

# POLICING POST-WAR IRAQ: INSURGENCY, CIVILIAN POLICE, AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

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*We present an analysis of the ongoing dynamics of civilian police reform in Iraq since an end to major hostilities was declared in the Spring of 2003. Analyzing the development of Iraq's new police forces since the fall of the Ba'ath regime, our study particularly focuses on the Iraqi police as a preferred target of insurgent attacks. Theoretically, we rely on sociological perspectives on the transformation of the police function in the process of democratization of the polity and apply these insights comparatively to the democratic reform of Iraq's autocratic regime. We argue that the Iraqi insurgency is disproportionately targeted at the new Iraqi civilian police, not because of the role police would fulfill as representatives of the state, but because a well-established and regularly functioning police would represent an important and highly visible indicator of a pacified Iraqi society. First and foremost, we maintain, the insurgency is aimed at the Iraqi police forces in order to prevent a normalization of Iraq's civil society.*

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The military intervention that was initiated in Iraq by the armed forces of the United States, the United Kingdom, and several other nations on March 20, 2003, presents sociologists with a variety of pressing questions. Besides the lasting nature of the intervention, the political climate surrounding the legitimacy and justification of the decision to engage in war, and the political and strategic difficulties surrounding the deployment of military troops in counter-terrorism efforts, areas of investigation that sociologists are ideally equipped to address, include the institutional state of Iraqi society as it has transformed since the fall of the autocratic regime of Saddam Hussein. Rather than attempting to devote our work to research areas that are more typically addressed in other social-science disciplines (e.g., foreign policy in political science; international regulations in law; foreign diplomacy in international studies), intriguing sociological work can be done in the Iraqi context about more routine aspects of society—family, class, religion, friendship, the polity—that are now cast in a very different light in a society that is troubled by warfare and its enduringly violent aftermath. In this paper, we address this concern by undertaking an investigation situated in the sociology of social control to unravel important dimensions of policing in the context of post-war Iraq.

Our analysis of the police situation in Iraq focuses on developments since an end to major combat operations was announced in the spring of 2003. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, the term "police" in this paper refers to the institution and function of civilian public police forces that are formally legitimated within the context of national states with the tasks of crime control and order maintenance. Importantly, we make no assertion that the police in Iraq have acquired a degree of popular legitimacy comparable to that of law enforcement agencies in other nations, especially those with a long history of democratization. Relatedly, when we use such terms as "insurgency" and "terrorism" in this paper, we imply no essentialist position but rather a constructionist viewpoint and, therefore, rely on the terms that are being used, especially on the part of the agents of control, to refer to acts of violence that police agencies and other institutions of social control respond to. Considering the rapid changes in the Iraqi situation, it is important to note that this article was completed in August 2006, at a time when discussions on the insurgency in Iraq were already implying a shift towards civil war.

Focusing on the reformation of the civilian police system in Iraq since the collapse of the Ba'ath regime, we devote special attention to the continued violence that has plagued Iraqi society, particularly the manner in which the insurgency has focused its most deadly efforts against the newly formed Iraqi civilian police. Media reports have regularly pointed out that Iraqi police are among the favored targets of the insurgency (Chandrasekaran 2005; Housego 2004; Reuters 2006; Redmon 2006; Shadid 2005). Yet, no scholarly analysis has been conducted on the role played by the reformed civilian police forces in the reconstruction of Iraq, and, particularly, the difficulties Iraqi police face in regard to the ongoing insurgency. The analyses in this paper rely on news articles retrieved via the Lexis-Nexis database, archival sources collected from government and private websites, and interviews, conducted by the first author, with representatives of the Department of State and the Department of Justice. Theoretically, our analysis is rooted in sociological perspectives of the evolution of the police function, especially the role of police in the democratization process.

## POLICING THE STATE, POLICING SOCIETY

Within the conceptual framework of social control, conceived as the whole of the societal mechanisms and institutions that define and respond to crime and deviance, sociological work on the institution and function of policing is well-grounded in theoretical developments in sociological thought. Most famous is, of course, Max Weber's explicit linking of the state with the legitimate means of force, when Weber defined the state as the political community which within a certain territory "claims for itself [with success] a monopoly of legitimate physical coercion" (Weber 1919:506). Further indicating the centrality of coercion in conceptualizing the state, Weber included "the protection of personal security and public order [police]" as one of the important functions of the state (Weber 1922:516).

The fact that the police in national states are to be conceptualized as the institution that is formally charged with lawfully executing the state's monopoly over the means of internal coercion (Manning 1977) should not lead us to conceive of the relations between the police and the other organs of the state as necessarily intimate. On the contrary, a comparative-historical viewpoint reveals an important degree of variability in how the police are institutionally placed and function within the concrete socio-historical circumstances of specific societies, revealing varying degrees of legitimacy granted to police institutions and an effective monopolization of force (Deflem 2002). At least two dimensions are therefore relevant to adequately situate the function and role of the police. First, the police institution is related in variable ways to the military, i.e., the state's apparatus to exercise the monopoly over the means of external coercion. Traditionally, the inwardly oriented coercion of the police often functioned in close accompaniment to an outwardly oriented military power. Second, the origins of modern police systems were historically closely linked with the power of governments to maintain order and security within a given territory. Policing powers were, therefore, traditionally very broadly conceived to include both political (or high) policing duties as well as criminal (or low) police objectives (Brodeur 1983). Over the course of history, however, police systems have become more independent in institutional and functional respects and become involved with policing society and crime, rather than with the state and political dissent (Deflem 2002; Manning 1977). Thus, the police transformed into a civilian force separate from the military, and became functionally oriented to law enforcement and crime control objectives, rather than to political and government-controlled goals.

