ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: GOVERNANCE, IDENTITY, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

Michael F. Fitzsimmons

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Dissertation directed by: Professor John D. Steinbruner, School of Public Policy

The premise of most Western thinking on counterinsurgency is that success depends on establishing a perception of legitimacy among local populations. The path to legitimacy is often seen as the improvement of governance in the form of effective and efficient administration of government and public services. However, good governance is not the only possible basis for claims to legitimacy. Prompted by recent experience in Iraq, the research presented here formally considers whether in insurgencies where ethno-religious identities are politically salient, claims to legitimacy may rest more on the identity of *who* governs, rather than on *how* whoever governs governs. Specifically, this dissertation poses and tests the hypothesis that in the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.

The dissertation reviews and synthesizes the record of scholarship and policy regarding insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, the politics of ethnic identity,

governance, and legitimacy. Building on this synthesis, it presents an analytic framework designed to formalize the terms of the main hypothesis sufficiently to enable empirical tests.

It then applies that framework to brief analyses of counterinsurgent experiences in Malaya, Algeria, South Vietnam, and then of two detailed local cases studies of American counterinsurgency operations in Iraq: Ramadi from 2004-2005; and Tal Afar from 2005-2006. These Iraq case studies are based on primary research, including 37 interviews with participants and eyewitnesses.

The cases examined yield ample evidence that ethno-religious identity politics do shape counterinsurgency outcomes in important ways, and also offer qualified support for the hypothesis about the relative importance to counterinsurgent success of identity politics versus good governance. However, the cases do not discredit the utility to counterinsurgents of providing good governance, and they corroborate the traditional view that population security is the most important element of successful counterinsurgency strategy. Key policy implications include the importance of making strategy development as sensitive as possible to the dynamics of identity politics, and to local variations and complexity in causal relationships among popular loyalties, grievances, and political violence.

GOVERNANCE, IDENTITY, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

by

Michael F. Fitzsimmons

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Advisory Committee:

Professor John Steinbruner, Chair
Dr. Michael O'Hanlon
Professor George Quester
Professor Robert Sprinkle
Professor Peter Wien

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I stand every day. I owe much of what made this dissertation possible to them: a love of learning, a concern for the public interest, and the fortitude to see a difficult task through. I dedicate this work to them.

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"If you're not confused, then you don't know how complex the situation is."

Lieutenant General Jim Mattis, United States Marine Corps, Anbar Province, April 2004[1]

"It is so damn complex. If you ever think you have the solution to this, you're wrong, and you're dangerous."

Colonel H.R. McMaster, United States Army, Tal Afar, February 2006[2]

[1] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), p. 343.

[2] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lessons of Tal Afar," *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2006, p. 57.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

This study was born of an attempt to make sense of two strong but somewhat contradictory intuitions about counterinsurgency. The first intuition is captured by an Iraqi Sunni tribal leader's comment that Iraq's Shi'a Muslims "cannot take charge of Iraq in the same manner as the Sunnis. The [Shi'a] are backwards. They are barbarian savages . . ."[1] From this perspective, in civil conflict, it matters who is in charge, and the ability of any party to succeed – insurgent or counterinsurgent – is at least partly a function of who they are, not just how they behave. Clearly, conflict is often rooted deeply in the politics of group identities and in such cases, the principal objective of the insurgents may be to overturn rule by some "other" group. In such a case, settling the conflict over identity politics would become one of the keys to resolving the broader conflict.

But the second intuition is that what most people want overwhelmingly is just a peaceful life where they can work, raise their children, provide for their families and have a society that functions and provides them the security and essential services that they need. Again, an example from Iraq illustrates the point. A woman in Baghdad told a reporter, "We want security and we want stability. Anyone who comes along is fine as long as he brings security and stability."[2] Or as an American soldier put it, "He who is able to fix the public utilities holds the keys to the kingdom in terms of winning the

[1] Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 71-72.

[2] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), p. 149.

support of the Iraqi people and ultimately ending this conflict."[3] By this way of thinking, resolving the conflict in insurgencies is all about establishing good governance. If the counterinsurgent can only manage to give people a good life, they will have a stake in the status quo and will abandon their support for the insurgents who threaten that status quo.

Each of these two intuitions implies a priority for counterinsurgency strategy. If people fight over ethnic or religious identity, then counterinsurgents must get the incumbent political system to deal effectively with the distribution of power across those groups. If people fight over provision of basic governance, then counterinsurgents must ensure that they are capable of "outgoverning" their insurgent opponents. While both of these intuitions can be valid to some degree, they are also not entirely compatible with each other. If different groups of people under a common system really oppose each other for who they are, or simply conceive of their political interests within ethnically-defined boundaries, then how much should a counterinsurgent expect to achieve by making the electricity and the sewers work, and by providing employment? Conversely, if all people want is a peaceful, comfortable life, why have ethnic and religious group loyalties seemed so often to have subverted counterinsurgents' attempts to improve governance in conflict-stricken lands?

The recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made the tension between these intuitions increasingly evident in American counterinsurgency policy and military doctrine. The counterinsurgency field manual published by the United States Army and Marine Corps in December 2006 states that "The primary objective of any counterinsurgent is to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate

[3] Michael R. Gordon, "In Baghdad, Struggle Ties Security to Basic Services," *New York Times*, April 22, 2008, p. 1.

government."[4] This judgment is in keeping with a conventional wisdom about counterinsurgency strategy that has accumulated over several decades of war and scholarship. Its premise, like that of most Western thinking on counterinsurgency, is that success depends on establishing a perception of legitimacy for the ruling regime among some critical portion of the local population. And among the mechanisms available to counterinsurgents for establishing that legitimacy, the most prominent in both practice and doctrine has been the improvement of governance in the form of effective and efficient administration of government and public services. Good governance, by this logic, is the key to "winning hearts and minds."

But beginning in 2003, the U.S.'s struggle to manage expanding sectarian civil conflict in Iraq began to call this traditional logic into question. As Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Michael Hayden told the Iraq Study Group in December 2006,

> The current situation, with regard to governance in Iraq, was probably irreversible in the short term, because of the world views of many of the [Iraqi] government leaders, which were shaped by a sectarian filter and a government that was organized for its ethnic and religious balance rather than competence or capacity. . . The Iraqi identity is muted. The Sunni or Shi'a identity is foremost.[5]

What the Iraqi experience was suggesting was that good governance is not the only plausible basis for claims to legitimacy among contending political factions, especially in environments where ethnic or religious identities are politically salient. Instead, perhaps in such conflicts, claims to legitimacy may rest primarily on the identity of *who* governs, rather than on *how* whoever governs governs.

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[4] Field Manual 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006), p. 1-21.

[5] Quoted in Bob Woodward, "CIA Said Instability Seemed 'Irreversible,'" *Washington Post*, July 12, 2007, p. 1.

Scholars and policymakers are just beginning to acknowledge and address these challenges to traditional views on counterinsurgency strategy. This process will require a careful synthesis of ideas and empirical insights from a wide range of academic disciplines and historical experiences that bear on the complex interactions among concepts of legitimacy, governance, ethnic identity, and political violence. With this notion as a point of departure, this dissertation explores the implications of differing bases of claims to legitimacy among different types of communities for political and military strategies employed by counterinsurgents. It presents the results of research on the relationship between counterinsurgency strategies focused on improving the quality of governance among affected populations and the dynamics of ethnic and religious identities among those populations.

In the broadest sense, the question it seeks to answer is simply:

Is provision of good governance necessary to defeat insurgencies?

More specifically, it poses and tests the general hypothesis that:

In the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.

Although this question and hypothesis were motivated in part by the challenges facing the United States and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the significance of the subject clearly extends beyond current events and beyond the interests of Western policy makers. Irregular warfare, civil conflict and attempts to mitigate them are likely to be common features of the international policymaking landscape for the foreseeable future, and the hypothesis under examination here has significant implications for the design of any counterinsurgency strategy. As one scholar has summarized it, “an effective

counterinsurgency program depends on an accurate, substantive, and comprehensive profile of the adversary and the environmental context with which he operates."[6] This research would suggest that close attention to the role and dynamics of ethnic and religious identities be a first-order issue in developing such a "comprehensive profile."

This dissertation attempts to address the topics outlined above in five main steps, divided across eight chapters, including this introductory chapter.

- First, it reviews and synthesizes the record of scholarship and policy regarding insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, the politics of ethnic identity, governance, and legitimacy (Chapter 2).
- Second, drawing on this review and synthesis, it presents an analytic framework and method designed to formalize the terms of the research question and hypothesis sufficiently to enable empirical tests (Chapter 3).
- Third, it presents brief analyses of three modern counterinsurgencies, based on secondary sources and designed to refine the analytic framework with provisional tests of the hypothesis (Chapter 4).
- Fourth, it examines Iraq: the history of Iraq's ethno-religious identity politics and the recent counterinsurgency there (Chapter 5), followed by two detailed local cases of American counterinsurgency operations, in Ramadi from 2004-2005 (Chapter 6), and in Tal Afar from 2005-2006 (Chapter 7).
- Finally, it concludes with a comparative analysis of the Iraqi cases and derives conclusions and policy implications from all of the preceding analysis (Chapter 8).

[6] Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd Edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 155.

Chapter 2: Governance, Identity and Legitimacy: Cracks in the Intellectual Foundations of Traditional Counterinsurgency Strategy

Irregular Warfare – Past as Prologue?

Political violence in the second half of the twentieth century was dominated by irregular warfare.[1] While the world's great powers developed firepower of unprecedented volume and technical sophistication, the era's military history was being acted out principally by insurgents and counterinsurgents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This phenomenon may be attributed to two major historical factors. First, the collapse of European colonial rule prompted a torrent of violent struggles for power and political identity in newly independent, but politically and economically immature regions. Second, the global reach of political and ideological competition between Western democracies and the Soviet Union sparked or exacerbated civil conflicts for over forty years, from Greece in the late 1940s to Nicaragua in the 1980s.

Today, the immediate traumas of decolonization and the Cold War are largely past, but the prospect of widespread and persistent irregular warfare remains. According to one common view of the future security environment,[2] threats to international security

[1] This general type of warfare goes by many names: revolutionary, insurgency and counterinsurgency, irregular, guerrilla, fourth-generation, and low-intensity conflict, to name the most prominent ones. Differences among these terms can be distinguished, but all of them refer to warfare conducted by relatively weak parties against more powerful adversaries often by sporadic and indirect means and usually toward the goal of gaining political concessions or control. I will favor the term "counterinsurgency" here, since it is the term most applicable to the strategies and tactics of the more powerful, albeit reactive, side of this type of warfare, the side on which the United States has repeatedly found itself. I will generally use "irregular" warfare to refer to the broader category.

[2] See Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000), Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York: Putnam, 2004), Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper No. 379, 2006), Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

will arise in large part from countries or groups that are either unable or unwilling to accommodate a globalized economic system, together with all of the cultural implications of such a system. Such groups are likely to be both economically marginalized and militarily weak, leaving guerrilla-type tactics as one of their few means of advancing their interests.

While the significance of this trend remains speculative, American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have accelerated a growing perception of the need to prevent, counter, and conduct irregular warfare. One reflection of this perception is that formal strategic planning in the U.S. government has elevated the priority given to preparing for these challenges.[3]

The sense of urgency apparent in current policy debates on counterinsurgency can be attributed in part to the fact that this type of warfare has often been performed poorly by modern governments and militaries. While notable exceptions exist, counterinsurgents have tended to overemphasize military operations in counterinsurgencies and underemphasize political solutions.

Perhaps two reasons for the mixed performance stand out. First, fighting this kind of warfare is inherently difficult. Targets are elusive and few; and the loyalties of civilian populations are constantly shifting and difficult to gauge in any case. The resulting slowness and messiness of such operations prompted the celebrated British officer T. E. Lawrence to compare fighting guerrilla wars to "eating soup with a knife."[4]

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[3] *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Executive Office of the President, 2006), pp. 43-44, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Department of Defense, 2006), pp. 19, 37-38, *National Defense Strategy* (Department of Defense, June 2008), pp. 4, 7-9, Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2009.

[4] T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York: G.H. Doran, 1926), p. 182 (Book III, Chapter XXXIII).

Second, modern militaries, especially those of large, rich nations like the United States have not typically been organized, trained, and equipped to fight counterinsurgencies. Two of the most prominent examples of the chasm between extant military doctrine and the demands of counterinsurgencies are the American experience in Vietnam and the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. In both cases, conspicuously superior military forces were defeated at least in part because of their inability to adjust organizationally to strategic environments very different from those for which they were designed. In recent years, the U.S. government and military have come under harsh and widespread criticism for again misunderstanding the nature of the war they are fighting, this time in Iraq.

At the same time, the history of modern counterinsurgency is not one of universal failure. In many instances, such as those in the Philippines, Malaya, and Peru, to name only a few, counterinsurgents succeeded in defeating challenges to their control through various combinations of political, military, and other means. Indeed, a conventional wisdom is emerging that U.S. operations in Iraq since 2007 represent a model of successful counterinsurgency as well. What accounts for the differences between the successes and the failures? Answers to this question, of course, are far from straightforward. Nevertheless, a great deal has been written about the question, and some common themes are evident in that literature, as well as in the policies and doctrine that reflect it.

Winning Hearts and Minds: Popular Support and Governance

Rebellion and counter-rebellion are as old as civilization. For most of political history, the main tools of defeating rebellion – that is, what today we would call "counterinsurgency strategy" – were coercion, repression, annihilation, intimidation, and fear.[5] So, while the 20th century produced the phrase, "winning hearts and minds," the 19th century British imperial experience offered up the ditty, "Whatever happens, we have got / The Maxim gun, and they have not."[6] Notwithstanding all of the carnage piled up by irregular warfare in the twentieth century, default to this "Roman model" of threatening wholesale slaughter generally ceased to be a viable choice in the counterinsurgency strategies of Western governments. Although paternalism remained firmly entrenched in Western policies toward the rest of the world, Wilsonian concepts of self-determination and legitimacy[7] largely displaced one of the main philosophical pillars of counter-revolutionary policy in colonial and earlier times: that might makes right.

These changing attitudes, however, made insurgency and counterinsurgency neither simpler nor rarer, and their prevalence in the 20th century has generated a vast literature on the subject by historians, political scientists, sociologists, military analysts, and others. Lists of principles for the conduct of successful counterinsurgency are

[5] For a concise summary, see Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 26-43.

[6] The Maxim gun was one of the first machine guns invented and was used to devastating effect in late 19th century colonial wars. See Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice 3rd Edition* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996 (originally published in 1906)), pp. 440-441.

[7] For a discussion of Wilson's impact on the formation of the state of Iraq, see Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 12-16.

abundant in this literature.[8] Variations abound, but if all these principles were reduced to a single central theme it would be that success and failure depend to a large extent on the resolution of the political conflicts underlying the military hostilities. According to this line of reasoning, the application of military force is not nearly as efficacious as in more conventional warfare. Rather, the contest between insurgents and counterinsurgents is seen as a competition for the prevailing sympathies of the non-combatant populations where the conflicts are taking place. In one of the classic works of this literature, Mao Tse-tung famously observed that the relationship between insurgents and the broader population in which they operate is akin to fish and water, such that "guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation."[9]

From this understanding of insurgency came a broad consensus that one of the chief objectives of any organization conducting counterinsurgency operations must be to gain the loyalty and trust of the local civilian population. The popular shorthand for this complex socio-economic-political-military objective became "winning hearts and minds," a term that has survived in common usage to the present day. To be sure, other considerations, including more traditional military ones such as intelligence, logistics,

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[8] For example, David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 74-90, Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 50-58, Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), pp. 233-246, Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd Edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), pp. 164-190, Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, March-April 2006, pp. 49-53, Field Manual (FM) 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006) (hereafter referred to as "FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5"), pp. 1-21 to 1-29.

[9] Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, translated by Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Praeger, 1961), Chapter 6, p. 4 and Chapter 1, p. 2.

and attrition of enemy forces, are crucial elements of counterinsurgency strategies as well. But in this type of warfare, it is supposed that the hearts and minds of the people, not territorial control or leadership, constitute the strategic "center of gravity" for which the adversaries compete.[10] In his renowned study, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, French army officer and theorist David Galula listed as his "first law" of counterinsurgency that "the support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent."[11]

With popular support as the foundation of counterinsurgency strategy, the question must turn then to how counterinsurgents can prevail in their competition for the people's allegiance. In this regard, winning hearts and minds is very often equated with the provision of good governance, in the form of improved material standards of living and government efficiency. The British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson, who served in Malaya and as an advisor to the American and South Vietnamese governments, concluded that "'Winning' the population can tritely be summed up as good government in all its aspects. . . such as improved health measures and clinics . . . new schools . . . and improved livelihood and standard of living." Later in the same work, he continues, "the real purpose of aid in all contexts, including counter-insurgency

[10] The first use of the phrase "hearts and minds" in the context of revolutionary warfare is often attributed to the British administrator during much of the Malayan Emergency, Sir Gerald Templer, who argued that "the answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people." See Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 3, and Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 1-2.

[11] Galula, p. 74.

[is] to help the local government get its organization right and its departments working efficiently."[12]

One representative scholarly rendering of this view comes from the widely-cited author and National War College professor Bard O'Neill:

> . . . popular support [for insurgency] from the elites and especially the masses stems primarily from concrete grievances concerning such things as land reform, injustice, unfair taxation, and corruption. It is over these issues that the battle to win hearts and minds is most directly enjoined. History suggests that a government can most effectively undercut insurgencies that rely on mass support by splitting the rank and file away from the leadership through calculated reforms that address the material grievances and needs of the people.[13]

Insurgency and counterinsurgency historian Thomas Mockaitis argues along similar lines: "Trust and cooperation depend . . . on recognizing and as far as possible addressing the real needs and the legitimate grievances on which the insurgency feeds. . . People generally support an insurgency out of a shared sense of wrong or frustration at not having their basic needs met."[14] Or, as writer and retired Marine T. X. Hammes has succinctly put it, "the fundamental weapon in counterinsurgency is good governance."[15]

This perspective is not limited to scholars or political commentators. It is also clearly evident in the way U.S. government organizations approach the problem of insurgency and counterinsurgency. One prominent example of this view can be found in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," which argues that

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[12] Thompson, pp. 112-113, 161.

[13] O'Neill, pp. 171-172.

[14] Thomas Mockaitis, "Winning Hearts and Minds in the 'War on Terrorism,'" *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (March 2003), pp. 21-22.

[15] Thomas X. Hammes, "Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks," *Military Review*, July-August 2006, pp. 20-21.

> Support of the people is vital to the survival of the insurgents who depend on them for food, shelter, recruits, and intelligence. The government's challenge is to regain the allegiance of a population already alienated by government failures to address basic grievances. Poor peasants and farmers are, however, seldom motivated by abstractions or vague promises. Their willingness to provide support hinges on concrete incentives – material benefits or demonstrable threats.[16]

Also, as noted in Chapter 1, the U.S. military's new counterinsurgency doctrine features this conception of the centrality of popular support and governance, stating that "The primary objective of any counterinsurgent is to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government."[17] An even more recent guide to counterinsurgency co-authored by the U.S. Departments of Defense and State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development asserts that "central to gaining the confidence and support of the population is [improving] the quality of governance through political reform, strengthening the rule of law and conducting economic development as appropriate."[18] And the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, written by the Marine Corps and the Special Operations Command, asserts that forces conducting irregular warfare should emphasize "winning the support of the relevant populations, promoting friendly political authority, and eroding adversary control, influence, and support."[19]

Moreover, beyond these academic and doctrinal assertions is a history replete with projects launched by counterinsurgents focused on land reform, economic

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[16] Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (undated), p. 8.

[17] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 1-21.

[18] *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (United States Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, January 2009), p. 14.

[19] *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (Version 1.0)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, September 11, 2007), p. 19.

development, public health, education, construction of infrastructure and other such initiatives.

In sum, the strength and ubiquity of such views on the importance of providing good governance and of winning hearts and minds amounts to what might reasonably be labeled conventional wisdom on counterinsurgency strategy. What accounts for this phenomenon? How did this conventional wisdom develop and why has it retained its appeal over several decades of irregular warfare?

The Roots of Conventional Wisdom: Legitimacy, People's Wars and Modernization Theory

The association of legitimacy and good governance is rooted in the dominant traditions of Western political philosophy. In the works of such foundational thinkers as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, legitimacy is seen as derived from a social contract between a government and free individuals. Individuals relinquish some of their own sovereignty to the government in exchange for a specific set of privileges and protections. In this formulation, legitimacy and good governance are tightly woven, if not synonymous. Max Weber characterized this conception of legitimacy as a "legal" or "rational" paradigm, one of three pure types of authority, or "legitimate domination." Legal authority, according to Weber, rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands."[20] Weber contrasts this form of authority with "traditional" and "charismatic" forms in which legitimacy comes more from, respectively, traditional social hierarchies or individual personal character than from codified rules and laws. The

[20] Max Weber, "The Types of Legitimate Domination," in Michael Hechter, ed. *Theories of Social Order* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 184.

discussion will return to "traditional authority" later in the chapter, but it is the legal-rational conception of legitimacy that has dominated Western political thought in the modern world.

Moreover, a rational, governance-based view of legitimacy formed the basis for political development not only in advanced, Western, or industrialized societies. Crucially important to this discussion of insurgency and counterinsurgency, it also formed the foundation of the most prominent revolutionary philosophy of the twentieth century – Marxism. In their emphasis on developmental aspects of capitalism and on economic classes as the basic units of political life, both Leninist and Maoist incarnations of Marxism were deeply modern and, at least in principle, hostile to traditionally-based, nationalist or ethnic political structures.[21] Accordingly, communist insurgents throughout the developing world advanced a fundamentally materialist view of social justice. In their view, legitimate government was not simply one that guaranteed freedoms and basic public goods, but one that enforced a particular distribution of resources and capital seen to be inextricably linked to freedom. In this sense, Marxist revolutionaries that dominated the landscape of post-World War II insurgency saw legitimacy as even more closely linked to specific forms of "good governance" than did their liberal opponents.

