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United States Interventions: Power Vacuums and the Rise of Extremist Groups

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UNITED STATES INTERVENTIONS: POWER VACUUMS AND THE RISE OF
EXTREMIST GROUPS

by

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B.S. May 2014, Old Dominion University
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ABSTRACT

UNITED STATES INTERVENTIONS: POWER VACUUMS AND THE RISE OF EXTREMIST GROUPS

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The purpose of this study is to examine U.S. foreign policy in Iraq and Syria and the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. By utilizing the integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws and the realpolitik theoretical frame, this qualitative case study analysis will explore how the U.S. foreign policy, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq and Syria, resulted in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. It was concluded that if the United States were to remove the Assad regime and dismantle the Alawite ruling class as it did with the Hussein regime and the Ba'ath party in Iraq, it would leave Syria with an immediate power vacuum that could easily be filled by Sunni backed extremist groups, including ISIS.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a recent interview with VICE News, President Obama stated that “ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) is a direct outgrowth of Al Qaeda in Iraq that grew out of our invasion, which is an example of unintended consequences” (Hussain 2015:1). Before the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the extremist juggernaut known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was imponderable. In an attempt to retaliate against the invasion, Sunni resistance fighters who opposed the occupation of Iraq by western forces formed a coalition known as Jam'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (TJ). Led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, TJ declared war on Shias in response to their cooperation with western forces that planned attacks in Sunni villages in an attempt to root out Al Qaeda. Subsequently, Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden in 2004 and TJ joined forces with Al Qaeda forming Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Two years later in 2006, AQI became the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Finally, once they became involved in the Syrian civil war, ISI branched into Syria and became the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Since the forming of ISIS in 2006, the group has been responsible for countless atrocities ranging from publicized beheadings to meticulously planned mass terror attacks. In the first 8 months of 2014, at least 9,347 Iraqi civilians have been killed and at least 17,386 wounded (Obeidallah 2014). Similarly, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (2015:35) concluded that

The impact of the current conflict and acts of terrorism on civilians remains severe and extensive. Since January 2014, acts of violence have killed or wounded tens of thousands of civilians and have displaced over 3 million Iraqis.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq prompted the development of anti-occupation coalition groups, which in a matter of years, became the Islamic extremist group known as ISIS.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to examine U.S. foreign policy in Iraq and Syria and the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. Specifically, this research is designed to examine whether U.S. foreign policies and interventions create power vacuums that allow for and facilitate the rise of terrorist groups vying for power. One central research question will guide this study: How has current U.S. foreign policy, driven by neo-liberalism and realpolitik, resulted in the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria? Given the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and the foreign policy currently being utilized, this study will explore how the U.S. foreign policy, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq and Syria, resulted in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By examining the relationship between U.S. foreign policy currently being utilized in Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS, this study may provide a better understanding as to the reasons why extremist groups develop in the wake of western intervention. While much attention has been given to the commission of state crimes abroad, there has been no criminological research examining the U.S. involvement in Syria or how their policies and interventions create power vacuums that allow for and facilitate the rise of terrorist groups vying for power. By examining how U.S. policies and interventions and actions create power vacuums that allow for and facilitate the rise of terrorist groups vying for power, this study may provide a better understanding of the possible consequences of the United States utilizing similar policies and practices in Syria that it did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, understanding the underlying reasons for the development of extremist groups such as ISIS is not

only beneficial for U.S. policy making in Syria, but for foreign policy making as a whole. If current U.S. foreign policy utilized in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS, then a change in policies and practices can be implemented before interacting with Syria in order to prevent further development of these groups.

The following chapter will provide a brief overview of the empirical studies that have examined state crime, the use of realpolitik, and U.S. involvement in Iraq.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter provides an overview of the literature examining state crime, realpolitik, and the U.S. led war in Iraq. First, the emergence of state crime and the standards used to constitute actions as being criminal are discussed. This is followed by the role of international financial institutions in the complicity of state crime. Next, the role of realpolitik in the decision making process within the international arena is examined. Finally, state crime and realpolitik are culminated into an analysis of U.S. actions in Iraq and Syria that led to the development of ISIS.

STATE CRIME

Defining State Crime

Historically, and even in the contemporary timeframe, criminological research has focused on individual acts of criminality which tend to take the form of street crimes. However, just recently there has been a push to extend this traditional viewpoint beyond the act of mere individuals and into the realm of state actors (Kramer 1992; Kauzlarich and Kramer 1993; Kauzlarich and Kramer 1998; Matthews and Kauzlarich 2000; Michalowski and Kramer 2006; Mullins and Rothe 2008; Whyte 2012; Friedrichs and Rothe 2014). The origins of state crime can be traced back to Edwin Sutherland (1940) who was the first criminologist to call attention to crimes committed in the context of legitimate occupations and corporations, which he labeled as "White-Collar Crime." Even though Sutherland brought attention to these primordial forms of

state crime, it was not until William Chambliss' (1989) American Society of Criminology Presidential address that more systematic attention was given to the concept of state crime. These early works pertaining to state crime were plagued by definitional issues including, "whether the individual or the state (organization) was culpable for acts deemed a state crime," and, "what standards should be used to define state criminality" (Rothe 2009b:2). In response to this question, Kauzlarich and Kramer (1998) asserted that not only could organizations be a primary focus of analysis in state and corporate crime, they should be. Further, their research highlighted the fact that the center of state criminality is not the individual, but rather the state. With this being said, punishing the individual would do nothing to deter the state from further offending. Not only do recognizing states and organizations as having the ability to commit crime make it possible to levy appropriate controls on rogue organizations, it also makes it possible for victims to be justly compensated. In regards to the later concern, some scholars, in particular Sharkansky (1995), have argued that if states do not violate the laws that they have created for themselves, then their actions cannot be labeled as criminal and any attempt to intervene is a direct violation of that state's national sovereignty. Their actions may be seen as being deviant, however they cannot be inherently criminal. There is also the issue of operationalizing the definition of state criminality. More simply stated, scholars have grappled with the question of should state criminality be limited to the individual state as Sharkansky (1995) argued, or should it breach the boundaries of the international arena? Green and Ward (2000) suggest that state criminality should be a combination of human rights violations and state organizational deviance. Rothe and Friedrichs (2006) concluded that the majority of criminologists agree that the use of international law provides a framework for defining and understanding state crime. This basic framework includes human rights and social and economic harms, but more importantly, it provides a

legalistic foundation from which to build upon. The use of international law as a framework creates a streamlined understanding of state crime and it also resolves any ongoing issues regarding holding the state, versus the individual criminally liable as actors. Taking this into consideration, Rothe (2009b:6) defined state crime as

Any action that violates international public law, and/or a state's own domestic law when these actions are committed by individual actors acting on behalf of, or in the name of the state, even when such acts are motivated by their personal economical, political, and ideological interests.

After establishing that international law provides the most complete framework for defining state crime, standards had to be conceptualized in order to classify acts as being criminal. As a guide, there have been two agreed upon standards that are used to classify state actions as being criminal. These include using the legalistic approach and the social harm approach. The legalistic approach combines international laws including various customary laws, treaties, and charters, as well as a state's own domestic laws. Because this approach includes the broader umbrella of international law, it provides a more streamlined understanding of state criminality. It also encompasses laws regarding human rights as well as social and economic harms. By doing so, it eliminates the problem of holding the individual versus the state accountable since it is not limited to one or the other. However, Rothe and Kauzlarich (2014:7) have criticized this approach for using "law as a tool of the state to control the very entities that create it." This argument rests on the fact that states create their own domestic laws. Inherently, these laws are created by those in positions of power within the state. Therefore, these laws are made to fulfill the interests of those in power, rather than to actually be mechanisms to define harmful behavior as being criminal. On the contrary, these laws have the potential to normalize criminal behavior as being necessary. On the other side of the spectrum is the social harm approach which realizes that the definition of crime is subjectively constructed based on issues of

power, including both political and economic factors. Many actions that are inherently criminal are omitted from domestic law due to the fact that they are of interest to those in positions of power. The social harm approach recognizes this phenomenon and expands the spectrum of victimization by including those who have been affected both directly and indirectly by the harmful actions of the state. The social harm approach is also amendable of omission and critiquing the harms facilitated by states: in the case at hand, the interventions that may have led to the rise of terrorist organizations vying for power.

The Western Hegemony

While there are multiple issues of complexity when explaining and defining state criminality, there has also been a general tendency of viewing the entire international arena within a capitalistic, United States centered viewpoint. Moreover, instead of taking into account all of the vital social, economic, and political structures that make up the international arena, those who study state criminality tend to focus solely on capitalistic viewpoints, thus boiling the entirety of the international arena into an unrealistically simple entity. This phenomenon can be seen in Kaulzarich and Kramer's (1998) theoretical framework in which the researchers integrated multiple criminological theories in an attempt to explain state crime. However, they failed to encompass the international nature of state criminality and instead narrowly focused on westernized capitalistic viewpoints. By doing so, many accounts and rationalizations of state criminality become inherently biased and are therefore uncharacteristic of many of the state actors involved in the entirety of the international arena. These dominant countries are frequently referred to as the global north. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015:6) note that countries of the global north are also referred to as "rich countries, industrialized countries...or the developed countries."

On the contrary, developing countries constitute the global south. The dominance of countries in the global north is apparent in virtually every aspect of global society, including the economic, political, and cultural aspects of the world. This phenomenon is frequently referred to as the western hegemonic control. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015:7) operationalized the term to refer to "the dominance of the developed countries of the west (or global north) not only economically but politically and culturally." Notoriously headed by the United States, the countries of the global north are driven by neo-liberal, free market fundamentalism. It is their belief that economic policy throughout the world should "privilege free markets and private sector enterprise – or a purely capitalistic economic system—over one with substantial government or public sector controls" (2015:7). This privatization fosters power accumulation and the continuation of criminal activity, all of which is masked within the democratic system. The free market model that arises from this system is enormously skewed to favor countries of the global north, western corporations, as well as financial institutions that are notoriously influenced by the elite western countries from which they do business. States themselves are interested in growing their economy in order to maintain their political legitimacy as well as their military and economic power. As a result, corporations become a primary concern. Also critical to the growth of corporations are financial institutions. Subsequently, states cater to the wants and needs of these institutions in order to expand their own power and legitimacy.

State-Corporate Crime

As previously mentioned, states are naturally inclined to be interested in the growth of their own economy in order to maintain their legitimacy in the world market, as well as their political and military power. In order to incur as much profit as possible, states must place

corporations at the forefront of their concern and be attentive to their demands. Financial institutions are also critical to corporate growth and expansion. Due to the mutuality of the system, states are intertwined with, impact, and are impacted by financial institutions. This further exacerbates the difficulty in separating and assigning appropriate blame when crimes are committed. To further complicate the matter, this intricate system is masked within the liberal democratic system which, by nature emphasizes the deregulation of corporations, privatization, as well as an open market system (Rothe 2009b). This system revolves around the idea that "economic policy should privilege free markets and private sector enterprise--or a purely capitalistic economic system--over one with substantial government or public sector controls and engagement" (Rothe and Friedrichs 2015:7). Within the system issues of substantial meaning are stripped of their importance and used as a means to pacify and redirect the attention of those who suffer, making it possible for state and state-corporate crimes to continue virtually unchecked. Si

Since the introduction of state-corporate crime in the criminological field, there has been an emergence of studies related to the subject (Bruce and Becker 2007; Mullins and Rothe 2008; Whyte 2012; Friedrichs and Rothe 2014; Whyte 2014). This blending of the state and corporate actors is most widely recognized by Kramer and Michalowski's (1990:4) definition of state-corporate crime:

State-corporate crimes are illegal or socially injurious actions that occur when one or more institutions or political governance pursue a goal in direct cooperation with one or more institutions of economic production and distribution.

State-corporate crime can be further separated into two distinct categories: state-facilitated crime and state-initiated crime (Kramer 1992; Kauzlarich and Kramer 1993). State-initiated corporate crime "occurs when corporations, employed by the government, engage in organizational

deviance at the direction of, or with the tacit approval of, the government." State-facilitated corporate crime occurs when

Government regulatory institutions fail to restrain deviant activities either because of direct collusion between business and government or because they adhere to shared goals whose attainment would be hampered by aggressive regulation. (Kramer, Michalowski, and Kauzlarich 2002:271-2).

Mullins and Rothe (2008) examined state-initiated crime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The researchers used the framework of international law to provide a qualitative case study on international state-corporate crimes committed in the DRC that drew upon primary documentation from national government organizations (NGOs) and quasi-governmental organizations focusing heavily on reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. United Nations reports and media accounts were also used. It was found that the DRC's problems could be attributed more to the behavior of mineral hungry transnational corporations and regional neighbors, rather than to the colonial-post colonial transition that many had assumed. Due to the push from foreign markets to get the valuable minerals into the Western market, transnational corporations disregarded the blatant human rights violations and civil war atrocities of genocidal character. They concluded that "while the legacy of colonialism and post-colonialism chaos has weakened essentially every social institution within the society, it is the engine of transnational hyper-capitalism that drove the bulk of the crime discussed here" (2008:97). On the other hand, Bruce and Becker (2007) examined state-facilitated crime in their study about state-corporate crime and the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. They aimed to demonstrate how the state's role in state-corporate crime can evolve from the role of an instigator to that of a facilitator. They used Kauzlarich and Kramer's (1998) integrated theory of crime as a framework to analyze the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Paducah, Kentucky. This qualitative instrumental case study examined the in the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant to

provide insight into an issue or to infer a generalization. Bruce and Becker (2007:38) found that the U.S. government made the decision to locate a nuclear plant at the Paducah site and “subsequently encouraged a generally lax attitude towards safety, and harmed plant workers by deliberately exposing them to materials known to be harmful.” The plant was also transferred from government ownership to private ownership even after its aforementioned history of neglect and failure to enforce safety regulations. This transaction subsequently changed the state's role from that of an instigator to that of a facilitator. They concluded that due to the fact that government institutions did nothing to restrain such problems that subsequently lead to environmental and physical health harms, the state had in fact engaged in crime.

As previously mentioned, international financial institutions are critical to corporate growth and expansion and since states place corporate growth at the forefront of their concern, international financial institutions play a major role in state activity. Therefore, researchers have found it necessary to mention their role in the state-corporate crime conglomerate. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015) outlined the goals of international financial institutions as being the promotion of development and growth in the global south. However, often times the interests of wealthy lender countries, corporations, and elite political officials of the countries in question are honored rather than those of the citizens in desperate need (2015). This aid is typically rendered by international financial institutions in the form of structural adjustment programs. These programs are put in place by the financier to ensure that they receive a return on their investment from the borrowing countries. The policies contained in these programs are superimposed upon, and detrimental to, the citizens of the global south. International financial institutions are ultimately shaped and influenced by institutions and elite entities that are located in the global north. In order to further their own geopolitical interests as well as those of the wealthy elites in

the global north, international financial institutions have adopted the private sector development strategy which requires countries who receive financial aid to adopt policies that “foster democracy,” meaning it opens the doors for privatization and private ownership. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015:33) noted that “in return for debt reallocations or admission into forgiveness programs, it demanded that macro-structural political and economic changes occur within the debtor nations.” This arrangement created by the neo-liberal democratic system in turn, promotes system criminality which facilitates criminal activity that expands beyond a singular actor, and emanates throughout states, organizations, and networks. This phenomenon is highlighted in Rothe and Collins’ (2011) study on arms trafficking.

State crimes are linked to corporations as well as international financial institutions. Corporate crimes are undoubtedly linked to the state as well as international financial institutions. Each of these combinations cumulates into crimes of the powerful. Not only is it hard to assign appropriate blame, it is also difficult to put an end to the cycle of crime. Chambliss, Michalowski, and Kramer (2010) conclude that the traditional way of dealing with these types of crimes is to focus on individual actors, organizations, or states. Since this way of committing crime promotes compartmentalization, eliminating one cog will not shut down the whole machine. Rather, the missing cog will be replaced and the machine will carry on. Chambliss et al. (2010:220) point out that this type of individualism “shifts the attention away from international networks of power that nurtures inequalities and state crime.” Thus, the individualistic approach that is used today pacifies the situation and allows for state and state-corporate crime to continue virtually unchecked. Additionally, as the literature notes, the individualistic approach negates any analysis of the role the broader structure plays in crime commission including states’ interests, what is often referred to as *realpolitik*.

