

of wars are still politics and economics. In fact, localized fighting erupts because of environmental factors far more often than cross-border conflicts do. Sloppy thinking about the effects of climate change could also serve to excuse the actions of violent regimes, as in Darfur. And heated rhetoric distracts attention from long-existing natural resource problems and conflicts, especially in poor and developing countries. Finally, Dabelko says, the West's fear of mass migrations from distressed developing countries is likely overblown. Research suggests that most movement will be South-to-South and within countries, following established country-to-city pathways.

Climate mitigation efforts carry their own hazards, as when, for example, soaring demand for corn-based biofuels led to painfully high food prices that sparked riots in Mexico. Act, Dabelko cautions, but don't overreact.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

L. Paul Bremer, Scapegoat

THE SOURCE: "Occupying Iraq: A Short History of the CPA" by James Dobbins, in *Survival*, June–July 2009.

LESS THAN TWO MONTHS after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, L. Paul Bremer arrived in Baghdad as a modern potentate. As administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which governed Iraq at the time, he wielded full legislative, executive, and judicial



Surrounded by security forces, L. Paul Bremer arrives at an Iraqi civil defense training camp in 2004.

authority. He lasted 13 months, leaving Iraq on June 28, 2004, after transferring limited sovereignty to an Iraqi interim prime minister. A good word has rarely been spoken about him since.

The rap is unfair, writes James Dobbins, head of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation, after reviewing nearly 100,000 documents from the CPA archives and interviewing many of the coalition officials. He contends that Bremer restored Iraq's essential public services to almost pre-war levels or in some cases improved them, reformed the court and penal systems, slashed inflation, boosted economic growth, took steps to curb corruption, began to improve the civil service, promoted the development of the most liberal constitution in the Middle East, and set the stage for free elections.

Bremer performed "credibly," according to Dobbins, and his senior staff was "generally competent," contrary to the popular impression that

they were mostly naive and inexperienced political appointees. Some of his staff showed up late in Iraq and resigned early. Washington was never able to fill more than half of the midlevel and junior positions in the CPA, and seldom for more than six months at a time. But of those who served, almost everyone worked 80-hour weeks. Bremer was "restrained and judicious" in the use of his extraordinary powers. He followed the best management practices to have emerged from nation-building efforts over previous decades. He did all this largely with Iraqi funds and a staff of perhaps 1,000 in the country at any given time.

Even so, the CPA has come off as a failure in a series of books and articles published since 2004, in large part because it was unable to halt Iraq's descent into civil war. But that task was always beyond Bremer's ability and resources, Dobbins says. He didn't have authority over security; rather, principal responsibility for the dismal U.S. security

performance rests with President George W. Bush and his top officials. They went into Iraq with a “maximalist” mission and tried to pull it off with a minimum application of money and manpower.

Upon his arrival in Baghdad, Bremer immediately fired Baath Party members who had worked for the government, but his single most cited mistake, according to Dobbins, was disbanding the Iraqi army, the institution responsible for keeping order. That, however, was not a Bremer inspiration. An order to that effect had been drafted and cleared through the Pentagon, approved by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, presented to President Bush and his National Security Council, and

even discussed with British officials before Bremer issued it.

When Bremer stepped off the plane in Baghdad, the country was already chaotic. The army had “disintegrated,” and most of its facilities had been destroyed by looting. “It will be endlessly debated whether disbanding a then-absent army and purging an abusive (and incompetent) bureaucracy” contributed to Iraq’s disorder, Dobbins writes. Both decisions should have been more thoroughly reviewed. The bigger mistake was the initial failure to continue paying the demobilized soldiers, to make any effort to reintegrate them into civilian society, and, most important, to recall the best and least politicized of

them to keep order when the country desperately needed it. The CPA should have done better, Dobbins concludes.

The Bush administration grounded its policies in Iraq in the lessons learned from U.S. occupations of Germany and Japan after World War II, according to Dobbins, an author of earlier studies of those and later efforts. But Baghdad wasn’t Berlin or Tokyo. It was much closer to Yugoslavia—economically devastated and plagued with historic sectarian divisions.

It is too convenient, Dobbins suggests, to assign blame for America’s early fumbles in Iraq, which were clearly made in Washington, to a now-defunct organization and a now-retired administrator.

SOCIETY

How Cities Go Global

THE SOURCE: “Cities in Today’s Global Age” by Saskia Sassen, in *The SAIS Review*, Winter–Spring 2009.

To most observers, New York appears quintessentially American; London, British; and Mumbai, Indian. Yet these enormous urban centers represent a new phenomenon: They are global cities, strategic economic spaces that play crucial roles in the international economy.

About 70 global cities, on every continent except Antarctica, provide crucial expertise in insurance, accounting, law, consulting, and programming for firms and ex-

changes operating across national borders. But far from being cookie-cutter copies of one another, they retain unique characteristics that are the sources of their strength. The top-rated cities overall, London and New York, are the leading financial, equity, and banking centers of the world, according to Saskia Sassen, a sociologist at Columbia University. But leadership in starting a business comes from Sydney, and in handling derivatives contracts from Seoul.

Chicago, mired in its past as hog butcher to the world, was once thought to be 15 years behind New

York and London as a global city. But its history, writes Sassen, author of *Cities in a World Economy* (2006), gave it an edge. Its long-standing preeminence as a futures market built on pork bellies and heavy industry required highly specialized financial, accounting, and legal expertise. While New York concentrated on service exports, finance, and trade, Chicago became a leading global financial futures center and provider of specialized services for handling heavy industry, heavy transport, and large-scale agriculture. When the Boeing Company, the world’s largest manufacturer of aircraft, decided it needed to leave Seattle, Sassen says, it never gave New York a thought but moved its headquarters straight to Chicago.

The growth of high-profit corporate service firms and of a high-