Probably the most important variety of this revolutionary ideology in action was the Maoist "people's war." Over nearly two decades of civil war in China, Mao Tse-tung transformed V. I. Lenin's urban, elite-driven interpretation of Marxism into a rural, peasant-based revolutionary doctrine. Revolutionaries throughout the developing world

[21] For an overview, see John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), especially pp. 826-828, 838-845.

have since seized on Mao's principles to help organize popular revolts among rural masses against elite, allegedly repressive governments. Rebels from the Viet Minh in the 1940s to the Shining Path in the 1980s to the Communist Party of Nepal in the 2000s have claimed Mao's mantle. Though people's wars have varied considerably across different times and cultures, Maoist ideology retained most of its central Marxist elements related to class conflict, social justice, and economic determinism, especially at the height of the Cold War.[22]

At the same time, opponents of Marxist ideology and revolution, especially in the United States, were constructing their own interpretive framework for explaining political and economic development in the post-war era. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of "modernization theory" in Western academic and policy communities (also known as "political development theory"), a theory of development that emphasized a teleological convergence of societies through several stages of modernization from primitive "traditional" forms toward Western-style industrialization, secularization, and political pluralism.[23] Legitimacy in this framework was earned by whoever could most reliably guide the society along these hypothesized paths of modernization, with their characteristic signals of good governance – economic growth, political representation and efficient administration.

The principles of modernization theory were quite influential among policy makers in Washington who were eager for guidance in navigating the complex Cold War

[22] Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[23] Representative works include David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), Cyril E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), and Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962).

competition underway in the decolonizing "third" world. Modernization theory played a significant role in guiding American policy toward the developing world generally,[24] and toward counterinsurgency specifically.[25] Walt Rostow, an economist who had written one of the most prominent books on modernization and development, became President John F. Kennedy's deputy national security advisor. In a 1961 speech to Army Special Forces graduates, he characterized the Kennedy administration's perspective this way:

> The U.S. has a special responsibility of leadership . . . in aiding the long-run development of those nations which are serious about modernizing their economy and social life. And, as President Kennedy has made clear, he regards no program of his Administration as more important than his program for long-term economic development . . . Independence cannot be maintained by defensive measures alone. Modern societies must be built, and we are prepared to help build them.[26]

By 1962, these concepts had been formalized in the U.S. Overseas Internal Defense Policy statement of August 1962 and in the Inter-departmental Seminar on Counterinsurgency that was taught at the State Department. These new statements of policy and doctrine codified the notion that the remedy to political violence and instability in the developing world, in the words of historian Ian Beckett, "lay in socio-economic development and appropriate nation-building measures based on concepts of security, good government and progress."[27]

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[24] Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) and Lisa Anderson, *Pursuing Truth, Exercising Power: Social Science and Public Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 94-97.

[25] D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially Chapter 5, Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1977), Chapter 3, Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), pp. 21-23.

[26] Walt W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Underdeveloped Areas," Speech at the U.S. Army Special Warfare School, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, June 28, 1961.

[27] Beckett (2001), p. 186.

Before long, the application of this philosophy to counterinsurgency policy had acquired the name "hearts-and-minds theory." RAND Corporation analysts Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf summarized the principal tenets of hearts-and-minds theory as: emphasis on popular support based on inherent "ardor and preferences"; stress on internal grievances over external influence; emphasis on economic deprivation and inequality; and conception of insurgent conflict in terms of "electoral analogy," where outcomes are driven by and reflect the prevailing affiliations of majorities or substantial minorities. In their judgment, made in 1970, hearts-and-minds theory "influences and perhaps dominates much discussion and thinking about this range of problems."[28]

Viewed through the lens of Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Marxist revolutionary ideology and hearts-and-minds counterrevolutionary ideology may appear to stand in stark opposition to one another. And within the framework of Western political philosophy, they do. Outside of this framework, however, they might more usefully be characterized as opposite sides of the same Western coin. While their normative aspects point in different directions, their assumptions and descriptions of the developing world share much in common. As political scientist D. Michael Shafer argues,

> Both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries assume that the Third World's shared experience with colonialism had everywhere produced a potentially revolutionary situation. Thus, Americans fret over the consequences of modernization – in particular, the possibility of Communists capturing uprooted peoples in the hiatus between tradition and a higher state, modernity. The revolutionary masters also focus on the inevitable, universal course of development, but in the deracination process they see the formation of classes, and so the fundamental dynamic of development. Each, however, assumes the malleability of the masses and, despite reference to an overarching process of change,

[28] Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham, 1970), p. 150. Also see Shafer, pp. 116-118.

> focuses on tactical measures for 'helping history.' In other words, both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries identify their role as manager of modernization.[29]

Based in part on this assessment, Shafer characterizes American counterinsurgency doctrine as "Mao minus Marx."[30]

Among the important similarities between these approaches to insurgency and counterinsurgency are the factors they assume to be dominant in establishing political legitimacy. In Weber's terms, both approaches posit rationalist grounds for legitimate authority. In his study of the role of legitimacy in insurgencies, Timothy Lomperis points out that

> . . . modern legitimacy can turn to several different models, including communist ones. Communism, after all, is a product of, or at least a reaction to, the industrial revolution of the West and offers a competitive system of modern political legitimacy to that of the liberal democracies. Yet even communists hold to the two hallmarks of modern legitimacy. They, too, have a view of history rooted in a 'dialectic' of material progress . . .[31]

One important product of the similarities in these opposing strategies is that successful application of one may in fact defeat the other, since they are competing, in some sense, on equivalent terms. From this perspective, the gradual expansion in the numbers of liberal democracies around the world may have something to do with the declining incidence of Maoist people's wars. As Ian Beckett concludes, "where states genuinely embraced or moved toward democracy the Maoist model had little to offer, since much depended on convincing the population that the limited consultation process

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[29] Shafer, p. 108.

[30] Ibid., p. 104.

[31] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 66.

envisaged in the relationship between the party and the 'masses' was sufficient democracy."[32]

Thus was forged the intellectual foundations of counterinsurgency strategy in the United States, and much of this foundation is still visible in the current policy and doctrine cited earlier in this chapter. Even so, the influence and longevity of these concepts and policies have not been without their critics.

Modernization Theory Under Assault: Hearts and Minds Dethroned or Refined?

For all of its influence in academic and policy circles, modernization theory came under widespread attack by the late 1960s, both for its conceptual shallowness and for its inability to account for the frequency of insurgency and revolution throughout the developing world. Most conspicuously, the persistence of the Viet Cong's resistance to American and South Vietnamese counterinsurgency efforts raised pointed questions about the viability of the assumptions of prevailing strategy and doctrine.

Another wave of literature emerged aiming to correct some of the flaws of modernization theory, particularly its emphasis on elites as critical agents of modernization and its tendency to link economic development inextricably with political stability. This literature sought to address the causes of revolution and insurgency directly and tended to locate those causes in socio-economic dislocations associated with the transition of societies from traditional to modern forms. One of the earliest and most influential of these works was Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*, where he argued that violence and instability "was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics, coupled with

[32] Beckett (2001), p. 81.

the slow development of political institutions."[33] On the one hand, this argument was a departure from the more optimistic perspectives of earlier works that touted the inevitable correlation of modernization and peaceful progress. On the other hand, as Charles Tilly points out, Huntington largely operates from within the broader framework that associates development with Western forms of political and economic organization.[34]

Another focus of criticism of modernization theory was its general insensitivity to variations in local conditions and the resulting universalism of its policy prescriptions. If, in fact, modernization was supposed to follow similar paths throughout the developing world, then successful policy implementation need not depend on deep expertise or experience in particular regions or cultures. What followed from this were policies of U.S. support for development that were probably more ambitious and optimistic than was warranted, such as the Alliance for Progress in Latin America and the early American involvement in South Vietnam. Former Undersecretary of State George Ball, for one, took a skeptical view of this trend in what he referred to as "nation building," complaining that "the most presumptuous undertaking of all [assumed that] American professors could make bricks without the straw of experience and with indifferent and infinitely various kinds of clay."[35]

In time, skepticism of grand theories of development helped to foster a new emphasis in academic work on the sociological roots of revolution and insurgency, and

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[33] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 4.

[34] Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" *Comparative Politics*, vol. 5, no. 3 (April 1973), pp. 430-436.

[35] Quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 30.

particularly on the interaction of modern economic practices with traditional political structures in peasant villages. Sociologist Timothy Wickham-Crowley identifies three "microstructural schools" in this body of work.[36] One school argues that different economic structures encourage different dynamics of collective action, and that "revolutionary action is to be found when cultivators derive their income from 'wages' (rather than land)."[37] According to the second school, capitalism tends to break down "age-old systems of patron-client . . . systems of reciprocity." Peasant revolts, in turn, represent efforts to protect those systems.[38] The third school holds that peasants do not respond to a shared "moral economy" of the kind postulated by the second school, but rather to rational self-interest "in a way perfectly intelligible to the economics of utility-maximization."[39]

Other analysts seeking explanations for political violence in the developing world looked to the psychological dynamics of individuals and groups in areas of conflict. Prominent among these arguments is the theory that revolution is caused by feelings of relative deprivation. According to this theory, it is not poverty or repression, per se, that cause people to take up arms against their government, but rather the unfulfilled promises of rising expectations in societies in transition. In the words of political scientist Ted Robert Gurr, "Discontent [is] not a function of the discrepancy between what men want

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[36] Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 92.

[37] See Jeffery Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

[38] See James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976) and Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

[39] See Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1979).

and what they have, but between what they want and what they believe they are capable of attaining."[40] This relationship between rising expectations and revolt is explicitly recognized in the U.S. military's new counterinsurgency manual.[41]

In addition to these works of sociology and political psychology, the national security policy community also offered some dissents to prevailing views of insurgency and counterinsurgency during the late 1960s and 1970s. Most directly relevant to this discussion is the work cited earlier of two scholars working for the RAND Corporation, Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr. These analysts argued that the common focus in counterinsurgency strategy on hearts and minds was misdirected and overly ambitious. First, they argued that the popular support generally considered to be the focus of competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents could be readily understood in terms of cost-benefit trade-offs rather than inherent preferences. "Fear (damage-limiting) and reward (profit-maximizing) may be as powerful spurs to desired behavior as conscience and conviction." Second, they suggested that actions taken to constrain the behavior of insurgents are more likely to be effective than actions taken to persuade the population to support the government's side.[42] Leites and Wolf also questioned the linkage between economic aid and winning popular support, pointing out that greater resources might simply allow people to exercise their existing preferences more effectively rather than causing them to change their preferences.[43]

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[40] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 359. Also see James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1 (February 1962), pp. 5-19.

[41] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 1-3.

[42] Leites and Wolf, especially pp. 13, 37.

[43] Ibid., pp. 18-20.

Overall, academic and policy-oriented reactions to modernization theory and hearts-and-minds counterinsurgency theory made substantial strides toward refining understandings and assumptions about development and the causes of political violence. However, two factors limited the impact of these critiques as an impetus for reconceptualizing how counterinsurgency strategy was actually developed and practiced by the United States and its allies. First, even these more sophisticated frameworks tended to focus on rural, peasant-based insurgencies and, in emphasizing the economic effects of modernization, retained a predominantly materialist viewpoint on the sources and dynamics of political legitimacy.[44]

Second, the end of the United States' military involvement in Vietnam in 1973 initiated an era of intellectual cleansing of the U.S. military's strategy and doctrine. The prevailing view among American military officers and defense intellectuals after Vietnam was that counterinsurgency and nation-building activities had been a harmful distraction from the military's pre-eminent mission of deterring and preparing to fight the massed conventional forces of the Soviet Union or its proxies.[45] Combined with détente's more accommodating posture toward Soviet policies in the developing world, this attitude among the U.S.'s military leadership went a long way toward severing the link between academic work on insurgency and counterinsurgency and its heretofore receptive government audience.

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[44] For example, Leites and Wolf explicitly acknowledge their methodological similarities with modernization theory while advancing a theory somewhat at odds with its conventional interpretations. See pp. 49-50.

[45] Wray R. Johnson, *From Counterinsurgency to Stability and Support Operations: The Evolution of U.S. Military Doctrine for Foreign Internal Conflict, 1961-1996*, unpublished dissertation, The Florida State University, 1997.

Interest among national security policy makers in "low intensity conflict" (as irregular warfare came to be known) was somewhat refreshed in the 1980s by U.S. involvement in Central American counterinsurgencies and in the 1990s by a spate of small wars that prompted U.S. interventions from Somalia to Bosnia. Nevertheless, the study of counterinsurgency remained an intellectual backwater in defense and military education, policy, planning, and discourse.[46] Counterinsurgency doctrine in the 1980s, in the form of the Army Field Manual on Low Intensity Conflict, became little more than a modification of "AirLand Battle," the Defense Department's newly ascendant concept for large-scale, conventional, mechanized warfare.[47]

Only after the U.S. found itself in the midst of major counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan did the national security policy community turn seriously to the task of revisiting the intellectual roots and assumptions of its extant strategy and doctrine on counterinsurgency. And when it did so, what it had to turn to was something of a hodgepodge of modernization theory, anti-communism, and a set of historical experiences that had been only partially digested in any coherent intellectual or strategic sense. Scholars and policymakers have made progress in recent years in rebuilding the foundation of counterinsurgency strategy, and tailoring it to its new 21st century context, and it is to this broad effort that this research aims to contribute.

Yet there remains one major piece missing from the overview presented here of the intellectual foundations of counterinsurgency strategy. This piece is central to the

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[46] Ibid., Part IV, John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 205-208, Robert Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).

[47] Field Manual 100-20, *Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, January 1981). See Johnson, Parts IV and V.

argument advanced in these pages: the role of ethnic and religious identity in irregular warfare. One of modernization theory's and hearts-and-minds theory's most conspicuous faults, according to some critics, was its discounting, sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, of the role of ethnicity in determining how people relate to their governments. As political scientist Milton Esman explains, policies grounded in the materialist, progressive assumptions of modernization tended to presume

> . . . that with industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and secularization, local, parochial, ethnic, and other 'traditional' identities would become increasingly irrelevant and would be succeeded by more 'rational' loyalties and association such as state nationalism, economic class, and cultural and recreational interests.[48]

Esman's language echoes that used by Weber to delineate different bases for political legitimacy. In those terms, "rational" grounds for legitimacy would comprise more concrete interests and basic grievances than those related to ethnicity, religion, or tribe. But Weber also points out that "traditional" authority, in contrast to "rational" authority, rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them."[49] So, what if "concrete interests" and "basic grievances" in some insurgencies do not arise principally from issues surrounding material benefits or conditions? What if legitimacy is sometimes conferred to governments not according to the quality of their governance, but according to their conformance to group loyalties and traditional hierarchies of power? The next section outlines some of the major contributions of scholarship of the last few decades on ethnic identity and conflict, and suggests the importance of these contributions to the design of counterinsurgency strategies.

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[48] Milton J. Esman, *Introduction to Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), p. 18.

[49] Weber, p. 184.

Ethnic Identity and Conflict

The end of the Cold War prompted a surge of interest in ethnicity and nationalism as causes of political violence. Bitter civil wars on the periphery of the former Soviet bloc, such as those in Tajikistan, Chechnya, and Bosnia, conveyed a sense that ancient ethnic passions, long suppressed by totalitarian regimes, were once again in the ascendancy. Genocidal violence in Rwanda in 1994 did nothing to moderate this impression. But in fact, large-scale, ethnically- and religiously-driven political violence had been a constant feature of the post-World War II era, as any residents of southern Nigeria, Bangladesh, or Lebanon, to name only a few, could attest.

Scholars taking up this subject began to examine the ways in which political identities and loyalties can be influenced and even dominated by affiliations with ethnic and religious communities. Debates in this literature begin, naturally, with the definition of ethnicity, itself. Max Weber's conception that ethnic identity is tied to but not limited to genetic kinship has proved to be quite durable over time. He defined ethnicity as "a subjective belief" in "common descent . . . whether or not an objective blood relationship exists."[50] In one of the most influential modern works on ethnicity and conflict, Donald Horowitz adopts a similar perspective, saying that "ethnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate. Some notion of ascription, however diluted, and affinity deriving from it are inseparable from the concept of ethnicity."[51]

[50] Quoted in Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 53.

[51] Ibid., p. 52.

An even broader definition was offered by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who argued that "forms of identity based on social realities as different as religion, language, and national origin all have something in common, such that a new term is coined to refer to all of them – ethnicity. What they have in common is that they have all become effective foci for group mobilization for concrete political ends."[52] However, while the emphasis in this definition on the political mobilization of ethnic groups is helpful, as nationalism expert Walker Connor points out, lumping "national origin" together with other dimensions of ethnic identification begs some of the most important questions about politics and ethnic identity.[53]

This semantic confusion derives in part from the modern conflation of the terms "nation" and "state." According to Connor, states are delimited by political boundaries, and nations are delimited by ethnic boundaries, where "nation connotes a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related."[54] In practice, however, the two terms are often used interchangeably, together with "nation-state," a term originally reserved for the occasional correlation between an ethnically-based nation and a politically-based state.

As a result, the study of nationalism has developed concepts of different kinds of nationalism. For example, scholar Anthony Smith distinguishes between "civic-territorial" nationalism and "ethnic" nationalism. The former, which Smith calls "a peculiarly Western conception of the nation," is characterized by "historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and

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[52] Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 18.

[53] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 101.

[54] Ibid., pp. xi, 39-42.

ideology." With the latter, Smith argues, "the nation is seen as a fictive 'super-family', and it boasts pedigrees and genealogies to back up its claims . . . the place of law in the Western civic model is taken by vernacular culture, usually languages and customs . . ."[55] Clearly, one of the principal differences between the two models is the basis on which membership and allegiance rests. In the civic model, they are matters of location and individual choice. In the ethnic model, they are matters of birth and group history.

Of course, though these distinctions are indispensable as analytic constructs, clean categorizations of real nations or states are seldom possible. As Smith himself acknowledges, "every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms."[56] And Horowitz argues that in divided societies there is competition between kinship and territory ("consanguinity and contiguity," in his elegant formulation) as the dominant principle for socio-political organization.[57]

The ambiguity and subjectivity of such classification schema provide the occasion for one of the other principal topics of debate in the literature on ethnicity and nationalism. In simplest terms, this debate concerns the stability and robustness of political identities.[58] On one side of the debate are "primordialists" or "essentialists," who see identities as deeply rooted, powerful political motivations that are very slow to

[55] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), pp. 9-12. Smith's treatment of this topic continues on pp. 79-84. Also see Esman, who includes "syncretic" nationalism (such as the weaving together of English, Scots, and Welsh in the United Kingdom) along with ethnic and civic forms (pp. 40-43).

[56] Ibid., p. 13.

[57] Horowitz, pp. 88-89.

[58] This summary draws especially on Esman, pp. 30-34 and Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics 2nd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), pp. 96-97.

change.[59] On the other side are "instrumentalists" or "modernists," who see group identification primarily as a means of political mobilization designed to maximize material and political gains. Instrumentalists see ethnic identities as somewhat contingent and open to manipulation by elites and "political entrepreneurs."[60] Analysts offering explanations of ethnic group behavior based on rational choice models and international relations theories such as the security dilemma can reasonably be grouped in with this modernist school.[61] In between these two positions are the "constructivists," who agree with instrumentalists that group identities are socially constructed and therefore malleable, but look to a broader set of factors operating over longer periods of time to explain changes in the dynamics of political identities.[62] The essence of the debate has been captured most colorfully, perhaps, by Ernest Gellner, who wondered, "do nations have navels?"[63]

Beyond quips, Brenden O'Leary has provided a useful framework for summarizing these approaches to ethnic identity. He divides approaches along two dimensions – modernists, ethnocontinuists (similar to constructivists), and primordialists;

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[59] See Connor's description, pp. 103-106.

[60] See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism (New Perspectives on the Past)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[61] For example, Elizabeth Crighton and Martha Abele MacIver, "The Evolution of Protracted Ethnic Conflict: Group Dominance and Political Underdevelopment in Northern Ireland and Lebanon," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 23, no. 2 (January 1991), pp. 127-142, David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 41-75, Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993), pp. 27-47.

[62] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1991).

[63] Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), chapter 15.

and then whether the analysts believe that ideas, interests, or identities are most important in influencing behavior. He concludes the following:

> Modernists tend to have greater optimism about the management and transcendence of national and ethnic conflict than do ethnocontinuists and primordialists. Those who emphasize the salience of ideas in explaining nationalism tend to emphasize the possibilities for conflict resolution created through alternative ideological mobilization or educational transcendence. Those who emphasize the salience of interests tend to explain ethnic relations through a realist focus on the balance of power between groups. Those who emphasize identities focus on the recognition and the misrecognition of collective identities.[64]

Recent scholarship has tended to favor the modernist and constructivist positions in the debate. As another summary of the debate observed, "'Essentialism' has . . . been vigorously criticized, and constructivist gestures now accompany most discussions of 'identity.'"[65] However, as with many such debates, ample opportunity exists to incorporate aspects from each of these perspectives into coherent analysis of ethnic identity and conflict. Many scholars have taken just such an ecumenical approach. Ted Robert Gurr points out that "the fact that . . . resurgent nationalisms are usually led by modern political entrepreneurs . . . should not obscure the fact that their success depends on the persistence of deep-rooted sentiments of separate identity. . ."[66] Horowitz advises that "many of the puzzles presented by ethnicity become much less confusing once we abandon the attempt to discover the vital essence of ethnicity and instead regard ethnic

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[64] Brendan O'Leary, "Nationalism and Ethnicity: Research Agendas on Theories of their Sources and their Regulation," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), pp. 37-48. O'Leary's category definitions differ somewhat from those outlined here, but his summary remains applicable (see p. 38).

[65] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 (February 2000), p. 6.

