

# The Exertions of Better Men: The Role of the US Military in Planting, Protecting, and Nurturing Free Government

by Alan W. Dowd

## INTRODUCTION

In his biography of Theodore Roosevelt, historian Edmund Morris recounts the strange story of Ion Perdicaris<sup>1</sup>, whose kidnapping at the hands of a Moroccan warlord nearly triggered a war. Upon his release, as he approached the Moroccan coastal city of Tangier, Perdicaris caught the first glimpse of the source of his regained freedom—“the mastheads of Admiral Chadwick’s ships, twinkling the news of his return.” Overcome with emotion as he took in the US armada, Perdicaris whispered a quiet prayer of thanks for “that flag...that people...that president...those frigates.”<sup>2</sup>

Almost a century later, Ronald Reagan told a similar story. “Back in the early 1980s, at the height of the boat people,” Reagan began, “a sailor was hard at work on the carrier *Midway*, which was patrolling the South China Sea.”<sup>3</sup> As it cut through the choppy waves, he explained, the *Midway* came across “a leaky little boat” crammed with refugees from the killing fields of Indochina. They hoped to do the impossible—to reach America’s shores and to find freedom. But on this day, freedom found them first. The *Midway* changed course to pluck the refugees from danger, and as the giant ship drifted toward the tiny raft, one of the refugees stood up and yelled out in broken English, “Hello, American sailor. Hello, freedom man!” It was, as Reagan concluded, “a small moment with a big meaning.”<sup>4</sup>

Both of these stories reveal something powerful and poignant about freedom, but they also say something about the US military and its role in promoting freedom worldwide. That responsibility began long before Roosevelt dispatched his armada to the Moroccan coast, and it continued long after the *Midway* returned with its precious cargo and powerful story for Reagan to share. Indeed, it continues today. America’s unique role is both a by-product and expression of a natural inclination to promote free government.

For each generation, there has been a different way of expressing this inclination. Within sight of the Union and Confederate fallen, Abraham Lincoln spoke of “a new

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birth of freedom.”<sup>5</sup> In 1917, Woodrow Wilson sent Pershing’s troops to make Europe “safe for democracy.” Franklin Roosevelt sent yet another generation of Americans to build “a world founded upon four essential human freedoms”—freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.<sup>6</sup>

As World War II gave way to the Cold War, Harry Truman vowed, “to help free peoples maintain their free institutions and their national integrity.”<sup>7</sup> John Kennedy promised that America would “bear any burden...in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”<sup>8</sup> In that brief interregnum between two terrors, between the Cold War and bin Laden’s jihad, Bill Clinton envisioned “engagement and enlargement” of the democratic community.<sup>9</sup> And after September 11, George W. Bush vowed to use American might to build “a balance of power that favors freedom.”<sup>10</sup>

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**After all, words did not protect Nanking or Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, nor Srebrenica or Rwanda in the 1990s. They did not liberate Europe or Asia in 1945. They did not preserve free government during the Cold War, or give it space to grow afterwards. And they are not protecting or planting free government in our time.**

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Words of this sort are important. They provide form and focus to American power. However, they are just words, and as such they have their limits. After all, words did not protect Nanking or Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, nor Srebrenica or Rwanda in the 1990s. They did not liberate Europe or Asia in 1945. They did not preserve free government during the Cold War, or give it space to grow afterwards. And they are not protecting or planting free government in our time. That task falls to “men whose values are not those of politicians or diplomats,” as military historian John Keegan has observed—men who are willing to do more than simply write or talk about freedom.<sup>11</sup> According to Keegan, “All civilizations owe their origins to the warrior,” especially the increasingly democratic civilization of the early twenty-first century.<sup>12</sup>

Although many countries have contributed to this great cause of democracy-building, the US has a disproportionate burden because of its unique position, unrivaled power, and historic, albeit self-appointed, role as leader of the free world. The US military shoulders the lion’s share of that burden.