The historical transformation of the police function has an important comparative dimension, for it is only in the context of societies that have a democratic polity and that have reached a modicum of peace that the police institution can develop into a professional civilian force of law enforcement (Manning 2003; Marenin 2000). In autocratic regimes, conversely, police power will remain very closely tied to the quest of governments to maintain power and secure order, often through very violent means and in close conjunction with military forces that are less differentiated from police powers than is the case in democratic societies. As police institutions tend to be very closely associated with the military, civilian police duties (of crime control) are often subsumed under a much broader security regime (of order). Such conditions are absent in democratic regimes, although the ideals of a civilian police will also rarely be perfectly met. In democratic societies, the politicization and militarization of police can

present obstacles to a well-functioning civilian law enforcement force. Such possibilities become realities under exceptional circumstances, such as during periods of war and other sudden disruptions of society, including strongly perceived threats to national security such as international terrorism (Deflem 2004, 2006) and illegal immigration (Dunn 1996). In the context of a democratic society, the privatization of the security and military industry has brought about renewed complications over the lines dividing the blue and green forces of coercion (Singer 2003).

Turning to Iraq, the foregoing discussion can be applied to postulate that the institution of police during the reign of Saddam Hussein was intimately tied to the autocratic Ba'ath regime. Consequently, the Iraqi police as a civilian force was not well-developed relative to the military and secret intelligence and security agencies. Since the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, these conditions have drastically changed to usher in a democratization of the Iraqi polity and commence an effort of civilian police reform. Of course, this is a slow and ongoing process that may require much time and effort and that, at present, will have produced mixed and ambivalent results. At a minimum, a democratization of the Iraqi polity must be based on an open and free electoral process, but, as recent developments in Iraq have all too tragically indicated, it is far from sufficient, as a variety of insurgent groups have been able to successfully disrupt the country, and old and new social fractions, especially along ethnic lines, have surfaced in Iraqi society, often with severely violent implications.

Besides the difficulties of forming a democratic polity, the democratization of policing poses an additional set of concerns. While some variations in the forms of policing democracies exist, the police function in a democratic society must, at a minimum, following David Bayley (2001, 2005), fulfill the following dual conditions: the police must have a position of independence relative to the center of the state and be responsible towards the needs of citizens and accountable to law; and police actions must abide by standards of human rights and be transparent. In contemporary Iraq, this analysis will show, these conditions are very tentatively beginning to emerge, but many problems persist. In view of the fall of the Ba'ath regime and Iraq's transition towards democratic rule, the case of Iraq's civilian police presents a striking real-life experiment by which the evolving dynamics of policing since the attempted democratization of Iraqi society and the difficulties this process has been facing can be investigated. In the following analysis, we will investigate the reformation of Iraq's police since the occupation by the international coalition forces; we will highlight some of the difficulties Iraq's new civilian police forces have faced since the spread of the insurgency that erupted after an end was declared to major combat operations.

### POLICING IRAQ: A BRIEF HISTORY

The transformation of the Iraqi police relates closely to the country's political history (Keegan 2004; Marr 2004). Originally not a united country but a conglomerate of three "vilayets" (regions) that were part of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards, the area now known as Iraq was granted as a mandate by the League of Nations to the United Kingdom after World War I. In 1932, the country gained independence, whereafter the Hashemite monarchy ruled the country until 1958, when the Iraqi army established a republic and installed a leftist government that entertained friendly ties with the Soviet Union.

In 1963, the Ba'ath Party installed another military government. This regime was soon overturned, but in 1968 the Ba'ath party once again seized political power. Within the party, Saddam Hussein gradually gained power, assuming the presidency and taking control of the Revolutionary Command Council in July 1979. Largely made up of members of the Sunni community, the Ba'ath party also controlled all government institutions. Saddam Hussein's rule was as brutal as it was effective, surviving the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and the Gulf War (1991) and UN-imposed economic sanctions that followed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

During Saddam Hussein's reign, a sophisticated system of security and intelligence agencies served to uphold the autocratic reign of the Ba'ath Party (Jones et al. 2005; Perito 2003, 2005). Internal security was particularly achieved through a system of overlapping security services, including the Special Security Organization, the General Intelligence Directorate, the General Security Directorate, and the Ba'ath Party Security Agency. Led by Saddam Hussein's youngest son, the Special Security Organization was in charge of the safety of the president, his family, and palaces. The General Intelligence Directorate, under the command of Saddam Hussein's brother, was in charge of espionage and foreign intelligence gathering. The General Security Directorate was responsible for internal security and public unrest. The Ba'ath Party Security Agency monitored the activities of Iraqi citizens in commerce, factories, unions and universities.