[66] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1993), p. 91.

affiliations as being located along a continuum of ways in which people organize and categorize themselves. . . Group boundaries are made of neither stone nor putty."[67]

Overall, the literature on the subject makes clear that, while ethnic identities can be malleable and are not the only types of identities that are politically relevant,[68] they do often have important effects that cannot be adequately described or predicted by focusing on individual, rational behavior. This general conclusion is buttressed not only by the work in political science and sociology described above, but also by work in social psychology on the impact of group identification on individual behavior. As one analyst describes it, "Group identification is part of a larger phenomenon in which, contrary to the assumptions of economists and sociobiologists, humans find it easy to care about people and things in a way that goes far beyond narrow self-interest."[69]

One other factor indicates potential for high relevance of ethnic identity in the context of insurgency and counterinsurgency. Group identities usually take on increased salience during civil conflict in multi-ethnic societies. In this way, ethnic conflict can become self-reinforcing as group boundaries are made more important and distinct simply by the onset of the initial violence.[70] This dynamic is crucial to account for in

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[67] Horowitz, pp. 55, 66.

[68] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006). Also see Connor, p. 156.

[69] Clark McCauley, "The Psychology of Group Identification and the Power of Ethnic Nationalism" in Chirot and Seligman, eds., p. 359. Also see Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict" in the same volume (pp. 319-342).

[70] See Gurr (1993), pp. 69, 126, Harff and Gurr, p. 97, Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 46-47, Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Addressing Ethnic Divisions in Post-Conflict Institution-Building: Lessons from Recent Cases," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 36, no. 3 (September 2005), pp. 299-300.

applying insights from the literature on identity and ethnic conflict to any analysis of counterinsurgency strategy.

An ambiguity along Horowitz's "continuum of ways in which people organize and categorize themselves" is the difference between ethnic and religious identity. Looking ahead in this study to the context of conflict in Iraq between Shi'a Arabs and Sunni Arabs, any significant theoretical differences could be quite important. Many analysts consider religious affiliation as a powerful form of identity, but somewhat less so than ethnicity. For example, Chaim Kaufmann asserts that

> Ideological identity is relatively soft, as it is a matter of individual belief, or sometimes political behavior. Religious identities are harder, because while they also depend on belief, change generally requires formal acceptance by the new faith, which may be denied. Ethnic identities are hardest, since they depend on language, culture, and religion, which are hard to change, as well as parentage, which no one can change.[71]

Others stress the similarities in the emotional and political effects of religious and ethnic identification. As Anthony Smith argues, "Both religious and ethnic identities have striven to include more than one class within the communities created on their bases. . . Both stem from similar cultural criteria of classification. They frequently overlap and reinforce one another. And singly or together, they can mobilize and sustain strong communities."[72] In general terms, this study is sympathetic to Smith's notion that religious and ethnic identities can operate in very similar ways and have similar effects. Accordingly, the study will use the terms "ethnic" and "ethno-religious" interchangeably, a choice that will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

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[71] Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil War," *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), p. 141.

[72] Smith, pp. 6-8.

One of the most important questions about how and to what extent ethnic identities contribute to political violence is the relative importance of those identities versus economic factors. Analytically, this often (though not necessarily) corresponds to a choice between focusing on behavioral processes in groups and focusing on structural incentives and preferences of individuals. This dichotomy brings the discussion around again to the previous section of this chapter on the historical influence and limitations of modernization theory. To reiterate the broad point, theories and policies of development and counterinsurgency in the United States and other European governments focused heavily on economic factors, structural incentives, and individual preferences. The judgment of the noted British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson is representative of this general view: "However powerful national or religious forces may be, that of material well-being is as strong if not stronger."[73] The neglect of ethnic identity in the formulation of these theories and policies was sometimes unconscious, sometimes deliberate, but there is little doubt that it was neglected.

Many of the works cited above are littered with critiques of excessive emphasis among academicians and policymakers on rationalist, materialist approaches to explaining and addressing civil conflict in the developing world.[74] Two renderings of this point will stand here for the rest of them, quoted at length because of their direct relevance to the topic of this study. Both passages were written in the 1980s, before the

[73] Thompson, p. 65.

[74] In addition to the quotations here, see Connor, 29-57, 72-74, 145-161, Harff and Gurr, p. 96, Horowitz, pp. 13-14, 87, 96-135, Smith, pp. 5, 125, and "Introduction," Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), p. 8.

end of the Cold War had thrust ethnic conflicts into the spotlight of international relations.

The first is from Walker Connor:

> To some, ethnonational identity seems little more than an epiphenomenon that becomes active as a result of economic deprivation and that will dissipate with greater egalitarianism. Others reduce it to the level of a pressure group that mobilizes in order to compete for scarce resources. A variation on the pressure group concept places greater emphasis on the role of elites; rather than a somewhat spontaneous mass response to competition, the stirring of national consciousness is seen as a ploy utilized by aspiring elites in order to enhance their own status. Finally, in the hands of many adherents of the "internal colonialism" model, entire ethnonational consciousness becomes equated with class consciousness. . . Explanations of behavior in terms of pressure groups, elite ambitions, and rational choice theory hint not at all at the passions that motivate Kurdish, Tamil, and Tigre guerrillas or Basque, Corsican, Irish, and Palestinian terrorists. Nor at the passions leading to the massacre of Bengalis by Assamese or Punjabis by Sikhs. In short, these explanations are a poor guide to ethnonationally inspired behavior. . .
>
> . . . Analysts have been beguiled by the fact that observable economic discrepancies are near universal concomitants of ethnic strife . . . [but] defining ethnonational conflicts in terms of economic inequality is a bit like defining them in terms of oxygen.[75]

The second is from Donald Horowitz:

> Processual theories of politics, developed in the United States at a time when ethnic claims were largely dormant, contain an inadvertent bias that impedes the understanding of ethnic politics. These theories hold that politics is a process for deciding 'who gets what'. . . following Hobbes, they conceive of power principally as a 'means to some future apparent good'. . . To understand ethnic conflict, it is necessary to reverse this emphasis. Power is, of course, often an instrument to secure other, tangible goods and benefits, . . but power may also *be* the benefit. . . Broad matters of group status regularly have equal or superior standing to the narrow allocative decisions often taken to be the uniform stuff of everyday politics.[76]

None of this criticism is meant to suggest that economic and material factors are insignificant, that ethnic grievances are more likely to cause civil conflict than economic

[75] Connor, pp. 73-74, 146, 147. Note that the collection referenced above was published in 1994, but the essays from which these quotes are taken were published in 1984 and 1987.

[76] Horowitz, pp. 186-187 (emphasis in original). A similar point is made by Indraneel Sircar, *Transnational Consociation in Northern Ireland and Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Role of Reference States in Post-Settlement Power Sharing*, unpublished dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006, p. 66.

grievances, or that ethnic and economic factors are always clearly separable.[77] To the contrary, a full appreciation of the roots and dynamics of irregular warfare undoubtedly benefits from complementary perspectives on legitimacy as it relates to both ethnic or religious identities and the quality of governance. The British insurgency expert Thomas Marks has argued persuasively that these different elements of insurgency have long co-existed to a greater extent than has been widely appreciated.[78] And another insurgency expert, Tony Joes, reminds us that "even during the Cold War, conflicts ostensibly about Communism exhibited deep ethno-religious roots, as in Malaya, Vietnam, Tibet, Angola, Peru, and Afghanistan."[79]

A debate on the relative importance of political and economic factors, and private and public factors in causing civil wars has emerged in the past decade in a subfield often referred to as the "economics of conflict." Using econometric techniques and large-N data sets, some analysts have presented evidence that economic factors tend to be more potent sparks for civil wars than ethnic diversity.[80] Other analysts using similar methods have found direct linkages between the types of ethnic divisions in a society and their proclivity for political violence.[81]

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[77] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars," *Perspectives in Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3 (September 2003), pp. 475-494, presents an argument for the difficulty of distinguishing between "political and private identities and actions."

[78] Thomas A. Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distortions," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 107-128.

[79] Joes, p. 3.

[80] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 28126, October 21, 2001 and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 2 (February 2003).

[81] Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part I)," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 45, no. 3 (June 2001), pp. 259-282, Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "How Much War Will We See? Explaining the Prevalence of

This study does not seek to resolve these questions since it is not principally concerned with the onset, frequency, or duration of civil wars, per se. But what the preceding discussion is meant to suggest, is that when ethnic conflicts do result in wars and insurgencies, their ethnic dimensions are likely to be extremely important in shaping the course of those wars and in determining the success or failure of efforts to stop them. And perhaps there is no better way to summarize this relationship between ethnic identity and political violence than by returning to the various grounds on which legitimacy is claimed. Horowitz directly addresses this issue and lays out four different potential bases for claims of "group legitimacy" in a given geographical space:[82] "prior occupation," or indigenousness; "special mission," usually one associated with religious claims; "traditional rule," where a group has ruled in a given area in the past; and "the right to succeed the colonial power," which relates to the status of particular groups at the point in time when colonial rule was ending. Note that none of these bases have much at all to do with Weber's notion of "rational" legitimacy or what would generally be associated with good governance. They all relate to the provenance and identity of the wielders of power.

Another important strand of the scholarly literature dedicated to ethnic conflict has focused on alternative political structures that have been used to mitigate ethnic conflict. Broadly, these structures can be placed on a spectrum bounded by assimilation on one end and secession or partition on the other, with intermediate steps mixing

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Civil War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 46, no. 3 (June 2002), pp. 307-334, Henry Hale, "Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse," *World Politics*, vol. 56, no. 2 (January 2004), and Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 101, no. 1 (February 2007), pp. 173-185.

[82] Horowitz, pp. 201-216.

different measures of integration and accommodation across ethnic groups within a single state.[83] As might be expected, those with views of ethnic identity tending toward the primordialist are more likely to support accommodationist political structures or even partition as institutional responses to ethnic conflict, while those with more instrumentalist views of identity are more likely to back integrationist responses.

One of the most prominent debates in this institutional arena has been between Horowitz and Arendt Lijphart. Horowitz advocates construction of federal constitutions and electoral systems that deliberately work against ethnic solidarity, such as those in Nigeria, South Africa, Malaysia, and India.[84] Lijphart advocates "consociational" power-sharing mechanisms that guarantee identity-based representation in key governmental posts, such as those in Belgium, Switzerland, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland.[85] These scholars disagree on whether institutions should be made to reflect ethnic identities directly or to decrease the political salience of those identities. But both sides of this debate proceed from the premise that ethnic identity is a powerful force that must be addressed by the political institutions of divided societies.

Finally, it is important to note the contributions of a relatively recent trend in scholarship on civil conflict that bears on the role of ethnic identities in such conflict. This literature, exemplified by Yale political scientist Stathis Kalyvas's work,[86]

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[83] John McGarry, Brendan O'Leary, and Richard Simeon, "Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation," in Sujuit Choudhry, ed., *Constitutional Design for Divided Societies: Integration or Accommodation?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 68.

[84] Horowitz, pp. 601– 652.

[85] Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics*, vol. 21, no. 2 (January 1969), and Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

[86] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Also Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Elizabeth Wood, *Insurgent*

demonstrates the limitations of macro or national measures of factors such as identity or governance or class as causal explanations of particular instances of local conflict. This work argues that the complexity and variability of motivations for individual and group behavior in civil conflict is so great that causal theories must address local "micro-level" variables, not only national-level ones. This insight need not divert an analytic emphasis on ethnic identities, however, so much as it sharpens that emphasis. As Kalyvas says, recommending a micro-level empirical focus "is not to say that ethnic, religious, or class allegiances are false or irrelevant, but rather that their effect varies considerably across time and space within the same civil war . . ."[87] The methodological implications of this perspective will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Recent Analysis of Governance, Identity, and Counterinsurgency

To be fair, the importance of ethnic identities and dynamics has not escaped the attention of analysts of insurgency, especially in recent years. For example, Bard O'Neill distinguishes insurgent grievances arising from dissatisfaction with the prevailing "political communities" from those arising from grievances related to "political systems" or "policies."[88] Steven Metz distinguishes "spiritual" from "commercial" insurgencies.[89] And Timothy Lomperis distinguishes legitimacy derived from "belief" from legitimacy derived from "opportunity" or "interest."[90] Each of these frameworks is directly related

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Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[87] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, pp. 390-391.

[88] O'Neill, pp. 15-19.

[89] Steven Metz, *The Future of Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993).

[90] Lomperis, pp. 55-59.

to the distinction made here between "identity" and "governance" as potential bases for legitimacy. More recently, the newest U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual counts "identity-focused" insurgencies as one of six main types of insurgencies.[91] And other analysts writing about irregular warfare in the midst of the war in Iraq have noted the powerful influence of ethnicity and religion on such wars.[92] Nevertheless, the implications of these dynamics for the design and conduct of counterinsurgency strategy remain under-examined by systematic empirical inquiry.[93] And many still hold out great hope for the contributions of improved governance to prosecuting counterinsurgency in Iraq.

Therefore, with the body of scholarship outlined in this chapter as a conceptual frame of reference, it is reasonable if not imperative to wonder whether improving governance in the form of economic benefits and material standard of living is always an effective instrument for dampening civil conflict. In cases where ethnic identities are salient, it seems quite possible that the individually-based social contract of Western political philosophy would be displaced by a "contract" based on groups or communities, and that the quality of governance would then take a back seat to identity in the conference of legitimacy on political institutions.

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[91] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, pp. 1-5, 1-8, 3-22.

[92] See Ian Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (March 2005), pp. 27-31, Cassidy, Beatrice Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1 (February 2007), pp. 151-171, Frank Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?" *Parameters*, Summer 2007, especially pp. 81-82, Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004), pp. 2-3, Richard H. Shultz, Jr. and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), Michael Vlahos, "Fighting Identity: Why We Are Losing Our Wars," *Military Review*, November-December 2007, pp. 2-12.

[93] This judgment is echoed in Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, p. 11.

The conflict begun in 2003 with the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq provides a particularly complex environment in which to explore alternative concepts of identity, governance, and legitimacy. The insurgencies there have been unusually, if not uniquely, decentralized, and comprise a variety of disparate interests.[94] One consequence of this complexity was significant disagreement over time among policy makers and analysts in the United States about the best course for counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq.

Perhaps four distinguishable, though overlapping, views have been evident since the beginning of the conflict in 2003. First, particularly prevalent in the war's early days, was a "kinetic" approach to counterinsurgency. Taken somewhat by surprise by the fact of the insurgency and its intensity, the U.S. military reverted to its organizational and doctrinal propensity to address hostile action through the application of overwhelming force.[95] This was coupled with resistance at strategic levels to the idea that an insurgency was under way, and therefore, that counterinsurgency was the appropriate framework for the U.S. and Coalition response.

A second approach quickly emerged, partly in response to the first, which cast the Iraqi insurgency as a successor to the long line of insurgencies faced in the past by American and other Western militaries. According to this view, counterinsurgents in Iraq should be looking to the lessons learned in previous counterinsurgencies, such as those in

[94] For overviews, see Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), Chapters 1-3, and *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, International Crisis Group, February 15, 2006.

[95] For two critiques of this propensity as implemented in Iraq, see Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), especially Chapters 8-9, and Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November-December 2005, pp. 2-15.

Malaya, Vietnam, and Algeria, for guidance on their strategies and tactics.[96] This view emphasized the centrality of winning hearts and minds in its traditional sense, focused on provision of security and good governance. This view gained some traction at the strategic level in Washington and Baghdad, but was coupled inextricably with an overriding focus on the transition of responsibility for counterinsurgency operations from Coalition forces to Iraqi forces.

A third view, emerging in 2006, began to question the applicability of traditional approaches to counterinsurgency, and emphasized the differences between today's insurgents and those of the twentieth century.[97] This view took exception to the notion that defeating the Iraqi insurgency depends on winning hearts and minds, emphasizing the sectarian nature of much of the violence in Iraq and concluding that addressing material grievances would matter little in squelching the insurgency. For example, defense analyst Stephen Biddle argued,

> The current struggle is not a Maoist 'people's war' of national liberation; it is a communal civil war with very different dynamics. . . Economic aid or reconstruction assistance cannot fix the problem: would Sunnis really get over their fear of Shiite domination if only the sewers were fixed and the electricity kept working?[98]

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[96] For example, Ian F. W. Beckett, *Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005), pp. 2, 15-18, Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters*, Summer 2004, pp. 73-83, Andrew Krepinevich, "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005, Melvin Laird, "Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2005 and Richard Lowry, "What Went Right," *National Review*, May 9, 2005.

[97] See David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency *Redux*," *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 4 (Winter 2006-07), pp. 111-130, Edward Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," *Harper's*, February 2007, Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, June 2007), and Hoffman, pp. 71-87.

[98] Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006. Richard Betts also argues that "In Iraq, the conflict . . . is about identity rather than ideology." See "Blowtorch Bob in Baghdad," *The American Interest*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Summer 2006), p. 36. Also see Ralph Peters, "The Hearts-and-Minds Myth," *Armed Forces Journal*, September 2006 for a much shriller but directly relevant argument.

In a similar vein, the Coalition Provisional Authority's Governance Coordinator in al Anbar province in 2003-2004 concluded that "a good political settlement without economic aid can still lead to stability, while no level of macroeconomic support can produce stability absent a viable political process."[99]

A fourth view became pre-eminent in 2007 with the arrival of General David Petraeus as the head of the Coalition's military effort and a "surge" of U.S. combat forces. This view seemed to balance aspects of both the second and third views while replacing the Coalition's strategic focus on transition of security responsibilities to a focus on directly providing population security in Baghdad.

At the time of this writing, the first drafts of history are giving great credit to the fourth of these views. But what combinations of security and good governance and identity-politics really drove events in Iraq? What kind of legitimacy has been at stake in there? And what should that mean for the policymakers charged with creating a successful counterinsurgency strategy? These questions are certainly far from settled, and the facts on the ground continue to change. One observation, though, seems safe to make: that claims to legitimacy and the effectiveness of insurgent and counterinsurgent operations have varied significantly in various regions within Iraq. Discerning whether and how these variations have been systematic present a great empirical challenge and opportunity, one which this study seeks to begin to take on.

[99] Keith Mines, "Economic Tools in Counterinsurgency and Post-conflict Stabilization: Lessons Learned (and Relearned) in al Anbar, Iraq, 2003-04," E-Notes, Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 29, 2006.

The Case for New Analysis on Identity, Governance, and Counterinsurgency Strategy

This chapter has tried to draw a clear distinction between the political dynamics of, on the one hand, government performance in meeting the needs of its citizens ("governance") and, on the other, ethnically and religiously driven group loyalties ("identity") as they relate to insurgency and counterinsurgency. At the same time, it has acknowledged that this distinction between governance and identity as potential bases for legitimacy is neither novel nor always stark in practice. It is reasonable to ask, then, why does this question merit further study? The preceding discussion reveals three crucial reasons for further study.

1. Current counterinsurgency doctrine and policy continues to strongly reflect conventional wisdom that was forged in the 1950s and 1960s in response to formative experiences in that era, the heyday of Maoist people's wars, modernization theory, and Cold War great power competition.[100] In particular, the concept that "winning hearts and minds" is central to counterinsurgency strategy, while rhetorically flexible enough to transcend narrow interpretation, is, historically speaking, firmly rooted in this intellectual tradition.[101] Most significantly for this research, both the liberal and the communist sides of this tradition are relatively insensitive to the divisive potential of ethnic and religious identity politics in civil conflicts. This is true partly for diametrically opposed reasons: an emphasis on political pluralism in the liberal case; and a dedication to a singular cosmopolitan set of values in the communist case. But

[100] As a RAND Corporation report from 2006 asserted, "COIN theory (as opposed to lists of practices . . .) is almost entirely a product of the Cold War." Long, p. 21.

[101] In the words of one analyst, ". . . hearts and minds was the expression of an ideology promoting a specific ideal of governance (and modernization) . . ." Alice Hills, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy? Controlling Civilians in Urban Operations," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 8.

it is also partly true for a common reason: a materialist conception of social welfare, justice, and legitimate authority.

2. Most of the social scientific literature in this field has focused on explaining the causes of revolution and insurgency, not on the causes of success or failure in the conduct of counterinsurgency.[102]
3. The war in Iraq that began in 2003 presents new and unusually promising empirical opportunities to illuminate these issues. This will be addressed in detail in Chapter 3.

In some sense, then, a theory of counterinsurgency strategy that is integrative of a diverse range of approaches to identity, governance, and legitimacy remains to be developed. This research does not aspire to generate a full-fledged theory of this sort. The cases and data presented here will not be sufficient, alone, to accomplish this. But this research does aim to provide a foundation for that larger theoretical goal.

[102] Lomperis and Shafer, both cited above, are important exceptions. Lomperis, however, explicitly avoids comparing alternative conceptions of legitimacy in favor of experimenting with the interpretive utility of a single assumption regarding legitimacy (p. xi). Lomperis also focuses exclusively on "people's wars" and subscribes to the transition from "traditional" to "modern" societies as the primary cause of these types of insurgencies (pp. 59-66).

Chapter 3: Research Design and Analytic Framework

Irregular warfare and the politics of ethnic identity clearly pose formidable analytical challenges. Relevant variables are legion, their interactions are complex, their descriptions subjective, and their associated data messy. As with other complex phenomena, great simplifications are sometimes necessary to make a given problem analytically tractable. The trick is to create a depiction of the world that is simple enough to make data available, questions coherent, and answers comprehensible, but no simpler than that. Such is the goal of this chapter.

The chapter is divided into four parts: 1) definitions of the study's central questions, hypotheses, and concepts; 2) description of its selection of case studies; 3) presentation of an analytic framework for the study; and 4) discussion of metrics and data sources for key parameters.

Bounding the Problem – Questions, Hypotheses, and Concepts

At the broadest level, as stated in Chapter 1, the question that guides this research is:

Is providing good governance necessary to defeat insurgencies?

More specifically, it seeks to examine the following hypothesis:

In the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.

Broadly speaking, testing this hypothesis could produce three alternative results, each with different implications for policy and strategy.

1. Hypothesis supported: Where major ethno-religious cleavages exist, those identities and group loyalties are clearly more important factors than the prevailing quality of

governance in explaining the dynamics of insurgencies, so those factors should be the basis on which counterinsurgency strategy seeks to build political stability.