## **WAITING FOR THE AMERICANS**

Critics of American power may refuse to recognize this special role, but by turning to Washington when tsunamis swallow South Asia, genocide is let loose in Europe, famine devours Somalia, nuclear weapons sprout up in North Korea, democracy teeters in Haiti, or chaos overtakes some faraway nation, they are tacitly

conceding that the United States is, well, special. RAND Corporation's international security analyst James Dobbins puts it matter-of-factly: "It now seems clear that nation building is the inescapable responsibility of the world's only superpower."<sup>13</sup> Adds Johns Hopkins professor Fouad Ajami, "The world rails against the United States, yet embraces its protection, its gossip and its hipness."<sup>14</sup> Especially its protection. As of 2004, some fifty countries enjoy defense treaties with the US; the US military is the first and last line of defense for dozens of others. This role of global guarantor of freedom expands daily in the War on Terror, with US forces now welcomed in more than 100 countries.

This is not to be construed as jingoism or triumphalism, but rather a statement of reality. Indeed, the pronouncements of America's friends and actions of its enemies bear out this truth. After Dunkirk, Winston Churchill contemplated a day when "the new world, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the old."<sup>15</sup> As the Cold War thawed and the West contemplated a response to Moscow's new openness, NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner reminded President George H.W. Bush, "the United States should not expect others to deliver much. They are waiting for the Americans."<sup>16</sup> With Washington averting its gaze from the Balkan wars of the 1990s, French President Jacques Chirac mixed contempt with delight by concluding, "the position of leader of the free world is vacant"—a backhanded admission that the US does indeed play a special role in protecting and promoting freedom.<sup>17</sup>

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Moreover, Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network targeted the Pentagon because it is a symbol of American power. Few nations, if any, have so often or so freely used their military power to promote democracy and help the helpless. As a consequence, the US military has made its share of friends and enemies. Within those five walls, Americans have planned peacekeeping missions in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Lebanon; humanitarian efforts to save Berliners, Somalis, and Kurds; rescue operations to defend Korea and Kuwait; democracy-building missions in Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq; the defeat of German fascism, Japanese militarism and Soviet communism; and the early counterstrikes against Islamist terrorism's practitioners, patrons, and partners.

This is not to say that America's military is flawless. The abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib is a grim reminder that any organization made up of humans is inherently imperfect. Of course, it is also a reminder that the American military strives to do the right thing: it pays to recall that the abuse was uncovered by the military itself. On balance, American military power is a force for good in the world, especially when it comes to defending freedom and deterring its enemies.

Nor is this to imply that civilian organizations are unimportant in planting free government. Just as it takes more than words to eliminate the enemies of freedom and build democracy, it takes more than armies. International organizations and NGOs have proven effective at encouraging confidence building measures, nurturing civil society, supporting the rule of law, teaching the habits of democracy, and ensuring fair elections. These are essential ingredients to the health of consensual government inside a state and to the spread of democracy around the world, but seldom are they enough to plant or protect democracy, as the last sixty years illustrate.

## **SECOND WORLD WAR**

Iraq is not the first place the US military has attempted to turn battlefield victories into political success, and ultimately to turn a nation into a democratic government. Colonel Jayne Carson of the US Army has observed that, historically, when the US wades into the waters of nation building, the ultimate objective is “to install or leave behind a constitutional government that recognizes universal suffrage, the rule of law, and separation of church and state.”<sup>18</sup> Early examples include Cuba and the Philippines, which were imperfect efforts at best.

The US military’s greatest success stories in building democracy also happen to represent its most costly and open-ended engagements. Recall that before democracy could be planted on German or Japanese soil, the US had to defeat two brutal regimes. Victory over those regimes came at a cost of some 400,000 American lives and almost \$350USD billion. And after the guns fell silent, the US military invested more capital, resources, and lives to nurture the nascent democracies in Tokyo and Bonn.