During the Ba'ath regime, the Iraqi National Police were responsible for all law enforcement duties. Though staffed by officers trained in police academies, the police were placed under military oversight. Law enforcement functions involving more serious criminal violations were delegated to the security services, leaving the police to deal mostly with petty offenses and traffic regulation. Three decades of Saddam Hussein's rule brought about poorly managed police forces which had low standards of education and operation. Corruption among the police was high, as was distrust towards the police among most Iraqi citizens. Police officers rarely ventured outside their stations, and when they did, they randomly rounded up suspects, extorted confessions by force and torture, or took bribes from family members to release suspects.

### POLICING THE OCCUPATION

The invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, by an international coalition led by the United States and Great Britain quickly led to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (Keegan 2004). On April 9, Baghdad was captured, and on May 1, President George W. Bush declared an end to major combat operations. A Coalition Provisional Authority was installed followed by an interim government in June 2004, and a transitional government following elections in January 2005. The executive power of the Iraqi government now resides in a three-person presidential council, consisting of a president and two vice presidents, effectively ensuring representation from the country's three major ethnic groups (Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds). A national referendum in October 2005 led to adoption of a new constitution, under whose provisions a permanent government was to be formed after parliamentary elections in December 2005. Lengthy negotiations however, delayed the formation of a new Iraqi government until April 22, 2006, when President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, named Jawad al-Maliki, a Shiite, as the new prime

minister. Since the ousting of Saddam, the Iraqi police have undergone important transformations.

### ***The Iraqi Invasion and the Absence of Police***

The invasion of Iraq brought about a relatively swift toppling of the Ba'athist regime. Yet, many problems ensued once major hostilities had ended. Initially most striking was the general lawlessness that erupted in Baghdad after the invasion of the city. Some of this violence damaged the police infrastructure, later contributing to impede the rebuilding of the civilian forces. Also, at the time lawlessness had erupted, most Iraqi police and military had simply gone home (Jones et al. 2005; Moss and Rohde 2006; Perito 2005). Although U.S. officials had been informed about the likely breakdown of law and order in post-war situations, military command did not count on continued unrest after the cessation of major combat operations (Borger 2003; PBS 2003b). The U.S. military appealed to Iraqi police to return to work, and although they were not allowed to carry weapons, many Iraqi police soon reported back to their stations.

On April 14, 2003, joint patrols of Iraqi police and U.S. soldiers were first spotted in the streets of the Iraqi capital. But the initial police presence produced considerable outrage among Iraqi citizens, as many of them were thought to be leftovers from the Ba'athist regime. That there was some truth to this perception was most clearly shown in May 2003 when Zuhair al-Naimi, a Ba'athist loyalist and interior ministry official under Saddam Hussein, was appointed as the new police chief in Baghdad. Al-Naimi was forced to resign within a week because he refused to implement the new police procedures suggested by the United States (Rai 2003).

Besides formally reporting to work after the invasion, most returning Iraqi police officers rarely left their offices. A careful vetting process would have to be conducted to train new officers and weed out those who were corrupt loyalists of Saddam Hussein (PBS 2003a). Police training is vital, as police in a non-democratic society, such as Ba'athist Iraq, are simply not accustomed to routine police activities, such as arrest, criminal investigation, and patrol (PBS 2003b). Besides training in technical matters of effective police techniques, the new Iraqi police also had to be familiarized with the procedures of democratic policing (Swiss Foundation for World Affairs 2005).

### ***The Establishment of the Iraqi Police Service***

Under the direction of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) was created and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Interior (Global Security website; Jones et al. 2005). The new police service has formal charge of law enforcement duties related to crime control and order maintenance. The police can also assist the coalition forces, but the latter remain primarily responsible for investigations involving terrorism and military crimes. Ba'ath party members are now no longer allowed to serve in any public sector function. Ironically, hindering the development of a well-functioning police, the purging of Ba'ath Party members from the Iraqi police implied a loss of officers at the senior and mid-level ranks, leaving important leadership positions vacant.

Many resources have been and are still being devoted to the professionalization of the new Iraqi police, including aid from the military and from foreign police experts (Perito 2004, 2005). In May 2003, a team from the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) in the U.S. Department of Justice concluded

that international assistance was needed for the Iraqi police to maintain order. A law professor's visit to an Iraqi police station in Baghdad in August 2003 illustrates the kind of difficulties confronting the reorganization of the Iraqi police (*Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* 2004). Dropping in a Baghdad police station unannounced, she found American military police, most of them between 18 and 20 years old, and Iraqi police just sitting around, sweltering in the 130-degree heat. The young American lieutenant in charge summed up the situation succinctly: "There's no rule of law here.... These Iraqis are all corrupt. They don't know what they're doing. They just beat suspects to get confessions out of them. They take bribes.... They don't understand anything about law. There's never going to be law here in a million years" (*Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*: 129). This pessimistic outlook was confirmed by a U.S. soldier stationed in the city of Falluja, where, based on his observations, there simply was no police "because the insurgents just kill them.... Most of the police are corrupt and the good ones get killed" (private correspondence, 2005).