2. Hypothesis partially supported: Where major ethno-religious cleavages exist, those identities and group loyalties are clearly important factors in explaining the dynamics of insurgencies, though they may or may not be more important causal factors than the prevailing quality of governance. Therefore, counterinsurgency strategy must seek to address both of these factors in building political stability.
3. Hypotheses not supported: Even where major ethno-religious cleavages exist, those identities and group loyalties are poor indicators of the dynamics of insurgency, so the quality of governance is a more reliable foundation upon which counterinsurgency strategy should seek to build political stability.

In any case, the first methodological task arising from the question and hypothesis above is to define what is meant by the key terms they employ.

Good Governance

"Good governance" is defined here as effective and efficient administration of public services and allocation of public resources. As such, assessment of the quality of governance will focus on issues such as economic organization, public health, education, the justice system, sanitation, power, and water. Governance is a general enough term that the choice of this particular definition is worth a few extra words of clarification and justification, especially since this definition is narrower than some conceptions of governance, yet broader than some others.

Most important, "good governance" here is not used in exactly the same way as it is often used in current literature and policy discourse on political and economic

development. There, good governance carries such strong connotations of transparent, democratic, and liberal political institutions as to be almost synonymous with them.[1] There are two key reasons why this conception of good governance is not appropriate for the context of this research. First, this conception sets unreasonably high standards of performance for governments under siege by insurgencies, and in so doing defines the majority of cases of insurgency and counterinsurgency as outside the scope of the question. Second, this conception presumes an inextricable linkage between particular forms of political institutions and legitimacy (e.g. liberal democracy) that may not be universally valid. Therefore, while some semblance of a functioning political system is a necessary component of good governance as defined here, such features as elections and the separation of institutional powers are not.

The World Bank tracks governance in six "dimensions:" 1) voice and accountability; 2) political stability and absence of violence; 3) government effectiveness; 4) regulatory quality; 5) rule of law; and 6) control of corruption.[2] These dimensions provide a closer approximation of what governance refers to in this research, but there are two very important differences. First, the definition used in this research expressly excludes the second of these six dimensions: security. As discussed at length later in this chapter, security in counterinsurgencies is both uniquely important and analytically problematic. For both of these reasons, it will be treated in this research as a separate

[1] For example, see, Gita Welch and Zahra Nuru, ed., *Governance for the Future: Democracy and Development in the Least Developed Countries*, United Nations Development Programme, 2006, Chapter 1.

[2] Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996-2007," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4654, June 2008. Another proposed measurement scheme for quality of governance that is generally consistent with this approach is in Robert I. Rotberg and Deborah L. West, "The Good Governance Problem: Doing Something About It," World Peace Foundation Report #39, 2004.

factor from the other dimensions of governance. To be clear, the intent of this research is to test the utility of *aspects of governance other than security* in defeating insurgencies.

Additionally, the first of the World Bank's governance dimensions also requires some qualification as it relates to the definition used here. "Voice and accountability," or the idea that constituencies see themselves as having representation is an important part of governance (though note that this need not necessarily be provided via democratic elections). However, the existence of a mechanism for accountability does not equate to satisfaction with the representation itself. The particular distribution of power among constituencies is considered in this study to be a separate variable from governance. At first glance, this may appear to be an overly subtle distinction, but it is truly at the heart of the issue under examination here. The *existence of mechanisms for accountability* speaks to *how* a government governs. The *distribution of power* across ethno-religious groups speaks to the issue of *who* governs.

Despite these important limitations in scope, the definition used here is broader than some definitions of governance, notably the one offered by the U.S. military's latest manual on counterinsurgency. There, governance is defined as one of six separate "lines of operation," which "relates to the host nation's ability to gather and distribute resources while providing direction and control for society." While the activities that the counterinsurgency manual identifies with governance are included in the definition used here, so are activities that the manual identifies with two other lines of operation: "essential services," dealing with the operation of power, water, sanitation, education, medical systems and the like; and "economic development," dealing with the supervision

and regulation of a functioning economy that provides employment and creates and allocates resources.[3]

Insurgency / Counterinsurgency

"Insurgency" is defined here as an indigenous military or paramilitary challenge to the sovereignty of a constituted government over all or part of its territory. Accordingly, "counterinsurgency" is the collective strategy and operations of a government and its allies that are aimed to defeat an insurgency.[4] This research will also focus on a specific subset of conflicts between insurgents and counterinsurgents: those in which a significant counterinsurgent role is played by a foreign power.

Defeat / Victory / Failure / Success

"Defeat" and "victory" are notoriously difficult to define and depend largely on a particular political point of view or point in time. That said, the proceeding analysis will recognize defeat and victory in instances where explicit or imputed counterinsurgent objectives, commensurate with the geographic and temporal scope under consideration, are either demonstrably met and/or are judged to be met by key parties to the conflict. As will be addressed later in this chapter, "success" and "failure" will be easier concepts to

[3] Field Manual (FM) 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006) (hereafter referred to as "FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5"), pp. 5-14 to 5-17.

[4] These definitions are consistent with the U.S. military's doctrinal definitions of insurgency ("an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict") and counterinsurgency ("those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civil actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency"). Joint Publication 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* as amended through September 17, 2006. Other similar definitions of "insurgency" are in Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd Edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 15, and Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 1.

apply to the case studies than "victory" and "defeat," in part because they allow for gradations of meaning and relative progress rather than absolute, definitive outcomes.

Ethno-religious Identity-Based Cleavages

A recent paper on the methodological dimensions of identity in the social sciences concluded that "the current state of the field amounts to a definitional anarchy."[5] Other scholars have commented that the term "identity," as an analytical category, "tends to mean too much, . . too little, . . . or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)."[6] Part of this state of confusion, no doubt, results from the variety of types of identity that operate in the variety of contexts relevant to the social sciences.

Mindful of these pitfalls, the first step in narrowing down the concept for this study is to say that the identities of interest here are those that are group-based, related to ethnic and religious affiliations, and are manifest in political behavior. As Chapter 2 made clear, the boundaries of ethnic and religious identities can only be established with any validity on a case-by-case basis. But as a starting point for distinguishing "identities" in this research, Weber's definition of an ethnic group will serve: "… those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration…"[7]

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[5] Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, "Identity as a Variable," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol 4, no. 4 (December 2006), p. 3.

[6] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 (February 2000), p. 1.

[7] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, translated by Ephraim Fischof (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 389 (first published in 1922) .

Also as noted in Chapter 2, the category of interest in this research reaches beyond ethnic identity to include religious identity as well. Hence, the term "ethno-religious" is used to describe group identity and behavior associated with either ethnicity, religion or both together. This combination is not meant to suggest that there are no differences between ethnic and religious identities. Instead, the combination is made for analytic convenience and is based on the assumption that ethnic and religious identities are likely to manifest themselves in political behavior in similar ways. This assumption is a common one in the study of ethnicity[8] and also is implicit in the U.S. military's definition of an ethnic group: "a human community whose learned cultural practices, language, history, ancestry or *religion* distinguish them from others."[9]

Finally, the hypothesis above requires distinguishing environments with major ethno-religious "cleavages" from those without them. Ethno-religious identities are present everywhere, but they are not equally politically salient everywhere. This research uses the term "cleavage" to describe the presence of multiple politically salient ethno-religious identities within a single political unit. The term is rooted in theories of political sociology that distinguish societies with dominant "segmental cleavages" from those with dominant "cross-cutting cleavages."[10] With segmental cleavages, individuals' interests across multiple domains such as ethnicity, religion, class, profession, region, etc. tend to align in relatively discrete social segments. With cross-cutting cleavages, those

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[8] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 17-18. David Little and Donald K. Swearer, "Introduction," in David Little and Donald K. Swearer, eds., *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq: A Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 3-7.

[9] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 3-4 (emphasis added).

[10] See Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

interests across multiple domains do not align particularly well, thus preventing strong linkages between group identity and political cohesiveness. The ethno-religious identity-based cleavages addressed in the above hypothesis, then, are segmental cleavages, and thus of high political salience.

A Note on "Hearts and Minds"

This research does aim to provide insight into the validity of the often-cited *sine qua non* of successful counterinsurgency strategy, "winning hearts and minds." In some sense, exploring the relative claims to legitimacy of ethno-religious identity versus expectations of good governance is tantamount to building a definition of "hearts and minds." Nevertheless, this particular terminology will be largely absent from the analysis. Trying to speak analytically of the "hearts and minds" of the "people" probably commits a logical error that historian David Hackett Fischer calls the "pathetic fallacy," that is, the "ascription of animate behavior to inanimate objects."[11] While "hearts and minds" may be useful shorthand in some contexts, it is distinctly opaque as an analytic category or as a strategic objective. As Fischer goes on to say,

> It is . . . problematical to locate the point at which the behavior patterns of individuals can be transferred to groups. . . Sometimes the intention is merely metaphorical. But it is an exceedingly doubtful and dangerous image to introduce into one's thought, for it has a way of spreading swiftly out of control.[12]

This seems an appropriate warning for analysts and strategists, alike, and is reflected in the research design for this study.

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[11] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1970), p. 190.

[12] Ibid.

Case Studies

The empirical components of the study fall into two categories. First, in Chapter 4, brief analyses apply the analytic framework developed in this chapter to a macro view of three of the most "classic" cases of twentieth century counterinsurgency. Second, in Chapters 5-7, the analytic framework is applied to two detailed case studies of American counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, from 2004-2006.

The twentieth century set of case studies, based on secondary sources, serve two purposes in the study. The first was methodological, in that they provided an opportunity to calibrate and refine the analytic framework and hypotheses developed here prior to the collection and analysis of original data. Second, though abbreviated and intended to be more analytically instrumental than conclusive, the case studies also stand as tests of the research question and hypothesis in their own right.

The cases were selected with an eye toward covering the most important episodes among the class of counterinsurgencies directly addressed by the research: conflicts in which a significant counterinsurgent role is played by a foreign power. The cases considered in Chapter 4 are the United Kingdom in Malaya (1948-1960), France in Algeria (1954-1962), and the United States in South Vietnam (1962-1973).

The second empirical component of this study is primary research on counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, during the period 2004-2006. Apart from its clear historical importance and its relevance to near and mid-term policy considerations, Iraq provides rich opportunities for comparative analysis of the issues addressed in this study, arising from the various combinations across the country of key variables such as ethno-religious demographics and counterinsurgent strategies applied.

In some cases, different organizations have been engaged in operations in very similar environments, with identical strategic goals, and yet have implemented different approaches to counterinsurgency. For example, both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps have fought extensively in the so-called "Sunni Triangle," but, at the outset of U.S. involvement there, had very distinct histories and doctrines with regard to counterinsurgency. Partly due to these differences, in the spring of 2004, the 1st Marine Division attempted to implement a different approach to its operations than the Army units it relieved in Anbar province.[13] Conversely, there have been instances where similar strategies were adopted by different organizations operating in environments that were quite different from one another. Both the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division and British forces pursued strategies with a heavy emphasis on good governance and economic reconstruction, with the former operating in multi-ethnic Baghdad and the latter in Shia-Arab-dominated Basra.

In many cases, partly due to the relative lack of preparedness and formal training for counterinsurgency, different approaches were adopted even by different units of the same organizations. In some cases, operational planning and decision making was so decentralized that battalions within a single brigade and units responsible for the same locales at different times took very different approaches to achieving their operational objectives. Examining the experiences of different units through a comparative lens,

[13] Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 327, Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 319-320, and Bing West, *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah* (New York: Bantam, 2005), pp. 49-52.

therefore, promises to provide some robust evidence for the efficacy or hazards of certain policies, doctrine, or tactics.[14]

The study presents two case studies focused on the operations of brigade-level U.S. military organizations in two Iraqi cities: the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division in Ramadi (2004-2005) and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Tal Afar in 2005-2006. Case selection considerations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The empirical focus here on military organizations is worthy of a point of clarification. Counterinsurgency strategies and operations are not purely military functions, and this analysis aims to capture the full range of activities undertaken by military and civilian counterinsurgents alike, for the cases considered. However, one premise of the research design is that in Iraq, local or regional dynamics have differed sufficiently to justify treating those localities as distinct analytic units. Typically, military units have led operations at that level. Focusing the analysis on these units, therefore, is not only a matter of analytic convenience, but also is probably the most viable method for constructing a holistic view of counterinsurgency operations in a given space and timeframe.

This approach may come at the expense of some confusion about the use of traditional terms for the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Ambiguity in this regard is very common, but is particularly acute in an environment where nominally "tactical" units, such as brigades, are developing their own political-military "strategies,"

[14] I am aware of only two examples of this kind of comparison that address the war in Iraq: Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization*, vol. 63, no. 1 (Winter 2009), pp. 67-106, and Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," NBER Working Paper 14606 (December 2008).

but whose objectives are considered "operational" by virtue of their being sub-national. This analysis will aim to minimize confusion on this subject with the understanding that the levels of this hierarchy will draw their meaning from their context relative to their geographic units of analysis rather than from doctrine. Hence counterinsurgency "strategy" may well be local in many instances.

Finally, the rationale for selecting 2004-2006 as the timeframe for the analysis is that this is the period in which the conflict in Iraq can most clearly be characterized as an insurgency against the nascent Iraqi government and its Coalition allies. By 2006, the conflict had evolved into a civil war with far less coherence about which parties could be considered "insurgents" and which "counterinsurgents." Clearly, there has been much debate about how to label the war in Iraq, a debate that has tended to generate more heat than light. But by September 2006, even the top American general in Iraq was acknowledging that "We're starting to see this conflict here transition from an insurgency against us to a struggle for the division of political and economic power among the Iraqis."[15] The most commonly cited turning point in this transition is the bombing of the Askariya shrine in Samarra on February 22, 2006. This point seems an appropriate demarcation point between the phase of the war dominated by insurgency and the phase dominated by wider civil war.

Structuring the Problem – An Analytic Framework

The first step in formally defining this problem should be to examine the basic causal logic usually hypothesized between counterinsurgency strategies and the ultimate defeat of insurgents. The next two sections take on this challenge, and are followed by a

[15] General George Casey, quoted in Elena Becatoros, "Top U.S. General: Iraq Conflict Shifting to Internal Struggle," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 22, 2006.

discussion of how this logic may be formalized through creation and organization of key variables.

The Logic of Counterinsurgency Strategy

In the most general sense, counterinsurgency strategy can be divided into two classes of activities: improving governance and providing security. The U.S. government's new Counterinsurgency Guide frames the problem of counterinsurgency strategy this way: "Effective COIN . . . involves a careful balance between constructive dimensions (building effective and legitimate government) and destructive dimensions (destroying the insurgent movements)."[16] As political scientist D. Michael Shafer describes this logic, "[American counterinsurgency] doctrine emphasizes development *and* security. . . Without security, so the argument goes, development is impossible; without good government and economic progress, efforts to maintain it will be bootless."[17] Figure 1 below outlines this logic, with events labeled A-H and causal processes labeled 1-9. In event A, counterinsurgents attempt to improve governance through the variety of mechanisms discussed in the definition above. At the same time, they also conduct traditional security operations, including both police and military operations (event B). If improvements in governance are realized (event C via processes 1 and 2), then this is supposed to win popular loyalty and support for the government and

[16] *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (United States Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, January 2009), p. 14.

[17] D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 79 (emphasis in original). Other analyses employing two similar categories to describe counterinsurgency strategy include Jim Baker, "Systems Thinking and Counterinsurgencies," *Parameters*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Winter 2006-07), pp. 26-43, Alice Hills, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy? Controlling Civilians in Urban Operations," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 6, and William J. Hurley, Joel Resnick, Alec Wahlman, *Improving Capabilities for Irregular Warfare (Volume I: Main Text)* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2007), p. II-3 and Appendix A.

thereby decrease popular support for the insurgency (event D). This should then cause the insurgency to decline (event G) both directly, as it is denied safe havens and recruits (process 5), and indirectly, as the population grows more cooperative with counterinsurgent security operations (events E and F and processes 6-8). Finally, the declining insurgency eventually results in a stable peace (process 9 and event H). This, in essence, is the conventional explanation offered by much of the academic literature and operational doctrine on counterinsurgency for an observed correlation between events A (attempts to improve governance) and H (a resulting stable peace).

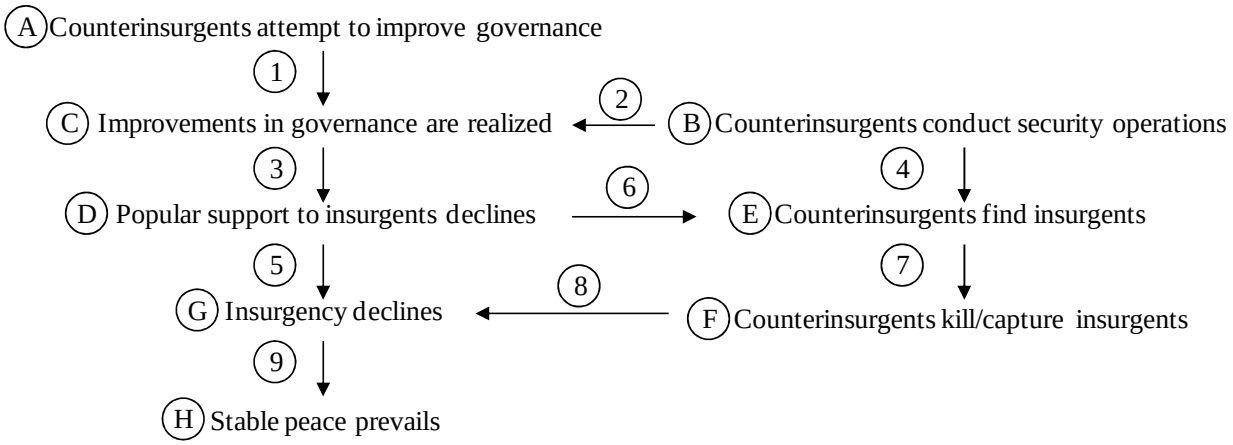

Figure 1: Basic Causal Logic of Counterinsurgency Strategy

If, however, we observe A but do not observe any evidence of H over time, we can infer that one or more of the causal processes in this chain has not operated as hypothesized. Specifically, what might those breakdowns be? Possibilities could be found in any one of the processes depicted in Figure 1, but this study focuses particular attention on process number 3: the mechanism that translates improved governance into shifting loyalties among the affected population. For it is here that legitimacy is widely believed to reside and to operate as a key instrument of the counterinsurgent. And it is

here that conflicts involving identity may subvert the intended effects of improvements in governance on popular support for the insurgency.

One of the principal problems with legitimacy as an analytic construct, of course, is that it is an abstraction, and therefore very difficult to observe. A little like dark matter in astrophysics, it is recognizable primarily through its imputed effects. In the model depicted here, those effects would be visible in events E, G, and ultimately H. But this indirect inference of the causal role of legitimacy is problematic because each of these signal events (E, G, and H) can also be caused by events B, E, and F. Moreover, events B, E, and F can plausibly operate without significant contribution from the supposed chain of legitimacy building, events A, C, and D. For this reason, we cannot necessarily infer a causal relationship between events A and H, even when they are correlated. Perhaps this is one reason why, as Timothy Lomperis reported in his study of legitimacy and insurgency, ". . . in a personal letter to the author, Chalmers Johnson, a prominent scholar on revolution, warned against basing a study of insurgency on legitimacy because the concept is too 'intellectually traumatic.'"[18]

In fact, the conceptual challenge here is even thornier than this problem with legitimacy implies. An additional complication arises from the fact that security is both an important input and an important output of any counterinsurgency strategy. This has two troublesome logical implications.

First, the dependent variable, represented here as event H, "stable peace," may sometimes be difficult to distinguish from one of the key independent variables, the security operations depicted here as event B. Sharp reductions in the magnitude and

[18] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. xii.

frequency of insurgent violence represent probably the clearest available indicator of the overall success of a counterinsurgent effort. But such reductions can often be provided fairly readily, if only temporarily, with sufficient quantities of patrols by police or military forces. This kind of militarized security could hardly be described as a successful counterinsurgency, however. The real measure of success would have to be the relative absence of violence coupled with much smaller levels of force. Political scientist Jeffrey Race refers to these two different types of security as tactical and strategic security, respectively.[19] Distinguishing between the two empirically is certainly feasible, but it requires both explicit collection and interpretation of the data in these terms, and a considerable degree of subjectivity in that interpretation.

The second logical implication, following from the first, concerns process number 2 in Figure 1. This reflects the fact that improvements in security are likely to help allow improvements in governance to be realized in addition to, or instead of, the other way around. If an observed improvement in security could, in fact, be either event B or event H, then we cannot be sure whether event C is actually a cause of improved security or an effect. This potential for confusion about cause and effect is not simply a methodological problem, either. It is an operational problem that strikes at the heart of strategy and decision-making. As one reporter described this problem in relating the struggles of an American provincial reconstruction team in Baqubah, ". . . officials seemed unable to agree on whether poor security was preventing reconstruction or whether reconstruction

[19] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 146.

failures had caused security to erode."[20] In such an environment, what is the strategist or the analyst to do?

Research Methods and Challenges of Causal Inference

For the moment, we must leave the strategist to fend for himself and focus on the needs of the analyst. The key to better understanding of complex phenomena such as these is in examining the detailed course of events in which the independent variables interacted to produce the outcomes of the dependent variable. This method for seeking detailed causal linkages is often referred to as "process tracing."[21] The analysis here of the Iraqi case studies focuses its empirical effort on just such a process-tracing method for counterinsurgency operations at local levels. This approach is inevitably challenging to execute and generates inconsistent data across different times and locales. Nevertheless, a focus on this level of detail offers the only hope of being able to reliably navigate the ambiguities outlined in the previous section. An empirical focus on the national level, on simply establishing correlations among variables, or on achieving a large sample size for statistical analysis could not accommodate the interpretive burden demanded by the dynamics under examination here.

This methodological judgment is one basis for the growing body of literature cited in Chapter 2 on "microlevel research" on social phenomena. As Stathis Kalyvas explains,

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[20] Solomon Moore, "A Promising Iraqi Province is Now a Tinderbox," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2007, p. 1.

