

# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

VOL. 100

July 2006

NO. 3

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Some military occupations, as in Iraq, have aimed at transforming the political and legal order within the “liberated” territory. This purpose appears to conflict with the long-established laws of war rule that occupants should respect the existing laws of the territory. Two post-1945 legal bases for transformative acts—human rights law and UN Security Council resolutions—have furthered evolution of the law. Yet the traditional rules retain their value, and transformative occupation remains politically and legally problematic.

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