Adviser. See Owen Bennett-Jones, Iraqi deaths survey as robust, BBC News (26 March 2007). At http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6495753.stm.

Categories of costs:

- A. Loss of life and long-term disabilities of US military personnel, allies, contractors.
- B. Effects of the War on U.S. interests in the international arena.
- C. Effects on government institutions.
- D. Budgetary costs.

These categories are intertwined, but each represents a different lens through which to view the effect of the Iraq War on U.S. society.

One caveat: all four of the cost categories have data problems, from counting the number of dead and wounded to identifying the budgetary costs of the war. Some of these problems are conceptual—how to value the cost of lives foregone or long-term disabilities—and some are the result of problems of collecting data in a theater of war. Others are the result of government policy, for example, the decision not to collect data on the number of Iraqi deaths or to provide a full breakdown by program in the requests for supplemental funding. So my account is suggestive, rather than comprehensive, even though it takes a broad view of what to include.

A. Loss of life and long-term disabilities of US military personnel, allies, contractors.

These costs have to come first on any list. They represent in the most basic form the cost of war.

A.1. Loss of Life (to 30/11/07)

Deaths of U.S. military personnel ⁴	3,879
Killed in action	3,161
Non-hostile	718
Other coalition troops ⁵	306
 Contractors (all nationalities, through 6/30/07) ⁶	 1,001

As with Iraqi deaths, the DOD does not keep track of contractor deaths. The number above is based on worker compensation claims filed with the U.S. Department of Labor, and is an underestimate.⁶

⁴ Department of Defense, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) U.S. Casualty Status. At: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>. Accessed 30/11/07.

⁵ Iraqi Coalition Casualties. At: <http://icasualties.org/oif/default.aspx>. Accessed 30/11/07.

⁶ The figure does not include contract employees killed when off duty nor an undetermined number who were not covered by insurance: although the 1941 Defense Base Act requires contractors to purchase workman compensation insurance for employees deployed abroad, not all contractors are in compliance. Howard Witt, “America’s Hidden War Dead,” *Chicago Tribune* (26 March 2007); Susie Dow, “Iraq, Contingency Contracting and the Defense Base Act,” *ePluribus Media* (4 March 2007). At http://www.epluribusmedia.org/features/2007/20070304_contingency_contracting.html.

A.2. <u>Wounded</u> (as of 8/30/07)	
U.S. Military personnel (WIA) ⁷	28,582
returned to duty within 3 days	15,778
not returned to duty w/in 3 days	12,375
Non-hostile injuries—medical air transport required ⁸	7,688
Diseases—medical air transport required ⁸	21,816

It is interesting to compare the number of wounded to the number of battle deaths: in Vietnam, there were 2.6 injuries per fatality, whereas in Iraq the figure is roughly 16:1, if you use the VA's definition of non-mortal wounded, or 8:1 if you use the Pentagon's narrower definition.⁹ Either way, the increase in the proportion of wounded among total casualties is impressive. It is consistent with long-term trends, which reflect our greater ability to evacuate and treat severely wounded soldiers over time. Estimates from the Brookings Institution place the rate of serious wounds (brain injuries, amputees, and other serious injuries) at 50 % of the total injured;¹⁰ in previous wars many of those injuries would have been fatal.

A particularly troubling statistic is the estimate that 1/3 of the soldiers seeking treatment after returning to the USA have been diagnosed with mental health conditions.¹¹ Even more disturbing are reports that soldiers suffering from PTSD are being pressured to accept a medical

⁷ Department of Defense, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) U.S. Casualty Status. At: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>. Accessed 30/11/07.

⁸ Iraqi Coalition Casualties. At <http://icasualties.org/oif/default.aspx>. Data to 1/10/07. Accessed 30/11/07.

⁹ Linda Bilmes, "Soldiers Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan: The Long-term Costs of Providing Veterans Medical Care and Disability Benefits," John F. Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Paper, RWP07-001, Harvard University (January 2007).

¹⁰ Scott Wallsten and Katrina Kosec, "The Economic Costs of the War in Iraq," AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, Working Paper 05-19 (September 2005), 12.

¹¹ "Mental Illnesses Appear Common Among Veterans Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan," *Science Daily*, 13 March 2007. At: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/03/070313114409.htm>.

discharge on the grounds of “personality disorder,” a diagnosis that prevents them from collecting any disability or medical benefits as a veteran.¹²

A.3. Rehabilitation costs over time

The unprecedented number of wounded soldiers has and will generate costs associated with rehabilitation and with disabilities that will persist for years. I will discuss these costs again under the headings of institutional damage and financial costs, but here I want to emphasize that there is a personal cost to soldiers and to their families and communities as a result of their injuries.

