



The New Legs Race: Critical Perspectives on Biometrics in Iraq

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THE UNITED STATES MILITARY faces a dual challenge in stability operations currently underway in Iraq. First, it must meet an immediate need by securing its own forces against an increasingly active and effective insurgency. Second, it must pursue the long-term political objective of state building, or democracy promotion and construction, transforming Iraq into the first domino of the heretofore elusive democratic peace in the region.¹ Unfortunately for the military, the proposed solutions to maintaining force safety in a dangerous political setting and fundamentally altering that setting are often mutually exclusive.

Biometric technologies represent, at best, a one-dimensional solution that not only fails to take into account one side of the dilemma, but also inhibits progress on the other side. Biometric technologies address the compressed timeframe under which the U.S. military operates in Iraq by bringing vanguard human identification and tracking capabilities to bear on a highly fluid and increasingly sophisticated insurgency operating among a population of over 26 million civilians. However, several political and social theories, including critical, realist, and structuration, suggest that the introduction of biometric identification and surveillance in Iraq will produce dubious results that make democratization less likely. These results range from a wider gap in civil-military relations in Iraq to the haunting prospect of a biometrically facilitated mass slaughter.

I propose that biometric solutions to U.S. stability operations requirements highlight a fundamental paradox of the U.S. military presence in Iraq. Mounting time constraints, caused by both the speed of the insurgency and American domestic political pressure, force the military to choose short-term tactical expediency over long-term political success. Biometrics offer a symptomatic nexus of the military's dilemma from which to analyze the paradox posed by larger, longer-term American political goals and the more temporally and spatially limited contexts in which they are to be achieved.

Smaller and Faster

Over time, U.S. stability operations objectives have changed very little. In operations in Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq, recurring themes have included "population control in general, suppression of residual resistance, resettlement of displaced noncombatants, rejuvenation of supply and distribution systems, infrastructure repair and institutional reform."² While in contemporary discourse "democracy promotion" and the "battle for hearts and minds" have been liberally substituted for more explicit lists, the fundamental ends of stability operations remain the same.³

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PHOTO: Crop of photo taken by MSGT Jonathan Doti, U.S. Air Force, Baghdad, Iraq, 5 August 2007.

What distinguishes the current generation of operations from prior incarnations is the greater compression of temporal and spatial contexts in which U.S. forces operate. Iraq's densely populated cities, such as Baghdad, Fallujah, and Najaf, provide havens for insurgents who can move with great fluidity through urban environments. More historically distinctive, the ubiquity of cell phones and increased Internet access also facilitate faster coordination and communication among all Iraqi inhabitants. The nature of asymmetric attacks, mainly by suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), inherently constricts the time the military has to assess and meet the insurgent threat. Constructing bombs in backrooms can be done individually and with scant indication of imminent danger compared to massing troops and weaponry along a front. Furthermore, since they can blend in with the citizenry in a highly populated urban setting, insurgents effectively shrink the military's space—an attack can come from any one person anywhere.

Biometrics: Promise, Problems, and Body Parts

From a tactical perspective, biometric technologies offer a tantalizing chance to check the enemy's temporal and spatial flexibility—to know where he or she is at any time. Such technologies can help identify and separate insurgents from the population, both digitally and physically, thus increasing the security of Soldier and civilian alike. Proponents believe that biometric technologies can provide the U.S. with “identity dominance” in the War on Terrorism and in stability operations such as those in Iraq. One proponent, John Woodward Jr., defines identity dominance as the ability to “link an enemy combatant or similar national security threat to his previously used identities and past activities, particularly as they relate to terrorism and other crimes.”⁴

Biometric identification technologies include but are not limited to fingerprinting (in use since the 19th century), iris and retinal scanning, face and voice recognition, gait analysis, and implantable radio frequency identification devices (RFID).⁵ While each are powerful advances in their own rights, these technologies are most effective when combined to construct multimodal profiles of humans that can be stored in “interoperable, networked databases”

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like the Department of Defense Biometric Enterprise Solution.⁶ Such databases allow faster and more accurate identification of individuals by any affiliated personnel possessing a scanner and a data connection. Distributing biometric scanners and surveillance devices—RFID receivers and digital cameras, for instance—throughout a territory would allow for identification of individuals at any node in the network as well as tracking of “tagged” persons as they move through the network. Thus, the time and space in which insurgents can exist and move undetected would shrink significantly. Coupling networked databases with handheld scanning and processing devices such as the Biocam system could make biometric profiling and tracking ubiquitous, given adequate resources.⁷