To assist with Iraqi police reform, an International Police Training Center was set up by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Amman, Jordan, in December 2003 (Cha 2003; Perito 2005). The Center was constructed with the financial assistance of the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and is operated on a day-to-day basis under the Justice Department's ICITAP Program (U.S. Department of State 2005). Within a year, some 32,000 new recruits, ranging in age from 18 to 24, were brought in for an eight-week training session. By October 2005, some 67,500 Iraqi police had been trained in the Jordan training center as well as in the Baghdad Police College and similar regional academies (U.S. Department of Defense 2005). The police training is handled by officials from military and justice departments of the United States, Great Britain and other countries, as well as by a host of officials from private contractors (Cha 2003; Jones et al. 2005). Most of the instructors from the United States are former neighborhood beat cops, some with international police experience from similar missions in Haiti, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Besides the Iraqi Police Service, a new Iraqi National Police has also been established out of the recent merger, in 2006, of two internal security forces: the Mechanized Police Unit and the Emergency Response Unit (Perito 2006). Like the IPS, the Iraqi National Police is placed under the Ministry of the Interior. Unlike the IPS, however, officers of the National Police are recruited from the former Ba'athist security forces and elite army units. Expressly involved with counter-insurgency activities, the Iraqi National Police also includes so-called Special Police Commandos that have been recruited by Iraq's Interior Ministry without supervision from U.S. officials.

### ***The Ongoing Challenge of Iraqi Police Reform***

Soon after its creation, the IPS turned out to be severely under-equipped and far from successful in fulfilling its mission. Police officers who had been reinstalled from the police forces during the Ba'athist regime often turned out to be unreliable (Jones et al. 2005). Many of the new recruits, also, engaged in corruption or were poorly trained and ineffective in carrying out their duties. To resolve the situation, a Civilian Police Advisory Training Team was established in May 2004 under the control of the international coalition forces and assigned responsibility for training and equipping the IPS (Jones et al. 2005; Perito 2005).

In May 2004, National Security Presidential Directive 36 assigned principal

responsibility for the training of the Iraqi security forces, including the civilian police, to the U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Department of State 2005). The coalition military forces initially carried out many police and other civilian tasks. However, the military was not ideally placed to perform police tasks and assist in the reformation of the Iraqi civilian police. The lack of understanding among the military of civilian police matters was sadly revealed when a U.S. soldier accidentally shot and killed an Iraqi police officer because he failed to recognize him as an ally. The soldier shot himself to stage self-defense, but a court martial found him guilty of negligent homicide (Salvato 2005). Arguably the most tragic case concerning the blurred edges of responsibility between military police, civilian authority, the Central Intelligence Agency, and contracted security companies was the scandal surrounding conditions in the Abu Ghraib prison (Hersh 2004).

In the fall of 2004, the Iraqi Interim Government conducted a purge of the Iraqi Police Service and removed several officers from the police because of corruption, lack of qualifications, or for failing to report to work. By May 2004, the total number of officers formally "on duty" in the Iraqi Police Service was about 90,000, but the number of police actually serving may have been as low as 40,000. Since its establishment, the Iraqi Police Service has continually expanded to approximately 75,000 personnel by February 2004 and 90,000 by December 2004 (Global Security website; Jones et al. 2005; Perito 2005). The projection by the Department of Defense is that 135,000 IPS officers are to be fully trained by February 2007 (U.S. Department of Defense 2005). Of course, whether securing a sufficient number of officers in the Iraqi police will be enough to ensure a structural change towards an effectively functioning civilian police institution is an altogether different matter. In 2006, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, announced a "year of the police," but right up to the fall of that year, repeated efforts had to be made to reform and control the Iraqi police forces (McKeely 2006; Moore 2006). The intensifying Iraqi insurgency has placed a particularly troublesome and ever-growing burden on Iraq's civilian security forces.

### THE IRAQI INSURGENCY

The insurgency in Iraq refers to the armed campaign by a wide variety of irregular forces, drawn from Iraq and other countries, that are operating against the international coalition forces and the new Iraqi government. Since the end of major hostilities in the Spring of 2003, the insurgency has increased considerably in size and intensity. At present, the total number of active insurgents is estimated to be between 12,000 and 20,000, representing some 40 groups and many more smaller cells. By the spring of 2006, debates in the popular media began to refer to the situation in terms of a civil war. And by the summer of 2006, even U.S. military generals had openly stated the possibility of an escalation of violence in Iraq that would amount to an outright civil war, although the U.S. presidency continued to refuse to refer to the situation as a civil war.

It is difficult to define the insurgency in precise terms without lapsing into a politically contentious debate, but it is clear that the insurgency does not refer to a unified collective engaged in a clearly defined objective. Among the insurgents are Ba'athist sympathizers of Saddam Hussein, Sunni extremists, foreign Islamist fighters, including members of al Qaeda and the group surrounding the now slain militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (who was killed in a U.S. air strike on June 7, 2006), as well as

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criminal groups that lack political-ideological motivations. Irrespective of the difficult questions surrounding the causes and objectives of the insurgency, it has effectively managed to destabilize Iraqi society and diffuse the social order to a chaotic complex of many forces, with varied groups working for and against the pacification of society.

Originally aimed at the coalition forces, the insurgency rapidly spread out across Iraqi society, targeting Iraqi civilians and institutions, including police and security forces. Attacks have also taken place against mosques, political parties, hotels, the United Nations headquarters, foreign embassies, the International Red Cross, and international diplomats. Insurgent tactics include car bombings, suicide bombings, kidnappings, hostage-taking, shootings, mortar attacks, and other types of deadly assault. Most attacks involve relatively few insurgents, although strikes involving larger groups of more than 100 have been reported as well. The attacks are meant to occur quickly and involve maximum lethal force. Kidnappings and beatings have focused on foreigners, including journalists and private contract workers, in an apparent effort to terrify foreign civilians and force their governments to back out of Iraq.