Rothe and Friedrichs (2015:76) define *realpolitik* as, "a political ideology that prioritizes the economic, military, and political interests of states above moral and ethical obligations." As previously mentioned, states put the interests of corporations and international financial institutions at the forefront of their concern in order to gain power in the form of political, military, and economic capital. This practice makes it possible for moral obligations to be forgone in the hopes of advancing ones own political, military, or economic agenda. Recently there has been a surge of research regarding the impact of the use of *realpolitik* within the international arena (Rothe 2008; Rothe 2009a; Collins and Rothe 2013; Rothe and Steinmetz 2013).

In the study of the Reagan administration and Nicaragua, Rothe (2008) aimed to add to the literature, provide a descriptive account of the events that transpired during the Reagan administration's war with Nicaragua, and to analyze the causal factors behind the criminality of the United States. This qualitative singular case study drew primarily upon governmental documents on the Reagan administration's war with Nicaragua. The researcher analyzed the case using the framework of the integrated theory of violations of international criminal law. Rothe (2008:65) found that "the acts of aggression and illegalities committed by the Reagan administration were the result of an ideological doctrine based on imperialism: economic, military, and political superiority." Due to this, the country and its citizens were forced to endure years of violence and acts of terrorism at the hands of the government. It was abundantly clear that the United States was motivated by the furtherance of its own domestic corporate interests and that Nicaragua clashed with these long term interests. The study also pointed out the fact that elite countries rarely allow themselves to be regulated by outside agencies, and in the event that they do, they usually either sit, or have allies that sit on the Security Council. As a result, these

elite countries can capitalize by using veto power in order to further their own political and economic interests. Subsequently, state sovereignty is limited by the impunity of elite countries. This issue of impunity is also discussed in Rothe's (2009a) critical analysis of post-resistance to state criminality, *realpolitik*, and ideology. It pushes to end impunity for heads of state and high ranking officials and highlights the need for a change in the characteristics of the international arena, which is deeply embedded in using *realpolitik* when applying international criminal law. The researcher used the framework of *realpolitik* as a guide to analyze the use of impunity in the international arena. It was concluded that the role of *realpolitik* in international relations “makes it nearly impossible to implement policies aimed at reducing its impact on international criminal justice due to the disjuncture between what "ought" to be and what "is" (2009a:116). As previously discussed, economic, military, and political interests are the primary concern of states rather than moral and ethical obligations to the wellbeing of the international arena and all of its actors. Furthermore, impunity makes it possible for elite actors to commit crimes against humanity in order to further their own agendas without any fear of repercussions levied by the international arena, who themselves are unwilling to intervene if such acts could jeopardize their own self-interests. Overall, Rothe (2009a) asserted that *realpolitik* must be addressed before there can be an end to impunity. States must relegate economic, military, and political interests in favor of a fully shared consciousness of common moral obligations based on a social contract that proposes accountability for all.

To further add to the literature on *realpolitik*, Rothe's (2010) qualitative case study analyzed the global principle of ending impunity, *realpolitik*, and legal precedent. By examining the case of the former president of Chile, Augusto Pinochet, whose international arrest warrant was issued by Spain, the researcher aimed to demonstrate that we have not yet achieved a world

where ending impunity is universally recognized nor indicated as a universally shared value by all states. The data was collected via primary government documents as well as documents from various international agencies such as the International Court of Justice and was analyzed using the framework of jurisprudence and realpolitik. It was found that there has been a difference between the “stated support for an ideology and the realpolitik involved in the implementation of mechanisms for ending impunity” (2010:408). Therefore, the ideological support for abandoning realpolitik in favor of ending immunity is present. However, the reality is that states lack the political will to uphold these ideologies for fear of political and economic consequences for delineating from the international norm. Thus, the cycle of crime continues, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide occur, states do not prosecute for fear of their own self-interests, those in charge are not reprimanded, and the crime continues. As with other studies dealing with realpolitik, policy implications are nothing more than a call for unity within the international arena to present a unified front against the continued use of realpolitik and impunity. In their study on foreign intervention and realpolitik in Egypt's Arab Spring, Collins and Rothe (2013) aimed to examine and unveil the contradictions between the United States' support of the uprising in Egypt that led to the subsequent removal of President Mubarak from office and its backing of repressive regimes. This qualitative discourse analysis used a case study approach utilizing both primary and secondary documents to understand the relations of power between Egypt and the United States. These included official government reports such as presidential addresses, White House press statements, United Nations reports, as well as media statements. The researchers used realpolitik as a theoretical framework to analyze the case, being the Arab spring uprising in Egypt and subsequent removal of Mubarak from office. Overall, Collins and Rothe (2013:18) found that regardless of state officials condemning the atrocities

committed by the Mubarak regime at the time of the Arab Spring uprising, “geopolitical interests dominated the United States' policy response and actions.” The only favorable discourse about the removal of Mubarak was in an attempt to pacify the masses and provide a legitimization by asserting that the United States stands by global social justice. Collins and Rothe (2013:20) concluded that

In exposing the two faces of the United States in its support for the people's movement and its simultaneous economic, political, and military support for the Egyptian government, this research has revealed the hypocrisy of US foreign policy in Egypt and the larger political goals that guide it.

The United States placed their geopolitical and economic interests above that of those who were being repressed by the Mubarak regime. Any attempt to provide favorable rhetoric in regards to the removal of Mubarak was merely an attempt to thwart criticism and to legitimize the administration.

More closely related to the study at hand, there has been a significant amount of research on the United States war on Iraq. In a study on the Legality of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Schmitt (2004) analyzed the legal justifications for Operation Iraqi Freedom. By international law as theoretical framework, Schmitt (2004) provided a qualitative case study and analysis of the U.S. led Operation Iraqi Freedom. International law requires that any attack under the guise of self-defense must be proportional as well as necessary to an armed attack that is either proven to be imminent or is already underway. It was found that

Iraq was not about to launch an attack in the United States, with weapons of mass destruction or otherwise, in the immediate future. Nor is there any compelling evidence of Iraq distributing WMD to transnational terrorists or any other way directing or sponsoring specific and imminent attacks on the United States (2004:91).

Similarly, Kramer and Michalowski (2005) used the integrated theory of crime as a framework to provide a qualitative case study and criminological analysis of the U.S. led war in

Iraq. They too found an absence of a clearly defined imminent threat of attack by Iraq where it was stated that, "Iraq, however, had not attacked the United States nor was there any claim that such an attack was imminent" (2005:448). Not only did they find that there was no imminent threat of attack, they also concluded that the U.S. government was able to legitimize the war on Iraq by linking Saddam Hussein and his regime in Iraq to the wider War on Terrorism. By doing so, Kramer and Michalowski (2005:460) concluded that the U.S. government was able to "establish the idea that security required the ability to attack any nation believed to be supporting terror, no matter how weak the evidence." By linking the Hussein regime to the War on Terror, the United States government was able to legitimize the attack, even in the absence of any imminent threat of danger, including WMD. Further, it was found that in regards to WMD, "even if Iraq had possessed the weapons that the United States claimed, in the absence of clear steps to use them against the United States...there would have been no justification under Article 51 for Attacking Iraq" (2005:60). Not only was it found that there were no WMD as the U.S. government claimed, there was also no evidence of clear steps being taken by Iraq to use them against the United States. It was concluded that "the mere possession of weapons, even in the hands of an enemy nation, does not constitute the treat of an attack" (2005:60). In a study on law and the use of force, Roberts (2003) used the framework of previously established international law to provide a qualitative case study and critical analysis of the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council on the Iraq War. It was found that since this action did not have the explicit authorization of the United Nations Security Council, "it could easily be viewed as having at best a doubtful basis in international law" (2003:39). Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe (2005:53) found similar results in their aforementioned study asserting that the war on Iraq poses a threat to the United Nations Charter system in that "the United Nations Security Council did

not authorize an invasion of Iraq either to enforce Security Council resolutions or to achieve humanitarian goals" and if the two qualifications for legal use of force under international law are the threat of imminent attack and United National Security Council authorization, the U.S. invasion of Iraq constitutes war crimes. Also in Kramer and Michalowski's (2005:449) previously mentioned study, it was found that "even if Hussein had possessed WMD, absent of explicit authorization from the United Nations Security Council the invasion would still have been a violation of international law." Simply put, even if Saddam Hussein has possessed WMD as the previously established arguments asserted that he did, without the explicit consent of the United National Security Council, the invasion of Iraq is, and would still be, illegal. In order to combat the lack of authorization from the United Nations Security Council, the United States and its allies sought to declare Iraq to be in violation of Resolution 1441, which was a disarmament resolution as well as Resolution 678, which set out the terms for the cease fire pending the end of first Gulf War, effectively authorizing force to remove Iraq from Kuwait. They further claimed that Iraq did not comply with the Resolutions and were therefore a threat to international peace and security (Kramer et al. 2005). Despite these efforts, it was found that "even if Iraq had been in clear violation of Resolution 1441, the Security Council would have had to determine if the violation was of sufficient magnitude to authorize military force" (2005:62). Accordingly, without this authorization, the invasion of Iraq was a direct violation of international law. Therefore, the claims of Iraq being in violation of Resolutions 1441 and 678 were voided and the subsequent invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies was illegal on all counts. In a study of terrorizing violence and the Iraq war, Bonds (2014) analyzed the terrorizing violence used by the United States as well as the need for humanitarian norms within a cost-benefit analysis when considering the deployment of violence. By using the framework of previously established

global humanitarian norms the researcher provided a qualitative case study and critical analysis of the "Long Iraq war" ranging from the sanctions regime in 1990-2002 to the U.S.

counterinsurgency strategy used after the 2003 invasion (2014:365). It was found that political gains were valued ahead of moral obligations to the citizens of post invasion Iraq. Bonds (2014:380) found that "in the case of the Long Iraq War, U.S. war makers enacted policies that ultimately targeted citizens in an attempt to communicate a larger political message."

Continuing with geopolitical interests, the regime change and overthrow of Saddam Hussein is another key factor in legal question regarding the U.S. war in Iraq.

Schmitt (2004:102) found that "the Administration desperately desired regime change in Iraq." However, regime change can only legally be accomplished if it is a legitimate consequence of otherwise legal use of force. Which, as previously discussed, the war in Iraq was an illegal war of aggression, thus making the action an illegal use of force. Schmitt (2004:102) concluded that "states may not, absent Security Council mandate, act for the sole purpose of removing a regime of which they disapprove; doing so would constitute a patent violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter." These political motives are also seen in Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe's (2005) previously mentioned study where the humanitarian motives were questioned and ultimately found to be a mask for the underlying geopolitical interests of the United States. It was found that

The use of indiscriminant weapons such as cluster bombs, napalm, and depleted uranium shells by the invading forces, however, suggests that the primary goal was not to protect Iraqi civilians, but to destroy the Iraqi army and topple the regime of a troublesome adversary (2005:65).

In a study about wars of choice, Doig (2014) preformed a case study analysis on numerous interventions using the framework of international law in order to analyze why a liberal democratic state may pursue an approach that borders a state crime. It was found that

The potential for state crime rests through wars of choice...that go beyond the authorized basis for the original intervention, or intervention on grounds of benefit to the wider international community that masks the self-interest of particular geo-political perspectives and alliances (2014:44-5).

Doig's (2014) research coincides with the notion that the reasoning behind the use of humanitarian intervention as an explanation for the invasion of Iraq was an attempt to cover up the hidden geo-political agendas of the invading nations. Bellamy (2006) identified an acceptable criterion for the use of humanitarian intervention. Four acceptable reasons for the use of humanitarian intervention were identified, they include: right intention, which is defined as being for the common good. A just cause which is considered to be an acceptable act of self-defense or defense against those who disturb the peace. Proportionality of ends which is defined as "whether the overall harm likely to be caused by the war is less than that caused by the wrong that is being righted." Finally, last resort which occurs if and only if the use of force is seen as being the only way to stop the wrongdoing that is being done (2006:38). The United States and the United Kingdom claimed a just cause for their invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. In their aforementioned study, Kramer and Michalowski (2005:450) found that the United States and the United Kingdom argued that they "had a right and a duty to the use of military force for the humanitarian purpose of saving Iraqis from human rights violations by the Hussein government." However, it is important to note that this claim was only asserted after Iraq had already been invaded and the claim of the Hussein government possessing weapons of mass destruction had been debunked. Therefore, the claims of humanitarian concerns were merely an attempt to save face once the original arguments had been disproven. Similarly, Schmitt (2004:101) concluded that "while the regime's treatment of the Iraqi population was morally and legally reprehensible...it did not justify humanitarian intervention absent Security Council de jure or de facto acquiescence."

Subsequent occupation of Iraq also violated International Humanitarian Law (IHL), or the law of armed conflict. Even though the invasion of Iraq was not authorized as being legitimate by the United Nations Security Council, it was recognized that Iraq was in fact occupied by the United States and its allies. In response to this, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1483 which officially recognized the United States and the United Kingdom as the occupying powers in Iraq. Kramer and Michalowski (2005:452) noted that "this resolution required the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to comply fully with their obligations under international law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Regulations of 1907." These international laws aim to "protect civilians and noncombatants, limit the means or methods that are permissible during warfare, and set out the rules that govern the behaviors of occupying forces" (Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe 2005:66). In regards to the subsequent occupation of Iraq, Kramer et al. (2005:67) found that the Bush and Blair administrations committed the following violations of International Humanitarian Law, "failure to secure public safety and protect civilian rights, illegal transformation of the Iraqi economy, indiscriminate responses to the Iraqi resistance, and torture and abuse of Iraqi prisoners." As previously discussed, the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention rests on the protection of the civilian population and the United States' use of indiscriminate weapons completely disregarded the lives of noncombatant civilians, thus constituting a breach of International Humanitarian Laws. Likewise, the aforementioned restructuring of the Iraqi economy to benefit western-corporations and give the United States unrestricted access to Iraqi oil exports also constitutes a breach. There has also been research on the illegality of the use of torture and abuse against Iraqi prisoners by the United States (Hamm 2007; Heurich and Vaughn 2009; Rothe, Kramer, and Mullins 2009; Smeulers and Niekerk 2009; deHaven-Smith 2010; Serralvo 2012; Hagan 2015).

Notably, deHaven-Smith (2010:413-6) found that the evidence indicates Bush and Cheney “formulated doctrines to justify torture and military preemption and authorized the torture of prisoners to obtain bogus confessions linking Iraq to Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden to 9/11.”

In a study on neo-liberal rule in Iraq, Whyte (2007) used the framework of neo-liberalism and international law to analyze the actions of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in occupied Iraq. Article 43 of the Hague Regulations asserts that the occupying force should do everything within its power to ensure public safety and restore public order while also respecting the domestic laws of the country, unless in dire circumstance. Likewise, Article 64 of the Geneva Convention of 1949 states that the occupying power can only subject the occupied state to changes which are absolutely essential for the occupying power to fulfill its obligations of maintaining peace, security, and order. Greider (2003:5) furthers this argument by stating that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 “specifically prohibits conquering powers from restructuring the economy of a conquered nation in accordance with the ideology and economics of the conqueror.”

With this being established, Whyte (2007) found that the neo-liberal rules that the CPA laid down for Iraq including the abolition of commodity protection and the abolition of seed sharing, both of which were common economic practices before the invasion, were not essential in maintaining orderly government or national security. Therefore, "the CPA rules can be regarded as falling beyond the legal limits of the powers of an occupation government laid down by the Geneva Convention" (2007:182). Further, Whyte (2010:138) concluded that

The legally binding administrative orders issued by the CPA created a trade regime that eradicated protections for local industry...and generally created a WTO-compliant regime that protected foreign capital at the expense of local business.

This irradiation of protection for Iraqi businesses forced the economy into a revolving door of lending and borrowing, further plunging it into an innumerable depression. Herring and Ragwala (2006:252-7) concluded that "enforced debt dependency shackled the Iraqi economy to the economic prescriptions of international donors and lenders." This further ensured that the neo-liberal reforms introduced by the occupiers would remain entrenched in the Iraqi system long after the Coalition Provisional Authority departs. However, regardless of international law, the economic transformation of Iraq into a western suited financial ally was exponentially appealing to the elite leaders of countries in the global north, in particular, the United States.

In his January 23, 1980 State of the Union Address, Jimmy Carter (1980:4) proclaimed

An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.