The development and adoption of these technologies represent a new kind of race for the military and its opponents. In previous eras, the U.S. engaged in arms races by building up its destructive capabilities. But biometrics are less about material destruction than compression of time and space through identification and tracking; they are the technological antidote to cellular insurgencies that achieve speed of attack through anonymity, tactical simplicity, and sophisticated coordination. Thus, the pursuit of tactical success through technology, both high and low, no longer contributes to a conventional “arms” race—meant to augment strength—so much as it signifies a new kind of contest: a “legs” race whose objective is to augment speed.

Without a doubt, biometric technologies hold the potential to change the way the U.S. military monitors and filters the inhabitants of Iraq. But the degree and scope of that change is debatable, due in part to the uncertain appropriateness or effectiveness of many of the technologies. For instance, iris and

retina scanning, while reliably accurate, require that individuals move past a scanner at a slower-than-normal pace while gazing into the scanner—a process easily circumvented by unwilling participants.⁸

Face recognition is even more contentious. Woodward wants facial data collected on enemy combatants as well as anyone who has contact with U.S. forces. The profiles would be housed in a single, networked database.⁹ But others believe that facial recognition software is still too immature to be reliable, especially in a highly populated, fast-paced urban setting. Roger Clarke, an industry consultant, goes so far as to call facial recognition “rubbish.”¹⁰

There is also a sampling problem inherent in using biometrics in a region of recent or ongoing conflict. As Russell Farkouh points out: “Living conditions experienced in the field can make fingers and handprints difficult to read . . . The very body parts necessary to prove identity may now be damaged too severely to offer an accurate read.”¹¹ Given the collateral damage associated with war, this point also applies to Iraq’s civilian population. As a very rough illustration, the antiwar group Iraq Body Count estimates that there were 8,000 nonmilitary casualties (*excluding* fatalities) in Baghdad from the onset of combat operations on 19 March 2003 to 7 August 2003—an average of 56 injuries per day during that period.¹² Many of those injuries likely occurred to parts of the body that could be useful in identification, meaning that combat operations reduced the available biometric data in Baghdad every day.¹³

Finally, optimism about biometrics usually relies on the assumption that the borders surrounding the monitored territory are secure. In this way, every person entering or exiting the territory can be scanned, profiled, and tracked (while within the territory) in a systematic fashion. But Iraqi borders remain porous. Thus, biometrics proponents cannot be sure that every individual within the territory has already been processed, which seriously diminishes the capacity for surveillance ubiquity and saturation (everywhere and everyone).

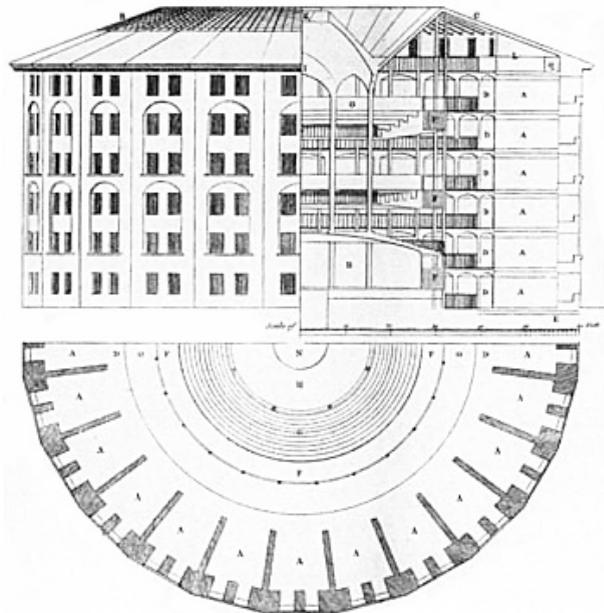
Critical Theory and Biometrics

The immediate objective of applying biometric surveillance to Iraqi society is to bring greater stability to the population by identifying and separating insurgents from civilians—to bring order by ordering. This task, using a network of pervasive sensors, may

be understood as the digitized incarnation of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, a design for prison discipline based on constant surveillance from a central tower. The Panopticon was the architectural precursor to Michel Foucault’s system of modern state discipline.¹⁴ Foucault based his analysis of state power on the rational division and “treatment” of plague-afflicted towns in the 17th century. His writings on the topic resound when considered in our current biometric climate.