These costs cannot be easily quantified in dollar terms, especially the costs borne by family members dealing with traumatized or depressed soldiers. We should resist the temptation to let them drop out of our accounting, just because there is no price tag attached. They are a long-lasting cost to our society.

B. Effects on U.S. interests in the international arena.

This is another area in which it is difficult to quantify effects, but the consequences are nonetheless very real. At the same time, we should be careful not to attribute everything that has happened in international relations since 2003 to the effects of the Iraq War. The Bush administration came into office committed to reducing U.S. involvement in multilateral regimes in favor of a unilateralist stance, so that our international relations were bound to change with or without the Iraq War.

On the positive side, we might count developments such as Libya renouncing its secret nuclear program in December 2003. It seems likely that the U.S. willingness to invade Iraq on the grounds that it was developing WMD had some effect on the Libyan decision. The collapse of the Hussein regime was widely welcomed, even by states that did not approve of the intervention. Elections have taken place at the local and national level.

Since 2003, however, the balance has shifted, as the situation in Iraq has deteriorated. Here is a short list of international costs to the United States from the Iraq War:

B.1. Loss of standing owing to the torture scandals.

The release in April 2004 of photographs of inmates at Abu Ghraib being mistreated and humiliated by American soldiers triggered a serious backlash around the world, particularly among Muslims. It is difficult to overestimate the damage to the USA standing from these revelations of abuse. The systematic use of “extreme” interrogation techniques went beyond the occasional—perhaps inevitable—atrocities cases that occur in all wars because it was part of government policy.

Aside from the shock effect of the pictures, the evidence of abuse brought to the fore the fact that the USA was not following the Geneva Conventions on treatment of prisoners, neither in Iraq

¹² Joshua Kors, “How Specialist Town Lost His Benefits,” *The Nation* (April 9, 2007).

nor in Guantanamo. President Bush's signing statement on the McCain bill to outlaw torture and Vice President Cheney's defense of a right to torture did further damage to our reputation worldwide. Further revelations about our practice of renditions have embroiled our European allies in the scandal and contributed to loss of allied support for the coalition forces. By undercutting our support for international humanitarian law, these incidents arguably raise the danger that U.S. citizens and soldiers could face the same treatment in future conflicts. They belie our claims to be the leader of the free world.

B.2. Instability in the Middle East

The fall of Saddam Hussein removed a tyrant from power: it also shifted Iraq from the group of Sunni-ruled countries in the Middle East to the Shiite column. Predictably—although no one in the Bush administration seems to have thought to make the prediction—the removal of the Iraq and Afghanistan governments that were hostile to Iran has increased Iran's power in the region, and caused increased tensions between Shiites and Sunnis across the region.

It is not clear what the long-term effects of this shift of power to the Shiites will be, but at the least it complicates our diplomacy in a region that is both important to U.S. interests and highly volatile. The uncharacteristic willingness of Saudi Arabia to publicly criticize U.S. policy is one sign of difficulties to come.¹³

B.3. Effects of the Iraq War on Terrorism

Despite the framing of the Iraq War as part of the global war on terrorism, there is no evidence to show that it has led to any decrease in the number of terrorist attacks. Data for 2006 showed approximately 14,000 terrorist attacks, an increase of 25 percent over 2005. These data include internal terrorist attacks: the figure for Iraq in 2006 was 6600, resulting in approximately 13,000 deaths.¹⁴

The U.S. data, however, are an underestimate of the true level of violence. The Iraq Study Group Report suggests that the actual number of attacks may be an order of magnitude larger than reported by the Department of Defense.

In addition, there is significant under-reporting of the violence in Iraq. The standard for recording acts as a filter to keep events out of reports and databases. A murder of an Iraqi is not necessarily counted as an attack. If we cannot determine the source of a sectarian attack, that assault does not make it into the database. A roadside bomb or a rocket or mortar attack that doesn't hurt U.S. personnel doesn't count. For example, on one day in July 2006 there were 93 attacks or significant acts of violence reported. Yet a careful review of the reports for that single day brought to light 1,100 acts of violence. Good policy is difficult

¹³ Hassan Fattah, "U.S. Iraq Role is called Illegal by Saudi King," *New York Times*, 29 March 2007, 1.