Polls conducted among the Iraqi population show that anti-occupation sentiments occasionally go hand in hand with sympathy for the insurgents. A 2005 article in *The Boston Globe* (Bender 2005) reported that an internal poll conducted for the international coalition found that almost 45% of the Iraqi population supported the insurgency, while only 15% said they strongly supported the coalition.

### TARGET: IRAQI POLICE

Available evidence suggests that the Iraqi police have been especially targeted by the insurgency. The Iraq Body Count website provides a database with numerical information, based on a variety of news sources, about the incidents and casualties involving insurgent and other attacks since March 2003 (Iraq Body Count). The total count in the database includes 7,350 deaths resulting from coalition military action during major combat operations. The nearly 1,000 deaths from the pilgrimage stampede on the Alimma Bridge in Baghdad in August 2005 are also included. By the beginning of August 2006, the website estimated the total number of civilian casualties between 40,133 and 44,662. In the period between January and July of 2006 alone, more than 14,000 civilian deaths were recorded in Iraq. In the month of July 2006, the daily death toll among Iraqi civilians was about 110. By that time, more than 2,500 U.S. soldiers, 115 British soldiers, and over 100 soldiers from other nations had died since the invasion. The casualty estimates on the Iraq Body Count website are likely lower than the actual death toll, because some casualties, especially in areas remote from the larger cities, go unreported. As early as the fall of 2004, *The Lancet* estimated the death toll since the invasion at 100,000 (Roberts et al. 2004).

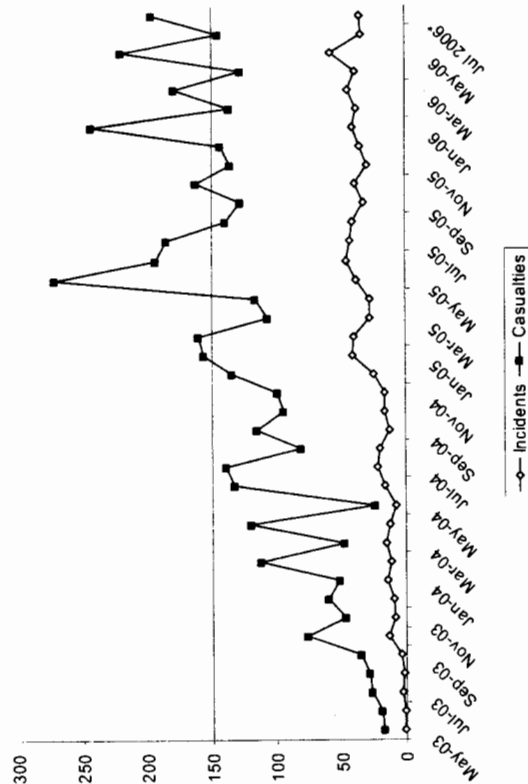
Because of selective reporting, findings of the Iraq Body Count website have to be treated with care; nonetheless, they may give an indication of the trend in the insurgency's impact on the Iraqi police. In order to avoid even the remotest possibility of overcounting, we rely on the minimum numbers in the database. In Table 1, we report the monthly number of incidents and casualties involving Iraqi police.

Of the more than 40,000 deaths included in the Iraq Body Count database by August 17, 2006 (end-date of last recorded casualty: July 25, 2006), 3,640 were police officers. Even though many deaths are reported for which occupational category is

not known, police officers are represented more often in the database than any other occupation, including politicians, religious leaders, and legal professionals. A report published by the Iraq Body Count website confirms that police account for the single largest occupational category (Iraq Body Count 2005). Of the 2,210 victims on which information about their occupation was available for the period from March 2003 to March 2005, no less than 977 police officers were counted among the 1,182 deaths recorded among security professionals, followed by 222 Iraqi soldiers, 149 political aids, and 121 government officials. Other casualties encompass a wide cross-section of Iraq's population. Most civilian casualties have taken place in Baghdad and other larger Iraqi cities. The Iraq Body Count numbers are largely much lower than the actual death toll. According to a report by Robert Perito (2006) of the U.S. Institute of Peace, several thousand Iraqi police officers have died in the line of duty since the invasion.

As Figure 1 shows, there has been a general trend toward an increase in the number of attacks involving police and the number of casualties involved, peaking in the months between May 2005 and January 2006. The increase in the number of casualties is not steady from month to month, with some of the most lethal months following months that produced relatively fewer deaths. The evolution of the casualty rate (the number of casualties per incident) is more erratic, due to the fact that some months had relatively few incidents with a relatively large number of casualties and because the lethality of

**Figure 1:**  
**Insurgent Attacks Against Iraqi Police, May 2003 - July 2006**



Source: Iraq Body Count website. \*End-date: July 25, 2006.