As evidenced by this statement, the Middle East is of crucial importance to the United States in that it provides vital goods in the form of oil. Crude oil is essentially the backbone of the United States and ever since its discovery it has played a decisive role in nearly all foreign conflicts that the United States has been a part of, including Iraq. Whyte (2007) recognized this appeal and found that the economic transformation of the Iraqi economy was possibly only because the U.S. occupation was willing to ignore international law in order to create an economy that was more suited towards the World Trade Organization. By doing so, the United States could profit off of Iraq's main economic asset, oil. Further, this neo-liberal economic regime that was imposed upon the Iraqi economy by the United States "facilitated the transfer of Iraqi oil revenue into the hands of Western corporations with no mandate from the Iraqi people" (2007:191). In an introspective analysis of the U.S. invasion of Iraq using the framework of Iraq being a war of aggression, Adu-Pimpim Boaduo (2012) came up with similar findings that the United States and the United

Kingdom knew that Iraq did not possess WMD. Rather, they "only wanted to secure access and control of the world's second largest oil reserves which would aid them in ascertaining their geopolitical position in the oil producing region" (2012:94). Overall, Whyte (2007) and Adu-Pimpim Boaduo (2012) have concluded that the given reasons for the invasion in Iraq (self-defense, counter-terrorism, the spread of democracy) were a front in order to disguise the true hidden agenda of the conquering powers, to create an economic structure that would benefit western corporations and provide unlimited access to Iraq's lucrative oil reserves. Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe (2005:70) concluded that "the occupying powers knew their actions violated international law; they simply did not feel obligated to comply." As a whole, state crime in the case of Iraq must be viewed as a part of a wider strategy of both political and economic domination in order for the attainment of geo-political goals or *realpolitik* (Whyte 2007).

Additionally, in a study of the cost of economic conflict crimes in post-invasion Baghdad, Hagan, Rothenberg, Hanson, and Parker (2012) cross-referenced the 2003 Gallup Poll (GP) of Baghdad and the 2003-8 Iraq History Project Current Violations Initiative (CVI) interview studies in order to present an estimate of civilian losses from economic conflict crimes that followed the U.S. led invasion of Iraq. It was found that "the largest and most statistically significant of the losses are associated with crimes that can involve large ransoms", namely beheadings and kidnappings. Also significant are losses associated with businesses. It was concluded that there was notable evidence of "the widespread, systematic nature of economic conflict crimes during the Iraq conflict" and the total estimated economic losses for the entire country were found to be "approximately US\$329 billion" (2012:494-5). Further, Green and Ward (2009) examined post-invasion Iraq in order to highlight the impact of the violence and corruption of the invasion and occupation on the dynamics of violence within its post-invasion

society. It was found that as a response to, and consequence of, the violent overthrow of the Hussein regime, political and criminal violence merged and created a new spectrum of violence as a means to a political end. This change in the landscape of violence was found to facilitate the rise of “dual purpose criminality: acts of murder, rape, kidnapping, smuggling, and robbery that simultaneously accommodate individual and organizational goals” (Green and Ward 2009:13). Likewise, using Tilly's framework of state-building often being a product of organized criminal activity as well as Cloward and Ohlin's assertion that organized criminals infiltrate state organizations and join legitimate and illegitimate means in order to facilitate a criminal enterprise that is protected by the state, Hagan, Kaiser, Hanson, and Parker (2015) examined the 2003 Gallup Poll (GP) of Baghdad and the 2003-8 Iraq History Project Current Violations Initiative (CVI) interview studies in order to show how the self-fulfilling forces that followed the U.S. invasion of Iraq were motivated by fear and uncertainty. It was noted that the Mahidi Army used targeted harassment and threats against Sunni victims in Baghdad which amplified the self-fulfilling prophecy of fear that was further provoked by the U.S invasion and occupation of Iraq. The researchers concluded that “Iraqis in vulnerable neighborhoods were already fearfully anticipating the dangerous consequences of sectarian violence that this American invasion would unleash.” This piece implicitly speaks to the power vacuum created by U.S. policies in Iraq in that is specifically highlights the U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq leading to additional crimes, from street crimes to trafficking. Hussain (2015:1) affirms these findings by asserting that “under Iraq’s new democratic regime which was armed by the U.S. and backed by Iran the Sunnis of the north became increasingly aggrieved, and this provided the perfect opportunity for ISI (Islamic State of Iraq, a precursor to ISIS) to fill the power vacuum.”

While much attention has been given to the commission of state crimes abroad, there has been no criminological research examining the U.S. involvement in Syria or how their policies and interventions create power vacuums that allow for and facilitate the rise of terrorist groups vying for power. Additionally, while Hagan et al. (2015) implies the role a power vacuum can have after U.S. involvement, overtly and covertly, no research has focused on the rise of groups from the Taliban, to Al Qaeda to ISIS. Given the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and the foreign policy currently being utilized, this thesis will explore how the U.S. foreign policy, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq and Syria, resulted in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the research collection method, the type of data collected, and the method of analysis for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This research will utilize a qualitative case study design to conduct a chronological temporal analysis. This chapter describes the relevant aspects of qualitative methods and a detailed description of the study design utilized, the procedures, and the chronological temporal analysis that will be employed in this study. A final section will outline limitations that are associated with the use of the qualitative case study research design and those specific to this study.

STUDY DESIGN

In order to gain an in depth understanding how U.S. foreign policy, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq and Syria resulted in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS, the case study design has been chosen. This allows for an in depth analysis of a specific phenomenon drawing from one case. The timeframe used for this study fell between the initiation of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003, to the present day. As previously mentioned, when utilizing the case study approach, the idea of representative sampling is rejected in favor of analytical induction and researchers are advised to select a case which exhibits a particular problem or phenomenon that one is interested in studying.

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While qualitative research methods have been used by a variety of researchers in a vast number of fields, quantitative methods are still heavily favored in criminological and sociological research. Despite this, qualitative research methods prove to be more beneficial in certain cases. Qualitative research "involves any research that uses data that does not indicate ordinal values" (Nkwi, Nyamongo, and Ryan 2001:1). Simply put, qualitative research methods are any measures where the data is not recorded in numerical form. Starman (2013:30) noted that qualitative research is characterized by an interpretative paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences as well as an idiographic approach "which emphasizes an individual's perspective on the investigative situation, process, relations, etc." These characteristics of qualitative research give the researcher a unique in depth understanding of individual perspectives. Trochmin and Donnelly (2008) highlighted four specific circumstances in which qualitative research proves to be highly beneficial: for achieving an in depth understanding of the issue at hand, for developing detailed accounts to describe a phenomenon, and for mixed methods research. In regards to providing detailed accounts in order to describe a specific phenomenon, Trochmin and Donnelly (2008:143) noted that "impersonal numbers may not connect their experience. Illustrating the implications of quantitative data through well-researched qualitative anecdotes and stories is essential to effective use of social research." When attempting to understand a specific phenomenon, qualitative research is imperative. Overall, qualitative research excels at "telling the story from the participant's viewpoint, providing the rich, descriptive detail that sets quantitative results into the human context" (2008:144).

One particular qualitative method that is utilized in this study is the case study method. Simons (2009:21) defined the case study as an "in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives

of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program, or system in real life." Likewise, Mesec (1998:45) defined the case study as a "comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis; i.e., the characterization of the case and the events, as well as a description of the discovery process of these features." A unique feature of the case study approach is that its focus is not to define a population and select an appropriate sample, but rather it is focused around "determining what the investigated case may be" (Sagadin 2004:34). Further, a case study is usually a study of a singular case or a small number of cases. Starman (2013:35) asserted that "The idea of representative sampling and statistical generalizations to a wider population should be rejected, and analytical induction should be chosen instead." Mesec (1998) supported this notion and suggested that researchers should select a case for a research unit where a problem or phenomenon that one is interested in exists. George and Bennett (2005:19) identified four advantages of qualitative case studies compared to quantitative methods:

Their potential to achieve high conceptual validity, strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses, usefulness for closely examining the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases, and their capacity for addressing causal complexity.

In terms of validity, rather than lumping together cases that are dissimilar in order to obtain a larger sample size as done in quantitative work, the qualitative case study approach allows for "conceptual refinements with a higher validity level over fewer number of cases" (2005:19). It also takes into account the contextual factors other than those that are codified that quantitative research tends to leave unaccounted for. Overall, the qualitative case study is helpful when "we want to cover contextual conditions because we believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear" (Baxter and Jack 2008:545). Qualitative research methods are preferred over quantitative methods in this

research because it is focused on a specific, localized phenomenon. By utilizing the qualitative case study method it was possible to achieve a more in depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It also gave the researcher the ability to develop a detailed account to portray it.

PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTATION

The case study approach used herein utilized the chronological temporal approach followed by themes and included the use of primary and secondary data which were collected based upon their relevancy to U.S. foreign policy utilized in Iraq and the subsequent formation of ISIS. The chronological temporal approach was chosen because it allowed for the ability to track down the root cause of the phenomenon in question. Primary data sources included declassified federal intelligence agency documents, joint U.S.-Iraqi documents, U.S. strategic framework, agreements, and contingency plans for Iraq, various memos and addresses given by high ranking political figures regarding U.S. action in Iraq, as well as United Nations Security Council (UNSC) expert reports on Iraq. Secondary data sources included academic books and journal articles, prior case studies, and relevant news reports which were used for the purpose of providing additional background and contextual information to guide the analysis. After chronological ordering, the data were then manually coded for all U.S. policies, practices, and actions utilized in Iraq that included underlying themes of realpolitik and neo-liberalism using color coded signifiers. All information and reference to privatization, deregulation, free-market economic practices, regime change, and geopolitical interests were then coded and separated into the appropriate theme.

Rather than an emphasis on reliability and validity as in quantitative research, qualitative research, particularly case studies, are more concerned with achieving a deeper understanding of

the phenomenon being studied. Trochim and Donnelly (2008:148) note that "each of us sees a different reality because we see it from a different perspective and through different experiences." Therefore, there is no single reality that exists separate from individual perceptions. Due to the interpretative nature of the research presented in this study, reliability is limited. Similarly, in qualitative work validity is often difficult to prove. Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed that transferability and confirmability should be used to judge the soundness of qualitative research rather than reliability and validity. Transferability refers to the "degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings," and confirmability refers to the "degree to which others can confirm or corroborate the results in qualitative research" (Trochim and Donnelly 2008:149). In this study, transferability is limited because the focus is on a specific phenomenon, U.S. foreign policy in Iraq and the development of ISIS. However, due to the striking similarities between U.S. actions and involvement in Iraq to that of Syria, the results of this study are transferable and applicable in that context. Outside of these specific cases, the transferability of this study is limited. Likewise, the international arena is ever changing. More specifically, the Middle East has been in a constant state of turmoil and has been subjected to the influence of a multitude of external actors. Due to these factors, confirmability of this study is also limited. However, by acknowledging the ever changing nature of the international arena, and thus the study at hand, this increases the level of dependability, or "the degree to which the researcher adequately describes the continuously changing context and its effects on the conclusions" of the study (2008:149).

ANALYSIS

Once the coded data mentioned in the previous section were chronologically ordered and established into themes, it then provided the factual events necessary to analyze the complexities of U.S. foreign policy which was suggested to constitute the use of realpolitik and neo-liberalism, specifically in the case of Iraq. A chronological temporal analysis of the development of ISIS as a result of this foreign policy being utilized, coded to contain privatization, deregulation, free-market economic practices, regime change, and geopolitical interests, was then preformed. The results of this analysis were then applied to Syria in an effort to obtain a complete understanding of the potential of U.S. foreign policy to result in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS.

LIMITATIONS

As with any research method there are limitations that should be noted. One of the biggest issues in regards to the use of qualitative case studies is that of generalizability. When focusing on a singular case, or a grouping of similar cases, it is impractical to try to generalize the findings to include instances outside those particular cases. Flyvbjerg (2006) notes that, within sociological research, there is a preconceived notion that in it is impossible to generalize findings on the basis of an individual case. Rather, the focus tends to zero in on specific phenomenon that occur within a specific case. Another issue that arises when utilizing the qualitative case study approach is the possibility of a bias towards verification. This meaning that there is "a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions (Starman 2013:38). Due to the time constraints of this particular study, there is also the issue of the data collected not being all inclusive and exhaustive. Beyond the limitations that are associated with the use of the case

study method, there are also issues when using governmental and politically driven documents. Specifically, Rothe and Collins (2011:27) note that "there is an issue of selectivity of information provided by the source as well as full disclosure of information..given the overall process of knowledge management." There is also the issue of censoring, much of the documentation on U.S. involvement in Iraq is still classified information, and those that have been de-classified are still heavily censored. Given the issue of access to the full array of information, the possibility of an incomplete picture of the case being illustrated is present.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the importance of qualitative analysis as well as the case study design. It also provided an overview of the research design, the reasoning behind the selection of Iraq as the case, a description of the data, as well as the procedures and analysis being used in the study. The follow chapter will provide a detailed description of integrated theory and its relevance to this study.

CHAPTER IV

THEORY

INTRODUCTION

As a discipline, criminological research attempts to understand the causal factors of crime and crime control. These attempts have produced a multitude of theories that are applied to street crime. While there is a plethora of criminological theories available with the capacity to explain individual street crimes, standing alone these theories fail to explain the complexity of state crime. In order to fully understand state crime, a multi-level integrated theory of crime is necessary. Further, utilizing only one theory, which in turn uses only one level of analysis, has the potential to lead to reductionism. Rothe (2009b:99) further explains this phenomenon by stating that:

Utilizing theories that explain only the individual level processes, that organizations, controls, or external precipitating conditions, is bound to overlook the intricacies of such cases and provide no additional guidance for future understandings of atrocities or the ability to foresee potential situations prior to becoming full-blown violations of international criminal law.

Therefore, individual theories that explain only one level of analysis overlooks the inherent details of complex state crimes which in turn fail to produce any complete future understanding of this phenomenon.

The first attempt to create an integrated multi-level theory began with Kramer and Michalowski's (1990) study regarding state-corporate crime. This work was further expanded upon by Kauzlarich and Kramer (1998) in their integrated theoretical frame. In this theoretical frame the three catalysts for action including motivation, opportunity, and operationality of controls were viewed as being constant factors in state crime at the interactional (micro),

organizational (meso), and institutional (macro) levels of analysis (Rothe 2008). While this theory was instrumental in its foundation, it was criticized for its emphasis on the capitalistic viewpoint and social organization which gave it a very westernized and United States centered focus. Thus, this viewpoint limits the theory to those crimes that are directly associated with the capitalistic corporate culture generated primarily by, and within, the United States. Further, Rothe and Mullins (2006, 2008) assert that the theory fails to address vital aspects of state crime such as “weakened and transnational states, the involvement of militias, ideological and religious motivating factors, international relations, and factors associated with post-colonialism” (Rothe 2008:51). To add girth and explanatory power to Kauzlarich and Kramer’s (1998) theory, Rothe and Mullins (2006, 2007, 2008) proposed an integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws, the likes of which will be utilized in this thesis. Rothe and Mullins (2006, 2008) added an international level of analysis to the original framework in order to incorporate the international nature of state crime which was previously overlooked. This level of analysis includes “international relations, controls, political pressures, overarching ideological and political interests, and economic and military positions of the particular states involved” (Rothe 2008:52). This new theory also separated Kauzlarich and Kramer’s (1998) catalyst of operationality of control into constraints and controls. Constraints are defined as “social elements that stand to potentially make a crime either riskier or less successful; offenders must navigate around them” (Rothe 2008:52). Controls are defined as “a complete blockage to an act or when a criminal penalization is ideally inevitable after the fact” (2008:52). Simply put, a constraint acts as a barrier such as oversight from the United Nations, whereas a control is an institution that has the ability to completely prevent the criminal action or punish the violation after the crime has been committed. Furthermore, the four revised catalysts constituted in the revised

theory include motivation, or the “constellation of the general and specific drives that lure and entice a given organization/organizational actor toward offending,” opportunity, or the “social interactions where the possibility for a crime to be committed emerges and presents itself to a motivated offender,” constraints, and controls, which have been previously defined (Rothe 2009b:107). Within each of the catalysts and levels are several individual criminological theories, though most are implicitly present (e.g. political economy). The following section draws these out as they are relevant to this study as well as provides discussions of other related theoretical frameworks.