Foucault described the control of plague victims as proceeding “according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc).”¹⁵ This control is generalizable to “all forms of confusion and disorder,” including counterinsurgencies and stability operations.¹⁶

Biometric technologies have collapsed Foucault’s double mode into a single one that divides and distributes nearly instantaneously: persons are digitally branded in a variety of ways that simultaneously determine their metrics of recognition and



The Panopticon’s architecture illustrates the psychological dynamic underlying biometric surveillance. Bentham’s model places the surveying authority in an architecturally and conceptually central position to deprive those observed of all sense of privacy. The implications for panoptical biometric surveillance of Iraqis, or any society, are far from certain and likely pernicious.

place them under constant surveillance. Databases enrich and sometimes replace the central monitoring station's "penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life."¹⁷

At their maximum effectiveness, the new technologies produce a dominion that Foucault predicted with precision: "This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded...in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings... all this constitutes a *compact* model of the disciplinary mechanism. . . . its function is to sort out every possible confusion . . ." (emphasis mine).¹⁸ It seems as if the only distinction between the 17th-century plague town and the postmodern insurgency-plagued city is that the space is no longer "frozen": partial mobility occurs under constant monitoring.

Critics point out that biometric technologies equate to extending state power and the logic of technology into human bodies, blurring a traditional boundary between the state and the individual. Michael Dartnell says that new information technologies (IT) impact "events by transgressing, re-articulating, and re-shaping the boundaries of identities, power, and security."¹⁹ James der Derian describes a "totalizing tendency" of IT that threatens to "envelope public ways of being from within and from without," a "techno-fundamentalism" in which "information technology has come to dominate... our most profound image of being in the world," collapsing any distinction between metaphysical being and technological method.²⁰

The tragedy embedded in the triumph of technology is the reduction of human identity to algorithms and data sets. This is the digitization of bio-political

life, where, according to Francois Jacob, "Biology has demonstrated that there is no metaphysical entity hidden behind the word 'life.'"²¹ Michael Dillon writes that biometrics and IT amount to virtual security, which "radically technologizes human existence—turns it into raw material."²² The biologization of social identity represents an "ontopolitical resource" that threatens to reduce human existence to Giorgio Agamben's "bare life"—the instrumental and life-or-death logic of the concentration camp.²³ The population of Iraq possesses a long, rich, and diverse tradition of identity based in part on tribal, ethnic, and religious affiliations and historical narratives. Imposing singular identities achieved by applying biometric identification to such a society may be tantamount to ontological and epistemological imperialism—the hegemony of technological rationalism and computer code over social history and semantic meaning.²⁴

Humiliation and Public Relations

Critics of biometrics pose a significant challenge to the bio-political assumptions upon which the technologies rest. But if the critical theorists are correct, how will we know? U.S. forces will not crumble because of a theoretical transgression. The practical outcome of a theoretical failure will likely manifest more in the psychological and public-relations aspects of U.S. stability operations. An increased sense in the Iraqi citizenry of alienation from U.S. forces would be one manifestation that would retard the infusion of democratic values in that citizenry. Current literature demonstrates that alienation is already significant and that the U.S. is far from winning the public relations battle for Iraqi hearts and minds.

U.S. forces have been less than adequately educated about Iraqi traditions and notions of honor and shame, with detrimental effects on the relationship between U.S. forces and Iraqi citizens. Iraqi concepts of honor revolve around *sharaf* (noble birth), *ihitram* (respect derived from coercive power), and *urd* (female purity). *Urd* also implies familial honor, since responsibility for the purity of the woman rests with her family.²⁵ Thus, rape victims are often killed or physically punished by their own families to "cleanse" the evidence of the inability of the men of the family to keep *urd*.²⁶ The potential for less-violent affronts to feminine—and therefore

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AFP, Maurício Lima

A U.S. Soldier of Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, collects the footprints of an Iraqi man during a house-to-house raid launched in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, 23 April 2007.

familial—honor is a daily reality under stability operations that may involve bodily and house searches as well as isolated interrogation. Victoria Fontan claims that the U.S. military often misses the early warning signs of the populace’s increasing humiliation.²⁷ Introducing biometric technologies like facial scanning may necessitate removal of the *hijab*, the woman’s headscarf. Similarly, implantation of RFIDs in clothing or under the skin might require a violation of the Shi’ite prohibition against exposing any body part other than a woman’s face to strangers. The presence of transmitters on a woman’s body or clothing and the knowledge that she was being monitored and tracked by foreigners could also exacerbate a sense of exposure. Any of these possibilities threaten to aggravate the sense of shame that Iraqi women—and therefore Iraqi men—feel as a result of American actions.