[21] For overviews of process tracing, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 205-232 and Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 85-87.

> . . . emphasis on the macrolevel implies that 'on-the-ground' dynamics are perceived as a rather irrelevant local manifestation of the macrolevel. Local actors are seen as local replicas of central actors, and studying them is justified only on grounds of local history or antiquarian interest. This neglect has several causes: a division of labor separating the tasks of collecting evidence at the microlevel and interpreting macrodynamics; an epistemic preference that marginalizes the particular; and the interpretation of microlevel dynamics in the language of the master cleavage.[22]

This research employs both macro and microlevel techniques; the former for the cases of Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam, and the latter for the Iraqi cases.

Coalition operations in Iraq present particularly interesting comparative analytic opportunities that this research begins to exploit. An advantage of considering multiple Iraqi cases is that a large number of contextual variables are automatically controlled. Comparative analyses of historical counterinsurgencies, such as those between Malaya and Vietnam,[23] are hampered by the large differences in context between cases.[24] With the case of Iraq, such important variables as the national political context, the role of neighboring countries and regional dynamics, and the prevailing technologies that shape communications, commerce, and warfare, are all very similar, if not identical, across the multiple local cases. Moreover, as described above, Iraq offers cases where different counterinsurgency strategies were attempted in areas with similar dynamics of ethnic

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[22] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 390.

[23] This has been a particularly popular comparison in the literature; see Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), Sam Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), and Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966).

[24] Bernard Fall was even less charitable about such comparisons, alleging that "any comparison between British victories in Malaya and the situation in Vietnam in the 1960s is nothing but a dangerous delusion, or worse, a deliberate oversimplification of the whole problem." Quoted in Robert W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of A Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, February 1972), p. 78.

political conflict; and it also offers cases where similar strategies were pursued in areas with quite different dynamics of ethnic political conflict.

All of these conditions suggest an opportunity to conduct a "controlled comparison," an analytic technique inspired by experimental science in which all conditions are held constant except for a single variable of interest. If changes in that single variable are shown to be correlated with differences in the dependent variable outcomes, then the comparison suggests a causal connection between the two variables. Also, even short of the restrictive conditional requirements of controlled comparison, Iraqi cases also offer the possibility of multiple "congruence" tests. With this method, "the investigator begins with a theory and then attempts to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case."[25]

These methods have the seductive quality of promising a link from the research's empirical work to theory building. But their attractiveness is limited because, for a variety of reasons, they provide only weak links from data to theory. The limitations for hypothesis testing of the "methods of elimination" underlying controlled comparisons, for example, have been well understood since John Stuart Mill gave them that name in 1843.[26] One problem arises simply from the complexity of many social phenomena. Complexity usually means that even cases that appear quite similar are different in ways that may remain unspecified by anything less than a grand field theory of all the phenomena involved in the cases. This raises the possibility that variables omitted from the analysis actually account for case outcomes, either directly or through interactions

[25] George and Bennett, p. 181.

[26] Ibid., pp. 153-160, and Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 56-58.

with specified variables. Insurgency and counterinsurgency certainly qualify as complex problems in this sense. Outcomes are subject to influence by an analytically unmanageable number of interdependent factors. Theorists of complexity science have taken to calling such phenomena not just complex, but "wicked problems."[27]

A second challenge arises from the "equifinality"[28] (or "multiple causality"[29]) of the outcomes under examination. These terms refer to problems where multiple causal paths can lead to the same outcome. Warfare is a good example of this kind of problem, where victory in one war is not likely to result from exactly the same combination of factors as victory in a different war.

A third challenge, which is related to equifinality, is the lack of specificity in predictions made by many theories. As Stephen Van Evera describes, Einstein's general theory of relativity was widely considered confirmed by a single case study "congruence" test because it made a highly specific and unique prediction about the degree of apparent displacement of stars during a solar eclipse.[30] By contrast, hypotheses such as the one proposed in this research are not highly specific, and multiple plausible explanations may fit a given combination of variable values. The easiest way to address this problem is to narrow the focus of the dependent variable. For example, rather than asking "will we win the war?" we ask, "at what rate will we attrit enemy forces?" But in some instances, this approach amounts to asking the wrong question, and hence throwing out the substantive

[27] Horst W.J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences*, vol. 4, 1973. pp 155-169.

[28] George and Bennett, pp. 161-162.

[29] King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 87-89.

[30] Van Evera, pp. 66-67.

baby with the methodological bath water. This is something of a common curse for the strategist. As his questions become more integrative, they simultaneously become more important and less tractable.

In sum, the essence of the problem with hypothesis testing for the subject of this research is that the variables of interest are not deterministic and they are not independent. The main methodological implication of this condition is that inferences of causation from correlations between independent and dependent variables are likely to be weak. But all is not lost. First, from the perspective of theory-building, as George and Bennett point out, "theories can be tested in two different ways: by assessing the ability of a theory to predict outcomes, and by assessing the ability of a theory to predict the intervening causal process that leads to outcomes."[31] For this research, the second of these methods will be much more important than the first.

Second, this study is not primarily an exercise in theory-building in any case. If it presents new information, stimulates thinking along new paths and is suggestive of new knowledge, it will have succeeded. All of these considerations, then, led to the hybrid research design selected for this study and described at the beginning of this section: a mix of macro and micro case studies with process tracing in the latter to determine how ethno-religious identities and counterinsurgency strategies interacted.

Identifying the Variables

The model of counterinsurgency depicted in Figure 1 is exceedingly simple. In the service of hypothesis generation and theory development, deductive reasoning could easily reveal additional layers of dynamics and complexity in the system at hand.

[31] George and Bennett, p. 209, n12.

However, an empirical research strategy demands a match between the analytic framework and the data that is available to make use of the framework. Therefore, the goal at this point is not to complicate the model, but rather to specify it and its variables with enough care to make it analytically functional. With this in mind, how can we formalize the main research question and hypothesis? The following few paragraphs outline the key variables that will be addressed. The next section discusses issues of measurement and sources for describing these variables.

In its most general form, the dependent variable is clearly the outcome of an insurgency – a victory or a defeat for the insurgents. For the Iraqi case studies, however, victory and defeat will have to be treated as directions rather than endpoints. The focus on local or regional cases within the larger national context prevents speaking strictly about outcomes for the whole insurgency. And, in any case, the timeframe under examination ends before that whole insurgency had any resolution. Therefore, the dependent variable for the case studies will essentially be the change in prospects for stable peace within the geographic and temporal boundaries of the case. To emphasize this more general character of the dependent variable, it can be labeled "success" or "failure" rather than "victory" or "defeat."

The framework will address four independent variables. For simplicity, each of them is described here as binary, though in fact they could just as easily be thought of as having multiple categories or even as continuous, accommodating multiple levels of assessment. The first independent variable addresses whether politically salient ethno-religious cleavages were present in a given case, that is, whether the identities represented among political leadership were a major factor in the grievances or evident

motives of insurgents. The second independent variable addresses security operations, and whether those operations were conducted with appropriate capabilities, resources, and discrimination between hostile and neutral targets. The third independent variable addresses whether or not initiatives for improving governance, as that concept is defined earlier in this chapter, were attempted and achieved by the counterinsurgents.

Finally, the fourth independent variable addresses the main hypothesis presented at the beginning of this chapter, which posits that "in the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages." Accordingly, the fourth independent variable in the framework is the presence of political agreements that directly address ethno-religious cleavages. Such agreements may take many different forms. As described in Chapter 2, these might include the establishment of consociational power-sharing mechanisms, arrangements of ethno-religious group autonomy, or perhaps electoral arrangements designed to foster greater cross-group cooperation. The key qualifying criterion is that the political agreement expressly recognizes the extant cleavage in trying to resolve conflict. Clearly, this factor would not be relevant in cases where identity-based cleavages were not present. But in cases where they were, pursuit of such political agreements may provide one of the only alternatives to good governance in promising a stable political resolution to the insurgency. Whether or not this is the case, and, if it is, how these activities operate and affect the course of the counterinsurgency, comprise the final element of the formal analytic framework employed in this study.

These five variables (one dependent, four independent) provide a focus for data collection and analysis in each of the case studies. In this regard, each case study requires collection and classification of data according to the scheme outlined in Table 1 below.

Variable	Data Required to Support Variable Classification
Ethno-religious cleavages or not?	Ethno-religious composition and political dynamics
Good security operations conducted or not?	Types and dynamics of security operations
Good governance provided or not?	Quantity/types of governance-focused initiatives undertaken
	Outcomes of governance-focused initiatives undertaken
Efforts toward a political agreement that addresses ethno-religious cleavages or not?	Ethno-religious composition and political dynamics
Counterinsurgency successful or not?	Counterinsurgency outcome metrics

Table 1: Main Data and Classification Requirements

With this data for each case, a summary of outcomes in the format of Table 2 below can be constructed. Again, representing these variables as having either binary (yes or no) or meaningful quantitative values would be, respectively, crude or arbitrary. Nevertheless, the binary classification is helpful for the purposes of clarifying the logic being tested through the analysis of a few hypotheses.

	Independent Variables				**Dependent Variable**
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**c (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Case 1					
Case 2					
. . .					
Case n					

Table 2: Notional Case Study Variable Summary

Assume the following symbols for each of the major variables:

a = ethno-religious identity-based cleavages

b = good security operations

c = good governance

d = efforts toward political agreement addressing cleavages

y = counterinsurgent success

Then assume that the values of all variables are either Yes (condition is present) or No (condition is not present). The following hypotheses (H) may then be specified, together with the combination of variable values that would provide supporting evidence for them.

H1: Good governance is not *necessary* for counterinsurgent success. This would be supported by any result where: c=No, y=Yes.

H2: If ethno-religious cleavages are not present, then good governance and good security are sufficient for counterinsurgent success. This would be supported by: a=No, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=Yes.

H3: If ethno-religious cleavages are present, then good governance and good security together are not sufficient for counterinsurgent success. This would be supported by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=No.

Variations and combinations of these hypotheses could also be constructed, but these represent the most important hypotheses relevant to main questions of the study in their simplest forms.

To reiterate a point from the previous section, correlations such as the ones posited here can only be suggestive of causal relationships. Alone, they do not provide strong evidence of causation. Accordingly, the framework presented here represents a point of departure for the analysis in this study, not a strict filter through which all insights from the research will be understood.

Metrics and Data Sources

Measurement of abstract phenomena such as governance, identity, and counterinsurgent success is inherently difficult. While no methodological panacea for this challenge exists, it is possible to achieve some degree of reliability in such measurement through the collection of perspectives of direct observers of and participants in the events being studied.

This kind of first-hand data is available in a few different forms: government and military archival resources such as after-action reports, lessons learned, and unit histories; extensive reporting by journalists of a diverse range of nationalities and perspectives; and interviews with military and civilian personnel who have worked in Iraq. This study draws on all three of these.

Table 1 lists five categories of data demanded by the analytic framework: ethno-religious composition and political dynamics; types and dynamics of security operations; quantity/types of governance-focused initiatives undertaken; outcomes of governance-focused initiatives undertaken; and counterinsurgency outcome metrics.

As discussed in the previous section, the last of these, the dependent variable, is perhaps the most important and the most difficult to get right. The definition of insurgent defeat offered in the first part of this chapter claims that defeat occurs if "explicit or imputed counterinsurgent objectives . . . are either demonstrably met and/or are judged to be met by key parties to the conflict." So, to some degree, the opinions of the counterinsurgent leaders matter as an outcome metric. But this is not sufficient. In more concrete, objective terms, what counts as "success"?

Security is the most obvious candidate metric. Event H in Figure 1, "stable peace prevails," represents the essence of this metric. But, to reiterate the earlier point, security is both an input and an output of counterinsurgency operations. Hence, simply using security as the dependent variable introduces a serious endogeneity problem into the research design. The hazard here is the potential for mistaking the direction of causation between the effectiveness of governance-related activities and the intensity of the insurgency. If success in the counterinsurgency is defined only according to the prevailing level of security, and some threshold level of security is necessary to execute governance-type measures, then there is some level of violence at which it is impossible to test any hypotheses about the effects of governance on levels of violence.

One possible response to this is to analyze only cases where the level of violence remains below this notional threshold. But this is impractical for the Iraq cases and would also have the drawback of excluding a significant portion of the problem from consideration. Another response would be to treat security as a trailing indicator, i.e. by comparing governance-related initiatives in month X to security in month X+1 or X+2. This avoids confusion regarding the direction of causation and also probably better represents the nature of any expected effects. Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher recommend this approach in their own work on civil conflict:

> . . . we don't have a way as yet to address the issue of endogeneity of violence and control. Violence is used to generate control, and levels of control affect the intensity of the violence. Contextual qualitative evidence make it possible to disentangle the relation between violence and control through sequencing.[32]

[32] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher, "Violence and Control in Civil War: An Analysis of the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES)," unpublished manuscript presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 27, 2003.

Just as security serves as an input to counterinsurgency, so do some other candidate metrics that relate to governance. Metrics such as hours of functioning electricity or unemployment rates are sometimes used to measure progress. Indeed, for some purposes, these are helpful proxies. But from an analytic perspective, measuring success by such metrics is very similar to measuring success by insurgent body counts; that is, it assumes a connection between input and output that is plausible but only hypothetical.[33]

Ultimately, distinguishing between the short-term security provided directly by military and police operations from more sustainable, stable security requires either retrospect through significant passage of time, or the judgment of people intimately familiar with the evolving situation. For the Iraq case studies, this study will emphasize the latter.

Metrics for the other key variables are more conceptually straightforward, though they may still be highly subjective. Composition and dynamics of ethno-religious identities may be derived from demographic statistics, local reporting, and participant interviews. It is important to recognize that group loyalties are not uniform across entire groups. As Henry Brady and Cynthia Kaplan point out, the "simple expedient of placing people into an ethnic category . . . assumes that ethnic identity is highly salient to group members, and it ignores subtle gradations of ethnic identity."[34] But it is also true that civil conflicts, such as insurgencies, tend to prompt greater salience of identities, and Brady and Kaplan find that "a highly salient ethnic identity puts in motion psychological

[33] See Baker, p. 41.

[34] Henry E. Brady and Cynthia S. Kaplan, "Categorically Wrong? Nominal Versus Graded Measures of Ethnic Identity," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2000), p. 56.

forces that homogenize attitudes within a group."[35] This research attempts to be sensitive to the notion of gradation and variation in salience, but, given the data, can only be so in a general, qualitative sense.

Beyond identifying ethno-religious identity groups, the analysis must determine whether those identities are the bases of politically salient cleavages such that the relationship between the government and one or more of those groups constitutes a major grievance among insurgents. In some cases, such as in parts of Iraq, this judgment may be rather self-evident. Still, there is value in being able to make this judgment somewhat more formally. Henri Tajfel, one of the pioneers of social identity theory, offers a useful set of criteria with which to identify distinctly intergroup behavior:

> First, at least two clearly identifiable social categories should be present in the situation (e.g., a Hutu and a Tutsi, a Catholic and a Protestant, a Serb and a Croat). Second, there should be little variability of behavior or attitude within each group. Intergroup behavior tends to be uniform (i.e., 'we' agree about 'them'), whereas interpersonal behavior shows a range of individual differences. Third, a member of one group should show little variability in his or her perception or treatment of members of the other group (i.e., 'they' are 'all alike').[36]

These criteria provide some general guidelines for making a judgment on the extent of division, or cleavage among ethno-religious groups.

Finally, metrics for judging the quality of security operations (as an *input*, or independent variable) will take many forms and will be largely informed by the types of data and tactics employed by the forces engaged in each of the case studies. Combat operations that eliminate insurgents without creating large collateral damage and disruption to civilian populations would be important here, as would the ability of police

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Henri Tajfel, as summarized in Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), p. 324.

forces to sustain regular operations with minimal amounts of corruption or penetration by insurgent forces. Another important factor in classifying this variable is the level of resources, especially in terms of manpower, that counterinsurgents bring to bear in a given case. Unfortunately, many of the detailed statistics regarding security operations in Iraq remain classified at the time of this writing. The case studies attempt to mine and present what is publically available. As those data become available in the future, they will provide an excellent opportunity for testing and generation of new hypothesis on the subject of this research and other related topics.

In summary, the methodological challenges presented by this research are formidable. Even the most careful research design will yield conclusions that are tentative and suggestive rather than decisive. Nevertheless, the importance of the subject matter compels the work. It is worth emphasizing that the methodological challenges facing questions such as those posed here have parallels in the operational world. For example, the complexities of constructing a reliable dependent variable for success in counterinsurgency are more than academic. The counterinsurgent must wrestle with similar questions about defining success in order to build a rational, coherent strategy.[37] Arguably, the harder it is to isolate such phenomena in a deliberative study, the harder it is likely to be operationally. In some sense, then, the plausibility of establishing the cause and effect relationships at issue here is a significant hypothesis being tested by this research. In this sense, inconclusive results would yield not only inconclusive

[37] The author was personally involved with such efforts while on the staff of the Strategy, Plans, and Assessments directorate of the Multi-National Forces – Iraq headquarters in Baghdad from May-September of 2008. Consensus on an appropriate framework for defining success proved impossible to achieve.

conclusions, but also evidence that any policies depending on reliable understandings of the dynamics of identity, governance, and counterinsurgency should be undertaken with great modesty, indeed. Or they might even give greater weight to the idea that, to appropriate the words of analyst Tony Cordesman: "Not every game is worth playing, and sometimes the best way to win is not to play at all."[38]

Finally, any study of this kind must grapple with the forces exerted by two opposing intellectual poles: the generalizing impulse of the social scientist, and the particularizing impulse of the historian. By instinct, I am drawn to the historian's model of depicting a problem in its confounding complexity. But the study's policy implications demand a good measure of social science's inductive generalization. The approach in this study stakes out a middle ground along this spectrum. Any particular balance will inevitably leave some unsatisfied, but it is my goal to do as little violence as possible either to the richness and complexity of the study's empirical context or to the feasibility of applying whatever insights can be uncovered.

[38] Anthony Cordesman, "Rethinking the Challenge of Counterinsurgency Warfare," Working Notes, Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 7, 2005, p. 3.

Chapter 4: Governance, Identity, and Counterinsurgency Strategy in Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam

This chapter has two related purposes. The first is to determine what light the study's proposed analytic framework can shed on three of the most important foreign-supported counterinsurgencies of the twentieth century. The second is to see what light those historical experiences can shed on the study's proposed analytic framework. In other words, the cases will serve as limited tests of the study's hypotheses, but also as tools for sharpening those hypotheses prior to the collection and analysis of original data.

The three cases presented here are those of the United Kingdom in Malaya from 1948-1960, France in Algeria from 1954-1962, and the United States in South Vietnam from 1962-1973. Selection of these cases was guided by several considerations. First, these three cases are among the very largest foreign-supported counterinsurgencies in history in terms of resources and manpower committed. (Though France was not technically a "foreign" power in Algeria, its role there strongly resembled that of a foreign power.) Second, as a group, these cases exhibit considerable diversity with regard to the dynamics of such key variables as the role of identity politics, the types of counterinsurgency strategies pursued, and the outcomes of the conflicts. Third, each case presents the perspectives and operations of a different country in the role of the counterinsurgent. Fourth, the three cases together span a 25-year period whose experiences formed the foundation of much of today's received wisdom regarding counterinsurgency. Fifth, as a result of all these factors, Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam are three of the most common sources in academic and policy discourse of "lessons" about insurgency and counterinsurgency involving foreign interventions. And finally,

each of these cases features dimensions that make its relationship to the issues under examination in this study somewhat more complicated than conventional wisdom might suggest. Together, these factors make a strong argument to dedicate the limited space and limited objectives of this chapter to an examination of Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam.

Each case is presented in seven parts covering the following topics: 1) a general overview of the context and major events of the conflict; 2) the role of ethno-religious identity politics in the conflict; 3) counterinsurgent actions with respect to providing security; 4) counterinsurgent actions with respect to improving governance; 5) any efforts toward political agreements that address ethno-religious cleavages; 6) an assessment of the outcome of the counterinsurgency; and 7) a concluding discussion and evaluation of the case.

Malaya, 1948-1960

Overview

The Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 gave the world the expression "winning hearts and minds." Not coincidentally, the counterinsurgency conducted by British and Malayan forces and authorities during the Emergency is perhaps the most frequently cited model of successful counterinsurgency practice. The case is especially interesting for the purposes of this study, because at first glance its basic facts seem to contradict one of the key hypotheses under examination: it is an insurgency with an important ethnic dimension that appears to have been defeated in significant part through the provision of good governance.

Malaya in 1948 was a collection of small states nominally ruled by ethnic Malay sultans, but together administered as a colony by Great Britain. Though the

predominantly Muslim ethnic Malays were native to Malaya and were the country's largest ethnic group, they did not constitute a majority. At the time of the Emergency, the population of 6.3 million was about 44% Malay, 38.5% Chinese, 10.5% Indian, 5.5% aboriginal, and 1.5% other.[1] During World War II, the Japanese defeat of the British in Malaya and Singapore and the country's subsequent occupation greatly disrupted political and economic life there. One beneficiary of this disruption was the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The MCP was born in 1930, but had struggled to gain support prior to the war. During the war, however, the MCP-based Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) became one of the primary vehicles for resistance, even collaborating with its former British colonial antagonists in fighting the Japanese occupation.

As a result, though the MPAJA was officially disbanded following the war, the MCP emerged as an important actor in the somewhat chaotic post-war Malayan political scene. Japanese occupation had not only weakened British political authority on the peninsula, but had also stoked ethnic tensions between Malay, Chinese, and Indian populations. Additionally, the war had generated a range of economic dislocations that provided ample opportunity for MCP agitation. In particular, the Communists were successful in gaining control of much of the growing labor union movement during the mid and late 1940s. By 1948, the MCP was sponsoring terrorist attacks in a fully fledged revolutionary program against the Malayan government.

[1] Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 12, and Sam C. Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 63.

