

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

American hegemony in Iraq is a fickle thing, rising and falling according to many different factors. Following the definition of hegemony that has been used in this thesis, these factors fall into two different facets of power: hard power that supports the domination aspect of hegemony, and soft power that supports the consensual aspect. This research has found that America had very little preparation for the post-war rebuilding of Iraq, and for that they first relied on hard power to maintain their hegemony in the first half of their occupation. Here they started their relationship with Blackwater in Iraq, whose presence benefited their hard power projection.

However, after the transition of power, the soft power aspect became a necessity as American hegemony required the consent of the sovereign Iraqi government. Blackwater's conduct in Iraq, with many cases of disregarding Iraqi civilians or outright murdering them, became detrimental to America's soft power projection in Iraq, and therefore American hegemony there. Their actions revealed to the Iraqi people how weak their government was in the face of the occupation, as well as worsening anti-American sentiment. The Nisour square massacre in particular became the turning point for the Iraqi people, who previously consented to most American policy, and now pushed hard to get Blackwater out of their country. Blackwater's conduct also accelerated America's exit from Iraq, which crippled their

hard power not only by removing actual combat forces but also by forcing other American PMCs to operate under Iraqi law.

Blackwater's actions revealed 3 governance failures in Iraq pertaining to PMCs: lack of transparency and accountability to the public, lack of government control over contractors on the ground, and lack of efficiency due to PMCs cutting operational cost to the detriment of the government and taxpayers. All three failures resulted in a company that the Iraqis hated due to the seeming inability for anyone to stop them. On top of that, the Iraqis saw that the people who could stop their injustices, the American government, refuses to do so.

To answer to our initial research question (*How did the proliferation of Blackwater undermine America's Hegemonic Status in Iraq between 2003 and 2007?*), this research has found that Blackwater undermined American hegemony in Iraq out of the fact that they weakened the pillars of American hegemony in Iraq: its hard power as well as its soft power.

Blackwater actively contributed to the erosion of American hegemony through its constant misconducts, all under the pretext of empowering American hard power. To that end their proliferation was worth it; after all, they did increase American hard power through their presence. However, the policymakers did not factor in that when these contractors run out of control, as they did in Nisour square, American soft power pays the price. By the end of Blackwater's existence in Iraq, America has been

dealt a massive blow to its soft power and was on its way to lose almost its entire extent of hard power in the country. The author concludes that the cost of PMCs proliferation in Iraq far outweighs their benefit.

To end on a more personal note, the author must add that it is not right that we only blame Blackwater for America's failure in Iraq. The writing of this thesis might suggest that none of this would have happened had American policymakers not employed these PMCs, but that could not be further from the truth. It is not a case of American troops being heroes compared to the villainous contractors, as American troops also did their share of war crimes. Instead, this is a case of American troops being the lesser of two evils; a situation that only came to be due to the nature of this thesis. To ensure a future with no more Nisour squares, we cannot only blame the mercenaries that pulled the trigger, as there will always be men who is willing to go to war for pay; instead, we must ensure that policymakers take accountability in their action, and to never let our leaders think that hiring these men is a sound policy.

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