Any additional shame would further strip the sensibility of honor from a society already deprived of *ihitiram*. Since the military possesses a preponderance of destructive power, U.S. operations amount to a regular reminder of the loss of *ihitiram*—a loss exemplified by the fact that Iraqis could not depose the Hussein regime themselves but needed an outside force to do so.²⁸ Furthermore, the U.S. censored Iraqi media during the war instead of trying to encourage standards of responsible journalism. Without those standards, the Iraqi media today is free to reinforce a view of U.S. forces as foreign interlopers.²⁹ In this context, it is unsurprising that

89 percent of Iraqis polled in 2004 viewed the U.S. as an “occupier” instead of a liberator.

Winning hearts and minds is a more nebulous undertaking than preventing offenses against traditional honor, although it must certainly include eliminating those offenses. A prescription for effective U.S.-Iraqi public relations is far beyond the scope of this paper; I seek only to suggest that biometrics will affect Iraqi perceptions of the merits of American objectives, and that the effect will not necessarily be positive. Biometric technologies bear no relationship to more traditional notions of identity based on race, religion, or

tribal bonds, and may seem a uniquely American or Western means of identification. Imposing biometrics on Iraqis thus implies the abrogation of their preferred identity attributes. So biometrics may be perceived as one more example of how the American way of doing things ignores Iraqi customs—a result not at all conducive to convincing a citizenry to adopt American governmental customs.

Realism on the Left and Democratic Cross-purposes

In addition to arousing critical ire and potentially alienating the targets of their technology, biometric applications confound the conventional wisdom and expectations of two disparate entities: classical realist thinkers and American Democratic politicians. A close reading of classical realism and an illustration from the maneuvers of American Congressional Democrats show how biometric technology forces realism to the “left” and exposes contradictions in recent Democratic tactics.³⁰

Classical realism stands as the theoretical hegemon of international relations studies. Typically, classical realism is understood simply as the idea that all politics devolves, by way of avaricious human nature, to power capabilities. Such an understanding usually leads to the conclusion that the “strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.”³¹ (This finding seems consistent with the implementation of biometrics in Iraq.) According to Michael C. Williams, Thomas

Hobbes's "state of nature," a fundamental tenet of most classical-realist accounts of international relations, has conventionally been interpreted as a state of perpetual insecurity, "the outcome of materially self-interested rational actors competing for the same scarce goods within a condition of epistemic agreement."³² But Williams's incisive reading of Hobbes's epistemological skepticism demonstrates that the Hobbesian state of nature is characterized by "precisely the *lack* of any such commonality" (emphasis in the original)—by an inability to agree on how we can verify knowledge claims.³³

It is this epistemic rather than physically insecure state of nature that necessitates a sovereign state, whose primary contributions to society are that it "underpins social structures of epistemic concord, provides authoritative (and enforceable) interpretations and decisions in contested cases, and creates conditions of predictability that minimize fear and allow rational cooperation." This "willful realist" understanding of Hobbes's Leviathan as a facilitator of the social construction of knowledge, rather than as simplistic monopolizer of violent force, relies on a contract between the government and the governed based on legitimacy. As Williams notes, "Hobbesian individuals never give up their right to judge situations for themselves in the sense that, if they believe their self-preservation to be threatened, they retain (via the right of nature) the right of rebellion against the Sovereign."³⁴ Thus, the populace must embrace the epistemic claims that the government seeks to enforce.

Willful realism, combined with critical theory's exposition of the epistemology that inheres to biometric technologies, provides a cautionary argument with regard to Iraq. If biometrics include intrinsic knowledge claims that tend to biologize political life, and governmental stability relies primarily on the popular legitimacy of such claims, then the crucial question becomes whether or not a significant portion of Iraqis accept the replacement of their traditional identities by technological practices. If they do not, U.S. stability operations lose the legitimacy needed to fertilize Iraqi self-government in the future.