THEORY INTEGRATION

Within the overarching integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws, Foucault’s (1980) premise of regimes of truth will be the primary framework guiding this research. Foucault emphasized the reinforcing role between power and truth. He believed power to be more than just a coercive force, rather that mechanisms of power “the means in which it is dispersed – produce knowledge that reinforces the exercise of that power” (Rothe and Friedrichs 2015:69). Further, truth is constructed by those who hold political and economic positions of power. These truths then benefit those who wield power within a society. Foucault (1977:74) asserts that

Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it: a “regime” of truth.

Simply stated, truth is created and reinforced by power; those who are in power create truths and proclaim them to be absolute. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015) make evident the ability of the Foucauldian notions of truth and regimes of truth to reinforce the concept of development. The

established truths guide the way in which development is discussed. The overarching regime of truth, which is inherently created out of state and corporate interests, guides this development. These established truths then undergirds actions within the international arena and become what Vico (1948:63) refers to as “judgment without reflection.” Once this has occurred, it becomes the generalized way of thinking and leaves no room for alternative methods to the proposed solutions. These truths are then manifested within the overarching regimes of truth which uphold the status quo. As previously discussed, if these truths are questioned or threatened, actors rationalize their actions. Rothe and Friedrichs (2015:71) simplify this phenomenon in stating that “the regime of truth supports the status quo, appears as common sense and as if consensually accepted.” This accepted way of thinking is then passed on to individual actors and is subsequently carried on even when the actors themselves leave. Subsequently, policy is then dictated by these created truths and becomes entrenched within the institution.

These truths however are embedded within state interests grounded in neo-liberalism. As such, the overarching umbrella of these ‘truths’ and ‘regime of truth’ is *realpolitik*: states’ prioritization of self-interests embedded within the political economic and military spheres. The *realpolitik* theoretical frame goes beyond the dichotomous relationship of politics and the economy to include geopolitical interests in order to explain state policy. In this case, *realpolitik* can be seen to be utilized by powerful countries situated in the global west in order to legitimize their actions through the adoption of certain discourses, namely condemning oppressive and opposing regimes, while at the same time pursuing avenues that benefit their own political and economic interest. This theoretical frame is useful in explaining U.S. foreign policy in Iraq given the historical economic and political relations of the United States with the resource rich countries of the Middle East.

While some researchers (Gelfand, Lefree, Fahey, and Feinberg 2013 and Conrad and Milton 2013) have used cultural differences as a theoretical framework to explain U.S. action in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent power vacuums that are created, this framework fails to explain the totality of the criminal activity that has taken place in that it only examines one level of analysis. By utilizing the integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws, specifically focusing on Foucault's regimes of truth as a framework and *realpolitik*, also called geopolitical interests, this research will be able to provide a more holistic explanation to the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent rise of extremist groups such as ISIS.

CHAPTER V

CASE

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter provides a case study analysis of the United States' actions in both Iraq and Syria and how this action led to the rise of extremists groups, in particular ISIS. Specifically, this section highlights U.S. involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom and post-occupation Iraq and Syria, as well as the formation and development of ISIS.

IRAQ

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The latest U.S. military action in Iraq began in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Directly following the attack, in his 2002 State of the Union Address President Bush included Iraq in a list of states the makeup an "axis of evil" in stating that,

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic (The Washington Post 2002:1).

On October 16, 2002 the Joint Congressional Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq was passed. Within which it was stated that,

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105-388) expressed the sense of congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remover from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime (Joint 2002:94).

On January 28, 2003 President George W. Bush gave his State of the Union Address in which he warned the citizen of the United States about the threat posed by Saddam Hussein in Iraq and his plan to disarm him if he failed to comply with the United Nations, stating that,

The United States will ask the U.N. Security Council to convene on February the 5th to consider the facts of Iraq's ongoing defiance of the world. Secretary of State Powell will present information and intelligence about Iraqi's--Iraq's illegal weapons programs, its attempts to hide those weapons from inspectors and its links to terrorist groups. We will consult, but let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm for the safety of our people, and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him (The Washington Post 2003:18).

On February 5th, 2003 U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, keeping with the President's State of the Union Address, appealed to the United Nations that Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq, posed an imminent threat to the United States and to his own people due to his possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). However, on February 14, 2003 the United Nations' Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix reported to the United Nations Security Council that his team "has found no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq" (CNN 2015:2). Despite these findings, on March 17, 2003 President George W. Bush issued an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq within 48 hour or face military action. The following day, Hussein spoke on Iraqi television where he called the coalition's attacks "shameful crimes against Iraq and humanity" (2015:2). That same day the United States invaded Iraq, marking the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. On April 9, 2003 coalition forces took Baghdad and toppled the statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square. Vice President Dick Cheney stated that "the day's events in Baghdad will mark one of the most extraordinary military campaigns ever conducted" (DePalma 2003:1). Further, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld "compared the collapse of Mr. Hussein's regime to the fall of the Berlin Wall and said Mr. Hussein had taken his place in the pantheon of failed dictators" (2003:1). Following the defeat of Baghdad, while aboard the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln

President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq were over on May 1, 2003. Despite this, the fighting continued. Following the end of major combat operations in Iraq, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order Number 1 (2003a), was established on May 16, 2003. It called for the de-Ba'athification of Iraq in which the Ba'ath party, the political party associated with the Hussein regime, was disestablished and barred from holding prominent ranks within the Iraqi military, and from holding positions in the top three layers of management in the national government ministry and related institutions. On May 22, 2003 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1483 which acknowledged the United States and Great Britain as occupiers of Iraq. The Council determined that,

The situation in Iraq still constitutes a threat to international peace and security; consequently the resolution was adopted under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which gives the Council authority to make decisions that are binding on all U.N. member states (Kirgis 2003:1)

Further, Resolution 1483 did not give any indication of the lawfulness of the invasion. However, it did recognize the United States and Great Britain as the occupying powers in Iraq and called upon the occupying forces to fully comply with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and The Hague Regulations of 1907 (2003). The following day, CPA Order Number 2 (2003b) was issued and completed the de-Baathification of Iraq by resolving jobs, titles, and entire agencies associated with the Ba'ath party. It also left the door open in regards to dissolved entities in that it cited that "additional organizations may be added to this list in the future" (Coalition 2003b:188). One month later on June 22, 2003 Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusay, were killed by U.S. coalition forces. Later that year on December 13th Saddam Hussein was captured in Tikrit, however this was not confirmed by the U.S. Defense Department until December 14, 2003. Following the invasion of Iraq by the United States as well as the downfall of the Hussein regime, which divided the Shiite ruling party from the marginalized Sunnis, there was an

increase in sectarian and insurgency violence. On March 8, 2004 the CPA issued a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) in order to govern the restoration of sovereignty to Iraq by June 30, 2004. Within which it stated that,

The system of government in Iraq shall be republican, federal, democratic and pluralistic, and powers shall be shared between the federal government and the regional governments, governorates, municipalities, and local administration (Law 2004:204).

From April to May of 2004, Shiite militias who were loyal to Moqtada Sadr engaged the coalition forces. After a month long siege of the Sunni city of Falluja, hundreds were reported as being killed. It was also during this time that photographic evidence of U.S. troops abusing Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharib emerged. In June of 2004, the United States handed over sovereignty to the interim Iraqi government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Two days later, the coalition turned over legal control of Saddam Hussein and other former top Iraqi officials to the Iraqi government. However, the United States retained physical custody of the men. Hussein was charged with a multitude of crimes including the illegal invasion of Kuwait and the gassing of the Kurdish people on July 1, 2004 (CNN: 2015). In August of 2004, fighting ensued between joint U.S. and Iraqi forces and the Shiite insurgency militia of Moqtada Sadr in Najaf. Two months later the United States mounted a major offensive against insurgents in Falluja in which 2,000 insurgents were killed. On November 14, 2004 Fallujah was declared as being liberated. In April of 2005, despite escalating insurgency violence, the National Assembly selected Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as President and Ibrahim Jaafari as Vice President of Iraq. In May of 2006, the newly elected Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, announced the creation of a national unity government. In his address to the nation, President Bush (2006:1) asserted that, “this Saturday in Baghdad, the new Prime Minister of Iraq announced a national unity government. This is a free government under a democratic constitution, and its formation marks a victory for

the cause of freedom in the Middle East." The following June, Massoud Barzani was sworn in as Regional President of Iraqi Kurdistan. In August of 2005, following CPA orders, a draft Constitution was endorsed by both Shiite and Kurdish negotiators. However, it was not endorsed by Sunni representatives. That October Iraqi voters approved the new Constitution and aimed to create "an Islamic Federal Democracy" (BBC 2015:7). Tensions rose between the United States and Iraq in November of 2005 when 24 Iraqi civilians were killed in Haditha, Iraq. Eight United States Marines from Kilo Company 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment were charged with the deaths. However, only one was convicted of "negligent dereliction of duty" (CNN 2015:3). In December the first permanent Iraqi government and parliament was elected, making the first full-term Iraqi government since the U.S. invasion. Following the implementation of the new Iraqi government, the United Nations estimated that an average of over 100 civilians were killed in Iraq each day (BBC 2015). Despite these numbers, on June 7, 2006 Iraqi insurgents faced a decisive defeat when the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was killed during a joint U.S. air strike.

The Iraqi High Tribunal reached a verdict in the 1982 Dujail massacre case finding Saddam Hussein guilty and sentencing him to death on November 5, 2006. On December 30, 2006 Saddam Hussein was killed by hanging for committing crimes against humanity. The following January, President Bush addressed the nation and announced a new Iraq strategy in which he stated,

The violence in Iraq — particularly in Baghdad — overwhelmed the political gains the Iraqis had made. Al Qaeda terrorists and Sunni insurgents recognized the mortal danger that Iraq's elections posed for their cause, and they responded with outrageous acts of murder aimed at innocent Iraqis. They blew up one of the holiest shrines in Shia Islam — the Golden Mosque of Samarra — in a calculated effort to provoke Iraq's Shia population to retaliate. Their strategy worked. Radical Shia elements, some supported by Iran, formed death squads. And the result was a vicious cycle of sectarian violence that continues today (Serrano 2007:1).

With this new strategy U.S. troop levels in Iraq and Baghdad surged to 150,000. In the months that followed, insurgency violence in Baghdad, Fallujah, and Ramadi killed over 500 Iraqi and Kurdish civilians. In August of 2007, the Kurds and the Shiites form an alliance behind Prime Minister Maliki, however they again failed to garnish the support of the Sunni leaders. In September of 2007, the United States faced backlash over private security contractors after Blackwater security guards were alleged to have killed 17 civilians in Baghdad. Despite this, on November 26, 2007, President George W. Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamel Al-Maliki signed a Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America. Within the Declaration the parties pledged to "begin as soon as possible, with the aim to achieve, before July 31, 2008, agreements between the two governments with respect to the political, cultural, economic, and security spheres" (Mason 2009:4). The intentions of both parties to enter into an agreement that would provide U.S. security assurance to Iraq as well as train and assist the Iraqi army with terrorist entities, specifically Al Qaeda, within the territory were also asserted. In January of 2008, Parliament reversed CPA Orders One and Two and passed legislation "allowing former officials from Saddam Hussein's Baath party to return to public office" (BBC 2015:9). On July 10, 2008 General David Petraeus was confirmed by U.S. Senate as commander of U.S. Central Command. Six days later the January surge officially ended resulting in the reduction of U.S. troop levels in Iraq about which General Petraeus told Congress,

The first of those units could be sent home in late September, with the rest returning home by mid-July 2008. Petraeus said the "surge" campaign has met its military goals of reducing sectarian killings by more than 50 percent nationwide and by more than 80 percent in Baghdad (CNN 2007:1).

In September of 2008 the United States relinquished control of the western province of Anbar which was once an al-Qaeda stronghold in the area. This transfer marked the first Sunni province

to be returned to the Shiite headed government. The following month, Iraqi Parliament approved the U.S-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement which determined the “principal provisions and requirements that regulate the temporary presence, activities, and withdrawal of the United States Forces from Iraq” (Agreement 2008:1). By January of 2009, the United States military handed over control of Baghdad's Green Zone to the Iraqi government. With this, Iraq assumed more control over foreign troops based in the country. Prime Minister Al-Maliki marked the move as "Iraq's day of sovereignty" (BBC 2015:10). Shortly afterwards, President Barrack Obama announced that August 31, 2010 would be the end of U.S. combat operations in Iraq, noting that upwards of 50,000 troops would stay and act as military advisors to protect U.S. interests, but they would be gone by the end of 2011. That June, U.S. troops pulled out of major Iraqi cities and towns officially transferring security responsibility over to Iraqi security forces. Small amounts of troops remained in rural areas of Iraq to combat insurgency activity.

Following the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops, multiple suicide bombings in Baghdad from August to December of 2009 claimed by the al-Qaeda linked Islamic State killed over 300 Iraqi civilians (BBC 2015). On August 19, 2010 the last remaining combat brigade pulled out of Iraq. President Obama announced that, "Operation Iraqi Freedom is over, and the Iraqi people now have lead responsibility for the security of their country" (Montopoli 2010:1). To reflect the reduced role of the United States in Iraq and the increased role of Iraqi security forces in securing the country, Operation Iraqi Freedom was renamed Operation New Dawn in September of 2010. During the same time, Iraq and Syria restored diplomatic ties. After four years of self-imposed exile in Iran, Moqtada Sadr returned to Iraq in January of 2011. Following his return, sectarian violence escalated culminating in 40 coordinated nationwide attacks in August. On October 21, 2011 President Obama announced that all U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Iraq

by the end of the year stating that, "After nearly 9 year, America' war in Iraq will be over" (Montopoli 2010:1). On December 15, 2011 U.S. troops lowered the flag of command over Baghdad, officially ending military operations in Iraq. Three days later the last of the U.S. troops in Iraq crossed the border into Kuwait, marking the end of U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Post U.S. Occupation

After the withdrawal of most U.S. forces in December of 2011, the unity government of Iraq became disentangled when arrest warrants were issued for Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi resulting in Sunni boycotts in both the parliament and the cabinet (BBC 2015). By December of 2012, Sunni Muslims organized mass rallies spanning several months in response to their marginalization by the predominately Shiite lead government. In response, security forces were called in to suppress the anti-government protests resulting in 50 civilian casualties sparking anger among the already disgruntled Sunnis. By July of 2013 insurgency violence skyrocketed and the country was described as being "yet again in a full-blown sectarian war" (2015:13). In response to Iraqi Kurdish support for the Kurds fighting jihadist in Syria, the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic State of Iraq unleashed a series of bombings in the Kurdish capital of Irbil in September of 2013. After increasing tensions in the Sunni populated Anbar province, which was previously under U.S. control, insurgency forces recaptured both Fallujah and Ramadi. By the end of January Iraqi security forces retook Ramadi, but were unable to rid Fallujah of rebel fighters. From June to September of 2014 the disenfranchised Sunnis of Iraq turned to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) for support. By doing so, they were able to expand out of the Anbar province and take the major city of Mosul, and the critical Mosul dam located there. In response, Kurdish forces assisted by the United States and Iran conducted

multiple airstrikes near Mosul about which President Obama commented, " If that dam was breached it could have proven catastrophic, with floods that would have threatened the lives of thousands of civilians and endangered our embassy compound in Baghdad" (Mullen and Capelouto 2014:1). Following the joint airstrikes on Mosul, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria declared a caliphate and renamed itself as the Islamic State.

In September of 2014, President Obama announced a new forward strategy against the Islamic State in both Iraq and Syria stating that,

I have made it clear that we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country, wherever they are...That means I will not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria, as well as Iraq. This is a core principle of my presidency: if you threaten America, you will find no safe haven (Cohen 2014:1).

The new strategy included increased air raids supporting Iraqi operations near Baghdad, the authorization of sending military advisors to Iraq, and an international conference in Paris to form a U.S. led coalition against the Islamic State in which Iran and Syria were excluded. By January of 2015, the U.S. led coalition had launched over 900 airstrikes against militant targets located in Iraq (CNN 2015). In April of 2015 Iraqi forces retook Tikrit, however a month later the Islamic State captured the key Iraqi city of Rramadi. By the end of 2015, Iraqi forces recaptured the Tamim district of Ramadi, however the remainder of the city remained under the control of the Islamic State.