In June of that year, a state of emergency was declared that was destined to last for twelve years. In his book on the Emergency, former British Secretary for Defense in Malaya Robert Thompson divides those years into three phases: a "build-up" on both sides (1948-1952); a period which "saw the success of the measures taken and the military defeat of the insurgents" (1952-1954); and "mopping up of the remaining communist terrorist gangs" (1954-1960).[2]

Although the insurgents scored many early successes, they suffered from a few key weaknesses that aided the British and Malayan authorities in isolating them. First, active membership in the MCP and its guerrilla and political arms was relatively small. Second, the insurgency was almost entirely limited to Malaya's ethnic Chinese population. In 1950, MCP membership was approximately 12,000-13,000, about 95% of whom were Chinese.[3] Third, the insurgency was also relatively isolated geographically. It gained very little traction in the cities, and received almost all of its support from rural and plantation villages on the jungle fringe. In the end, the insurgents were unable to overcome these limitations in the face of a well-coordinated counterinsurgency effort whose principal elements were population resettlement, expansion of police and security forces, targeted improvements in governance and economic development, and the transfer of national sovereignty from Britain to a new and independent Federation of Malaya.

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[2] Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966), p 16.

[3] Sarkesian, p. 126, and Robert W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of A Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, February 1972), p. 8.

Were ethno-religious identity-based cleavages significant?

There is no question that the politics of ethno-religious identity was an important aspect of the Malayan Emergency. The strong concentration of the insurgency within the minority Chinese population imbued the entire movement with an ethnic character. Because of the MCP's initial roots in the Chinese community, and because of unresolved questions of minority rights and status following World War II, early conflicts between the MCP and the government tended to occur along ethnic fault lines. This early conflict, then, "sealed in the minds of Malays an identity of communism with the Chinese, and, therefore, as a threat to both Islam and the Malay community."[4]

And, indeed, ethno-religious cleavages and grievances in Malaya did have substantive roots. Many laws on citizenship, land ownership, and education were discriminatory against the Chinese. Moreover, many Malayan Chinese were unassimilated into Malayan life. Many were channeled in particular sectors of the economy, and many spoke neither Malay nor English.[5]
Also, in a study involving interviews with dozens of former Communist guerrillas in Malaya, scholar Lucian Pye found racism to be endemic among the insurgents.[6]

At the same time, however, the doctrine and aims of the insurgency had very little to do with ethno-religious grievances or protecting Chinese political identity. The Communists' complaints, like those of their Leninist and Maoist role models, were

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[4] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 204.

[5] Sarkesian, pp. 60-61, Stubbs, pp. 117-118, and Riley Sutherland, *Winning the Hearts and Minds of the People: Malaya, 1948-1960*, Memorandum RM-4174-ISA (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 1964), p. 7.

[6] Lucian Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 207-210.

principally about economic injustice. They railed against labor exploitation, shortages and high prices of rice, rising cost of living, low wages, and excessive economic management from London. As Richard Stubbs points out, "the MCP propaganda teams were skillful at highlighting [wage and labor grievances] and other issues, such as corruption, land tenure, and high rents."[7] And, while Lucian Pye found many insurgents to be racist, he did not find racism to be a generally important motivation for joining the MCP. Motivations tended to much more personal and materialistic, based on issues like standard of living, underemployment, career prospects, and even boredom.[8]

The MCP also made significant efforts, albeit with little success, to broaden its appeal to Malay and Indian communities. One clear symbol of this aspiration is the name of the MCP's military arm, which was chosen expressly to emphasize the cross-communal nature of the Communist objectives: the Malayan Races' Liberation Army (MRLA). In 1951, during the course of a thorough rethinking of its strategy, the MCP issued a directive admonishing itself for "failing to distinguish between the 'big national bourgeoisie,' who were implacably opposed to communism, and the 'medium national bourgeoisie,' who were often fence-sitters and who could be won over to a broadly based united front." Another instruction issued in the same time period directed that "Malays and Indians were to be more actively recruited and Chinese cadres were ordered to cease treating them as inferiors; this was considered a form of 'nationalist deviation.'"[9]

[7] Stubbs, p. 90.

[8] Pye, pp. 210-237.

[9] Stubbs, pp. 152-153.

By the same token, the Malayan Chinese population was far from united behind the Communist insurgents. One major split within the Chinese population was between the so-called "Straits Chinese" who had been in Malaya for generations and were highly assimilated, and the recent immigrants who had a wide range of affiliations and degrees of loyalty to Malaya. Perhaps even more important was the split between the mostly urban "towkay" or merchant classes and the mostly rural laborers in agriculture, tin mining, and rubber plantations. The merchants tended to sympathize with the anti-Communist Kuomintang forces in China and "were basically loyal [to the Malayan government] as long as their business interests were protected by the local and colonial elites."[10] Chinese businessmen, who together owned mines and plantations generating almost half of Malaya's tin and rubber output,[11] had a great deal to lose from the instability caused by the insurgency, not to mention from a successful Communist takeover.

Also, many Chinese were undoubtedly fence-sitters, waiting to see which side would prevail. Political activism was not historically a characteristic of the Chinese community. Sun Yat Sen quipped that they were politically "like a plate of loose sand."[12] One of Britain's High Commissioners in Malaya, General Sir Geoffrey K. Bourne, judged that many Chinese had "a foot in each camp, and that they might just have waited

[10] Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics 2nd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 72, and Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 69.

[11] Pye, p. 12.

[12] Quoted in Stubbs, p. 29.

passively for the outcome of the insurrection if they had not been won over to the idea of a multiracial Malaya."[13]

Perhaps the most striking evidence of division within the Chinese community is the fact that, as of April 1952, 1,250 of 1,942 (64%) civilians killed by the MRLA were Chinese.[14] This dynamic of the insurgency, probably more than any other, helped convince the peasants that, in Sam Sarkesian's words, "the MCP was engaged in a power struggle with the British-Malay government, not necessarily for the betterment of the Chinese but for the privilege of ruling over them."[15]

Overall, for the purposes of this analysis, were ethno-religious cleavages significant in the Malayan Emergency? In the broadest sense, they certainly were since they were important to the roots and the development of the insurgency and the counterinsurgency. But the insurgency was not truly based on these cleavages. The MCP attempted to create a class-based Leninist revolution, and then, having failed in that goal, to create a protracted Maoist peasant revolution. It spoke little about Chinese ethnic unity, terrorized Chinese populations more than any others, and lamented its inability to recruit Malays and Indians to its cause. Malay-Chinese relations during the Emergency meet only one of Henri Tajfel's criteria mentioned in Chapter 3 for identifying distinctly intergroup behavior: clearly identifiable social categories were present, but there was great variability in both the behavior within the groups, and in each group's perceptions

[13] Sutherland, p. 11.

[14] Lomperis, p. 210.

[15] Sarkesian, p. 69.

of the other.[16] So, while cleavages certainly existed, their political salience was fairly weak in the sense most relevant to this analysis.

Were good security operations conducted?

Security operations conducted by British and Malayan forces were extensive and, over time, generally quite effective. Measures implemented in the earliest days of the Emergency were often blunt, approaching the insurgency more as a criminal problem than as a political one. Laws instituted through the state of Emergency widened the authority of police and military forces though a variety of measures, such as registration of all adult citizens, temporary abandonment of habeas corpus, right of search without warrant, heavy sentences for illegal weapons possession, severe sentences for assisting the Communist propaganda effort, and expanded rights to impose curfews.[17] Another key early initiative was a large expansion of police forces. The number of federal police nearly tripled from 1948 to 1952, and the ranks of local "Home Guard" police units swelled from 17,000 in 1948 to 152,000 in 1955.[18]

The first couple years of the Emergency were marked by large military operations, incompetent police work and a great deal of indiscriminate brutality on the part of the government. Chinese villagers sometimes even commented that the British were more brutal than the Japanese.[19] But British forces soon adapted their operations to

[16] Henri Tajfel, as summarized in Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), p. 324.

[17] Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975), p. 566, and Komer (1972), pp. 34-37.

[18] Komer (1972), pp. 38-41.

[19] Stubbs, p. 76.

the threat, focusing more on intelligence collection and small-unit operations,[20] an approach that ultimately allowed them both to kill and capture more insurgents, and to antagonize the local populations less.

Undoubtedly, the centerpiece of the government's strategy for providing security to populations affected by the insurgency was the resettlement of several hundred thousand people in protected enclaves which came to be called "New Villages." This key element of the "Briggs Plan" was highly disruptive for its resettled people, but had the dual benefit of creating more defensible population centers and of isolating the insurgents from much of their support bases for food and other supplies. As the Briggs Plan author and the colonial government's Director of Operations Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs argued, resettlement "is not the final objective, but affords only that measure of protection and concentration which makes good administration practicable."[21]

The resettlement program was not immediately or fully successful in providing better security to the predominantly Chinese villagers who had been resettled. But the combination of the program with the large expansion in local police forces made insurgents' efforts to intimidate, coerce, indoctrinate and recruit villagers much more difficult. British Brigadier Richard Clutterbuck judged the village policeman to be "the decisive character in this drama."[22]

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[20] See John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 77-107, and Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency 1919-1960* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 162-167.

[21] Quoted in Mockaitis, p. 115.

[22] Clutterbuck, p. 70.

Was good governance provided?

Apart from providing greater security and physically separating the insurgents from the civilian population, improving governance was the central goal of the New Villages resettlement program. In one sense, this was a simple goal because governance among the rural Chinese at the beginning of the Emergency was so minimal. In many villages on the jungle fringe, Malayan government activity was so sparse that some believed control of their areas had been ceded to the MCP following the Japanese occupation.[23] Seventy percent of the surrendered guerrillas interviewed in Lucian Pye's study "perceived the colonial administration as existing completely apart from the Chinese community in Malaya. The government operated in distant and limited spheres, and they could not always comprehend how its acts might impinge upon their daily lives."[24] Many rural villages were governed *de facto* by cells of the "Minh Yuen" or the MCP's "People's Organization."

As a result, Briggs believed the essence of the war in Malaya to be (as Richard Clutterbuck describes),

> . . . a competition in government. He aimed not only to resettle the squatters but to give them a standard of local government and a degree of prosperity that they would not wish to exchange for the barren austerity of life under the Communists' parallel hierarchy; in other words, to give them something to lose.[25]

Thus began the campaign, executed in earnest beginning in 1952 under Sir Gerald Templer, to win the war by "winning the hearts and minds of the people." Richard Stubbs

[23] Stubbs, pp. 78-79.

[24] Pye, p. 201.

[25] Clutterbuck, p. 57.

summarizes the criteria that Templer established by which New Villages would be judged "properly settled" as follows:

> a modicum of agricultural land and the granting of long-term land titles, an adequate water supply, a reasonably well-functioning village committee, a school which could accommodate at least a majority of the children, a village community centre, roads of passable standards and with side drains, reasonable conditions of sanitation and public health, a place of worship, trees along the main street and padang, an effective perimeter fence, a flourishing Home Guard, a reasonably friendly feeling toward the Government and police, and the beginning of certain activities such as the Scouts, Cubs, and Girl Guides.[26]

The efforts to achieve these standards, while uneven, met with a great deal of success, both in improving governance and quality of life and in winning loyalty toward the government. As Riley Sutherland concludes,

> Governmental prestige rose as the public witnessed the amenities of life in the new villages with their well-organized after-care program and felt the effects of such new developments as irrigation and drainage projects; farm loans and other agricultural support measures; regulation of the formerly backward labor conditions, work hours, and money lending practices; the encouragement of consumers and producers cooperatives; the growth of labor unions; a greatly improved education system with a concomitant rise in student enrollment; the opening up of the diplomatic, military, and civil services to all Malayan citizens under liberalized conditions of admission; and the opportunities for direct acquaintance with the workings of government through the week-long 'civics courses' attended by representatives of all racial and economic communities.[27]

In sum, good governance was a very important aspect of the British and Malayan counterinsurgency strategy, and the execution of this aspect of the strategy was largely effective.

Were political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages pursued?

One of the most important developments in Malaya during the Emergency was the formation of a political alliance between the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA).[28] Each of these major political

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[26] Stubbs, p. 173.

[27] Sutherland, p. viii.

[28] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 398-427.

parties was born in large part from ethnic political interests, with the UMNO based in the Malay population, and the MCA in the Chinese population. Nevertheless, a combination of genuine inter-ethnic common interests and electoral pragmatism resulted in an alliance between the two parties that began in 1952 and proved to be the dominant force in Malayan politics in the country's march toward independence in 1957.

Among the key foundations of this alliance was the creation of the MCA, itself, in 1949. Prior to that point, disparate elements of the Malayan Chinese community were not politically organized, leaving limited formal alternatives to the Communist party for Chinese political activism. But, as noted above, a large number of Malayan Chinese were not at all supportive of the Communists. The MCA served as a focal point for these Chinese, who then participated extensively in supporting government policies in the New Villages and in building a multi-ethnic national Malayan vision.

Another critical factor in the success of the UMNO-MCA alliance was the unifying effect of Britain's commitment to Malayan independence. Templer's tenure began in 1952 not only with his commitment to improving governance among the Chinese villagers, but also with a firm statement from London that "The policy of Her Majesty's Government in Great Britain is that Malaya should in due course become a fully self-governing nation." Moreover, the British also laid out an explicitly multi-ethnic vision for the country: "Her Majesty's Government will not lay aside their responsibilities in Malaya until they are satisfied that communist terrorism has been defeated and that the partnership of all communities which alone can lead to true and stable self-Government has been established."[29] As an important early step in reconciling

[29] Quoted in Stubbs, p. 144.

ethnic conflicts, the Malayan government liberalized its citizenship laws in September 1952, thereby granting citizenship to over a million Chinese.[30]

The combination of these British policies and the success of the UMNO and MCA in negotiating a shared approach to national politics and policy not only helped to dissipate ethnic tensions, but also undoubtedly sapped support for the MCP and its insurgency.

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

By almost any measure, the counterinsurgency in Malaya was successful. Even before the official end of the Emergency in 1960, insurgent attacks had all but disappeared, and the MCP had ceased to operate as anything resembling a coherent, effective organization. From its estimated peak strength of 12,000-13,000 members, the MCP declined to about 7,000 in 1951 and to 2,000 in 1957. Similarly, insurgent incidents declined from almost 500 per month in 1950-51 to about 100 per month as early as 1953.[31] "White areas," villages where sufficient progress had been made in eradicating insurgents to suspend the Emergency regulations, spread steadily up the peninsula from 1953 onward.

Evaluation

It is no surprise that Malaya is often held up as a model of successful counterinsurgency strategy. All the factors that ostensibly support effective counterinsurgency were in place, including those that are the focus of this analysis: good

[30] Ibid., pp. 189-190.

[31] Komer (1972), pp. 9-10.

governance, security operations, and political agreements among competing ethnic groups.

At the same time, however, this multiplicity of positive factors limits the interpretive utility of the Malayan case for drawing broader conclusions about counterinsurgency strategy. Success in Malaya was overdetermined, so the effects of any one set of factors is somewhat obscured by the presence of others. Therefore, from an analytical perspective, it is difficult to come to any conclusion more refined than the one Robert Komer proposes, that "No one element was decisive. Success was achieved by the meshing of many civil-military programs, each of which interacted with the others."[32] Moreover, several unusual and favorable conditions beyond the factors considered formally in this framework made significant contributions to the victory of the British and Malayan governments. Chief among them were the absence of outside support for insurgents, the relative geographic isolation of the insurgents, and the boom in tin and rubber exports sparked by the Korean War, which buoyed the Malayan economy considerably during the most critical years of the Emergency.

For the purposes of this analysis, the most provocative aspect of the Malayan case is the apparent effectiveness of governance-related counterinsurgency efforts in the New Villages in the face of a conflict with significant ethnic dimensions. But ultimately, grievances related to ethno-religious identity were not the source of the Communist insurgency and their redress was not its main objective. To the extent MCP objectives addressed group identities, they did so in opposition to British colonial rule, a grievance

[32] Ibid., p. 76.

that was completely co-opted by Britain's 1952 commitment to grant Malayan independence.

Overall, to the extent that General Sir Harold Briggs was correct in conceiving of the war in Malaya as a "competition in government," it is clear that the British and Malayan governments "outgoverned" the insurgents. However, given the variety of other factors that also contributed to the counterinsurgent victory there, the indispensability of this factor cannot be established with great confidence.

Algeria, 1954-1962

Overview

Algeria won its independence from France in large part by means of an insurgency waged over the years 1954-1962. The Algerian war was not only one of the largest and most ferocious of the anti-colonial wars following World War II, it also presents particular interpretive challenges to the counterinsurgency analyst due to France's unusual mix of successes and failures.

Algeria was first occupied by France in 1830 and had become incorporated as an integral part of France in 1848. In 1954, approximately ten million people lived in Algeria. Almost nine million were indigenous Muslims, ethnically divided between Arabs and Berbers. The remaining million were of European origin, generally known as "colons" or "pieds noirs" ("black feet"). As in so many other cases of European rule outside Europe, the French had imported a great deal of modern technology, culture and political organization to Algeria, but standards of living, economic privilege and balance of political influence heavily favored the European population over indigenous peoples.

Several years of rising frustration with and revolt against French rule culminated in 1954 with the formation of the Front de Liberation Nationale (National Liberation Front), or FLN, a revolutionary organization committed to winning Algerian independence. The FLN launched the war in November of that year with coordinated attacks on several French targets, accompanied by a formal proclamation of its revolutionary goals.

Though the first wave of attacks achieved little tactical success, the French reaction was swift and severe. Unlike most European conquests, Algeria was technically not a colony, but was rather legally part of France, itself. As a result, French opinion ran very strongly against Algerian independence. As one commentator noted, "Up to 1956, the only point on which virtually the whole of France was united was that Algerian independence was unthinkable and unmentionable."[33] Another factor shaping the French response was the French Army's catastrophic defeat by anti-colonial insurgent forces at Dien Bien Phu and France's subsequent departure from Indochina only months before the FLN's first attacks. At the outset of the war, military and political leaders alike were determined not to allow another such defeat.

In the first few years of the conflict, French security forces enjoyed a great deal of success in severely restricting the insurgents' freedom of action. Two tools that were key to French progress were strong control of Algeria's borders with Tunisia and Morocco and the application of a "quadrillage" system, whereby the country was divided into something of a checkerboard organized by a combination of fixed military outposts and mobile units charged with pursuit of insurgent forces within specific zones. These

[33] Dorothy Pickles, quoted in Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York: New York Review Book, 2006), p. 234.

setbacks prompted the FLN to shift its focus from the countryside to urban terrorism, prompting, in part, what came to be known as the "Battle of Algiers," from late 1956 through late 1957. In this phase of the conflict, too, French forces managed to dismantle the FLN's network, ending in a decisive defeat for the insurgents and the restoration of calm to Algiers.

At the same time, however, the brutality of the war, especially the French Army's use of torture, had begun to turn some international opinion against French rule in Algeria. Most importantly, a gap had opened between the French government on the one hand and the military and the Algerian pieds noirs population on the other regarding how to address the ongoing insurgency and about the long-term viability of French control of Algeria (so-called "l'Algerie Francaise"). In 1958, this split culminated in a political crisis that brought down the French government and brought to power a new regime under Charles de Gaulle.

Initially, the pieds noirs believed that de Gaulle would strongly support l'Algerie Francaise, and indeed, de Gaulle did initiate a new, aggressive counterinsurgent program under new leadership. However, de Gaulle, reflecting the feelings of a growing portion of the French public, proved to be ambivalent on the subject, and by 1959 had begun referring to the need for Algerian "self-determination." Historian Alistair Horne refers to de Gaulle's first public speech regarding self-determination as "one of the most decisive events of the whole war."[34] From this point forward, what had been a fairly one-sided military conflict between French and FLN forces began a transformation into a political

[34] Horne, p. 346.

conflict within the French government and military over the proper trajectory of French rule in Algeria.

In the end, this was the conflict that came to define the outcome of the Algerian war. Opposition to de Gaulle among the French authorities in Algeria prompted major political unrest among the pieds noirs in 1960, followed by attempted coups in January and April of 1961 and by terrorist attacks by French citizens against French citizens in both Algeria and France in 1961 and 1962. Finally, de Gaulle reached an agreement on independence with the FLN in March 1962 and the majority of the pieds noirs were forced to flee Algeria in June of that year.

In the eight years of war, casualties totaled 17,456 in the French military, 3,663 among European civilians, and 30,034 indigenous people were killed by the FLN. Estimates of those killed by the French and their supporting forces range from 158,000 to one million. Tens of thousands of Muslims were killed after independence as well, many in exchange for their having supported French rule.[35]

Were ethno-religious identity-based cleavages significant?

Conflict over the politics of ethno-religious identity was central to the Algerian war. As Horne argues, "In order to understand events from 1954 onwards, it is necessary to accept the existence of three totally distinct peoples – the French of France, the French of Algeria, and the Muslims of Algeria."[36] The opposing claims on each side of the conflict were fairly transparently rooted in the political prerogatives of their respective ethno-religious groups. The Algerian French, in sociologist Eric Wolf's words, "were at

[35] Ibid., p. 538, and Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 167-168.

[36] Horne, pp. 53-54.

one in defense of their privileges which made the lowest French [citizen] the superior of any Arab. Their unity was the product of their common fear of the Muslim majority."[37]

Algerian Muslims, however, were not at all united in opposition to French rule. One contemporary analyst estimated that at the beginning of the war, the non-European population in Algeria was "20 percent for the insurrection, 20 percent for the maintenance of French order, and 60 percent undecided."[38] Before the war, there had been a significant "assimilationist" element among Algerian Muslims, which sought to draw French and indigenous cultures closer together under French rule. Nevertheless, the pieds noirs' repeated "inability and unwillingness to grant concessions in time spelled the end of the assimilationist cause."[39]

On the other side of the conflict, the insurgent movement was quite explicitly and uncompromisingly aimed at Algerian national independence from France, not at any lesser goal of political, economic, or social reform. No better expression can be found of this than the FLN's initial proclamation of November 1954 which states: "GOAL: National Independence through . . . restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam . . ."[40]

And, while many French accused the FLN of Communist sympathies and motivations, in fact, communist ideology had very little to do with the motivations of the Algerian insurgency. In Horne's judgment, "Marxist materialism was at least as alien to

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[37] Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 224.