¹⁴ National Counterterrorism Center, *Report on Terrorist Incidents 2006*, 9 (30 April 2007). At <http://wits.nctc.gov/reports/crot2006nctcannexfinal.pdf>. Accessed 30/11/07.

to make when information is systematically collected in a way that minimizes its discrepancy with policy goals.¹⁵

The blowback from the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the subsequent actions of U.S. troops has facilitated an increase of Al Qaeda's presence in Iraq, whereas before it was not welcome. It is difficult to separate native insurgents from foreign terrorists in the field, but it seems clear that the U.S. presence in Iraq has been a potent recruiting tool for international terrorism. I would argue that a military response to the threat of terrorism is ill-judged in any case, but it is not necessary to accept that argument to recognize that our particular military activities in Iraq have probably produced more terrorists than they have captured or killed.

B.4. Opportunity costs for other policies

The Iraq War constrains the U.S.'s ability to practice diplomacy in other policy areas for two reasons. It has damaged our relations with traditional allies, and it has crowded out other initiatives. It is not just that the Bush administration has favored a unilateralist stance on many issues, such as arms control treaties or the International Criminal Court or its doctrine of preventive war. The real cost to diplomacy is the competition for time and attention—the Washington line to almost any initiative these days is “call me after Iraq.” More insidious is the tendency for military responses to crowd out alternative approaches, despite wide recognition that problems in Iraq and elsewhere require political and economic responses.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is resurgent and protects Al Qaeda. Indeed, Afghanistan must be counted as a major casualty of the Iraq War, which has absorbed manpower and funding that could have been invested in rebuilding Afghanistan as we promised to do. In another example, an opportunity at the beginning of the Bush administration to build better relations with Mexico and other Latin American countries has been neglected

C. Effects of the Iraq War on U.S. government institutions

One of the insidious effects of the war has been its effects on the way our government operates. Following 9/11, national security was used to justify new restrictions on our civil liberties. We are all familiar with the debates over habeas corpus and the military tribunals, the increased surveillance of private citizens, the crackdown on foreign nationals. I want to mention here other areas in which our governmental institutions have suffered as a direct consequence of the Iraq War.

C.1. The Army is stretched to the breaking point

After Vietnam, it took twenty years to restore the Army to a fully functional organization. The current situation suggests that the same may well be true after Iraq. The multiple tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq have taken their toll on readiness and retention. Among the problems related to the high operational tempo are equipment shortages, lack of time for training before

¹⁵ *The Iraq Study Group Report*, James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, Co-chairs (6 December 2006), 62. At: http://bakerinstitute.org/Pubs/iraqstudygroup_findings.pdf.

deployment, stresses on family life with their many repercussions on our society, and depletion of resources for other missions.

Retention is a problem both for the officer corps, especially at the mid-career level where the experienced leadership for combat operations resides, and for enlisted personnel. Higher-than-expected attrition among officers has led to higher-than-planned promotion rates and less pressure to force out less competent officers. In 2006, the Army promoted 90 percent of eligible majors to lieutenant colonel vice the normal rate of 70 percent.¹⁶

Similar pressures have led to relaxing requirements at the enlisted level. The Army has relaxed its criteria for fitness, high school graduation, and mental aptitude. Most controversially, it has expanded the use of “moral waivers” to allow in recruits with criminal records. These stop-gap measures are costly in the long run; a lower quality of recruits is historically associated with failure to complete basic training and military misconduct.

Increased use of National Guard and reserve units simply transfers the pressure to those groups, which have the same problems of retention and recruitment as the regular Army. The reliance on reserves carries additional costs to the community: reservists are often the first responders in their home communities, so their absence has a societal impact beyond the cost to their families and employers.

There is no obvious way out of this dilemma, beyond a troop withdrawal from Iraq. The alternative of reinstating the draft is not on the table—some would argue that it should be.

C.2. Increased reliance on private contractors.

Outsourcing government activities to the private sector was a favored administration policy before 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, but the logistical requirements of the Iraq War greatly increased the trend. Private military companies like Blackwater provide guard services; their actions have exacerbated tensions between the U.S. and Iraqi governments. CACI and Titan were providing interrogators at Abu Ghraib during the time of the torture scandal. Major defense contractors provide thousands of technicians to maintain and repair equipment. Halliburton famously garnered billions of dollars in sole source contracts to supply infrastructure to the coalition forces and for Iraq reconstruction, and now stands accused of war profiteering and other crimes. The problems at Walter Reed have been ascribed in part to the decision to outsource facilities operations to a private firm. Enforcement of penalties for fraud has so far been light: the Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction has identified \$10 billion in problem contracts but recovered only \$10 million in fines.