SYRIA

Following President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, Syria became associated with the aforementioned "Axis of Evil," marking them as a "grave and growing danger" against the United States (The Washington Post 2002:1). In May of 2002 Undersecretary of State John Bolton claimed that Damascus was acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Following

these allegations in April of 2003 the United States threatened Syria with sanctions if they failed to comply with demands to end their support of terrorism groups as well as stop the development of WMD. New York Congressman Eliot Engel stated that,

We can have normal diplomatic relations with them, if they act like a decent nation. But if they continue to do the things we talked about, support terrorism, occupy Lebanon, and develop weapons of mass destruction, it's time to get tough with them (Voices of America 2009:1)

The following October, Israel, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East, launched an airstrike against a Palestinian militant camp located near Damascus. An action in which Syria claimed to be an act of military aggression. Despite previous warnings to Syria by the United States, Syria refused to comply. Therefore, in May of 2004 President Bush Signed Executive Order 13338, officially implementing the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SAA). This Act listed a multitude of Syrian misdeeds including, "support for terrorism, undermining stability in Iraq, continued meddling in Lebanon, and ongoing development of WMD and ballistic missile programs" (Schenker 2006:1). The killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri sparked anti-Syrian protests in Beirut resulting in the United States urging Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. In April of 2005, Syria complied. Also following the controversial assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiki Hariri, the United States recalled its ambassador to Damascus. On September 12, 2006 the U.S. embassy in Damascus was attacked by four armed Islamic gunmen. In response to the attack, the Syrian Embassy in Washington stated that,

It is regrettable that U.S. policies in the Middle East have fueled extremism, terrorism and anti-U.S. sentiment...The U.S. should take this opportunity to review its policies in the Middle East and start looking at the root causes of terrorism and broker a comprehensive peace in the Middle East (Roumani 2006:1)

Despite the security breach of the U.S. embassy in Damascus, Washington praised the Syrian guards who combated the attackers. In the month that followed, the United States and Syria

restored diplomatic relations. This restored relationship was tested in April of 2007 when U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi met President Assad in Damascus, in which she faced major backlash from Washington who favored a hard line approach to isolate the country. Despite this, the following month Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Foreign Minister Walid Muallem.

In September of 2007 Israel carried out another airstrike, this time targeting northern Syria alleging that a nuclear facility was being constructed. In March of 2008 Syria hosted the Arab League summit. Pro-Western countries, specifically Saudi Arabia and Egypt, sent low level delegates in order to protest Syria's stance on Lebanon resulting in a political deadlock. The following month the United States accused North Korea of assisting Syria in building a nuclear reactor, the same reactor which Israel claimed to have bombed in 2007 (BBC 2016). The diplomatic isolation by the west ended in July of 2008 when French President Nicolas Sarkozy met with President Assad in Paris. This continued into March of 2009 when the assistant U.S. Secretary of State for the Near East, Jeffery Feltman visited Syria along with White House National Security Aide Daniel Shapiro. Within the same month, trading began in Syria's stock exchange, "in a gesture towards liberalizing the state-controlled economy" (2016:11). While investigating the U.S. claims that the site of the 2007 Israeli raid was a nuclear reactor in June of 2009, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) divulged that they had "discovered new traces of uranium of a type not included in Syria's declared nuclear material" (Bell 2009:1). The following month, amid strained relations with Israel, U.S. special envoy George Mitchell met with President Assad to broker peace between Syria and Israel. During so, Mitchell told Assad that President Obama was "determined to facilitate a truly comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace" (BBC 2009:1). Even though Syria and Iraq restored diplomatic relations in 2006, in response to

allegations regarding the responsibility for insurgency bombings in Baghdad, Iraq and Syria recalled their envoys in August of 2009 (BBC 2016). After a five year absence in Syria following the attack on the U.S. Embassy, in February of 2010 the United States reassigned an ambassador to Damascus. However, the following May President Obama renewed sanctions against Syria citing that Syria's,

Continuing support for terrorist organizations and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States (BBC 2010).

Specifically noted was Assad's provisions of Scud missiles to Hezbollah militants located in Lebanon, which directly violated United Nations resolutions. In the spring of 2011 violent protests began in Deraa resulting in Syrian tanks entering the towns of Deraa, Banya, Homs, and Damascus in order to suppress the anti-regime protests (BBC 2016). At the same time, the United States as well as the European Union continued to impose increasingly strict sanctions on Assad. In June of 2011, the IAEA formally decided to report Syria to the United Nations Security Council regarding the reactor destroyed in the 2007 air raid conducted by Israel. The IAEA's board of governors noted that,

Syria claims that an installation at Dair Alzour, destroyed by an air strike in September 2007, was a military non-nuclear installation and not a clandestine nuclear reactor site. However, as the IAEA resolution notes, the country has not supplied documentation to support its claims and has not allowed the agency to confirm its assertions about the non-nuclear nature of the destroyed building (World Nuclear News 2011:1).

The following months saw a spike in anti-regime protests and internal and external exiles of opposition activists. This resulted in the November 2011 suspension of Syria from the Arab League which cited Assad's failure to uphold the Arab peace plan (BBC 2016). Furthering the unrest, in May of 2012 Syrian diplomats in the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Canada, and Australia were expelled to protest the murder of civilians in Houla by the Assad

regime. The following month Syria shot down a Turkish plane. In response, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that the United States condemned the attack and that it is, "yet another reflection of the Syrian authorities' callous disregard for international norms, human life and peace and security" (Tuysuz 2012:1). In conjunction with Senator Clinton's remarks, President Obama further warned Assad to neither utilize nor transport chemical or biological weapons or else risk crossing the "red line" which would invoke a military response from the United States (CNN 2012). In November of 2012 the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed in Qatar and were formally recognized as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people by the United States and its allies in the following month (BBC 2016). In March of 2013 the Syrian city of Raqqa was seized by the Operation National Coalition. In return, Assad's warplanes bombed the city. As a result, the United States and Great Britain pledged to provide non-military aid to the rebel forces. After previous efforts failed, the United States and Russia came to an agreement on the framework of Syria's chemical weapons in September of 2013. It was noted that in accordance with the agreed upon timeline,

Initial inspections of declared chemical weapons sites must be completed by November; all production and mixing and filling equipment must be destroyed by November; and all chemical weapons material must be eliminated by mid-2014 (Smith-Spark and Cohen 2013:1).

The following month, President Obama permitted internationally sanctioned inspectors to begin destroying Assad's chemical weapons as per the U.S.-Russian agreement. After Islamic rebels captured a major Free Syrian Army bases in northern Syria, the United States and Great Britain officially suspended their non-military aid in December of 2013. The following January peace talks in Geneva sponsored by the United Nations failed as the Assad regime refused to discuss the creation of a transitional governing body. The following June, the United Nation announced that the removal of Syria's chemical weapons was complete.

In June of 2014 the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) declared a caliphate in the territories it conquered in Iraq and Syria. In September the United States in conjunction with five other Arab nations conducted a bombing raid on Raqqa, the self-dictated capital of the newly established caliphate. After which President Obama asserted that, "once again, it must be clear to anyone who would plot against America and try to do Americans harm that we will not tolerate safe havens for terrorists who threaten our people" (Carter, Labott, and Sciutto 2014:1).

Although the Kurdish Peshmerga pushed ISIS out of Kobane in January of 2015, ISIS fighters captured the city of Palmyra in central Syria in May. In doing so they also secured the last remaining border crossing into Iraq. The following June ISIS fighters regained Kobane and Hassekeh from Kurdish forces. In September of 2015 Russia conducted controversial airstrikes in Syria in which the Russian Defense Ministry claimed to target ISIS "arms, transportation, communications and control positions" (Payne, Star, and Cullinane 2015:1). However, U.S. officials questioned Russia's target intentions stating that, "a Russian airstrike near the Syrian city of Homs has no strategic purpose in terms of combating ISIS, which shows they are not there to go after ISIL" (2015:1).

THE ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA (ISIS)

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) got its roots in the militant group Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ) led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (AMZ) (Hashim 2014). After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan JTJ moved into Iraq and created a partnership with the Partisans of Islam, Ansar al-Islam. Following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the disbanding of the Hussein regime, the disenfranchised Sunni population launched a five group insurgency campaign. These groups consisted of "Iraqis from the former regime, nationalists, tribal

elements, various Islamist fighters", and al-Zarqawi's JTJ. Their main objective was to "force a withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq" (2014:70). In October of 2004, al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and merged the JTJ, creating Tanzim Qaidate al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In doing so, AQI provided al-Qaeda with a base which was needed to attack the United States (2014). After attempting to spark a sectarian uprising by uniting the Iraqi Sunnis against the majority Shiites, al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike on June 7, 2006. Following his death, Abu Ayyub al-Masri was appointed as the AQI representative in Iraq (2014). However, al-Masri's reign was short lived; in October of 2006 al-Masri announced the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and named Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the leader (CNN 2016). Following the creation of ISI, the Sahwa movement took root and disgruntled Sunni insurgents allied with the United States in order to defeat ISI in return for integration into the Iraqi security forces (2014). However, the Iraqi government was unable to keep the promises given to the Sahwa militias causing deep seeded discontent (Kavalek 2015). In the beginning of 2009, the United States began to pull out of Iraq, leaving the task of security enforcement to the Iraqi security forces. By doing so, ISI gained significant ground in sabotaging the Iraqi government and many disgruntled Sahwa fighters defected to ISI. However, in April of 2010 Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri were killed in a joint U.S.-Iraqi raid in Tikrit, after which Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISI. In April of 2013, ISI combined with the al-Qaeda backed Syrian group Jabhat al-Nusra. As a result, Al-Baghdadi stated that the group would be known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, Abu Mohammad al-Jawlani, the leader of the Al-Nusra Front, rejected Al-Baghdadi's attempted absorption of the group (2016). On February 3, 2014 al-Qaeda's General Command renounced their ties to ISIS

and stated that "ISIS is not a branch of the al-Qaeda group...does not have an organizational relationship with it and [al-Qaeda] is not the group responsible for their actions" (Sly 2014:1).

Despite being renounced by al-Qaeda, in June of 2014 ISIS took control of Mosul, Tikrit, and Al-Qaim, a town bordering Syria. Within the same month, the United Nations reported that one million Iraqis have been displaced as a result of insurgency activity (CNN 2016). On June 29, 2014 ISIS leader al-Baghdadi announced the creation of a caliphate to be known as the Islamic State and asserted that,

The time has come for those generations that were drowning in oceans of disgrace, being nursed on the milk of humiliation, and being ruled by the vilest of all people, after their long slumber in the darkness of neglect — the time has come for them to rise (Vick 2014:1).

At the same time, al-Baghdadi also announced that ISIS would be further known as the Islamic State (IS). The following day, the United States authorized the sending of an additional 300 troops to Iraq. In a letter to Congress, President Obama noted that these forces were deployed to protect U.S. citizens and interests and would remain until the security situation deescalated (CBS 2014). The following July ISIS took control the oil and gas fields in the Homs Province of Syria. In order to thwart the taking of the Kurdish capital of Irbil, the United States authorized targeted airstrikes on ISIS convoys and artillery units on August 8, 2014. Following the televised executions of U.S. journalist James Foley and British aid worker David Haines, the United States along with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, carried out additional airstrikes against ISIS controlled oil refineries on September 23, 2014 in an attempt to cut off financing for its operations (Carter, Starr, and Tuysuz 2014). On November 14, 2014 the United Nation's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic declared that ISIS had committed crimes against humanity and should be held accountable by the International Criminal Court (Ellis 2014).

By January of 2015 U.S. officials released that coalition airstrikes had killed upwards of 6,000 ISIS fighters, "including half of the top command of the terror group" (Starr 2015:1). Despite these figures it was estimated that ISIS still had between 9,000 to 18,000 fighters and sympathizers (CNN 2016). On February 11, 2015 President Obama formally submitted a draft resolution to Congress to authorize the use of force against ISIL. Within his remarks to Congress President Obama stated that the strategy would include,

A systemic and sustained campaign of airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, support and training for local forces on the ground, including the moderate Syrian opposition, preventing ISIL attacks, in the region and beyond, including by foreign terrorist fighters who try to threaten our countries, regional and international support for an inclusive Iraqi government that unites the Iraqi people and strengthens Iraqi forces against ISIL, and humanitarian assistance for the innocent civilians of Iraq and Syria, who are suffering so terribly under ISIL's reign of horror (Office of the Press Secretary 2015:3).

On March 7, 2015 Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Nigerian based Boko Haram, pledged allegiance to ISIS via audio message. The following week a spokesperson for ISIS accepted Boko Haram's pledge and claimed that the caliphate has expanded to western Africa (CNN 2016). Following increasing amounts of violence in Syria, on May 16, 2015 United States special operations forces conducted a raid of al-Amr in eastern Syria, which acted as a stronghold that bridged ISIS controlled territory in Iraq and Syria (Dunham and Perry 2015). During the raid, a key ISIS leader, Abu Sayyaf, was killed. Despite the efforts of U.S. special operations forces, within the same month ISIS seized control of both Ramadi and Palmyra, which acted as the last Syria-Iraq border crossing under the control of the Syrian army (CNN 2016). The following month the State Department released the Annual Terrorism Report and declared that ISIS had emerged as a greater threat than al-Qaeda (2016). In the months following its release, a string of attacks were executed by ISIS militants in Palmyra, Tunisia, Kuwait, Egypt, and Khan Bani Saad, Iraq, killing over 250 and injuring hundreds more. In August of

2015, ISIS destroyed historical artifacts in Palmyra, including the Temple of Baalshami. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the destruction of the Temple as being a war crime (2016). On November 12, 2015 the United States launched a drone attack in Raqqa, Syria targeting and killing Mohammed Emwazi, an Islamic militant also known as “Jihadi John” who was responsible for the beheading of numerous western citizens. Simultaneously, the United States Coalition offered air support to the Peshmerga in Sinjar. After two days of fighting, the Peshmerga pushed ISIS militants out of Sinjar and recaptured the city on November 13, 2015. This same day, militants affiliated with ISIS executed a coordinated attack on Paris, France. In response, the United States in conjunction with France and Great Britain conducted air raids on Raqqa, Syria targeting ISIS command and recruitment centers, munitions depots, and training camps (Wyke and Tomlinson 2015).

CONCLUSION

The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq incited widespread opposition from the Iraqi people creating an environment which allowed extremist groups such as ISIS to thrive. The removal of the Hussein regime by the United States allowed for the deeply rooted sectarian schism between the ruling Shiites and the disenfranchised Sunnis to boil to the surface. After U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq, disgruntled Sunnis turned to radical insurgency groups for support. In turn, these groups were able take root in Iraq and spread into neighboring Syria. Similarly, as the United States attempts to remove Assad from power in Syria, ISIS creates a platform for which disenfranchised groups could bolster power and support. The following section will provided an analysis of the United States’ actions in both Iraq and Syria and the rise

of ISIS, specifically highlighting instances of regime change, geopolitical interests, privatization, free-market economic changes, and deregulation in U.S. policy.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter provides a theoretically driven analysis of the United States' actions in both Iraq and Syria and how this action led to the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS. In utilizing the integrated theory of violations of international criminal law, specifically highlighting Foucault's Regimes of Truths and realpolitik or geopolitical interests, this section highlights instances of regime change, privatization, free-market economic changes, and deregulation in U.S. policy in Iraq and Syria. Since the events in Syria are still unfolding, only instances of regime change and geopolitical interest have been reported.

IRAQ AND U.S. PRIORITIZATION OF REALPOLITIK AND THE EXERCISE OF GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS AS PRIORITY

Regime Change

In regards to U.S. support of regime change in Iraq, there is a multitude of evidence of the planning, the execution, and the aftermath of the forcible removal of Saddam Hussein from power. Five months after the events of September 11, 2001 the Bush administration shifted their focus from retaliating against Al Qaeda to targeting countries who were helping to equip these organizations. In his "Axis of Evil" State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush singles out the Hussein regime as one that is dangerous to the United States and its own people. Stating that,

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America and to support terror...This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens...This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world (Bush 2002b:60).

In the months that followed, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice (2002:64) affirmed President Bush's concerns and asserted that "we must recognize that truly evil regimes will never be reformed. We must recognize that such regimes must be confronted, not coddled," speaking specifically about the Hussein regime in Iraq. Furthering this idea, eight months before the U.S. and British invasion of Iraq, senior British officials met with Prime Minister Tony Blair at which there was a discussion of the Bush administration's determination to go to war. Matthew Rycroft, a British foreign policy aide, addressed reservations about the legality of the administration's call to war in the *Downing Street Memo* on July 23, 2002. Within which, Rycroft (2002:68) confirmed the administration's plan to remove Hussein from power stating that, "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD (weapons of mass destruction)." Further, Rycroft wrote that "the defense secretary said that the U.S. had already begun "spikes of activity" to put pressure on the regime" (2002:68).