As discussed above, there is little to suggest that biometrics will increase the legitimacy of U.S. operations in Iraq. Thus, biometrics risk running afoul of another "supreme virtue" of classical

realism, prudence, defined as "the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions."³⁵ If the demands of legitimacy and therefore prudence are ignored in the implementation of biometrics in Iraq, U.S. decision-makers risk a "worst-case scenario" where "out of their fear of future harm rather than the calm appraisal of current realities...they create the very conditions of distrust that that they fear."³⁶ To graft my particular subject onto Williams: "[Techno]logic, so necessary for prediction and preservation, becomes the source of a destructive self-fulfilling prophecy."³⁷

Just as confounding as finding classical realism in opposition to biometric applications implemented by the powerful is the discovery that House and Senate Democrats have maneuvered themselves into a circular scenario reminiscent of Williams's and Hobbes's self-fulfilling prophecy. Democrats have supported biometric initiatives with regard to homeland security, but recent efforts in Congress place two Democratic pillars of Iraqi policy—a timetable for the war and transferring responsibility for Iraq to Iraqis—in opposition to each other.³⁸ One focal point of this opposition is biometric identification and surveillance.

Democrats have been calling for a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq for some time, and made it a centerpiece of their Congressional takeover in the 2006 mid-term elections and of their platform in the new Congress.³⁹ The demand corresponds with a belief that the Bush administration's war-making capabilities must be severely constrained. Growing domestic momentum for timetables further shrinks the U.S. military's window within which to effect U.S. objectives in Iraq. This can only amplify the aforementioned conundrum in which U.S. military planners must conduct limited operations "with one eye on the clock . . . [and it] suffuses the campaign with the sense that American forces must move quickly if they hope to take the initiative and take control of the situation."⁴⁰ In other words, the natural compression of stability operations timeframes, combined with calls for withdrawal dates, encourages the U.S. military to trade long-term effect for tactical expediency. The momentum for biometric technologies is just such a tradeoff.

It is therefore ironic that biometrics promote an outcome that is anathema to the Democrats'

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other primary objective in Iraq: the retrocession of responsibility to Iraqis.⁴¹ Biometric initiatives not only make U.S. forces responsible for identifying and detaining insurgents, they usually *insist* on the necessity of U.S. proprietary rights to database access.⁴² In counterinsurgencies and stability operations in pre-biometric eras, U.S. forces often relied in part on indigenous populations providing identification and intelligence regarding insurgents. Biometric technologies will not only alienate the Iraqi populace. Their promises of scientific superiority and ubiquity will also relieve civilians of any duty to report what they see since they can assume that U.S. scanners have already identified, logged, and tracked suspicious persons. Thus, one Democratic initiative has hamstrung another party objective. While a timetable bill has been passed, it is unlikely to correlate with increased Iraqi responsibility.⁴³ Instead, a timetable makes biometrics more attractive to the military. Biometrics in turn reinforce the idea that U.S. Soldiers, not Iraqis, are responsible for stabilizing Iraq.

Structuration Theory and Democide Promotion

Biometric proponents advance a particular narrative about the implementation and application of the technology, moving from technical capabilities to identity dominance to managed and monitored populations to increased stability and greater security for both U.S. forces and Iraqi civilians. But this narrative is overly deterministic. Is there any point where the linear progression could veer off course and take an unforeseen path to unexpected destinations? A structurationist view of technology suggests that such a point will follow immediately after the installation of biometric technologies in Iraq. A few strategic scenarios will demonstrate just how undesirable some of the unanticipated outcomes could be.

Based on the work of Anthony Giddens, a structurationist theory of technology considers the relationship between users and technology as a co-constitutive dynamic in which technological capabilities affect user preferences and actions, and those actions and preferences in turn alter how technologies are perceived. Changed perceptions of technology then modify user preferences, and the cycle repeats in perpetuity.⁴⁴ Particularly important in structuration theory is the reflexivity of users (their ability to self-monitor current and potential uses of technology), the direct (either intended or unintended) and indirect (almost always unintended) effects of technology use on a social environment, and the idea that, no matter how permanent or accepted its use seems, a technology is always “evolving [in society] uncertainly according to innumerable *ad hoc* judgments and assumptions.”⁴⁵ What results is an ever-changing relationship between technological capabilities and human users wherein technology is always “interpretively flexible” and therefore never fully determined in its uses by and effects on society.⁴⁶ Such an analysis of technology casts doubt upon the optimistic outcomes assumed by advocates of biometric surveillance. Could there be any other permutations caused by introducing biometrics into a dynamic, increasingly insecure, oftentimes uncooperative, and frequently hostile sociopolitical setting?