“Germany and Japan,” Dobbins concludes in *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, “set standards for post-conflict transformation that has not since been equaled.”<sup>19</sup> In both instances, in Dobbins’ view, the positive result came in direct correlation to “the level of effort the United States and the international community put into their democratic transformations.”<sup>20</sup> That effort was led by the US military, which provided internal and external security, dismantled and disarmed the machinery of militarism, convened military tribunals, administered much of the humanitarian aid, cleaned up the poisoned education systems, and set up proto-democratic institutions.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Dobbins notes that the American military was scheduling municipal elections in Germany as early as 1946.<sup>22</sup>

Within a decade of the war’s end, Germany was a sovereign, democratic country. Today, it is a leader in the field of human rights and a role model for developing democracies. None of this was a foregone conclusion. In Weimar’s wake, “it was unclear whether the German people would accept Western democratic principles” after the Second World War.<sup>23</sup> Germany’s stunning and relatively rapid transition from a constant source of instability and war into an international exponent of liberal democratic government is evidence that “military force and political capital

can, at least in some circumstances, be successfully employed to underpin democratic and societal transformation.”<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, hundreds of thousands of American troops did the heavy lifting of democracy-building in post-imperial Japan. Foreshadowing the American military’s ambidexterity in places like Berlin, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, US forces delivered tons of foodstuffs to the defeated people of Japan, even as they demobilized the Japanese army. The post-imperial constitution, which guaranteed equal rights, education reform, free speech, and religious liberalization, bore the unmistakable fingerprints of an American general—Douglas MacArthur.<sup>25</sup> It was MacArthur who ordered that postwar Japan provide legal protection for labor unions, which “invigorated Japanese democracy.”<sup>26</sup> Historian Paul Johnson observes that it was MacArthur’s constitution that triggered “a revolution from above” and broke the “mesmeric hold the state had hitherto exercised over the Japanese people.”<sup>27</sup> In pursuit of that goal, Dobbins details how the US Army sent teams to school districts to ensure that emperor worship was no longer practiced or encouraged.<sup>28</sup>

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Sixty years later, Japan is an island of stability, peace, and free government in a region in desperate need of each. In a sign of its maturity, Japan is now leading the effort to plant free government in Iraq. Tokyo has pledged \$5 billion to rebuild Iraq, and in December 2004 announced that it would extend its deployment of peacekeeping troops by another year.<sup>29</sup>

While discussing democratic Japan and proto-democratic Iraq, it is worth noting that, contrary to popular opinion, America’s history of creative battlefield skimping began long before the statues fell in Baghdad. Although the Continental Congress promised to field and fund an army of 75,000, General George Washington never had more than 25,000 full-time troops under his command. Dobbins reminds us that initial plans for occupying postwar Germany called for nine US divisions (down from the 61 US divisions in Germany on VE Day), but domestic pressures to bring the troops home sliced the nine-division plan down to a five-division plan. Likewise, in Japan, initial plans called for more than 600,000 troops, including 315,000 Americans, 135,000 British Commonwealth troops, 175,000 Soviet troops, and 60,000 Nationalist Chinese troops. Of course, the Soviets and Chinese were never integrated into the occupation effort in Japan, and the Commonwealth only sent 45,000 men.<sup>30</sup> Obviously, that would affect how America carried out its occupation, and so would the Cold War with Moscow.

## THE COLD WAR

The Cold War at once fueled and impeded democracy-building in postwar Europe. For example, in the western half of Germany, the Soviet threat spurred the Allies to forge a democratic, albeit semi-sovereign, government. Yet Moscow's actions also threatened to derail the progress toward freedom in the western sectors of Berlin. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's attempt to close off West Berlin in 1948 was neither the first nor last time Moscow would seek to challenge the process of democratization in the West, but it was perhaps the most brazen.