**Table 1:**  
**Insurgent Attacks Against Iraqi Police, May 2003 - July 2006**

Month	Incidents	Casualties	Casualty Rate
May 2003	1	16	16.00
Jun 2003	18	18	18.00
Jul 2003	3	24	8.00
Aug 2003	2	27	13.5
Sep 2003	4	31	7.75
Oct 2003	13	63	4.85
Nov 2003	9	38	4.22
Dec 2003	10	50	5.00
Jan 2004	14	37	2.64
Feb 2004	11	101	9.18
Mar 2004	15	33	2.20
Apr 2004	12	108	9.00
May 2004	8	16	2.00
Jun 2004	16	116	7.25
Jul 2004	22	117	5.32
Aug 2004	20	61	3.05
Sep 2004	12	103	8.59
Oct 2004	16	78	4.88
Nov 2004	16	83	5.19
Dec 2004	25	109	4.36
Jan 2005	41	115	2.80
Feb 2005	40	120	3.00
Mar 2005	28	79	2.82
Apr 2005	28	88	3.14
May 2005	38	233	6.13
Jun 2005	46	147	3.20
Jul 2005	43	142	3.30
Aug 2005	41	98	2.40
Sep 2005	32	96	3.00
Oct 2005	39	123	3.15
Nov 2005	30	105	3.50
Dec 2005	35	108	3.09
Jan 2006	41	202	4.93
Feb 2006	38	98	2.58
Mar 2006	45	134	2.98
Apr 2006	39	89	2.28
May 2006	58	162	2.79
Jun 2006	34	111	3.26
Jul 2006*	35	161	4.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>3640</b>	

Source: Iraq Body Count website. \*End-date: July 25, 2006.

each incident can vary considerably. Of the 964 incidents involving police casualties, 63 incidents had a casualty count of more than 10 deaths each. In May 2005, the deadliest

month for Iraqi police, five out of a total of 38 attacks produced 148 casualties. In the second-deadliest month for Iraq's police, January 2006, four of the total of 41 attacks led to 120 deaths. At least four incidents since 2003 involved more than 50 police deaths: a truck bomb that exploded on February 10, 2004 in a police station in Iskandariyah killed 55 officers; a suicide car bomb led to the deaths of 70 police recruits near a police station in Al-Najda on July 28, 2004; on January 5, 2006, 55 police recruits were killed by a suicide bomb attack in Ramadi; and on July 1, 2006, a car bomb striking a police patrol on a Baghdad market killed 68 people.

Not all casualties reported in the Iraq Body Count database are due to insurgent attacks, but evidence suggests that insurgent attacks are primarily responsible for the killings of Iraqi police. Based on information from one of the collaborators of the Iraq Body Count site (personal communication, October 28, 2005), in the period from March 2005 until October 2005, a total of 514 police were killed, of which 384 were victims of attacks by anti-coalition agents.

Analysis of media sources retrieved via Lexis-Nexis provides additional information of the nature of the insurgent attacks against Iraqi police. Bringing out an additional limitation to the numbers compiled from the Iraq Body Count website, a number of insurgent attacks on police stations and police recruits involved many civilian casualties. For instance, on September 14, 2004, a bombing attack against police recruits in a shopping street killed a total of 59 people, many of them civilians (Housego 2004). On February 28, 2005, a suicide car bomb blasted a crowd of police and national guard recruits, killing 125 people, most of them everyday Iraqi citizens (Abbas and al-Khairalla 2005). A more complete picture of the death toll of insurgent attacks against police, then, would also have to include civilian deaths as the result of police-related attacks, but no systematic information is available. In any case, this consideration can only strengthen the conclusion that the Iraqi police forces are a major target of the insurgency.

The attacks against police typically involve suicide bombings (bombs strapped on the person or in a car) and roadside bombings of police convoys or military convoys escorting police. Some of the attacks combine multiple means, such as rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, and car bombs. Animals rigged with explosive devices have also been used (Oppel and Schmitt 2005). Some insurgents have disguised themselves as police officers to carry out attacks. In one incident, insurgents dressed as police entered a school, where they rounded up and killed five teachers (Spinner and Sarhan 2005). Police cars have been stolen and masked men have been seen carrying away police jackets from the scenes of car bombings against police officers (Filkins 2005). Among the most recent tactics have been the infiltration of insurgents among the ranks of the Iraqi police and the new recruits (BBC 2005; U.S. Department of Defense 2005).

Despite the enormous casualty rate among the Iraqi police, new police recruits are readily found. Economic urgency rather than patriotism is a major motivation for many young Iraqis to join the police (Chandrasekaran 2005). One of the new recruits explained the situation well when he argued that joining the Iraqi police (or the army) is among the few options available for employment, although he fully realized that Iraqi police officers are "walking dead men" (Fainaru 2004).

## POLICE AND THE PACIFICATION OF SOCIETY

Following the 2003 invasion, the regime of Saddam Hussein collapsed quickly, much as the U.S. government and the other coalition powers had hoped for, but the old Iraqi regime did not collapse in the manner that was expected. Among the greatest difficulties in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq have been the resurgence of ethnic and religious rivalries, the eruption and intensification of the insurgency, difficulties in mobilizing medical supplies and other necessary goods, and the restoration of Iraq's primary social institutions. Clearly, the coalition forces were prepared to wage war, but were much less prepared to establish peace (Roxborough 2003).