Every war has its share of procurement scandals, but the expansion in the use of private contractors to provide to core governmental functions is a trend that deserves wide discussion.

¹⁶ Bryan Bender and Renee Dudley, “Army rushes to promote its officers,” *Boston Globe*, 13 March 2007.

Under the pressure of the demands of the Iraq War the expansion has proceeded apace without that discussion.

C.3. Loss of accountability in the defense budget

Since Robert MacNamara introduced PPBS into the Pentagon in the mid-1960s, the Defense Department has enjoyed a reputation of being one of the best-run government agencies from the point of view of budget accountability. There is a well-established system for program justification and review during the budget process, and a high level of professionalism in the Comptroller's Office. Congressional committees with competent staffs hold authorization hearings, and with the exception of classified programs a great deal of information is available in the public domain for analysis by outsiders. This set of practices does not guarantee sensible spending decisions, but it provides accountability.

The way in which the Bush administration chose to fund the Iraq War has undercut this achievement. Since 2001, large annual supplementals have been passed by Congress, without any of the oversight afforded by the regular budget process. Supplemental requests are intended to tide an agency over in the case of an emergency, e.g., in the case of an unexpected military action or a natural disaster like Katrina. Detailed scrutiny of programs and policies is sacrificed because of a crisis. Typically, supplementals have been on the order of \$5-10 billion and for one or two years only.

By contrast, the supplementals for the Global War on Terrorism have totaled hundreds of billions of dollars, rising year by year and amounting to 21 percent of the DOD budget by FY 2006. The two supplemental requests for FY 2007 bring that percentage to 27 percent¹⁷ Iraq costs account for the bulk of the supplementals, amounting to around 80 percent of the total.

Virtually no hearings were held on the supplemental requests for the first four years, and there has been little after-the-fact reporting from the Defense Department on how they spent the money. The supplementals have become a way to fund regular DOD expenses as well as Iraq-related expenses, thereby avoiding internal and Congressional scrutiny. Examples include tank modernization, costs of modularity reorganization, buying new aircraft. These are predictable expenses and should be in the regular defense budget.

Congress has gone along with this because it allows them to keep the standard DOD budget to an unrealistically low number in their regular budget process, and make up for it in the supplementals, which don't count against the spending limits set in the congressional budget resolutions. Even *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, a trade publication that usually favors high defense budgets, has attacked this process editorially, arguing that "the regular defense

¹⁷ Gordon Adams, "Budgeting for Iraq and the GWOT," Testimony before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate (6 February 2007).

budget should cover all predictable expenditures. Supplementals should be restricted to paying for extraordinary costs.”¹⁸

D. Budgetary costs.

Let me turn finally to the financial costs of the Iraq War. Here calculating costs is not so much a conceptual problem as one of getting the right numbers. As I have just discussed, the supplementals have bundled in items that more properly should have been included in the regular defense budget, while other costs that arguably should be included are excluded.

D.1. The budgetary costs of the Iraq War, from March 2003 to March 2007

The CRS has just issued an update of its estimate of the cost of the Iraq War. The following table summarizes the situation with respect to Iraq:

ESTIMATED FUNDING OF THE IRAQ WAR
FY 2003-2008
(billions of dollars)

FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY07 supp.	FY08 req.	CUM TOTAL
53.0	76.0	84.5	101.0	63.7	69.9	115.9	564.0

Source: Congressional Research Service, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations since 9/11,” RL33110 (Updated March 14, 2007). The data in this table are for Iraq only.

These figures include funds allocated to DOD, State/AID, and the Veterans Administration; DOD funds account for 90 percent of the total. The CRS report points out numerous anomalies in the year-to-year growth in funds requested which cannot be explained in the absence of detailed breakdowns from the DOD. The totals have been rising at an increasing rate: 20 percent from FY 2005 to FY 2006, and 30 percent from FY 2006 to FY 2007.

D.2. Other monetary costs

In addition to the costs of funding military and reconstruction activities, there are other monetary costs, some of which are borne by individuals and some of which will be paid for by the government. Here are some examples:

The future cost of treatment of long-term disabilities of wounded soldiers. Linda Bilmes, a scholar at Harvard’s JFK School, has estimated these costs at \$350-\$660 billion over the next 40 years (discounted to present value). Because the low estimate of \$350 billion assumed that no additional troops would be deployed and that the claims pattern would resemble that of the last

¹⁸ “Stop the Defense Budget Shell Game,” *AW&ST*, 12 February, 2007, 58.