Interestingly, the memo also mentioned that the Attorney-General specified that the desire for regime change was not a legal base for military action. In his article "Don't Attack Saddam" in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brent Scowcroft (2002:70) affirmed the administration's plans and asserted that "the Bush administration vows regime change, but states that no decision has been made whether, much less when, to launch an invasion." On August 26, 2002 Dick Cheney delivered a speech at the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Within this speech he confirmed the fear of the regime in stating that "armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror, and seated atop 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East" (Cheney 2002:78).

He continued on to explain the reasons as to which regime change would benefit the region and the international arena as a whole by stating that,

Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace...With our help, a liberated Iraq can be a great nation once again (Cheney 2002:79).

The decisive call for regime change in Iraq was emulated in George W. Bush's speech outlining the Iraqi threat given in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 7, 2002. Within which he presented a call to arms to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Bush (2002a:85) made clear that the United States government as a whole agreed that the regime was a danger to the country, and to the world and declared that "members of the congress of both political parties, and members of the United Nations Security Council, agree that Saddam Hussein is a threat to peace and must disarm." Further, Bush (2002a:87) asserted that U.S. military power is capable of defeating both regimes that harbor terrorists and the terrorist themselves by stating that "terror cells and outlaw regimes building WMD are different faces of the same evil. Our security requires that we confront both. And the United States military is capable of confronting both." This speech acted as the last ditch effort in requesting that the Hussein regime disarm themselves. The President further stated that "the time for denying, deceiving, and delaying has come to an end. Saddam Hussein must disarm himself--or, for the sake of peace, we will lead a coalition to disarm him" (2002a:89). However, the administration was skeptical that Hussein would voluntarily meet these requirements and asserted that the only way to ensure security would be to remove him from power.

Unfortunately, at least so far, we have little reason to expect it. And that's why two administrations -- mine and President Clinton's -- have stated that regime change in Iraq is the only certain means of removing a great danger to our nation (2002a:89).

The President went on to address fears that regime change could create instability in the region and assured the American people that the situation in Iraq could get no worse than it already is

for the Iraqi people. However, he vowed that if military action is necessary in Iraq, the United States and her allies would "help the Iraqi people rebuild their economy and create the institutions of liberty in a unified Iraq at peace with its neighbors" (2002a:90). Nine days later, on October 16, 2002, the Joint Congressional Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq was passed. Within which it was stated that,

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105-388) expressed the sense of congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime (Joint 2002:94).

In a last ditch effort, President Bush issued a unilateral ultimatum to the Iraqi government to disarm. However, the administration had no expectations for the regime to obey. In his ultimatum to Iraq, President Bush (2003c:112) stated,

Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within forty-eight hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign nationals -- including journalists and inspectors -- should leave Iraq immediately... It is too late for Saddam Hussein to remain in power.

Two days later, on March 19, 2003 the President announced the start of Operation Iraq Freedom stating "we have no ambition in Iraq. Except to remove a threat and restore control of the country to its own people" (Bush 2003a:114). The following day, the United States invaded Iraq and dismantled the regime of Saddam Hussein. On May 1, 2003 aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* President Bush announced the end of major combat operation in Iraq. Within this announcement, the President addressed the overthrow of the Hussein regime and the transition in Iraq from dictatorship to democracy, stating that "the transition from dictatorship to democracy will take time, but it is worth every effort. Our coalition will stay until our work is done. Then we will leave, and we will leave behind a free Iraq" (Bush 2003b:176).

As stated in the Presidential Address on the End of Major Combat Actions in Iraq, after the Hussein regime was overthrown, the United States and her allies formed the Coalition Provisional Authority, tasked with providing a smooth transition from the previous authoritarian regime and promoting and ensuring the emergence of a new democratic Iraq. However, when British defense expert and CPA Director of Policy Planning, Andrew Rathmell analyzed the progress and shortcomings of the CPA in Iraq; he found that the elements necessary for successful policy were absent. Rathmell cited a lack of communication between Washington, Baghdad, and other portions of Iraq, a fragmented CPA organization as a whole, adoption of goals without necessary resources, inadequate debate when it came to policy implication, and non-existent plans for the aftermath of the invasion (Ehrenberg, McSherry, Sanchez, and Sayej 2010). Rather than restructuring and leaving behind a free Iraq as Bush indicated, Rathmell concluded that,

In reality, the CPA ended up creating nation-building institutions on the run, governing Iraq at all levels, supporting a counterinsurgency campaign, reconstructing and reforming Iraqi state institutions, and implementing democratic and economic transformation (Ehrenberg et al. 2010:184).

CPA Order Number 1 (2003a), established on May 16, 2003 called for the de-Ba'athification of Iraq in which the Ba'ath party, the political party associated with the Hussein regime, was disestablished and barred from holding prominent ranks within the Iraqi military, and from holding positions in the top three layers of management in the national government ministry and related institutions. This Order thereby implemented the declaration by "eliminating the party's structures and removing its leadership from positions of authority and responsibility in Iraqi society" (Coalition 2003a:184). The order also outlawed any displays or symbols that resembled the likeness of Saddam Hussein or that of the Ba'ath Party on any government buildings or public spaces (Coalition 2003a). CPA Order Number 2 (2003b) was issued one week later and

intended to be complete the de-Ba'athification of Iraq. Order Number 2 (2003b) resolved jobs, titles, and entire agencies associated with the Ba'ath party. It also left the door open in regards to dissolved entities in that it cited that "additional organizations may be added to this list in the future" (Coalition 2003b:188). In September of 2003, Paul Bremer (2003), the Administrator of the CPA, drafted a seven-point plan for ending formal responsibility in Iraq which would consist of three phases. First, the Iraqis would write a constitution. Second, national elections would be held. Third, the CPA would be dissolved and sovereignty would be restored to Iraq (Ehrenberg et al. 2010). On March 8, 2004 the CPA issued a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) in order to govern the restoration of sovereignty to Iraq by June 30, 2004. Within which it states that,

The system of government in Iraq shall be republican, federal, democratic and pluralistic, and powers shall be shared between the federal government and the regional governments, governorates, municipalities, and local administration (Law 2004:204).

Two years after the invasion of Iraq, U.S. administrators and politicians gave optimistic assessments of state-building, despite the fact that the Bush administration's plans for rebuilding received widespread criticism. On October 19, 2005 Condoleeza Rice presented a view of the progress in Iraq both domestically and internationally to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In regards to the Hussein regime, Rice (2005:297) noted that,

In 2003, enforcing UN resolutions, we overthrew a brutal dictator and liberated a nation. Our strategy then emphasized the military defeat of the regime's forces and the creation of a temporary government with the Coalition Provisional Authority and an Iraqi Governing Conflict.

Further, in regards to the governmental transition, Rice (2005:298) stated that in 2005 the emphasis then shifted from regime change, to an emphasis on transition, specifically a "political transition to a permanent, constitutional democracy." However, Ehrenberg et al. (2010:297) noted that while the United States wanted to remodel Iraq using neoliberal economic ideologies,

the reconstruction project was not popular among the citizens of Iraq, "contributing to social discontent and helping fuel the developing insurgency."

Geopolitical Interests

Throughout the literature regarding U.S. involvement in Iraq, there is significant evidence of the role of geopolitical interests on decision making. In the years before Operation Iraqi Freedom, Dick Cheney delivered a speech at the London Institute of Petroleum at which he laid the groundwork for the importance of Middle Eastern oil to the United States and its allies.

Cheney (1999:368) asserted that

The Middle East and Africa have over one hundred years' supply of gas reserves as current low usage levels and the former Soviet Union and Latin America have gas reserves to production ratios which should last over seventy years.

There was an expectation that significant amounts of the world's oil resources would come from areas such as the former Soviet Union and from China, however these expectations were quickly dashed. As a result, many countries, including the United States, turned to the Middle East for oil supplies making the area a key political and economic interest. In his article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brent Scowcroft (2002:70) keyed in on these concerns by asserting that Saddam's key objectives seemed to be to control the Persian Gulf its oil reserves noting that this "clearly poses a real threat to key U.S. interests." These fears were further exemplified in Dick Cheney's speech given at the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention on August 26, 2002. Cheney (2002:78) emphasized that Hussein is in control of 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, and that he could "take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies and directly threaten America's friends throughout the region." This therefore asserts that Hussein was seen as posing a threat to the United States because he had the ability to seize control of the vital oil reserves

that it is dependent upon. In "The Road to Economic Prosperity for a Post-Saddam Iraq," Cohen (2003:382) discussed the potential benefits of Iraq leaving the OPEC regime, one of which being the fact that,

An unencumbered flow of Iraqi oil would be likely to provide a more constant supply of oil to the global market, which would dampen price fluctuations, ensuring stable oil prices in the world market in a price range lower than the current \$25 to \$30 a barrel.

This would greatly benefit the United States given the fact that oil prices would stay fairly stable at a low cost. Adding to the argument, the United States had a significant amount of influence and control over the decision on how Iraq was going to utilize its oil supply. Secretary of State Colin Powell has indicated that the oil of Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people and should not be exploited for the United States' own interests. However, Cohen (2003:381) argued that this statement does not "preclude the U.S. from offering its guidance to the future of government of Iraq on establishing sound economic and trade policies to stimulate growth and recovery." This would, of course, mean making a pact with the United States, thus solidifying its claim to the Iraqi oil reserves. By doing so, Ehrenberg et al. (2010:397) explained that Washington used "soft power as well as hard, coercive, power to shape policy in its own interest in Iraq." The United States also made sure to protect its own personnel and contractors situated in Iraq granting them immunity from Iraqi laws and regulations. CPA Order Number 17 (2004) enacted on June 27, 2004 granted the CPA, their personnel, property, and funds, as well as other important U.S. and allied figures immunity from the Iraqi legal process. Contractors and sending states were also given this coveted immunity and were granted "freedom of movement without delay through Iraq" (Coalition 2004:211).

In February of 2005 the National Energy Technology Laboratory's Executive Summary warned against the peaking of world oil production. In this summary, the National Energy Technology Laboratory (2005:369) concluded that,

The peaking of world oil production presents the U.S. and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem. As peaking is approached, liquid fuel prices and price volatility will increase dramatically, and, without timely mitigation, the economic, social, and political costs will be unprecedented.

This further fueled the United States' need to influence Iraq to leave the OPEC regime and formulate a deal with them. As previously mentioned this would relatively stabilize the cost of oil as well as provide a more constant supply to the world market, in particular, the United States. These fears were brought to the surface in the 2006 Iraq Study Group Report in which concerns over the health of the Iraqi economy after U.S. intervention and the politics of its oil reserves were discussed. In regards to Iraq's economic situation after U.S. intervention it was found that,

Many leading economic indicators are negative. Instead of meeting a target of 10 percent, growth in Iraq is at roughly 4 percent this year. Inflation is above 50 percent. Unemployment estimates range widely from 20 to 60 percent. The investment climate is bleak, with foreign direct investment under 1 percent of GDP. Too many Iraqis do not see tangible improvements in their daily economic situation (Iraq 2006:373).

These percentages failed to reach the benchmark previously set by the International Monetary Fund, in conjunction with the United States and Great Brittan, for economic growth and development in Iraq post invasion. Further, the Iraq Study Report (2006:374) asserted that the politics involved with the Iraqi oil reserves damaged any possibility of the creation of a unified central government, arguing that "the Iraqi constitution leaves the door open for regions to take the lead in developing new oil resources." Given the fact that the Iraqi constitution, created in 2005, was formed under the supervision and guidance of the CPA, which has major ties to the United States, it becomes apparent that the oil interests of the United States was a primary

concern. This "partnership" between the United States and Iraq was further solidified in a press release that was accompanied by a speech given by President Bush on March 27, 2008 in which he assessed the progress being made in Iraq. In this assessment, President Bush stated that,

Last year, Iraqi leaders requested to form a long-term strategic partnership with the U.S. This partnership would help assure Iraqis the political and economic and security cooperation between the nations will endure. This partnership would also ensure protections for American troops when the U.N. mandate for Multi-National Forces in Iraq expires in December (Fact 2008:395).

Taken as a whole, this statement embodies the entirety of the aforementioned U.S. interests in Iraq. This strategic partnership, which was influenced by the CPA and consequently the United States, ensured that the United States would have a continued stake in Iraqi political matters as well as economic avenues such as oil and other resources. It also ensured protection for U.S. troops and personnel when other avenues expired. On November 17, 2008 the Status of Forces Agreement was signed by Iraqi and U.S. officials. This document was created to replace the U.N. mandate which authorized the presence of foreign forces which was set to expire at the end of 2008. The agreement held U.S. troops and contractors accountable under Iraqi criminal law, however, Ehrenberg et al. (2010:336) noted that "contractors for the State Department and other agencies would retain immunity from Iraqi law, a provision that caused much controversy." Also notable, this agreement exempted members of U.S. forces and their civilian counterparts from taxation and fees and they were afforded the ability to import and export goods freely without the need for inspections or restrictions. Specifically, it stated that "the exportation of Iraqi goods by the United States Forces and United States contractors shall not be subject to inspections or any restrictions other than licensing requirements" (Status 2008:344). On the same day, the Strategic Framework Agreement was signed. This agreement solidified the future alliance of the United States and Iraq, emphasizing the shaping of cultural, economic, and energy cooperation between

the U.S. and Iraq (Ehrenberg et al. 2010). *Section V* of the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq (2008:353) states that the parties agree to,

Promote expansion of bilateral trade through the U.S.-Iraq Business Dialogue, as well as bilateral exchanges, such as trade promotion activities and access to Export-Import Bank programs...Support Iraq's further integration into regional and international financial economic communities and institutions, including membership in the World Trade Organization and through continued Normal Trade Relations with the United States...Encourage increased Iraqi agricultural exports, including through policy engagement and encouraging education of Iraqi exporters on U.S. health and safety regulations.

By examining this particular document, it is evident that the United States aimed to make Iraq a World Trade Organization friendly country. It also provides significant evidence that the United States had the intention of receiving continued imports from Iraq that were to be tailored specifically to meet U.S. standards. Overall, Ehrenberg et al. (2010) notes that oil infiltrated every aspect of U.S. policy and actions in Iraq, specifically due to the role that it played in the U.S. economy. As the world's second largest reserve of oil, Iraq was vital to the interest of the United States.

Privatization

Soon after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the United States began a push to privatize broad aspects of the Iraqi economy, further bolstering the geopolitical and neo-liberal interests of the United States, particularly in regards to the lucrative Iraqi oil industry. This plan was evident in the Future of Iraq Project released in 2001 in which an economic empowerment system was devised. This system was to be sponsored by private parties that were designed to,

Enter markets that in times past had been inaccessible to them, adopt technologies most suited to their needs, generate continuing streams of private and social capital, boost their financial returns with reasonable safety, and enjoy a sense of belonging buy-ins and

ownership of significant private enterprises bestow on them and their families (United States State Department 2001:365).

Further, the Future of Iraq project listed the privatization of state run enterprises as one of the major goals and economic plans in order to support a new free-market economy. In "The Road to Economic Prosperity for a post-Saddam Iraq," Cohen (2003) bolstered the push for privatization by outlining the benefits of the privatization of the Iraqi oil industry. In order to maximize Iraq's economic performance, Cohen (2003:381) argued that "without private ownership, oil will remain politicized and mismanaged." The Bush administration agreed with this notion and through its executive directors, situated within both governmental and non-governmental organizations, based their policies on the "best practices developed around the world in the late 1990's, when the largest government privatizations in history occurred" (2003:381). Cohen (2003) further recognized the benefit of these privatization policies by pointing out that the privatization of the Iraqi oil industry provides an incentive for Iraq to leave the OPEC cartel, thus benefiting the United States and the global oil supply in the long run. After the publication of Cohen's findings in the *Heritage Foundation Report*, a 101 page classified document created by the U.S. Treasury Department as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) detailing the privatization plans for Iraq was leaked to the *Wall Street Journal* and was later dubbed as the Bush administration's blue print for a neo-liberal post-Saddam Hussein state (Ehrenberg et al. 2010). One of the primary goals laid out in the aforementioned document was the privatization of Iraq's industries in which it was outlined that,

The United States will attempt to build a consensus for industry privatization during the first year, after which the assets of the Iraqi public sector would be transferred to private ownership over a period of three years...The main controversy here is obviously the proposed privatization of the oil industry (United States Treasury Department 2003:296).