[38] Constantin Melnik, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 23, 1964), p. 279.

[39] Wolf, p. 236.

[40] *Proclamation of the Algerian National Front, Liberation Front,* November 1954.

the FLN ethos as were other external Arab ideologies . . . The FLN had always been quite unyielding in never accepting Communists into their ranks as a 'block membership.'"[41]

Of course, socio-economic grievances were not absent from the FLN cause. In 1955, France's Governor-General for Algeria, Jacques Soustelle, described the way in which these challenges interacted with the grievances related to ethno-religious identity:

> The population growth of an essentially agricultural country with unfertile soil and a difficult climate, has produced chronic unemployment, the desertion of the countryside for working class suburbs, extreme poverty and despair for a growing mass of individuals and families. While this underprivileged proletariat is increasing in number and growing daily more bitter, a small Moslem bourgeoisie, educated through contact with us, is vainly seeking a solution not only economic, but above all administrative and political. However, they cannot find this solution. The number of Moslems in the administration is still infinitesimal. . . Hence a dual dissatisfaction: the social unrest of the masses and the political unrest of the elite. At the point where they meet, these two forms of unrest constitute a very strong explosive force.[42]

Another important caveat regarding ethno-religious conflict in Algeria is the large number of Algerian Muslims who fought in the war in defense of French rule, generally thought to be significantly more than those fighting for the FLN.[43] As noted above, Muslims were not united. Nevertheless, the key point is that identity was clearly the most important basis for the insurgents' claims to legitimacy and was the key issue at stake in the war.

Were good security operations conducted?

In Malaya, British and Malayan authorities pursued security and improved governance very much in parallel. In Algeria, the French strategy clearly favored security over governance. One of the central elements of this security-oriented strategy

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[41] Horne, p. 406.

[42] Quoted in Melnik, pp. 12-13.

[43] See Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 127, and Melnik, p. 3

was the deployment of large numbers of military forces. From the beginning of the insurgency in 1954, France committed half a million troops to Algeria, in part by lengthening mandatory service times and recalling large numbers of reservists.[44] These troops opposed an FLN insurgent force that was probably less than 30,000, many of whom were in Tunisia, not even in Algeria.[45] Another key to the French security strategy was their system of "quadrillage," whereby the Algerian countryside was divided up into a checkerboard of fixed outposts that delineated various zones of operation. Over time, the quadrillage system of combining garrisoned forces at the outposts and mobile strike forces operating from the outposts was quite effective in suppressing insurgent activity throughout the countryside.

Additionally, French forces succeeded in controlling Algeria's border with Tunisia, where thousands of FLN forces and supporters maintained sanctuary. By September 1957, they completed a formidable physical barrier known as the Morice line, which featured electrified fences, minefields and extensive patrolling. According to historian Ian Beckett, "by April 1958, the kill ratio of those trying to infiltrate into Algeria from Tunisia was reportedly 85 per cent, after which few attempts were made to do so."[46]

As in Malaya, another important component of the counterinsurgency strategy in Algeria was the resettlement ("regroupement") of large numbers of rural peasants into secured villages. As with Malaya's "new villages" and South Vietnam's "strategic

[44] Horne, p. 151.

[45] Beckett, p. 162.

[46] Ibid., p. 164.

hamlets," the purposes of the resettlements were to protect the population from the insurgents and to isolate the insurgents from their support among the population. By 1960, something like two million people had been resettled in such villages.

While the resettlement program enjoyed significant success in isolating FLN insurgents, it also generated a great deal of ill will against French forces and French rule. Conditions in the villages were generally quite poor. One journalist, writing in 1958, described them this way:

> Crammed together in unbroken wretchedness, fifteen to a tent since 1957, this human flotsam lies tangled in an indescribable state. . . At the moment, the whole population is fed entirely on semolina. Each person receives about four ounces of semolina a day . . . Milk is given out twice a week: one pint per child . . . No rations of fat have been distributed for eight months. No rations of chick-peas for a year . . . No rations of soap for a year . . . [47]

In Horne's estimation, "by uprooting these Algerians from their homes and fields and placing them in camps where they led listless and largely unemployed existences, the French only created a new area of profound social discontent . . ."[48]

Another double-edged sword in France's approach to establishing security was its aggressive, even brutal, law enforcement tactics. Most infamously, French paratroopers murdered and tortured many suspected insurgents during the "Battle of Algiers." According to one estimate, 3,000 of the 24,000 arrested in this phase of the insurgency disappeared while they were in detention.[49] And throughout the counterinsurgency, French security forces indulged in many excesses of indiscriminate violence.

Such tactics did produce many positive results for the French side, including improved intelligence and intimidation of potential insurgent recruits. But they also

[47] Quoted in Horne, p. 220.

[48] Ibid., p. 221.

[49] Beckett, p. 165.

sacrificed much good will among the moderate Muslim population in Algeria and among many observers outside Algeria, especially among French citizens in France. Horne relates a story that helps to sum up the trade-offs involved in this kind of brutality. In 1957, a French officer visiting Orleansville on temporary leave from his job improving government services and living conditions in the countryside, encountered a band of rampaging paratroopers, wrecking shops and harassing Muslim civilians. "You band of little idiots," he told them. "You're doing exactly what the FLN terrorists count on you doing . . . Two months of [my] work . . . are wrecked in one evening like this."[50]

Nevertheless, in terms of rolling back the FLN's ability to operate effectively in Algeria, French forces were extremely successful. As of late 1957, after the completion of the Morice line and the eradication of FLN cells in Algiers, the insurgency was "on the defensive and could not undertake the conquest and control of a part of the territory which would have been a logical phase in the evolution of this type of situation and which the FLN had dreamed of accomplishing . . ."[51] In 1960, one officer reported to his commander that "We have pacified the country so well that the [insurgents] have almost disappeared. Nowadays, almost no one joins the guerrillas. It is more practical to stay put and campaign for independence in a thousand legal ways."[52]

Was good governance provided?

As noted, France's counterinsurgency in Algeria was influenced heavily by its army's recent defeat in Indochina at the hands of Ho Chi Minh's communist insurgents.

[50] Horne, p. 173.

[51] Melnik, p. 29.

[52] Horne, p. 337.

In particular, many French officers believed that the principal lesson of that defeat was that counterinsurgency strategy should incorporate a better understanding of the principles of Maoist people's wars. The doctrine that began to develop around this understanding, known as "la guerre revolutionnaire," emphasized the centrality of popular support to achieving victory.

Though not formally adopted into French Army doctrine, this philosophy became highly influential during the war in Algeria. As a result, considerably more attention was paid to the quality of governance in Algeria than in Indochina. As Beckett describes, ". . . many French officers interpreted guerre revolutionnaire as a genuine social revolution to win the support of the population, and some critics were even to accuse advocates of the new doctrine . . . of practicing rural socialism."[53]

However, guerre revolutionnaire also tended to place at least as much emphasis on manipulation of perceptions as it did on addressing grievances as a method of winning popular support. As a result, French operations tended to emphasize psychological operations and population control. In his famous exposition of guerre revolutionnaire, *Modern Warfare*, French officer Roger Trinquier says, "We know that it is not at all necessary to have the sympathy of a majority of the people in order to rule them. The right organization can turn the trick. . . [popular] support may be spontaneous, although that is quite rare and probably a temporary condition. If it doesn't exist, it must be secured by every possible means, the most effective of which is *terrorism*."[54] Trinquier was even more blunt at one point in remarks to a French newspaper: "Call me a fascist if

[53] Beckett, p. 159.

[54] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 4, 8 (emphasis in original).

you like, but we must make the population docile and manageable; everybody's acts must be controlled."[55]

In Wolf's view,

> Assuming Algerians to be like Frenchmen, possessed of identical culture patterns and interests, the military technicians visualized their task simply as one in which organization reproduces the experimental design of the laboratory and simple conditioning provides the experimental subject with a new set of habits, without the simultaneous creation of a new cultural order for which these new habits could be relevant. . . [W]hat was missing from 'the theory of revolutionary war' was any vision of real revolution, of a transformation of the environment congruent with new patterns of habit. Under the conditions of colonial warfare . . . the theory was emptied of any cultural content to produce simply obedience to naked power imposed from without.[56]

The French Army's view of popular support, then, perhaps further reinforced the Army's tendency to privilege security measures over governance improvement in its use of counterinsurgency tools.

Having said all this, the French counterinsurgency effort did, in fact, include a substantial amount of activity dedicated to improving governance in Algeria. The focal points of these efforts were small teams of soldiers working throughout the countryside known as the Special Administrative Sections (SAS) (as well as their counterparts in larger cities, the Urban Administrative Sections (SAU)). SAS and SAU units worked principally to reform local governments, establish functional medical and educational facilities and other local infrastructure, and to train police.

By 1959, 660 SAS and SAU teams were operating throughout Algeria. By most accounts, the performance of officers on these teams was exceptional, and they scored many successes in winning the loyalty of villagers. In articulating the strategic logic of the SAS/SAU program, one officer posited that "if tomorrow the government gives each

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[55] Quoted in D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 156.

[56] Wolf, p. 244.

inhabitant of my village a new house, either he will not occupy it or he will decide it is his due. On the other hand, if, with a few soldiers, I help a peasant to rebuild a roof, he will be very grateful to me and through me to France which I represent."[57] One striking example of the success of such programs came from the mayor of a town where future counterinsurgency theorist David Galula had led French efforts to improve both security and governance:

> We were told, and we believed, that the French were colonialist oppressors. We have seen with our own eyes what you have done for us here. You never molested us. None of your soldiers ever cast an eye on our women. Far from stealing from us, they shared their food with the poor. Our sick are taken care of, our children are educated, schools and roads are being built. Recently you had the people elect freely their own leaders and we are now planning with you how to improve our life. If this is colonial oppression, then in the name of all the people here I want to thank the French Army for it. Speaking for all of us, I want to tell you that we will help you finish with the criminals who misled us. Just give us the weapons.[58]

If there is such a thing as winning hearts and minds, this is what it must look like, at least at the local level.

Local efforts of the SAS were complemented by the larger counterinsurgency strategies pursued at the national level, most notably the "Constantine Plan" that was implemented under General Challe in 1958-1960. As of 1961, foreign investment was on the rise, industrial production was growing 10 percent per year, unemployment was down, and foreign trade had more than doubled since 1954. The number of children in school was twenty times greater than in 1954, and the number of workers with social security benefits had risen by two-thirds.[59]

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[57] Quoted in Melnik, p. 236.

[58] Quoted in David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria (1956-1958)* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1963), p. 232.

[59] Melnik, p. 231.

For all of the progress achieved through these initiatives, however, broad popular support remained elusive for the French. Two factors offsetting these efforts were described above. First, the frequent incidence of indiscriminate violence and torture by French forces turned off many middle-of-the-road Algerians. Second, the harshness of the resettlement camps convinced many others of France's hostility toward the interests of the Muslim population. Horne concludes, "Of all the confidence and goodwill that may have been gained . . . as much – or more – was lost through . . . intensification of the old 'regroupement' policy."[60]

But another critical factor that limited the relevance of French efforts to improve governance in Algeria was the lack of connection between those efforts and the larger political context of the war. The real issue at stake in the war was independence, and improvements of governance did little to address this issue. Even Algerians inclined to support continued French rule had to hedge against the possibility that the French government would ultimately withdraw from Algeria. Again, David Galula's experiences speak directly to the key issue here:

> We had every reason to believe that only a minority [of the population] actively supported the rebels. A small amount of co-operation from the majority, and the FLN's fate would have been sealed rapidly. Yet we could not get it except in a few isolated spots. . . Why was the population stubbornly sitting on the fence? Very simply because the Moslems were no fools. They realized perfectly well that the ultimate issue depended on Paris, not on whatever was said and done in Algeria. . . The Algerian Moslems had every incentive to avoid commitment, and who could really blame them? . . . When the Moslems found our pressure too strong, they bowed to it but carefully took out a counter insurance policy with the rebels; the obscure farmer kept paying his dues to the nationalist movement; the more exposed mayor or councilman betrayed us.[61]

Perhaps most important of all, the political system the French were fighting to preserve showed hardly any sign of accommodating the aspirations of Algerian Muslims

[60] Horne, p. 338.

[61] Galula, pp. 176-177.

to play a greater role in their own government. As Horne concludes about France's vision for improving Algeria,

> once one has scraped away the thick gravy layers of propaganda, one finds little serious discussion of social aims of the future Algerian society . . . a profound revolution had taken place in the traditional conservative consciousness of agrarian Algeria, lying deeper than the devoted French SAS administrators could gauge, let alone reverse.[62]

On balance, then, did French counterinsurgents provide good governance to the people of Algeria or not? Economic reforms were extensive and effective, and SAS units contributed greatly to improved standards of living and governance in many parts of the country. But at the same time, population resettlement was highly disruptive and harshly administered and French security measures often terrorized large numbers of innocent people. Good governance was certainly part of the French counterinsurgency strategy. But its implementation was inconsistent enough, and overshadowed enough by evidence of ill will on the part of French forces, that it does not seem fair to conclude unambiguously that the French provided good governance in Algeria.

Were political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages pursued?

As implied by the preceding discussion, cross-ethnic political compromise was almost entirely absent from the French strategy in Algeria. Many recognized the explosive potential of Muslim disenfranchisement, but the pieds noirs' sense of entitlement always stymied any serious efforts to address this issue. Democratic reforms were attempted shortly after WWII in order to provide greater voice to the Muslim population in Algeria, but the resulting elections were rigged and had very little effect other than to highlight the system's inequalities.

[62] Horne, p. 407.

Another major reform effort was adopted by the French legislature in January 1958, the "loi-cadre," which aimed to introduce a greater degree of federalism and regional autonomy to Algeria's political system. But implementation of the loi cadre fell victim to the political turmoil in France that culminated in the fall of the Fourth Republic in May 1958. As one of its principal proponents, Governor-General Robert Lacoste later concluded, "If [loi-cadre] had gone through, . . . I do believe that all but a small fraction of the pieds noirs . . . could have stayed. . . Maybe the rebellion would have continued, but with less force. Who can say what might have happened, because it was never tried?"[63]

Ultimately, any political agreement between Europeans and Muslims would have required a much greater degree of willingness between hardliners on each side of the conflict to compromise than was ever in evidence. As Horne puts it, "the basic fact was that, whereas integration, if honourably entered into, might have worked happily in 1936 and less probably in 1945, by 1958 it had become at best a romantic delusion, at worst a confidence trick."[64]

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

In the end, was France's counterinsurgency in Algeria a success or a failure? In spite of a conclusion to the war that appears to be a resounding French defeat, the answer is not straightforward. On purely military grounds, in fact, the French were clearly victorious. The French army scored repeated victories over the FLN, severely restricting

[63] Ibid., p. 270.

[64] Ibid., p. 307.

its freedom of action both as a guerrilla force in the Algerian countryside, and as terrorist cells in the cities. By 1959, in Galula's estimation, French

> . . . strength was such that the war had been won for all practical purposes . . . I realize this sounds odd when one looks at the situation of Algeria today. Yet if experts . . . took the trouble of comparing our results in the first six years of the war – from the end of 1954 to the end of 1960 – with the British achievements in Malaya – a successful counterinsurgency in their judgment and mine – during the same lapse of time, they would perhaps see my point.[65]

And, as Galula's comparison to Malaya implies, this military victory was not merely a matter of killing and capturing insurgents – it had a significant effect on popular support for the FLN. Due to its major setbacks in 1957, as Horne points out, "the FLN also lost important ground in the struggle for the souls of the uncommitted 'third force' Muslims, now giving increased indication of war weariness."[66]

Why, then, was the FLN ultimately successful? How did it achieve its main objective of Algerian independence in only eight years in the face of such effective military resistance? It was divisions within the French government that proved decisive. Wolf sums it up this way: "victory came to the [FLN] less through its own brave and desperate struggle during seven and one-half years of war than through the strains which the war had produced in the foundations of the French polity."[67] Part of this strain may be fairly credited to the FLN's persistence, even in the face of consistent political and military setbacks. The ability of the insurgents to maintain a destabilizing influence on Algeria undoubtedly contributed to the French public's exhaustion with the war. But more important than this factor was the political conflict created by the hard line pieds noirs in Algeria. It was their machinations that brought down one French government

[65] Galula, pp. 243-244.

[66] Horne, p. 219.

[67] Wolf, p. 242.

and staged two more attempted coups. And it was the Paris terrorist attacks in 1962 conducted by the pieds noirs extremist group, the "Secret Army Organization" (OAS), that finished off any lingering desire among the French people to maintain their sovereignty over Algeria. In the referendum of that year on the formal agreements to grant Algerian independence, over ninety percent of French voters voted 'oui'.

Hence, it is difficult to define the French counterinsurgency as either a success or a failure. The ultimate ascendance of the insurgents defies the notion of a French success, but the most important causes of that outcome lie very near, if not outside, the hazy boundaries of what can reasonably be considered "counterinsurgency."

Evaluation

The Algerian case presents a difficult challenge for this study's analytic framework. In essence, the values for two of the framework's five variables remain ambiguous. It seems clear that identity-based cleavages were highly significant in the Algerian war, and that political agreements to address these cleavages were not seriously pursued. It is also clear that French security operations were quite effective in degrading and otherwise suppressing the capabilities of the FLN insurgents. However, summary assessments of French attempts to improve governance in Algeria and of the success of its counterinsurgency efforts in general yield ambiguous results.

At a minimum, we can observe that French counterinsurgency operations enjoyed a great deal of success in pacifying much of Algeria from 1954-1960 in spite of a very mixed record in its efforts to improve governance. It is certainly plausible to place part of the blame for France's eventual defeat on the weaknesses of its governance-related activities. But those weaknesses are not at all the most obvious explanation for that

defeat. If French forces had displaced fewer people in their resettlement programs, had administered those resettlement camps more humanely, had conducted SAS operations even more broadly and effectively, and had killed fewer innocent Algerians, would the outcome of the war have been different? It is impossible to know, but given the French government's low threshold for tolerating persistent conflict in Algeria and the intransigence of the pieds noirs leadership toward political compromise, it is difficult to see how better performance in any dimension of the counterinsurgency operations, governance-related or otherwise, would have tipped the scales.

Rather, it appears that a strong sense of "us" and "them," that is, of ethno-religious identities in conflict, was at the heart of the Algerian war. In the words of Germaine Tillion, a French ethnologist with extensive experience in Algeria before and during the war, the "'hysteria of the two populations constituted an almost total obstacle to any solution,' and nothing could be achieved without first lowering the temperature of hatred and terror."[68] In such an environment, regardless of whether the counterinsurgency is seen as a success or a failure, the contributions that improved governance could make to victory were severely constrained.

South Vietnam, 1962-1973

Overview

Counterinsurgency in American history is frequently viewed through the lens of the United States' involvement in the Second Indochina War (hereafter referred to as the Vietnam War). Given the scale, duration, and traumatic outcome of American involvement in Vietnam, this focus is neither surprising nor wholly inappropriate.

[68] Quoted and paraphrased by Horne, p. 214.

Nevertheless, rooms full of books and articles claiming to identify the lessons of Vietnam have yet to yield any consensus about the nature of that war or a generally accepted reckoning of counterinsurgent performance there. With an eye toward this interpretive nettle, the following discussion attempts to draw out what can be learned about this study's analytic framework and hypotheses from the American experience in Vietnam.

The insurgency facing the government of South Vietnam (GVN) from its creation in 1955 to its conquest in 1975 was a continuation of the Communist, avowedly Maoist revolution that had ended French colonial rule and culminated in the partition of North and South Vietnam. By 1961, Communist insurgents in the south had taken on the identity of a unified National Liberation Front (NLF), comprising a political arm, the People's Revolutionary Party, and a military arm, the Viet Cong (VC). Over time the insurgency would also consist of regular and irregular units of the North Vietnamese Army itself (NVA). VC and NVA forces in South Vietnam were numerous – by one account, insurgent numbers grew from 35,000 in 1961 to roughly 400,000 in 1967.[69] Their goal was the overthrow of the GVN and the unification of South Vietnam under the Communist regime in Hanoi.

America's efforts to oppose the insurgency were marked by gradual escalation from 1950, with the establishment of a four-man Military Assistance Advisory Group to a peak of over half a million committed troops in 1969. The last American combat forces left Vietnam in 1973. The U.S.'s role as a major partner to the South Vietnamese government can be dated to February 1962, when the Military Assistance Command – Vietnam (MACV) was stood up in Saigon. By that point, the insurgency was quickly

[69] Sarkesian, p. 133.

gaining ground thanks to a combination of strong political and military organization, strong support from North Vietnam, and weak and corrupt leadership at multiple levels of the South Vietnamese government.

In 1965, the GVN's declining fortunes prompted U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson to deploy several divisions of ground forces to Vietnam and to initiate a massive bombing campaign against VC and North Vietnamese targets. U.S. intervention staved off the immediate risk of defeat and was effective in causing a great deal of damage to insurgent forces.[70] But the insurgency remained resilient, a result made plain by the enormous nationwide VC and NVA attack during the Tet holiday of 1968. The Tet Offensive was decisively turned back by South Vietnamese and American forces, but proved to be a signal event for American involvement in demonstrating the tenacity of the insurgency in the face of waning political commitment in the U.S.

The years following the Tet Offensive saw some improvements in the responsiveness of the GVN and the professionalism of its army, and the VC and NVA struggled to maintain the foothold they had gained in the country. At the same time, however, American policy shifted to emphasize withdrawal, and the GVN was not able to strengthen its position fast enough to resist the combined opposition of the indigenous insurgents and their North Vietnamese allies. South Vietnam fell to its Communist adversaries in 1975.

Were ethno-religious identity-based cleavages significant?