Structuration theory suggests that from the moment the technology is introduced into Iraqi daily life, outcomes will be less reliable than biometric advocates hope. In the following paragraphs I discuss two possibilities, one a worst-case scenario, the other having to do with foreseeable logistical difficulties. Both scenarios merit consideration by planners before biometrics are accepted for stability operations uses.

The worst-case result would be a biometrically facilitated democide in which the Iraqi Government or sectarian factions within the police and military forces utilize identification and tracking techniques to cleanse areas of tribal, religious, and/or political opponents.⁴⁷ Such a possibility is not without precedent. Argentina, one of the earliest adopters of fingerprint technology, used the Digicom biometric system to “track down so-called dissidents in the streets of Buenos Aires,” contributing to 30,000 “disappearances” between 1976 and 1981.⁴⁸



U.S. Air Force, Senior Airman Steve Cayz

U.S. Soldiers use the Biometrics Automated Tool Set system to gather information on volunteers seeking to be civilian info-structure security members in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq, 16 October 2007.

the U.S. grants greater authority to trained Iraqi Army and police forces, these groups will need, at a minimum, access to identification databases if they are to do their jobs competently. Denying Iraqi Government forces biometric capabilities would surely make Iraqi-controlled areas much more attractive to highly adaptable insurgents. Furthermore, the U.S. military has had less success than Iraqi militias in some stability-related operations, and retrocession of the right of some Iraqi groups to use force in certain situations has already been suggested, as in the case of the Mahdi Army's protection of Shi'ite pilgrims.⁵¹ The presence of biometrics would force U.S. commanders to choose between granting high technology to a factional group or being vulnerable to the charge that

they had not fully facilitated the group's protection capabilities. Retrocession and shared stability operations are inherently challenging issues. Biometrics would only make them more difficult.

The two scenarios described above are far from the only alternative futures that biometrics might initiate. I mean for them merely to illustrate the strategically sensitive implications of biometric technologies when viewed from a structurationist perspective. Such possibilities deny the panacean image of biometrics and suggest that they may in fact do more harm than good in Iraq.

Scan the Sin, Not the Sinner

The tragedy of an un-debated and unmitigated acceptance of a biometric solution to stability problems in Iraq is that there are viable alternatives that might better support the military in accomplishing not only the expedient objective of securing personnel and forces, but also the long-term end of promoting democracy to Iraqi civilians. I will briefly discuss two such alternatives: tagging of goods and commodities to remove illicit sources of income from insurgents, and weapons detection using broadband-over-power-line interference.

RFIDs, at their most fantastical, lie in wait beneath the skin, activating proximal sensors as

While in all proposed biometric scenarios the U.S. would initially control and secure database access, the chance that this would continue indefinitely seems slim. Whether it takes 5, 10, or 20 years for the U.S. to cede database rights to the Iraqi Government, can we be sure that factionalism and civil war will have been erased from the sociopolitical landscape? If they have not, then the existence and control of various identification technologies will make the violent settling of old scores all too efficient.

Identity security often equates to physical safety in Iraq today. For instance, in Baghdad, "fearful Sunnis and Shiites are hiding their identities to survive. Their differences . . . have become matters of life or death in ways never before seen in modern Iraq."⁴⁹ The March 2007 Shi'ite police massacre of Sunnis in Tal-Afar stands as a stark warning.⁵⁰ Biometric scanners and databases would eliminate identity secrecy in Iraq. The U.S. cannot consider their installation without taking into account the most nefarious possible uses for the technologies.

Far less dangerous than biometric-assisted cleansing, immediate command-and-control quandaries should still vex stability planners. Even under U.S. auspices, biometric surveillance in Iraq will require some decentralization to be truly pervasive. As

the wearer travels through space. RFIDs, at their most practicable, can be attached to cargo containers, pallets, and even individual products so that goods can be quickly identified at points of entry and tracked to points of delivery. This less-futuristic application of RFIDs could inhibit smuggling, money laundering, and other activities that amount to illicit economies from which insurgents are often funded.⁵² A biometric siege of insurgents, using high technology to choke off their resources instead of tracking their (and every other Iraqi's) every movement, would constrain insurgent capabilities without intrusive human sensing.