By blockading Berlin, Stalin no doubt thought he had checkmated Washington with a *fait accompli*. What he did not realize was that there was another option for the Allies. This precipitated the Berlin Airlift, one of the greatest military, political, and technological feats of the twentieth century. Blending the principles of strategic bombing with the efficiency of a Detroit assembly line, the Americans crafted an air campaign unlike any in history. The coal and food laden planes would land every three minutes during the Soviet siege. From June 1948 to September 1949, Allied pilots flew 277,000 missions and delivered 2.3 million tons of supplies to sustain Berlin's civilian population. About 75 percent of those missions were flown by US pilots, and 31 Americans were killed during the airlift.<sup>31</sup>

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During those fifteen months of brinkmanship, the US showcased not just its military might, political resolve, and boundless economic capacity, but a unique ability to bring all of these qualities to bear in pursuit of its national interests. Washington displayed an ability to balance those interests against the most basic needs of its former enemies in Germany. Although the Cold War would continue for decades, the Berlin Airlift laid the foundation for everything that followed on both sides of the Iron Curtain. With the world watching, the siege and subsequent rescue of Berlin exposed the stark differences between the two postwar superpowers.

For the balance of the Cold War, America's military strength would usually be employed in a similarly restrained manner, not so much to extend the frontiers of democracy, but rather to preserve and protect them. What Churchill said in the first decade of the global standoff with Moscow would be true until the end. "But for American nuclear superiority," he sighed, "Europe would already have been reduced to satellite status and the Iron Curtain would have reached the Atlantic and the Channel."<sup>32</sup> When this nuclear balance of terror was threatened, the American military was obliged to intervene, and it did often. From 1946 to 1989, the US military was ordered into action at least forty-six times: ranging from major combat deployments, as in Korea and Vietnam; to token shows of force, as when Washington sent fighter jets to fend off a coup in the Philippines in 1989; to things in between, as when the

US Navy ensured freedom of the seas against Libyan encroachment in the 1980s.<sup>33</sup> Some of those interventions had little to do with democratization, but most of them were aimed at keeping the enemies of democracy at bay and positioning the West to win the Cold War. Thus, even though American military action was sometimes shortsighted and always imperfect during this period, it served an important and worthy cause.

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### **BETWEEN THE TERRORS**

The same can be said of America's post-Cold War efforts, although the transition was anything but smooth. When Yugoslavia began to descend into civil war in 1991, Western Europe seized upon the crisis as an opportunity to prove it was ready to keep the peace. It proceeded to launch diplomatic missions and deploy "protection forces" to the war-torn region. It was, as one European diplomat declared, "the hour of Europe."<sup>34</sup> Washington took the hint and stepped aside. It would be a fateful decision. As historian William Pfaff notes in *The Wrath of Nations*, "In the Bosnian crisis, the United States did not act, so everyone failed to act."<sup>35</sup> Relying on diplomacy, sanctions, and bluster, the Europeans were unable to protect the innocents, let alone end the war.

In that long hour, when Europe tested its soft power against Slobodan Milosevic's hard power, almost 200,000 people were erased and another two million were displaced. Europe's fecklessness and America's acquiescence, Pfaff concludes, "dealt a brutal blow to the idea that democracies possessed the capacity, or the will, to enlarge that zone of pacification and cooperation created inside the western political community. It even raised a question as to whether that achievement itself would last."<sup>36</sup> The low point came when the Dutch government allowed its peacekeepers in the laughably misnamed UN Protection Force to stand aside, as the Serbs entered the so-called safe haven of Srebrenica and liquidated 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men. (Obviously, little in the way of protection was offered to Srebrenica.) Only after Washington reasserted itself in late 1995, by bringing American military might in the form of robust air strikes against Serbian paramilitaries (under the auspices of NATO), did the war come to an end. A US-led peacekeeping force then entered Bosnia to enforce a partition, smother any flare-ups, and in a faint echo of postwar Germany, crack down on hypernationalist elements, provide public infrastructure, and aid international organizations in holding free and fair elections.<sup>37</sup>