The process of pacification and reconstruction in Iraq must also include adequate attention to the civilian police situation. The Bush administration and its allies did not adequately anticipate what had to be done to establish a new Iraqi police force. Although there is some discussion as to whether CIA reports before the invasion had stated that the Iraqi police were professionally trained or, alternatively, could not be expected to keep order (Gordon 2004; Moss and Rohde 2006), Justice Department officials had advised the U.S. administration about the task ahead. In any case, a well-developed civilian police in Ba'athist Iraq was extremely unlikely, because states with a strong military and dictatorial past have inherent difficulties in separating internal security tasks from national defense functions. International support and political will are the minimum conditions for the successful creation of a well-functioning civilian police in countries where a radical regime change has taken place (Stanley 1996). A careful adaptation to local cultural and political circumstances and a clear separation of military and police functions are also needed (Bayley 2001).

Robert Perito, a former official in the U.S. Department of State who has extensive experience in implementing civilian police programs abroad, takes a very pragmatic view and argues that "[l]arge-scale breakdowns in public order should be anticipated in the aftermath of international interventions, particularly in societies emerging from brutal oppression" (Perito 2005). Under those circumstances, Perito argues, police reform will always be difficult, because even when police officials are given new equipment and better training, they will have great difficulties performing in an effective and accountable manner. Perito (2004, 2005) estimates that such training in post-war situations can take at least five years and requires the help of international police experts with foreign experience. Initial estimates that the reconstruction of Iraq's police institutions would take several months or one year were, in any case, inaccurate (PBS 2003a).

The problems associated with civilian police reform in Iraq have further been compounded by the fact that the United States, as the dominant participant in the international coalition, does not have a national police force in the style of the semi-military *gendarmerie* forces that exist in many European countries. Therefore, the U.S. military had to perform police functions in the immediate days following the end of major combat operations in Iraq, and the United States additionally had to rely on newly created Special Forces in the army and the U.S. Military Police for an extended period thereafter (Perito 2003). The capabilities of such units are limited, primarily because they are made up of military personnel who are neither trained nor equipped to act as law enforcement officers. It is also highly unlikely that military units will be recognized and accepted as police forces among the civilians they are meant to serve.

Additionally, certain difficulties in Iraqi police reform relate to the specific experience of the United States with instituting civilian police in other post-war situations, such as in the aftermath of the invasions of Panama and Haiti and the UN peacekeeping missions in Somalia and Bosnia (Peake 2004; Perito 2002). Since the Panama invasion (1989-1990), the Department of Justice oversees the ICITAP Program to reform civilian police forces abroad. Yet, ICITAP delegations typically consist of only a few law enforcement officers who organize criminal investigation courses, while for the staffing of police positions, the United States government relies on a private contractor (Perito 2003). Run by the State Department, the U.S. Civilian Police Program in Iraq is administered through the company DynCorp International, which hires law enforcement personnel from state and local agencies to fill civilian police posts abroad. Many of the officers deployed by DynCorp have little if any foreign experience. In Bosnia, most tragically, DynCorp-deployed police were discovered to have been involved in arms trading and the sexual exploitation of women and children (Perito 2004:283-288). Since the spring of 2006, DynCorp has been under investigation by U.S. officials following reports of criminal fraud by DynCorp employees in Iraq, including the illegal selling of fuel and ammunition designated for the Iraqi police. Additionally raising concerns is that DynCorp also delivers military troops and equipment to assist in foreign missions, thus effectively blurring the boundaries between military and civilian-police powers (Singer 2003).

In Iraq, some 1,000 DynCorp-subcontracted U.S. police act as "International Police Liaison Officers" to aid the reorganization of Iraq's police systems on the basis of a \$750 million contract (Merle 2004; Moss and Rhode 2006). U.S. police officials supervised by DynCorp are all U.S. citizens and operate in programs directed by the Department of State. They wear uniforms and carry guns provided by the U.S. government. As such, DynCorp-provided police officials are not to be confused with the security personnel provided by private companies such as Blackwater (Blackwater website). There are currently at least 36 such private security companies with some 25,000 employees, mostly from the United States and Great Britain, as well as 16 Iraqi firms registered for security functions in Iraq, besides as many as 50 more companies thought to be operating illegally (Finer 2005). Employees from these private security companies, which are to perform various police functions because of the void left by the absence of Iraqi police, have reportedly been involved in several dozen shootings against Iraqi civilians. Private company employees are immune from prosecution under a new law adopted by Iraq's interim government. The worst form of punishment they can receive is dismissal from their jobs.

The Iraqi civilian police forces remain at an extreme disadvantage against the insurgency. Poorly equipped and undertrained, Iraq's police forces can simply not engage in law enforcement duties when the minimal conditions of a basically safe and secure society are not met. These conditions of insecurity additionally create an environment in which other criminal ventures, such as organized crime, human smuggling, and drug trafficking may take root (Tosti 2004). In these circumstances, also, many police matters will take on a war-like character and remain primarily within the province of military forces.

## CONCLUSION

Formally, the Iraq war ended on May 1, 2003. Yet, President Bush's declaration of the end of major combat operations did not usher in a period of peace for Iraqi society, as insurgent violence bordering on the brink of, and possibly anticipating, civil war has continued to ravage the country. The strength and effectiveness of the ongoing insurgency also drastically hindered the further development and the degree of effectiveness of the Iraqi police. A society that has not attained a degree of pacification cannot afford a civilian police. As Max Weber (1922) observed, it is only in the context of a pacified society that the forces of internal coercion can develop and the police can take on the position as "the 'representative of God on earth'" (516). "Pacification" is hereby conceived to imply, as a minimal condition, an absence of warfare (involving a high degree of domestic violence as a result of victimization by war or a preoccupation with externally oriented violence as part of an aggression towards another nation) and, additionally, a continuation of a state of durable peace that allows for a stabilization of the political order and a normalization of social life.