The second technology, broadband-over-power-line interference remote detection and identification (BPLI RAID), allows for the detection of metallic weapons signatures potentially anywhere on the electric grid.⁵³ Using natural background radio noise from the transmission of broadband over power-lines to create a "scanned" area, along with special receivers housed in electricity transformers, BPLI RAID identifies the presence of weapons in a given space by their reflected frequency signatures.⁵⁴ BPLI RAID holds the potential to detect weapons only a few centimeters long. Instead of identifying individuals deemed threatening, it can alert U.S. forces to the presence of imminent threats.⁵⁵

This technology also promises benefits more consistent with U.S. democracy-building objectives and Iraqi notions of honor.⁵⁶ Because it can be installed anywhere there is electricity, BPLI

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gives the U.S. extra incentive to build up the Iraqi infrastructure while also making U.S. Soldiers more secure. And because it passively scans objects instead of people and requires no processing of individuals prior to detection and monitoring, BPLI RAID will disturb Iraqi daily life and customs much less than biometric surveillance.

With the potential to increase the security of U.S. forces to a degree at least equivalent to biometrics while reducing Iraqi alienation, RFID commerce tracking and BPLI RAID more adequately address the U.S. military's temporal and political dilemma in Iraq. They deserve careful consideration. They also call attention to the existence of alternatives to biometric solutions that respect the complex nature of U.S. stability operational needs without sacrificing speed. The U.S. military clearly intends to win the legs race against insurgents and terrorists. It deserves the opportunity to do so with appendages that will move it further along the path to a democratic Iraq instead of with ones that may only run in place. **MR**

NOTES

1. Democratic peace theory is, simply put, the idea that democracies do not go to war with one another. For an overview of the democratic peace theory, see Miriam F. Elman, *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1997); John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994); and, most stridently, Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). For an equitable critique, see David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994).

2. Roger Spiller, "The Small Change of Soldiering and American Military Experience," *Australian Army Journal* 2, no. 1 (2005): 171.

3. For evidence of the increasingly umbrella-like usage of these terms from various sides of the debates on the Iraq war as well as the global War on Terrorism, see Thomas Carothers, "Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2003); Alexander T.J. Lennon, *The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Using Soft Power to Undermine Terrorist Networks* (MIT Press, 2003); "Press Release Fact Sheet: President Requests \$72.4 Billion for the Global War on Terror," ed. The White House Office of the Press Secretary (2006); Hart Seely, "U.S. Soldiers Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq," *The Seattle Times*, 12 November 2005; Jeremy M. Sharp, *U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma* (Congressional Research Service, 2006); Declan Walsh, "U.S. Losing Battle for Hearts and Minds with Abuses and Insensitivity," *The Guardian/UK*, 21 May 2005.

4. John D. Woodward Jr., "Using Biometrics to Achieve Identity Dominance in the Global War on Terrorism," *Military Review* (September-October 2005): 30.

5. Fingerprinting was adopted by Argentinean law enforcement in 1892. Jeanne-Vida Douglas, "Biometrics: The Body and Soul of Security," *ZDNet Australia*, 14

February 2002.

6. Russell B. Farkouh, "Incorporating Biometric Security into an Everyday Military Work Environment," *SANS GIAC GSEC Practical Version 1.4b, Option 1* (2004): 4. A "multimodal" profile is built from more than one "metric." The combined metrics are then used to create a more robust and distinctive profile (Douglas).

7. Robert K. Ackerman, "Army Intelligence Digitizes Situational Awareness," *Signal* 59, no. 11 (2005).

8. Douglas.

9. Woodward, 33-34.

10. Douglas.

11. Farkouh: 8.

12. Hamit Dardagan, John Sloboda, and Kay Williams, "Adding Indifference to Injury: At Least 20,000 Civilians Injured in Iraq War," *CounterPunch*, 7 August 2003. While this figure may be considered a liberal estimate, it should be noted that the estimate was arrived at without consulting incidents in which there were no fatalities. Furthermore, I will assume only one disfigurement per casualty, while in reality there could easily be more.

13. I acknowledge the methodological flexibility and lack of precision of this estimate, but include it simply to illustrate the idea.

14. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2d ed. (New York: Vintage, 1979), 200.