Interestingly, it is noted that the concept of privatization is not foreign to the Iraqi people due to the limited attempt at privatization in the 1980's. The creators also called for the modernization of the Baghdad stock exchange in order to accommodate the trading of shares of newly privatized companies. Lastly, the creators called for the creation of a legal framework that would be compatible with private ownership, production, and distribution, stating the need for "a system of laws protecting private property contracts and all of the supporting infrastructure that is required by a modern market economy" (United States Treasury Department 2003:297). In the following month, Washington's plans for the privatization of Iraq's economy were highlighted in a conglomerate of CPA orders, which were subsequently met by fierce opposition from the Iraqi political sector. CPA Order Number 12 (2003c) was "designed to set the conditions for privatization by opening Iraq to international economic forces" (Ehrenberg et al. 2010:198). This order included both the trade liberalization policy and the suspension of tariffs and trade restrictions. In December of the same year, CPA Order Number 39 (2003d) supplemented Order Number 12 (2003c) and emphasized a "dynamic private sector and the need to enact institutional and legal reforms to give it effect" (Coalition 2003d:199). In 2005, USAID created and implemented the Private Sector Development Program in Iraq which dismissed the state-owned economy that existed under Saddam Hussein and emphasized privatization as the preferred tool for the reconstruction of Iraq. In regards to privatization, the contract states that,

The majority of economic activity in Iraq is funneled through over 500 state-owned enterprises, creating an unsupportable system. Through technical assistance and support, USAID is helping the Government of Iraq (GOI) privatize much of the economy, removing a major burden from the national budget and revitalizing the private sector. In 2005, USAID helped draft the privatization Committee to reduce redundancy, increase efficiency, and ensure a transparent privatization process (United States Agency for International Development 2005:400).

Following the completion and implementation of the Private Sector Development Program in Iraq, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a stand-by arrangement for Iraq in which it created a legal basis for the privatized Iraqi oil industry (IMF 2005). In the aftermath of the widespread privatization of the Iraq economy and oil industry, U.S. Steelworkers supported the Iraqi oil workers in their attempt to thwart privatization of their national oil industry. Leo W. Gerard (2007:392), the International President, wrote to Congress opposing the privatization of the Iraqi oil industry in which he expressed the union's belief that "the oil privatization law...is designed to benefit the multinational oil companies; not the Iraqi people." Overall, the privatization plans for Iraq, particularly those concerning the oil industry, enacted by the United States provoked economic uncertainty within the Iraqi population causing them to turn on one another and subsequently increase their resistance to American occupation and reconstruction of Iraq. Ehrenberg et al. (2010) noted that the privatization of the Iraqi economy drove a wedge between Iraq's ethnic groups and caused the country's other economic assets to be sold at near nothing prices. This, in turn, fed the distain for the U.S. occupation and restructuring of Iraq and became a cornerstone issue for the rising insurgency.

Free-Market Economy

Further evidence of the United States' use of realpolitik in Iraq is evidenced by the uncontested push for the creation of a free-market economy. Working in conjunction with privatization and deregulation, the creation of a free-market economy in Iraq opened the country's economy up to western markets and vastly benefited the primary stakeholder, the United States. Indicated in the preceding documentation, this push was spearheaded primarily by the CPA and, subsequently, the United States. Released in 2001, the Future of Iraq Project

provided a compilation of principle economic challenges planners would have in reconstructing the new Iraq and "supporting new free market economic system" (United States State Department 2001:365). This, of course, insinuates that the plan for the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy revolved around creating and accommodating a free market economic system. The aforementioned CPA Order Number 12 (2003c) also provided evidence for the United States' plan to restructure the Iraqi economy into a free market system. Specifically, the introduction of the Order states that "recognizing the central role of international trade in Iraq's recovery and its development of a free market economy, acting on behalf, and for the benefit of, the Iraqi people, I hereby promulgate the following" (Coalition 2003c:198). The remainder of the Order laid the blueprints for the privatization of the Iraqi economy which works in conjunction with a free market economic system. However, it is significant to note that the goal emphasized by Bremer in CPA Order Number 12 (2003c) was to facilitate the development of a free market economy in Iraq. In December of the same year, CPA Order Number 39 (2003d) supplemented Order Number 12 (2003c) and further outlined the importance of developing and ensuring a free market system in Iraq. This Order was to act in a matter consistent with the Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on July 17, 2003, "concerning the need for the development of Iraq and its transition from a non-transparent centrally planned economy to a market economy characterized by sustainable economic growth" (Coalition 2003d:199). The Order ensured this transformation by emphasizing the private sector and encouraging and implementing foreign investment in Iraq. The USAID Private Sector Development Program in Iraq also emphasized the transition to a free market economy stating,

USAID assisted the GOI in submitting the Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime, the first step in joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). The accession process will oblige Iraq to reform its trade regulations and establish an open, market based economy (United States Agency for International Development 2005:400).

Following the completion and implementation of the Private Sector Development Program in Iraq, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a stand-by arrangement (IMF 2005) which was created to provide Iraq with the assistance it needed to transform its economy to a free-market based system. The Executive Board outlined the goals and functions of the program, stating that,

The program, which envisages an increase in economic growth, a reduction in inflation, and an increase in net international reserves, maintains a focus on macroeconomic stability, while improving governance and advancing Iraq's transition to a market economy (IMF 2005:399).

The program also established a debt restructuring agreement to support economic programs through 2005, given that this restructuring exemplified neo-liberal, free-market ideals. Overall, Bremer's mission, and subsequently the mission of the CPA, was to "implant a free-market economy in Iraq," following the Future of Iraq Project's declaration that "the economic system most appropriate for Iraq the day after the current regime is a profit-based system" (Ehrenberg et al. 2010:359). This goal of a profit-based free-market economy was envisioned through widespread privatization.

Deregulation

In order to fully achieve the United States' goal of a privatized free-market based Iraq, thus opening the country's economy up to foreign trade and investment at promoting the spread of U.S. geopolitical and neo-liberal economic values, widespread deregulation became commonplace in joint U.S. Iraqi legislation. Yet again, the CPA led the way. The Future of Iraq Project evaluated and addressed the restrictions placed upon the Iraqi economy by the Hussein regime. It was notated that "Saddam's totalitarian regime has not allowed any large-scale economic endeavors in the private sector," and that the businesses that did exist were berated and

exploited by government officials (United States State Department 2001:365). Further, several challenges standing in the way of transforming the Iraqi economy into a free-market system were outlined. Specifically, these challenges included "dismantling the current illegal structures and enterprises, removing ruling party cliques from ownership/control and privatizing some state run enterprises" (2001:365). In addition, the challenge for the new Iraq was laid out as being the ability to "foster economic and regulatory conditions that allow new, voluntary, individual businesses and entrepreneurial activities under free, legal, competitive market conditioning" (2001:365). To foster privatization and a free-market economic system as the Future of Iraq Project called for, deregulation of the market was deemed as being necessary. In "The Road to Economic Prosperity for a Post-Saddam Iraq," Cohen (2003:381) asserted that "privatization needs to be accompanied by reforms to open markets, removal of price and exchange rate distortions, reductions in barriers to entry, and elimination of monopoly powers." Soon after Cohen's (2003) publication in *The Heritage Report*, Bremer enacted CPA Order Number 12 (2003c), outlining the need for deregulation in the form of suspensions of tariffs and trade restrictions. *Section 1* of CPA Order Number 12 (2003c:198) declared that,

All tariffs, customs duties, import taxes, licensing fees and similar surcharges for goods entering or leaving Iraq, and all other trade restrictions that may apply to such goods, are suspended until December 31, 2003. For the remainder of this year, the CPA will not collect such fees for goods entering Iraq by land, sea, or air.

By suspending the aforementioned regulations implemented by the Hussein regime, CPA Order Number 12 (2003c) opened Iraq up to foreign investment and promotion. CPA Order Number 39 (2003d) also promoted foreign investment by deregulation of previously restrictive laws created by the Hussein regime. Specifically, the Order (2003d:199) declared that,

Recognizing the problems arising from Iraq's legal framework regulating commercial activity and the way in which it was implemented by the former regime...This Order

specifies the terms and procedures for making foreign investments and is intended to attract new foreign investment in Iraq.

Two years later, the USAID Private Sector Development Program in Iraq which "dismissed the state-owned economy that had existed under Saddam Hussein, criticized its mismanagement, and declared the need to remove its barriers to private sector-led growth," was signed into effect (Ehrenberg et al. 2010:400). This contract claimed to facilitate investment promotion by "promoting foreign investment and removing the barriers to private-sector growth" (United States Agency for International Development 2005:400). Subsequently, the removal of the barriers implemented by the Hussein regime were argued to promote a free-market economy that would generate employment and foreign investment in Iraq.

SYRIA: THE REPEAT OF REALPOLITIK AND PRIORITIZATION OF GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS

Regime Change

As in Iraq, there is a significant amount of dialog regarding regime change in Syria, specifically targeting Bashar al-Assad. Byman and Miles (2012) examined the problems that could occur if and when, the al-Assad regime falls and America's role in this dilemma. While neither of the authors speaks directly for the United States, they each have a unique understanding of the situation in Syria and have connections with the United States Department of Defense. Utilizing this knowledge, in the event of the fall of the Assad regime, Byman and Miles (2012:48) predict that "the long and bloody Syrian conflict is likely to generate a failed state requiring the kind of large-scale reconstruction efforts seen in Iraq and Afghanistan." The regime kept rival ethnic communities throughout Syria pacified through the use of force; however this also created deeply rooted schisms making any new government's chances of

legitimacy relatively weak. In regards to U.S. intervention in Syria, Byman and Miles (2012:48) assert that "the United States and its allies are unlikely to overcome Syria's myriad of problems and establish a peaceful stable and democratic Syria." The authors warn that the removal of the Assad regime would create dangerous power vacuums that could result in the rise of jihadists. Specifically, Byman and Miles (2012:49) assert that,

These fighters want an Islamic state in the parts of Syria they control, and they will try to sway or coerce Syrians into joining their group...Syria may go from importing terrorists to exporting them, with Al Qaeda and other groups using territory they control to launch attacks on neighboring states and perhaps even Western targets outside the region.

If the United States were to implement a democratic system as well as a court system to try those responsible for atrocities as they did in Iraq, Byman and Miles (2012:52) predict that "conducting a mass purging of government officials such as in Iraq can be similarly destabilizing." Despite these predictions, on May 12, 2012 a publication in *The New York Times* highlighted Obama's plans for Syria and subsequently its President, Bashar al-Assad. In order to stop the violence in Syria, Cooper and Landler (2012) reported that President Obama will push for the removal of al-Assad modeled after the transition that occurred in Yemen. Specifically, Cooper and Landler (2012:1) report that the plan calls for,

A negotiated political settlement that would satisfy Syrian opposition groups but that could leave remnants of Mr. Assad's government in place. Its goal is the kind of transition under way in Yemen, where after months of violent unrest, President Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to step down and hand control to his vice president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, in a deal arranged by Yemen's Arab neighbors. Mr. Hadi, though later elected in an uncontested vote, is viewed as a transitional leader.

However, any attempt by the United States or the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to take action against the regime has been blocked by Vladimir Putin and Russia. In order for Obama to achieve his goal of the removal of the Assad regime using the Yemen model, an

agreement must be promulgated between the two opposing countries. Cooper and Landler (2012:1) assert that,

For Washington, the most important aspect of the Yemen model is its assumption, from the outset, that the leader — in this case, Bashar Assad — will exit. For Moscow, its most important feature is the endorsement of a very gradual process that preserves the basic structures of the regime and in which the leader is not unceremoniously kicked out.

Moreover, as Allison (2013) points out, no such deal has transpired between Russia and the United States in regards to the removal of the Assad regime. Further Allison (2013) asserts that,

Even if it had, it would most likely have been rejected by the Syrian rebel groups. Since then western officials have vainly tried to enlist Moscow's help in pressing for the replacement of Assad as a preconditioning to forming a new transitional government in Syria.

Given the status of the sectarian schism within Syria created primarily by Assad's harsh policies, the Islamic opposition groups situated within Syria are given sustenance by the United States' policy towards the Assad regime. Further, Tabler (2013) examined the potential cost of inaction by the United States in Syria. In the years preceding 2013, Washington has sought diplomatic isolation of Syria by implementing financial sanctions upon the regime, imposing a raft of oil trade, attempting to assist in organizing divided opposition groups into the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, as well as offering upwards of \$700 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Syrian civilians. However, Tabler (2013:3) notated that,

Fearing that American weapons could find their way into the hands of extremists, the United States has more or less ignored the armed opposition, which effectively replaced the civilian activists at the vanguard of the effort to topple Assad more than a year and a half ago and already controls large swaths of territory in the country. Washington's hesitation has led many armed groups to seek support elsewhere -- including from private Salafi and jihadist funders in Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

In order to prevent a repeat of Iraq, the United States avoided a full scale armament and land invasion of Syria, however this inaction, as Tabler (2013) points out, comes at a steep price. In an attempt to thwart the further rise of anti-American sentiment, Talbler (2013:6) suggests a

ground-up strategy to win back the trust of the Syrian people, specifically by "backing the more liberal, secular, and nationalist battalions and isolating -- and possibly launching drone strikes against -- these extremist forces that refuse to adopt civilian authority during the transition."

Despite the fear of a repeat of Iraq or the backlash from Vladimir Putin and Russia, President Obama spoke against the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons in his address to the nation on September 10, 2013. In this address President Obama (2013:3) asserted that,

I will not put American boots on the ground in Syria. I will not pursue an open-ended action like Iraq or Afghanistan...This would be a targeted strike to achieve a clear objective: deterring the use of chemical weapons, and degrading Assad's capabilities...I don't think we should remove another dictator with force -- we learned from Iraq that doing so makes us responsible for all that comes next.

While the President did not elect to forcibly remove Assad from power, it was made clear that a diplomatic solution to the Assad problem was being formulated, stating that Secretary of State John Kerry was being sent to Russia to negotiate with Assad's biggest ally. Following this address, Kinninmont (2014:50) reported that from September of 2013 onward, the United States focused on diplomatic solutions and humanitarian responses while at the same time "continuing to provide aid to the Syrian National Council (SNC) and the Free Syrian Army (FSA)." Specifically, by providing the FSA with limited amounts of weapons, despite the fear of these weapons potentially landing in the hands of jihadist opposition groups. On September 23, 2014 President Obama addressed the nation concerning U.S. airstrikes in Syria targeting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Within which, President Obama (2014:2) asserted that the United States will "move forward with our plans, supported by bipartisan majorities in Congress, to ramp up our effort to train and equip the Syrian opposition, who are the best counterweight to ISIL and the Assad regime." As in earlier measures, the United States took no physical boots on the ground measures to remove Bashar al-Assad. However, in an attempt to passively remove

Assad from power, the United States decided to provide more equipment and training to the Syrian opposition.

This strategy is evidenced in the *National Security Strategy*, released in February 2015.

Within which, the plans for regime change in Syria are outlined, stating that,

We are working with our partners to train and equip a moderate Syrian opposition to provide a counterweight to the terrorists and the brutality of the Assad regime. Yet, the only lasting solution to Syria's civil war remains political -- an inclusive political transition that responds to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian citizens (Obama 2015:10).

In his speech given in November of 2015, Secretary of Defense John Kerry discussed the U.S. strategy in Syria in which he declared that neither Daesh nor the civil war could be stopped with al-Assad in power. Further, Secretary Kerry (2015:3) emphasized the role that the Assad regime played in the underlying sectarian violence within Syria, stating that "the four decades of dictatorial rule choked off any attempt to develop an organized political opposition." He also asserted that the U.S. is pushing for a full political transition in Syria in stating that,

I got news for you, it will not stop. Because there are those invested in what has happened and in what has been done to them, who see Assad as the critical component of the transition. That's why we are pushing so are for a real transition. Because without a real transition, no matter how much we want it, the fighting will continue and the war will never end (Kerry 2015:5).