Conditions of peace and the functioning of social institutions mutually influence one another. For as much as pacification is a condition of civilian police development, so too would the development of a well-functioning police force in Iraq signal the beginnings, however small, of the normalization of Iraqi society. Therefore, because of the crucial role of civilian police in the reconstruction of society, Iraq's police forces have been a favorite subject of insurgent attacks. While it might be suggested that Iraqi police are among the insurgency's favored targets because they are considered collaborators of the foreign coalition forces, we hold that the exact opposite is true. We argue that the growing and increasingly violent Iraqi insurgency is disproportionately targeted at the Iraqi police because a well-established and regularly functioning police force in Iraq would represent an important and highly visible indicator of a pacified society. Of course, indications are that Iraq does not (yet) have a stable democratic polity and also cannot (yet) count on a police that can truly lay claim to have a legitimate monopoly of force. However, it is also the case that the very existence of a reformed Iraqi police, inasmuch as it has developed and would be further allowed to mature as a professional civilian force, represents a concrete expression of a normalized Iraqi society. Attacks against the police, therefore, are meant to thwart the reconstruction and pacification of Iraqi society.

On October 15, 2005, the U.S. Department of Defense submitted a report to Congress on the security situation in Iraq (U.S. Department of Defense 2005). The report went almost without notice in the press (Tavernise 2005), but it was the first time that the U.S. military provided any systematic information of the civilian death toll of the military operation in Iraq. The Pentagon numbers confirm the trends that can be observed from other sources, especially the fact that the insurgency has increased in degree of lethality. Based on the Department of Defense numbers, almost 26,000 civilians died from January 2004 until October 2005, at an increasing daily rate, especially in the days leading up to the constitutional referendum on October 15. Although the insurgent attacks are also oriented against coalition forces, Iraqi civilians and security forces account for 80% of all casualties (U.S. Department of Defense 2005). As the analysis in this paper has revealed, Iraqi police are particularly targeted by the insurgency.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 brought about a toppling of the Ba'athist regime and ushered in a new era for Iraq's police system as well as other social institutions. As the

coalition forces were caught by surprise over the enormity of the task of civilian police reform, the newly created Iraqi police forces were clearly in need of training both in technical respects of adequate law enforcement but also in view of accountability and the use of democratic police methods. As is often the case with foreign police assistance, the need to assist police reform hovers between the dangers of providing insufficient support to build a well-functioning police, on the one hand, and creating a powerful tool of repression, on the other (Bayley 2005). Efforts to accomplish Iraqi police reform, at first clearly underestimated by the U.S.-led occupation forces, have been increasingly recognized. Inasmuch as the Iraqi police is no longer the political tool of an autocratic regime, the police institution in Iraq is thus undergoing a process of societalization, however modest its current accomplishments. Therefore, we argue, the insurgency is aimed at attacking the Iraqi police in order to prevent the normalization of Iraqi society.

Our thesis that the civilian police forces of Iraq are primary targets of the insurgent attacks because of the normalizing role a functioning police plays in society does not imply that there are no other factors contributing to the police being targeted. Indeed, another reason the police are a preferred target is that the Iraqi police forces are the primary Iraqi instrument in the counter-insurgency, thus positioning the police as direct combatants against the insurgents. Also, because the Iraqi police force are poorly trained and not well equipped, they are relatively soft targets, especially as compared to the U.S. military troops. Therefore, also, we do not mean to suggest that the Iraqi police, in being targeted because of its normalizing role, have already attained the status of a professional and democratic civilian force. Clearly, residues of the Ba'athist regime remain in place in the Iraqi social order today. An additional and important complicating factor is the infiltration of militia groups in the police and the sectarian violence they engage in with Iraqi civilians.

The relevance of the past is most tragically revealed in the continued reliance among the Iraqi police on methods of extortion and torture. In the summer of 2005, human rights activists stated that torture tactics, including such brutal methods as the hanging of detainees from wires and the drilling of holes into parts of their bodies, remain relatively common among Iraq's police (Galpin 2005). As recently as March of 2006, U.S. military leaders and Iraqi authorities cooperated to investigate continued reports of police misconduct, leading to dismissals of corrupt officers and, in at least one case, the firing of an entire police unit (McKeeby 2006). By then, reports also indicated that the Iraqi police had more and more been infiltrated by sectarian militia groups and continued to show an extreme lack of professionalism (Allbritton 2006; Moss 2006). The Sunni community, especially, has complained about police brutality from a civilian force that is now dominated by a Shi'a majority. Recent reports have even indicated that the Iraqi Interior Ministry is connected to sectarian militias and has supplied militiamen with police uniforms and vehicles (Zavis 2006). As a result of the inability of police to protect the population, also, Iraqis have continued to resort to neighborhood militias (Baker 2005). The Iraqi police are even more victimized by insurgent attacks than they are distrusted by the civilian Iraqi population, which indicates the significance of the development of a civilian police. Inasmuch as the Iraqi police forces aspire no longer to function as an arm of an autocratic state but to become an independent and professional law enforcement service, ironically, they are more prone to the violent attacks from insurgent groups that continue to be committed to destabilize Iraqi society.

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