15. *Ibid.*, 199.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 198.

18. *Ibid.*, 197. For a more expansive Foucauldian critique of biometric surveillance,

see Philippe Bonditti, "From Territorial Space to Networks: A Foucauldian Approach to the Implementation of Biometry," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29, no. 4 (2004). Bonditti invokes the image of a "global state of plague."

19. Michael Dartnell, "Weapons of Mass Instruction: Web Activism and the Transformation of Global Security," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 497.

20. James der Derian, "The Question of Information Technology in International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 444, 447.

21. Quoted in Michael Dillon, "Virtual Security: A Life Science of (Dis)order," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 539.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, 533.

24. For more on this point, see *Ibid.*; Gillian Fuller, "Perfect Match: Biometrics and Body Patterning in a Networked World," *Fibreculture Journal* 1, no. 1 (2003): 543.

25. Victoria Fontan, "Polarization between Occupier and Occupied in Post-Saddam Iraq: Colonial Humiliation and the Formation of Political Violence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 2 (2006): 219.

26. *Ibid.*, 223.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, 220-21.

29. *Ibid.*, 224-25.

30. Congressional Democrats were forced into contradictions in terms of the critical stance they took toward biometric applications, as the ensuing argument in the text shows. In short, their push for a timetable is one factor that has caused U.S. forces to opt for expedients like biometrics. But the use of biometrics then undermines the Democrats' other demand: that Iraqi forces be pushed to assume responsibility.

31. From the "Melian Dialogues" in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Classics, 1954), 400-08. Foundational classical realist works include Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). For a critique of classical realism that introduces neorealism, also known as structural realism, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

32. Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 23-24.

33. *Ibid.*, 24.

34. *Ibid.*, 40-41.

35. Morgenthau, 12. As Morgenthau remarks, there "can be no political morality without prudence."

36. Williams, 26.

37. *Ibid.*

38. See Declan McCullagh and Ben Polen, "Dems Ready Bioterrorism Bill," *Wired*, 26 October 2001. <www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2001/10/47898>.

39. See, for instance, Joseph R. Biden Jr, "Time for an Iraq Timetable," *Washington Post*, 26 November 2005.

40. Spiller, 167.

41. For examples of calls for Iraq to take responsibility for itself, see Nancy Pelosi, "Floor Remarks on Amendment to the Defense Appropriation Bill" (House of Representatives, 2005); "Press Release: Stupak Renews Calls for Iraqi Accountability Plan" (House of Representatives, Office of Congressman Bart Stupak, 3 August 2006).

42. For examples of biometrics proponents' views on database security, see Douglas and Woodward. For a critical appraisal of the need for data encryption, see Bonditti, 470.

43. Jeff Zeleny and David Stout, "House Narrowly Backs Iraq Timetable," *The New York Times*, 23 March 2007.

44. Wanda J. Orlikowski, "The Duality of Technology: Rethinking the Concept of Technology in Organizations," *Organization Science* 3, no. 3 (1992): 403-06.

45. Brian Wynne, "Unruly Technology: Practical Rules, Impractical Discourses and Public Understanding," *Social Studies of Science* 18, no. 1 (1988), quoted in Orlikowski, 408.

46. Orlikowski, 405.

47. I use the term democide to capture the wider possibilities of slaughter than genocide, which is typically defined as the mass extermination of a certain religious, ethnic, tribal, or national group. Democide, on the other hand, refers to any instance of violence directed against citizens by government authorities.

48. Douglas.

49. Sudarsan Raghavan, "At Checkpoints in Baghdad, Disguise is a Lifesaving Ritual," *Washington Post*, 29 September 2006.

50. Sinan Salaheddin, "Shiite Cops Reportedly Rampage Vs. Sunnis," *The Associated Press*, 28 March 2007.

51. Juan Cole, "Is the Bush Surge Already Failing?," <Salon.com>, 8 March 2007.

52. Vanda Felbab-Brown, "From Sanctuaries to Protostates," in *International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention* (Chicago, IL: 2007), 1.

53. Newton Howard and Sergey Kanareykin, "Bpl Interference for Remote Detection and Identification (Bplli Raid): Wide Area Remote Detection and Identification Technology Using Broadband-over-Powerline," *Center for Advanced Studies Draft Paper*. <www.c4ads.org/papers/RAID_draft.pdf>.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*



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