US troops are still there, and although the process of democratization in Bosnia is far from ideal, the peace is still holding. In fact, the armistice has now held longer than the war itself. Dobbins notes that the postwar cartography of Bosnia, albeit fragile and flawed, is being maintained largely by the presence of American and allied peacekeepers. A similar formula has been successful in Kosovo. It pays to recall that not long ago, Milosevic's terror squads were rampaging through Serbia's tiny Albanian enclave, purging 850,000 ethnic Albanians and killing thousands more. It was not diplomatic communiqués or UN sanctions that changed Belgrade's behavior, but rather a US air armada. During the seventy-eight day air campaign, the US-led NATO alliance would feed, house, and clothe the displaced Kosovars and lead them home. In fact, as Jane's Defense observed at the time, "Kosovo is the only case in modern history where a systematic removal of ethnic groups has been reversed."<sup>38</sup> Today, Milosevic is pacing in a jail cell, awaiting his sentence for a decade of war crimes; the Kosovars are protected; Serbia is a democracy; the Balkans are arguably more stable than they have been since Tito; and not coincidentally, there are several thousand American and European troops keeping the peace. They have overseen elections, rebuilt infrastructure, played the role of referee, and worked to inculcate the habits of freedom.

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**AFTER SEPTEMBER 11**

If people vote with their feet, then post-Taliban Afghanistan held its first elections long before Hamid Karzai's name was placed on a ballot. After all, some three million displaced Afghans returned home in late 2001 and early 2002. They were able to do so because of the US military, as Christopher Hitchens observed upon the fall of the Taliban. "The United States has just succeeded in bombing a country back out of the Stone Age," he wrote. "This deserves to be recognized as an achievement."<sup>39</sup> However, the Americans did not just topple the medieval Taliban and flush out bin Laden's terror network; they simultaneously swooped in to rescue a war-weary people from starvation and lay the groundwork of self-government. In the final three months of 2001 alone, US forces airdropped 2.4 million meal rations and helped deliver another 127,000 tons of food and water over land, all in the midst of a war.<sup>40</sup> Today, US forces are delivering additional aid and widening the zone of stability in Afghanistan through provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), which are military units of sixty to eighty troops that work with civilian organizations to rebuild key infrastructure and pacify regions beyond Kabul. The PRTs aim to



create secure areas where aid workers can help with reconstruction and in the process, extend the authority and legitimacy of the central government throughout Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> According to General Walter Sharp, director of strategic plans and policy at the Pentagon's Joint Staff, "over 400 schools, 600 wells and over 170 medical facilities have been provided through PRT and USAID reconstruction projects across Afghanistan."<sup>42</sup> As of September 2004, there were nineteen PRTs at work all across Afghanistan.

Despite its good intentions and positive results, the PRT concept drew unwanted and arguably unwarranted criticism in June 2004, when terrorists murdered five aid workers from Doctors Without Borders (DWB). By July, DWB announced its withdrawal from Afghanistan, denouncing the US-led coalition's "attempt to co-opt humanitarian aid." In the process, DWB officials criticized US Secretary of State Colin Powell for praising DWB as "members of a team against terror," condemned the coalition's "attempt to put us in one side of a conflict," and seemed unable or unwilling to distinguish between "armed actors."<sup>43</sup>

Never mind that some of those armed actors were saving innocents rather than killing them. This sort of criticism, which fails to make any distinction between people who use weapons to destroy freedom and people who use weapons to defend it, calls to mind something John Stuart Mill wrote long before Americans cared a wit about Afghanistan:

*War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war is worse. A man who has nothing which he is willing to fight for... has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men.*<sup>44</sup>

DWB's retreat from Afghanistan is regrettable because such organizations can achieve far more working with the military than they can alone. According to RAND's Cheryl Benard, the attack on DWB's unarmed team is an argument for "closer cooperation with the military, not a separation of spheres."<sup>45</sup> Indeed, as US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has observed, "the only reason humanitarian workers are today back in Afghanistan is because of the US military."<sup>46</sup>

To paraphrase Rumsfeld, the only reason Afghanistan is now a full-fledged democracy is because of the US military. After the *loya jirga* selected Karzai as Afghanistan's interim leader, it was left to US forces to protect this central symbol of the country's nascent democracy. In fact, when a group of Taliban sympathizers infiltrated Karzai's security detail and tried to assassinate the popular president in September 2002, they were repulsed by a detachment of US Special Forces. At least one of Karzai's anonymous American bodyguards was wounded in the attack.<sup>47</sup>