Gulf War, the true number will almost certainly be higher.¹⁹ These are future costs that have not yet entered into the budgets passed by Congress.

Civilian wages forfeited by National Guard and reservists deployed to Iraq. Wages foregone were estimated at \$10 billion between 3/03 and 8/05, or approximately \$7 billion more than their total military pay. I do not have more recent figures, but the annual figure should be declining with the reduced number of reservists and National Guard posted to Iraq after 2005. Some employers make up the difference in wages; state and local governments are required to do so. This merely shifts the cost elsewhere, however, and the reservists' civilian jobs must be filled by temporary employees, which represent an additional cost to the business or local government.

Interest payments on the proportion of the national debt attributable to the Iraq War budgetary costs. The exact amount depends on how one allocates the deficit across government programs and on the cost of the war as a percent of DOD spending. The decision to go to war without a tax increase has the effect of shifting the cost to the future; in effect it is a transfer payment we are collecting from the next generation.

Other. Then there are the costs that families have assumed, as they have shipped body armor, GPS systems, and camel-backs to their soldiers, to make up for deficiencies in the Army's supply chain.

Adding all these costs to the military spending for the war, one arrives easily at the trillion dollar projections of the total cost over the long run.²⁰ It is highly ironic to recall that Lawrence Lindsay, an economic adviser to the White House, was fired for suggesting in September 2002 that the total costs of a war with Iraq might range as high as \$100-200 billion.

D.3. Comparison to other wars

How does the cost of the Iraq War compare to other wars that the United States has fought, going back to World War II? The table below summarizes some standard measures used to compare the burden of military spending across time or countries. These numbers are not comparable to those in the previous table because: 1) the dollar figures have been deflated to constant 2000 dollars, and 2) the figure for National Defense includes almost all DOD spending, plus small amounts spent on defense by other agencies, but does not include funds for post-war reconstruction or for the Veterans Administration.

¹⁹ Bilmes, "Soldiers Returning," 16-17.

²⁰ David Leonhardt, "What \$1.2 Trillion Can Buy," *New York Times*, 17 January, 2007.

THE IRAQ WAR IN PERSPECTIVE

WAR (peak spending year)	BA for Nat Defense (2000 \$ billions)	Nat Defense as % of Federal Budget	Nat Defense as % of GDP
World War II (FY 1945)	775	89.5	37.5
Korean War (FY 1953)	416	69.4	14.2
Vietnam (FY 1968)	420	46.0	9.4
Iraq War (FY 2007)	427	19.0	3.8

BA=Budget Authority; GDP = Gross Domestic Product; FY= Fiscal Year

Note: National Defense includes most of the Department of Defense budget, atomic energy defense-related activities from the Department of Energy budget, and a small amount of defense-related spending from other agencies. It does not include funds allocated to the Army Corps of Engineers, the Veterans Administration, or the Department of Homeland Security.

Source: DOD, National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2007 (March 2006), Tables 7-2 and 7-7.

One conclusion that emerges from this table is that because the U.S. economy is so much larger than it was 40 or 55 years ago, the burden of the war is much smaller that it was for comparable dollar amounts during the Vietnam and Korean wars. We are a rich country, and from that perspective we can afford this war.

Whether the investment we have made is a good value is another question. The answer would depend on the outcome, and as I suggested at the beginning of my talk, it is hard to identify many benefits, either for the USA or even for Iraq. From a parochial point of view, we might count as a benefit the fact that the Rumsfeld vision of high technology as the answer to every threat has been dealt a blow by the encounter with reality in an insurgency fought on the ground. But these are not the kind of benefits a democratic nation goes to war for; rather, they are the crumbs of lessons learned that we take from any experience.

Conclusion

It is difficult to be optimistic in the face of the kind of numbers I have cited above. We are engaged in a costly war, albeit one we can afford. Indeed, the ability of the country to carry the cost with so little disruption to most of its citizens has profoundly disturbing implications for our society, which already is fractured into haves and have-nots.

Nevertheless, I do not want to end on such a pessimistic note. I personally think that the Iraq War has been a huge and costly mistake: like many, I have thought so from the very beginning. Now that a majority of Americans agree, there is the possibility that we will learn or re-learn lessons from this mistake that will inform our foreign policy and conduct of government in the future. I am thinking about a better appreciation of the intricacies of nation-building; a better understanding in Washington and the country as a whole of Islam, in all its varieties; and a more balanced view of what can be accomplished with military power.