In the days following Secretary Kerry's (2015) press conference, *The Wall Street Journal* published an article entitled "Obama Says Syrian Leader Bashar al-Assad Must Go." Within which, Nelson (2015) reported on President Obama's statement in which he noted that regardless of the actions of others, al-Assad cannot regain political legitimacy and while the dictator remains in power, there will be no end to the civil war in Syria. On the contrary, in December of 2015, *ABC News* published an article entitled "U.S. Not Seeking Regime Change in Syria, Kerry Says." Reevell (2015:1) reported that following Secretary Kerry's meeting with Vladimir Putin in

Moscow, the Secretary stated that "the United States and its partner are not seeking so-called regime change as it is known in Syria." Rather, the possibility of Assad remaining in power during the transitional period was discussed. However, Reeve (2015) continued to report that Secretary Kerry does not believe that Assad has the ability to remain as Syria's leader in the future.

In regards to regime change in Syria, it has been made clear that the United States does not support the Assad regime and is pushing for the dictator to step aside. To date, hard power has not been authorized to physically remove Assad however; specific measures are being taken in order to ensure that Assad cannot remain in power in the foreseeable future. However, regime change in Syria has the distinct possibility of creating a power vacuum within the state, as it did in Iraq, which could lead to the rise of radical jihadist groups, particularly ISIS. The Assad regime has facilitated deep rooted ethnic schisms between the ruling Alawite Shiites and the marginalized Sunnis causing many Sunnis to turn their allegiance to radical jihadist sects. If the ruling Alawites were to be removed, a power vacuum could ensue, resulting in the possibility of the rise to power of Sunni backed radicalized groups such as ISIS.

Geopolitical Interests

While the evidence outlining the United States' desire for regime change in Syria is undeniable, there is also a speckling of significant information regarding its geopolitical interests in the state. Byman and Miles (2012) make significant points and predictions about U.S. interest in Syria. While President Obama and Secretary Kerry made it clear that putting boots on the ground was not on the agenda, Byman and Miles (2012:48) point out that being present in some way would be beneficial to the United States in that it would "offer the United States more legitimacy in supporting regional democracy, greater legitimacy to weigh in on key regional

issues and a better strategic position to counter potential threats to U.S. interests." Similar to Iraq, Syria presents the United States with an opportunity to set conditions for economic recovery including the rollback of sanctions and the accommodation of foreign investment (2012). Further, being absent in the Syrian crisis portrays America as somewhat of a faltering or weakening superpower, further compounded by shortcomings in Iraq and Afghanistan. Also important, Syria poses a direct threat to key U.S. allies throughout the Middle East. Due to its Alawite leadership, a Shiite sect, Syria acts as one of the last remaining major allies of Iran, who President Bush (2002b) classified as one of the "axis of evil" states along with Iraq and North Korea. Because Syria is under the control of the Alawites, it acts as a threat to Sunni states, including Saudi Arabia, one of the United States' major allies in the region. Further, The United States' alliance with Israel is a major factor in its insistence for leadership change in Syria as it poses a direct threat to Israel's security. Syria provides the Palestinian liberation group, Hamas, with an external base. Under Assad, it also supports an Iranian transit route for financial and military assistance to Hamas and Hezbollah for the purpose of countering Israeli dominance in the Arab region (Simura 2015). Syrian's chemical weapon arsenal also poses a threat to Israel's security. Further, the partition of Syria also threatens the neighboring state of Iraq, which the United States has poured immeasurable amounts of time and money into and now considers being an ally. Allison (2013:822) illuminates this concern noting that warnings have surfaced "at senior levels in the United States and from Assad himself about the risks of a partition of Syria, which would have grave ramifications for and beyond the neighboring states of Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan."

Directly following Allison's (2013) publication, Tabler (2013:2) further detailed the threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East and asserted that "avoiding the problem looks less and

less feasible, as the situation in Syria shifts from a mostly contained humanitarian catastrophe to a strategic disaster for the United States and its regional allies.” On September 10, 2013 in his address to the nation on the situation in Syria, President Obama (2013:4) addressed the Syrian threat against Israel and concluded that "our ally, Israel, can defend itself with overwhelming force, as well as the unshakeable support of the United States of America." The following month, Saudi Arabia turned down the opportunity to serve in a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. After which, the Head of Intelligence, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdel-Aziz Al Saud, stated that the rejection "had been a message for the U.S., not the U.N., and that Saudi Arabia would be moving away from the U.S. and towards other allies" (Kinninmont 2014:50). This stemming directly from pro-Western Arab states' frustration with the United States due to its lack of action in Syria. This too poses a threat to U.S. dominance in the Middle East as it has allowed Russia to gain political ground, and thus legitimacy as a world superpower in the international arena.

On September 23, 2014 President Obama addressed the nation regarding airstrikes in Syria conducted by the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, and Qatar, targeting ISIL in Syria. Within which President Obama (2014:2) stated that "it must be clear to anyone who would plot against America and try to do America's harm that we will not tolerate safe havens for terrorists who threaten our people." Thus, proclaiming Syria as a threat to the United States and subsequently, its interests. In the *National Defense Strategy* released in February 2015, President Obama (2015:7) addressed these concerns and stated that,

We embrace our responsibilities for underwriting international security because it serves our interests, upholds our commitments to allies and partners, and addresses threats that are truly global...And our allies and partners in other regions, including our security partnership and people-to-people ties with Israel, are essential to advancing our interests.

Further, President Obama (2015:26) asserted that the United States will "ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world." Undoubtedly referring to Syria's oil supply given that the region is home to 65 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

As a whole, the interest in Syria by the United States is compounded by a multitude of motivational factors and geopolitical interests. Action in Syria gives the United States the opportunity to set the conditions for economic recovery. By doing so, Syria could, like Iraq, become a World Trade Organization friendly country, which has the possibility to benefit the United States and its allies greatly. Syria also provides the United States with an opportunity to reaffirm its position as the global superpower after failures in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Syria poses a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East, primarily that of its allies. As an Alawite led country, Syria acts as the last major ally of Iran, who acts as a threat to Sunni states such as Saudi Arabia, a key U.S. ally in the region. Further, through its support of Palestinian liberation groups, and its arsenal of chemical weapons, Syria poses a unique security threat to longtime U.S. ally, Israel. The possibility of the partitioning of Syria becomes hazardous to neighboring states, including Iraq, a country that the United States has deep ties to. Finally, Syria's vast oil reserves play a vital role in its importance to the United States, as well as the global north.

REALPOLITIK AND "TRUTH": MERGING THE CASES

The above analysis has thoroughly documented the presence and prioritization of the U.S. geopolitical interests and the exercise of realpolitik in Iraq and Syria. U.S. action in Iraq and Syria was motivated by neo-liberalism and realpolitik and the ideology has been entrenched in the system and has become the overarching truth. Any objection or critique of the development plan for Iraq was dismissed. Since the goal of neo-liberalism and realpolitik is capital

accumulation and these goals are learned and entrenched within the system, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, while illegal, was carried out in order to reach these goals creating a subsequent power vacuum opening up opportunities for those vying for power. Similarly, the restructuring of the Iraqi economy emulated these goals, leaving Iraq's economy in a weakened state. These criminogenic behaviors promoted system criminality in that multiple levels of actors were involved, including states, organizations, and IFI's. All of these actions reinforced the status quo at the benefit of the United States.

Other factors played a significant role in how these occupations and interventions were able to be carried out contrary to international law. As such, the integrated theory of violations of international criminal law provides an overarching explanation of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent creation of power vacuums. In regards to Foucault's notion of Regimes of Truth, by separating U.S. policy in Iraq and Syria into specific instances of regime change, geopolitical interests, privatization, free-market economic changes, and deregulation it becomes evident that the promotion of democracy in Iraq and Syria using neo-liberal ideologies, such as those listed above, and realpolitik are the ascribed "truths" utilized by the United States when formulating its foreign policy. These truths were created, and later perpetuated, by those who wielded power within the United States government, specifically by members of the Bush-Cheney administration. In the aforementioned text, both President Bush and Vice President Cheney highlighted the need for a "liberated Iraq" or a "free Iraq" in speeches regarding the removal of the Hussein regime from power in exchange for a westernized democratic government (Cheney 2002:79; Bush 2003b:176).

Foucault (1977:74) asserts that these truths are "linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it." With this being said, truth, in this case being the

promotion of democracy in the Middle East using neo-liberal ideologies and realpolitik, was created and reinforced by the Bush-Cheney administration who then proclaimed it to be absolute. This established truth then guided the way in which development in the Middle East was discussed. Because this truth was considered to be absolute, it then became the generalized way of thinking throughout the entirety of the administration. Therefore, the only viable option for the United States in regards to foreign policy in Middle East, specifically Iraq and Syria, would be to promote the spread of its own neo-liberal westernized democratic ideals. Chiefly because these truths were seen as the only method to the proposed solution, leaving no room for any alternative methods. This phenomenon is exemplified by Congress' complete disregard to U.S. Steelworkers International President Leo. W. Gerard's (2007) letter opposing the privatization of the Iraqi oil industry in which he expressed his concern that this privatization was to benefit the United States rather than the Iraqi people. Similarly, Ehrenburg et al. (2010:281) note that experts on the Middle East argued that the democratic lag in the region could be explained by,

Dependence on oil, which resulted in a distributive rather than a productive economy; long-standing tensions between liberal and Islamic political thought; a gender gap in political and social affairs; and, most importantly, the fact that no region of the world had been so thoroughly ensnared in great power struggles as the Middle East.

Despite these findings, the Bush administration argued that the region needed an external push towards democratization. The administration predicted that, "regime change in the Iraq would have a snowball effect prompting democratization throughout the whole region, and, indeed, all over the world" (2010:281).

Further, these truths became entrenched within the political stem and became the overarching regime of truth. The primary goal of neo-liberalism and realpolitik is capital accumulation, and as mentioned earlier, these goals are learned and entrenched within the system. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein by the United States, while illegal, was carried out in

order to reach these geopolitical goals which then created a power vacuum in Iraq. Subsequently, these actions opened up opportunities for those vying for power, namely ISIS. Similarly, the restructuring of the Iraqi economy emulated the geopolitical goals of the United States, leaving Iraq's economy in a weakened state. The push by the United States to privatize and deregulate Iraq's economy in the name of ne-liberalism and realpolitik left many Iraqi citizens disillusioned and without work. As a result, its citizens much more susceptible to and sympathetic of the insurgency movements that resulted from the power vacuum.

CONCLUSION

Preemptive war in Iraq as well as forcible regime change by the United States incited widespread opposition from the Iraqi people towards the ensuing foreign occupation. United States action in Iraq including regime change, geopolitical interests, privatization, free-market economic reform, and deregulation sparked the rise of anti-occupation sectarian violence that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld attributed to “criminals, dead-enders, foreign fighters, and lingering Ba'ath party leaders” (Ehrenberg et al. 2010: 213). However, U.S. reconstruction policies in Iraq proved to be detrimental to its citizens causing widespread anti-occupation sentiment. The forcible removal of Hussein from power created widespread chaos in which the United States and the Coalition Provisional Authority failed to provide adequate security to quell. The Iraqi National Security Strategy recognized this failure in stating that terrorist groups “have found an opportunity for expansion due to the lack of security after the collapse of the previous regime” (Republic of Iraq 2007:267). Further, the U.S. removal of Hussein and the subsequent de-Ba'athification of Iraq empowered the Shia and Kurds, but it created a significant power vacuum that left the Sunni population targeted by punitive policies and demoralized

which encouraged Sunni nationalists to turn their allegiance to Al Qaeda. The widespread privatization and deregulation of Iraq by the United States incited panic within the Iraqi population who subsequently turned on one another in competition for job opportunities which dwindled after the market was opened up to foreign investment, furthering anti-occupation resistance. Similarly in Syria, security is becoming a major cause for concern as armed gangs and powerful warlords regularly capture wealthy citizens in exchange for hefty ransoms. If the United States were to take similar action in Syria as it did in Iraq, the possibility of the rise of extremist groups is significant. The Assad regime has created deeply rooted schisms between the ruling Alwaite Shia and the Sunnis, causing many of the marginalized Sunni population to turn its allegiance to violent jihadist groups that are quickly becoming more powerful. If the United States were to remove the Assad regime and dismantle the Alawite ruling class as it did with the Hussein regime and the Ba'ath party in Iraq, it would leave Syria with an immediate power vacuum that could easily be filled by the awaiting Sunni backed extremist groups, particularly ISIS. Further, if the United States were to implement policies regarding free-market economic reform, privatization, and deregulation as it has in Iraq, it could lead to anti-occupation resistance and thus open the door to jihadist extremist intervention.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how the U.S. foreign policy, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq and Syria, resulted in the rise of violent extremist groups such as ISIS. Previous research has focused on the commission of state crimes abroad, however there has been no criminological research examining the U.S. involvement in Syria of how their policies and interventions create power vacuums that allow for and facilitate the rise of terrorist groups vying for power.

Empirical Findings

After analyzing the data collected, it was evident that the United States' prioritization of realpolitik and the exercise of geopolitical interests as priority in Iraq ultimately resulted in the creation of a power vacuum in which Al Qaeda gladly filled. The forcible removal of Saddam Hussein by the United States incited anarchical conditions that the United States and the Coalition Provisional Authority failed to quell. U.S. privatization and deregulation of the Iraqi economy left its citizens without jobs and acted as a catalyst for the ensuing sectarian schism between the ruling Shia and the disenfranchised Sunnis. Likewise, Assad's regime in Syria has created a deeply seeded schism between the ruling Alwite Shias and the remaining Sunnis. Given the similarity in make up between the two countries, by utilizing the aforementioned data regarding the United States' use of realpolitik and neo-liberalism in Iraq, it is reasonable to conclude that if the United States were to remove the Assad regime and dismantle the Alawite ruling class as it did with the Hussein regime and the Ba'ath party in Iraq, it would leave Syria

with an immediate power vacuum that could easily be filled by Sunni backed extremist groups, including ISIS.

Theoretical Implications

The empirical findings of this study exemplify both Foucault's notion of regimes of truth, which is encompassed by the overarching integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws, and the realpolitik theoretical frame. The promotion of democracy in the Middle East using neo-liberal ideologies and realpolitik became the truth and was further ingrained in the overarching regime of truth, thus solidifying its role as the only viable option for the United States. Further, the realpolitik theoretical frame was epitomized by the United States' actions in Iraq and Syria of condemning oppressive regimes, namely the Hussein and Assad regimes, while at the same time pursuing its own political and economic interests in the region. By utilizing both the integrated theory of violations of international criminal laws and the realpolitik theoretical frame, this study provides a more holistic explanation of the United States' involvement in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent rise of extremist groups such as ISIS.

Policy Implications

While limited, this study provides a better understanding of the consequences of the United States utilizing comparable policies and practices in Syria as it did in Iraq and Afghanistan by examining how these actions, driven by realpolitik and neo-liberalism, create power vacuums and allow for the rise of terrorist groups vying for power. While it is not likely that the results of this study will change the course of U.S. foreign policy regarding Syria, the aforementioned evidence indicates that by rethinking the foreign policy strategy utilized in Iraq

and Afghanistan and changing these policies and practices before interacting with Syria, the United States may be able to avoid the creation of dangerous power vacuums and, subsequently, the further development of extremists groups such as ISIS.

Limitations and Future Research

The results of this study are not without limitations. Most notably, the generalizability of these results is extremely limited. U.S. action in both Iraq and Syria are strikingly similar, for that reason the results are highly transferable. However, outside of this specific phenomenon occurring within the two countries, the results of this research are not generalizable to other situations. While the chronological temporal approach utilized by this study allowed for data collection from a multiplicity of sources and time periods, due to the time constraints of the particular study, the data collected was not all inclusive or exhaustive. The nature of the data being collected also presented its own set of limitations. Many of the documents being analyzed were governmental and politically driven documents in which Rothe and Collins (2011:27) note that this can result in selectivity of information given and knowledge management. Similarly, much of the documentation regarding U.S. involvement in Iraq is still heavily either classified or heavily censored.

In order to expand on the results of this study, it would be beneficial for future researchers to conduct a longitudinal study regarding the United States' interaction with Iraq as well as the development of extremists groups such as ISIS. This would allow for the data to be exhaustive and all inclusive. It would also be beneficial for future researchers to expand upon the rise of extremists groups once the power vacuums have been created. In order to increase the

generalizability of this research, future research should focus on similar instances occurring throughout other areas of the globe.

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