The US military then worked with partners from NATO, the UN, and international NGOs to hold the first democratic elections in Afghanistan's 200-year history. In a macroversion of the effort to guard Karzai, some 18,500 American troops, joined by 13,000 Afghan soldiers and 9,000 NATO forces, provided security

on election day, literally insuring democracy by protecting the right to vote.<sup>48</sup> With the national elections of October 2004 now behind them and Karzai as their leader, the Afghan people officially govern themselves.

## INTO IRAQ

In Iraq, as in Afghanistan, the democracy-building effort has both critics and obstacles. Without question, it is difficult amid car bombings, beheadings, and gun battles to celebrate the birth of Iraqi democracy, but it pays to keep things in perspective. Iraq's is not the first popularly supported government to draw the fire of radicals or reactionaries. Consider the mini-civil war in Moscow in the autumn of 1993, when Boris Yeltsin used tanks and artillery to put down an antidemocratic rebellion. Consider the Israeli democracy, which fought for its very life from its very first breath. Consider the administration of President Abraham Lincoln, which came under assault even before his inauguration. In other words, the fact that Iraqis are fighting to plant democracy is not without precedent; and the fact that they are willing to fight and die to keep their newfound freedom is actually a hopeful sign. "Iraqis are grimly determined to rebuild their own country, grimly determined never again to be ruled against their will," according to Ambassador Feisal Istrabadi of Iraq.<sup>49</sup>

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Moreover, as Germany and Japan remind us, it is not unprecedented for democracy to get a push from outside parties. "Iraqis will tell you universally that they could not possibly have removed the old regime," according to Istrabadi.<sup>50</sup> After all, Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq for almost twenty-four years, longer than Hitler controlled Germany and longer than Tojo dominated Japan. During that quarter-century, neither the Iraqi people nor their neighbors knew a day of peace. Saddam's wars scarred Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. His internal terror decimated the Kurdish minority in northern Iraq and the Shiite majority in southern Iraq, transforming the cradle of civilization into a giant torture chamber. His cult of death deformed a nation. Tens of thousands were orphaned by his wars. Thousands more were orphaned by his death squads. Saddam became their father and god. "With our souls and our blood," they pledged at school, "we sacrifice for Saddam. We will sacrifice ourselves for you, O Saddam."<sup>51</sup> Those children who refused to join the youth wing of the Ba'ath party were imprisoned by the hundreds. It was a regiment of the US Marines that set them free.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of this brutal history, the Iraqi people are now striving to lay the foundations of free government. Less than a week after the liberation of Baghdad, for example, they were forming city councils and ad hoc assemblies all across the country. "In the space of a year-and-a-half, a hundred political parties have emerged, a couple hundred newspapers. You have people speaking their minds, protesting this and that," Istrabadi observed in October 2004. "Iraq has a lot to learn about democracy, but in fact we're on the way."<sup>53</sup> The Iraqi people have already created a national representative body and embraced the rule of law, promising to protect ethnic and religious minorities, assure free speech, and promote basic human rights. A permanent constitution and permanent National Assembly will be in place by the end of 2005.<sup>54</sup>

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Playing every role from diplomat to de facto mayor, US forces have aided in this democratization process. In April of 2003, for instance, literally days after Saddam's regime collapsed, US troops were convening town hall meetings with Iraqi communities.<sup>55</sup> After fighting their way from Kuwait to the northern third of Iraq, a brigade from the 101st Airborne reopened trade flows between the border towns of Iraq and Syria. They did so by convening Iraqi customs officers, tribal leaders, and businessmen and helping them agree on a per-vehicle toll. The humming trade activity has generated enough revenue to hire additional customs officials, fund municipal projects, and reconstitute local institutions of governance. One might call Iraq's northwestern borderlands the 101st Airborne Enterprise Zone.<sup>56</sup>

