

Rudd looks back on Reconstructing Iraq during Perspectives Lecture

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As the war in Iraq ended, Dr. Gordon Rudd, Strategic Studies Institute, looked back on the United States' attempt to change the regime in Iraq from a dictatorship to a representative democracy during a lecture on, "Reconstructing Iraq: Regime Change, Jay Garner, and the OHRA", during the December Perspectives in Military History Lecture at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.

"Marshall had two years, and you are giving me two months," said retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, upon being told in January 2003 that he was going to head the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance for Iraq.

"OHRA was established on Jan. 20, 2003, two months before the invasion," said Rudd, who was one of the first people to join the team. "From the beginning we had problems.

OHRA was made up of volunteers from many different government agencies, which was good," said Rudd. "The problem was they were not always the best people for the job. For example many members of the State Department joined the team, but very few of them were Foreign Service officers.

There was also this prevailing belief that reconstruction would only take a few months. So there was no real planning for long term reconstruction."

OHRA's efforts were further undermanned when U.S. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, replaced Garner in May, 2003 because of their differences over de-Ba'athification. ORHA was dissolved and the Coalition Provisional Authority was established.

"Garner never envisioned a de-Ba'athification process similar to the De-Nazification done in Germany," said Rudd. "Because he realized that while some Ba'ath officials were corrupt many of them were not and needed to continue to run the government.

"Many of the bad ones will have fled the country or be dead. The Iraqi people will tell us who is corrupt and we will deal with them," Rudd said recounting what Garner told him.

Shortly after de'Ba'athification went into effect, Garner also disbanded the entire Iraqi military. "This also hindered reconstruction efforts because it left a lot of unemployed angry people," said Rudd. "OHRA had planned to use the Iraqi Army, especially combat support, to help rebuild the country."

The CPA had executive, legislative and judicial authority in Iraq until it was dissolved on June 28, 2004 when sovereignty was transferred to the Iraqi Interim Government.

On Jan. 18, 2012 Dr. Geoffrey Megargee will present a lecture entitled "Inside Hitler's High Command." As part of the next Perspectives in Military History lecture series. The lecture will begin at 7:15 p.m.

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