Without question, a number of US military decisions have angered Iraqis, and will continue to do so. However, as one member of the Mosul City Council told *The New York Times*, "They work hard to do the right thing."<sup>57</sup> That is largely because the motives of the typical American soldier and Marine are honorable; his instincts are democratic. This is not just syrupy sentiment. An analysis by the US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) concluded that American forces deployed in Iraq believe they are fighting and dying to make Iraq free. Relying on interviews with US personnel deployed in the invasion and initial occupation, SSI's researchers found that "liberating the people and bringing freedom to Iraq" were commonly cited by American troops in describing their combat motivation.<sup>58</sup>

While few question the motivation of American troops, many have questioned Iraq's capacity for democracy. This is more than unfair because it belies a kind of cultural prejudice. As Bush observed on the eve of the Iraq War, "It is presumptuous and insulting to suggest that a whole region of the world—or the one-fifth of humanity that is Muslim—is somehow untouched by the most basic aspirations of life."<sup>59</sup> Moreover, it echoes the folly of earlier critics of democratization efforts. The list of peoples and places that the experts once deemed as beneath representative government is long. It includes India, now the largest democracy on earth, Latin America, Eastern

Europe, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Afghanistan, and the thirteen breakaway colonies known as the United States of America. There is no reason why Iraq cannot join that list. It will simply take time. “We’ve done these things quickly and we’ve done them well,” Dobbins explains, “but we’ve never done them quickly and well.”<sup>60</sup>

## FORCE OF FREEDOM

The intent here is not to glorify war. Rather, it is to remind those of us who talk and write about democracy, who praise NGOs for their efforts (and rightly so), and who dispense Nobel Peace Prizes to negotiators and diplomats, that the process of democratization often begins with the force of arms and “the exertions of better men.” From Normandy to Najaf, America’s military has helped fuel that process, extending liberty to those who do not know it and preserving it for those who take it for granted. As historian John Lewis Gaddis writes of the burden America accepted in the middle portion of the twentieth century, “Who else was there to hold the line against the authoritarians who otherwise would have dominated that century? Who else is there now, at the beginning of the twenty-first?”<sup>61</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ion Perdicaris was not a United States citizen. Roosevelt thought he was and so did his captors. Perdicaris had foresworn his citizenship but later regained it.

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (Random House, 2001), pp. 337-338.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address, January 11, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/gatr1.html>

<sup>6</sup> Franklin Roosevelt, Message to Congress, January 6, 1941, Yale Law School Avalon Project, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/decade/decade01.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Harry S Truman, Address to Congress, March 12, 1947, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/03/documents/truman/>.

<sup>8</sup> John Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, Yale Law School Avalon Project, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/kennedy.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Bill Clinton, “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement,” February 1995.

<sup>10</sup> George W. Bush, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” September 20, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, (Knopf 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Id. at p. xvi.

<sup>13</sup> James Dobbins, *America’s Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq*, 2003, RAND, p. xxix.

<sup>14</sup> Fouad Ajami, “The falseness of anti-Americanism,” *Foreign Policy*, September/October 2003.

<sup>15</sup> David Cannadine, Ed., *The Speeches of Winston Churchill* (Houghton Mifflin, 1989), p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> George Bush, Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (Knopf 1998), p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace* (Scribner, 2001), p. 305.

<sup>18</sup> Jayne Carson, “Nation Building, the American Way,” US Army War College Strategy Paper July 4, 2003, 2.

<sup>19</sup> James Dobbins, *America’s Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq*, 2003, RAND, p. xix.

<sup>20</sup> Id.

<sup>21</sup> Id.

<sup>22</sup> Id. at p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Id. at p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Id. at p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Id.

<sup>26</sup> Id. at p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Johnson, *Modern Times* (Harper 1991), p.730.

<sup>28</sup> See generally, Dobbins, "America's Role in Nation Building".

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<sup>37</sup> Dobbins, pp.95-98

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