South Vietnam was not an ethnically or religiously homogeneous country. Outside of the majority Vietnamese population, ethnic Chinese, Khmer, and Montagnard

[70] North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap told a reporter the Communist forces lost over 600,000 people from 1965-1968. Joes, p. 188.

minorities made up 10-15% of the population.[71] More politically salient were distinctions between the majority Buddhists and Catholics, who made up about 10% of the population.[72] Partly due to its ties to South Vietnam's Catholic first president, Ngo Dinh Diem, the Catholic community exerted political influence beyond its size. This dynamic did create some tension between Catholic and Buddhist communities. As Robert Thompson describes, discrimination against Buddhists "stemmed partly from the fact that the Catholics generally were better educated and therefore able to take greater material advantage of their opportunities, and partly from the fact that the Catholics were more committed as a whole to the war against the Viet Cong."[73]

However, in spite of some highly-charged religious conflicts during Diem's rule, the religious divisions in South Vietnamese society were relatively mild and did not usually define political allegiances. Douglas Blaufarb argues that "The religion of the majority, Hinayana Buddhism, was never a strongly organized church. Certain religious sects . . . showed persistent vitality but involved only small minorities. Only two nationwide institutions persisted with approximately their former vitality: the family and the village."[74]

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[71] Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 10.

[72] Joes, p. 37.

[73] Thompson, p. 65.

[74] Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance 1950 to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 91.

Most important, although some relationships can be drawn between ethno-religious divisions and some political leanings during the war,[75] those divisions were not the basis of the insurgents' grievances, and ethno-religious identities were not the bases that either side usually claimed for the legitimacy of its cause. Insurgents and counterinsurgents in Vietnam were far more similar than they were different.

Instead, grievances arose principally from the socio-economic disruption in traditional peasant communities introduced by the newly independent GVN. Following the split between North and South Vietnam, the tension between the educated, urban elite and the peasantry was further exacerbated when President Diem abolished political autonomy at the village level. Blaufarb contends that the result of this move "was to bring into direct contact the two cultures of modern, educated elite and traditional peasant life which had grown worlds apart, and to charge the elite with managing a new type of society for which the peasants were entirely unprepared, one which provided services but also placed new and stricter demands on the villages."[76]

More will be said about the nature of insurgent grievances in the governance section below. But for the purposes of assessing the role of identities in shaping the Vietnam War, Sam Sarkesian's assessment is directly on point:

> An important characteristic of the revolution was the fact that the two major protagonists . . . were of the same ethnic group but represented different political systems. . . The lack of clear delineation between the protagonists and supporters focused attention on the effectiveness of one or the other system. This effectiveness was judged on the measure of security and the social and economic benefits they could afford the peasants.[77]

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[75] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics and Society*, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 188-204.

[76] Ibid., p. 92.

[77] Sarkesian, p. 91.

Overall, then, ethno-religious identity-based cleavages were not a significant factor in the Vietnam War.

Were good security operations conducted?

Deterioration in security of the South Vietnamese population in the early 1960s was severe, and to a significant extent was the main impetus for the earliest escalations in American involvement. By one estimate, 80 percent of the countryside in 1961 was controlled by the VC. The visiting Arthur Schlesinger lamented that "The guerrillas now control almost all of the southern delta – so much so that I could find no American who would drive me outside Saigon in his car even by day without a military convoy."[78]

Early campaigns against the VC by South Vietnam's Army (Army of the Republic of Vietnam, or ARVN) were largely ineffective, and even counterproductive because of the ARVN's lack of professionalism and frequently indiscriminate use of firepower.[79] Under the tutelage of their American advisors, ARVN commanders focused on large-scale operations with battalion and brigade sized units, and VC strength continued to grow. A British observer and veteran of the Malayan Emergency saw three causes for the failure to improve population security:

> Ineffective registration and control of the population have allowed Viet Cong commanders and units to keep in touch freely through public channels; commanders have been reluctant to send small numbers of soldiers against large guerrilla units; and massive airmobile operations against big Viet Cong units have left few men available for harassment patrols.[80]

In 1962, GVN launched the strategic hamlets program, an attempt, partly modeled on the New Villages of the Malayan Emergency, to greatly enhance security in the

[78] Ibid., p. 89.

[79] Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988), Books I and III.

[80] Clutterbuck, p. 73.

villages throughout the countryside through a combination of physical measures, increased investment in local security forces and improved communications networks linking the hamlets. Intended to be the centerpiece of the counterinsurgency, the strategic hamlet program was beset from the beginning by problems of both design and execution. For example, as in Algeria, large-scale population resettlement proved to be extremely unpopular with peasants who had multi-generation ties to the land where they lived and worked.

Additionally, the program's security measures were often poorly resourced and implemented. Richard Clutterbuck summarizes the program's meager results: "With little to stop them but a perimeter fence patrolled by part-time armed villagers and with their own agents already inside, the Viet Cong were able to overrun large numbers of these hamlets; and this had a disastrous effect on public confidence."[81] Douglas Blaufarb continues:

> What happened in hamlet after hamlet was that the population was hastily organized to construct defenses and man them, and promises of reimbursement were made for support of all the varied types required, but all too often these promises went unfulfilled, sometimes because of outright embezzlement, more often for reasons of disorganization.[82]

The GVN abandoned the strategic hamlet program in early 1964. It was succeeded by a series of new programs, none of which made a great deal of progress in securing villages against VC incursions.

The introduction of American ground forces in 1965 was a major milestone in South Vietnam's struggle to provide security. But the Americans' impact on security was decidedly mixed. U.S. forces were crucial in rolling back and preventing major

[81] Ibid., p. 68.

[82] Blaufarb, p. 192.

movements of VC and NVA conventional forces that were threatening to take control of major parts of the country. But American combat operations were governed by a strategy dedicated to the attrition of Communist forces through "search and destroy" missions. They did not focus on securing populated areas. The MACV commander from 1964-1968, General William Westmoreland, saw the war in primarily conventional terms, and therefore did not see great value in focusing military resources on population security. His attitude is nicely summarized by the one-word answer he once gave to a reporter's question about the key to defeating the insurgency: "Firepower."[83] This emphasis on large-scale operations and the heavy use of artillery and aerial bombardment also resulted in a large number of casualties among non-combatants,[84] displacing over a million people from their homes[85] and further degrading security among the people where the insurgency was being fought.

Many Americans recognized the problems with this strategy from the beginning, however.[86] Over time, policy slowly shifted to accommodate greater emphasis on providing security. The Marine Corps's Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program was an early example of this recognition. CAPs were small teams, composed of twelve Marines and 24 Popular Force (PF) militia men, who lived and worked in villages for months at a time. Though the CAP program enjoyed some success, it was never

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[83] Quoted in Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 197.

[84] Sheehan, pp. 617-621.

[85] Beckett, p. 197.

[86] Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy At War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 134-140.

implemented on a large scale, staying confined to the Marines and their area of operations.

It was not until 1967 that "pacification" was given significant focus and resources by American leadership in Washington and Saigon through the creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary (later Rural) Development Support (CORDS) program. The pacification campaign that CORDS was to lead aimed to improve both security and governance in South Vietnam, but it was predicated on the primacy of security. As historian Richard Hunt describes, "After a modicum of security was established, . . . the Americans believed, the process of development could begin – electing local officials, stimulating rural economic growth, and opening roads."[87] The so-called "accelerated pacification campaign" that began in late 1968 featured ambitious goals, aiming to secure over a thousand contested hamlets.[88] And it entailed major changes in resource allocations to match those ambitious goals.

> According to data compiled by Pentagon analysts, only 0.5 percent of American military operations and 5 percent of U.S. expenditures in South Vietnam supported pacification before the accelerated campaign. During the campaign, it was estimated that half of all American ground operations supported pacification, for the first time focusing the U.S. Army's efforts on the struggle for control of the people.[89]

One key focus of the pacification campaign was to bolster the Regional Forces and Popular Forces (RF/PF), local militias whose mission was to operate in their home provinces and districts to provide local security.[90] The RF/PF grew by 73 percent from

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[87] Hunt, p. 172.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., p. 192.

[90] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999), p. 72.

1966 to 1972.[91] Closely related to this effort was a large expansion in the military advisory program. CORDS more than doubled the number of advisors to local security forces from 1967 to 1968 alone.[92] A third prominent piece of the pacification program was a concerted effort to attack the VC "infrastructure" by improving intelligence on, and attempting to neutralize, VC administrative, political, and propaganda capabilities. This "Phoenix Program" suffered from abuses, bad intelligence, and public controversy. But it also scored some significant successes against the VC infrastructure, an impact since acknowledged by North Vietnamese officials.[93]

The pacification campaign initiated in 1968 was certainly not an unambiguous success, but it did yield remarkable gains. By the end of 1969, the percentage of the South Vietnamese population that the U.S. and GVN considered to be "relatively secure" rose above 93 percent. The population living in areas considered to be controlled by the insurgents fell below three percent.[94] In Hunt's judgment, "When viewed in the longer perspective, the [accelerated pacification campaign] marked the start of a period, roughly 1969 to early 1972, of uninterrupted gains in population security throughout South Vietnam and further erosion of the Viet Cong."[95] This phase of the war presents a marked contrast with the years immediately preceding it, where population security was largely neglected, or worse.

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[91] Komer (1986), p. 120.

[92] Hunt, pp. 107-108.

[93] Sorley, p. 147, and Beckett, p. 197.

[94] Hunt, p. 254.

[95] Ibid., p. 204.

Was good governance provided?

Counterinsurgent efforts to improve governance in Vietnam followed a similar path as those to improve security of the population. Programs such as the strategic hamlets, CAPs, and CORDS generally married a variety of socio-economic initiatives to the improvements in security that were their focus. Some senior U.S. officials believed that such initiatives were the key to victory in Vietnam. For example, Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman issued a paper in February 1962 titled "A Strategic Concept for South Vietnam," which called for an emphasis on political, economic, and social measures to defeat the insurgency.[96]

But in the first several years of the war, attempts to implement such measures were generally weak and ineffectual. The Diem regime was highly corrupt and did little to address popular grievances. In fact, reform programs the GVN did pursue tended to reinforce peasant grievances rather than alleviate them. In D. Michael Shafer's estimation, the "VC addressed peasants' problems directly: landlessness, high rents, indebtedness, and high taxes," while the GVN's efforts to tackle these issues were really aimed at "solidification of support among landlords."[97] Such policies served as confirmation of the VC's philosophy and message about the class-based repression practiced by the GVN. Jeffrey Race, who conducted extensive interviews with peasants and participants on both sides of the conflict in Long An province, concluded that "the incentives for living in the strategic hamlets were not relevant to the reasons for assistance to the revolutionary movement . . . the program devoted its resources to a

[96] Beckett, p. 199, and Blaufarb, p. 109.

[97] Shafer, pp. 264-265.

physical reinforcement of the existing social system and of those who held power under it . . ."[98]

Partly as a result of these dynamics, many South Vietnamese people really did prefer the political leadership of the insurgents to that of the government. The insurgents understood the people's needs better than the government, or at least were more willing to address them. Race argues that "a basic fallacy underlay the government's development programs in Long An: that people 'supported communism' because they were poor, and therefore that reducing their poverty would reduce the appeal of revolution. Thus this approach viewed the problem as incremental rather than distributive."[99] Perhaps the most important illustration of this phenomenon was the different attitudes toward land reform that prevailed on each side of the conflict during the early years. In his interviews, Race found that "government officials uniformly dismissed the significance of land ownership as an issue in the conflict, while former members of the revolutionary movement uniformly emphasized its importance."[100] The VC, in fact, carried out land reform during the early 1960s in areas where they had established sufficient control.[101]

Thus the insurgents had the upper hand in the battle for the sympathies of the peasant population. The Americans' tendency toward liberal use of firepower and loose rules of engagement did little to mitigate this VC advantage. In addition to causing the

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[98] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), p. 192.

[99] Ibid., p. 201.

[100] Ibid., p. xiv.

[101] Blaufarb, p. 96.

extensive collateral damage noted above, the attrition-based strategy diverted money, manpower, and management focus away from the socio-economic competition underway between the VC and the GVN. In the first several years of the U.S. intervention, this was not simply a matter of neglect, but rather of deliberate strategy. One U.S. general described the problem this way:

> I had two rules. One is that you would try to get a very close meshing of pacification . . . and military operations. The other rule is the military operations would be given first priority in every case. That doesn't mean you wouldn't do pacification, but this gets at what you might call winning the hearts and minds of the people. I'm all for that. It's a nice concept, but in fighting the Viet Cong and the NVA, if you don't break their military machine you might as well forget winning the hearts and minds of the people.[102]

However, as described in the section above on security, these priorities in the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy underwent a transformation beginning around 1967-1968. Three key factors help account for the Americans' subsequent focus on governance as a key instrument of counterinsurgency. First, U.S. leaders in Washington, including President Johnson, had become convinced by events and expert advice that a greater focus on the people was warranted. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara summarized his view of the problem in 1966:

> By and large, the people in rural areas believe that the GVN when it comes will not stay but that the VC will; that cooperation with the GVN will be punished by the VC; that the GVN is really indifferent to the people's welfare; that the low-level GVN are tools of the local rich; and that the GVN is ridden with corruption. Success in pacification depends on the interrelated functions of providing physical security, destroying the VC apparatus, motivating the people to cooperate, and establishing responsive local government.[103]

This growing appreciation in Washington for the importance of improving governance in Vietnam led to the second key development in the changing strategy: the creation of CORDS. According to CORDS's founder Robert Komer, prior to CORDS, ".

[102] Major (later Lieutenant) General Julian Ewell, quoted in Krepinevich, p. 222.

[103] Quoted in Blaufarb, p. 236.

. . counterinsurgency (or pacification) fell between stools. It was everybody's business and nobody's. The absence of a single major agency or directing machinery charged with it contributed greatly to the prolonged failure to press it on a large scale."[104] CORDS established that agency and "directing machinery" and facilitated the allocation of greater resources to the pacification campaign.

The third key factor was the replacement in 1968 of General Westmoreland with General Creighton Abrams as MACV commander. Abrams recognized many of the problems with the attrition strategy and the conventional military orientation that had prevailed under Westmoreland, and he put the full weight of his command behind the new pacification campaign. The extent to which Abrams deserves credit for departing from previous practice remains a matter of scholarly debate. But at a minimum, General William Rosson, who took over as Abrams's deputy in 1969 after a year's absence from Vietnam, remarked that "Abrams (with [Ambassador Ellsworth] Bunker) had made [the strategy] 'clear and hold' instead of 'search and destroy.'"[105]

In addition to building up and advising local security forces, a central focus of the pacification campaign was supporting the so-called "revolutionary development" (RD) cadres throughout South Vietnam. The RD cadres were charged with a wide variety of tasks, including to

> restore local elected government, assist in community self-help or government-subsidized development projects (such as repairing roads, buildings, and bridges), provide medical treatment to the ill, and aid farmers in getting credit. Teams would also issue identification cards to citizens, recruit people for the armed forces, organize and train self-defense groups, uncover and arrest members of the Viet Cong, and conduct political rallies.[106]

[104] Komer (1986), p. 83.

[105] Quoted in Sorley, p. 29.

[106] Hunt, p. 37.

In order to support these activities, CORDS created and managed a similarly diverse array of U.S. programs, such as public administration, economic stabilization, education, public health, census taking, civil engineering, and construction.[107]

Perhaps the most important single element of the counterinsurgency directed at improving governance was one undertaken entirely by the GVN, itself: land reform. As noted above, land ownership and landlord-tenant relationships were highly salient issues for Vietnamese peasants and were often their chief grievances against the government. A 1966 study that surveyed South Vietnamese farmers about their needs and concerns reported that "It had been presumed that villagers would stress . . . public works including schools. Instead, the desire to own land was at the top of the list. . . [E]ven peace and security were far down the list behind the desire to own land."[108]

Hunt explains why this was such a potent issue for the Vietnamese peasants. During the reign of the French,

> wealthy urban entrepreneurs had slowly bought up tracts of farmland traditionally belonging to established villages and hamlets and had allowed farmers to till the land in exchange for the payment of a fixed percentage of the crop in rent. The result was that large numbers of Vietnamese . . . were either landless or tenants. . . Often officials and soldiers returning to villages liberated from the Viet Cong were accompanied by landlords, who reclaimed their property and collected back rents. In some cases government officials themselves were landlords. Such practices led many peasants to identify the Saigon regime with exploitation . . .[109]

In March 1970, the GVN finally enacted comprehensive land reform in the form of legislation known as "Land to the Tiller." The new law granted ownership of land to all current tenant cultivators and compensated the existing owners for the expropriation.

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[107] Ibid., pp. 93-95.

[108] Shafer, p. 266.

[109] Hunt, pp. 11, 14-15.

Notably, the land grant was made without discrimination with regard to who had supported the government in the past.[110] Even those tenant farmers with historical VC sympathies were granted their land. While the Land to the Tiller legislation was not as revolutionary as it would have been ten years earlier, it still had a significant positive effect on the popularity of the government. In 1972, a study funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development surveyed peasants and conditions in the South Vietnamese countryside. It concluded that "The Land to the Tiller Program is a splendid means to pacification. . . It is helping turn a once-disaffected, politically neutral mass of potential and sometimes actual revolutionaries . . . into middle class farmers in support of the regime."[111]

In conjunction with the other reforms under way and the improving security in the villages, economic activity and prosperity improved significantly in the early 1970s. Roads and canals re-opened, investment increased, and agricultural production boomed. Annual rice production, for example, increased nearly 40 percent from 1968 to 1972.[112]

In the end, then, did the U.S. and its Vietnamese allies provide good governance to the people of South Vietnam? In the first years of the war, it is clear that on balance they did not. Corruption, incompetence, the use of excessive force, and neglect of peasant interests were rife and overwhelmed efforts to provide good governance. The judgment is much less clear in the war's later years, around 1968 and after. None of the earlier problems disappeared altogether, but in those years, security and good governance

[110] Race, pp. 272-273.

[111] Hunt, p. 264.

[112] Blaufarb, p. 266, and Sorley, p. 149.

were central components of the U.S. and GVN counterinsurgency strategies, and their implementation was somewhat successful.

Were political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages pursued?

Because the war in Vietnam did not center on conflict between ethno-religious groups, no political agreements focused on such groups were pursued, or were likely to be very relevant if they had been.

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

As in Algeria, an evaluation of the outcome of counterinsurgency in Vietnam is more complicated than conventional wisdom would suggest. The departure of American forces from Vietnam under the cloud of domestic political disillusionment and the ultimate collapse of South Vietnam to the Communists in the North belie an assessment of success in the counterinsurgency. And yet by many measures, the counterinsurgency conducted by the U.S. and the GVN did succeed in marginalizing its VC enemies.

For analytic purposes, it is useful to separate the U.S. involvement in Vietnam into two halves, roughly divided between the periods before and after the 1968 Tet Offensive. Though Tet is remembered perhaps most of all as the beginning of the end of American involvement, it also represented an enormous blow to the VC and their insurgent strategy, one from which it never fully recovered. In his study of the role of legitimacy in insurgencies, Timothy Lomperis considers the Vietnam War as two separate "half cases," arguing that "after Tet, the political issues fueling the insurgency were abandoned in favor of a purely military solution. Hence legitimacy as an explanatory variable works only until Tet . . ."[113]

[113] Lomperis, p. 287.

There is little doubt that counterinsurgency up to the point of Tet was a failure. The sheer size and level of activity of the VC that allowed them to mount the offensive gives some testimony to the failure of their opponents. But also, at the political level, Jeffrey Race's detailed study of the Long An province makes clear that the VC was ascendant, if not in control there. He claims that as of 1968, the insurgency "had all but extinguished the government presence in the province and that it had the ability, based on internal forces, to smash the remaining government units at will."[114]

But this condition did not last. The year 1968 marked, in addition to the Tet Offensive, the earliest effects of a new emphasis on pacification from Washington and Saigon, a change in the strategic perspective at the top of the American command, and the beginnings of serious efforts at political reform from the GVN. In the years following, VC influenced waned, and the counterinsurgents made steady gains in securing the South Vietnamese population.

The famed American advisor, John Paul Vann, who spent most of 1962-1964 and 1966-1972 in Vietnam in various roles both military and civilian and from the level of a lieutenant colonel to a two-star general equivalent, wrote in a letter home in December 1969, "For the first time in my involvement here, I am not interested in visiting either Washington or Paris, because all of my previous visits have been with the intention of attempting to influence or change the policies for Vietnam. Now I am satisfied with the policies."[115]

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[114] Race, p. 264.

[115] Sorley, pp. 169-170.

Robert Komer, the founder and first director of CORDS wrote years later that "in no important field did GVN performance improve so much as in pacification. . . Indeed, *it is on the role which the 1968-1971 pacification program played in the turnaround of the war during 1968-1971 that the case for a counterinsurgency-oriented strategy must chiefly rest.*" In support of this argument, he cites both inputs and outputs of the pacification campaign:

> GVN/U.S. resources devoted to pacification rose from under $600 million in CY1966 to around $1.5 billion at the CY1970 peak. . . in March 1968, only 59 percent of the population . . . was regarded as even 'relatively secure.' By end-1971, this had risen to over 96 percent . . . by [1975] the indigenous Viet Cong insurgency had largely petered out. Pacification had not failed; indeed, it had become a qualified success at long last.[116]

Komer's successor at CORDS, William Colby, also believed that the pacification program had been a qualified success, citing the steep decline of insurgent attacks and the shift in strategy toward conventional warfare conducted by the NVA.[117]

It is, of course, reasonable to discount the perspectives and conclusions of participants in the counterinsurgency who may have an interest in interpreting the outcomes of those efforts as successful. But these perspectives can also be found in more scholarly treatments of this period from sources with direct experience in the events, and from critics of the general policy pursued by the U.S. in Vietnam. In an interview that Race conducted with a former Communist Party member in 1970, he heard the following assessment of local developments:

> . . . a number of changes in the government approach . . . had begun to make themselves felt around May of 1969. One of these changes had been a partial reconstitution of the government's village apparatus. A second had been the psychological impact of the government's land-reform proposals, widely propagandized at the time. A third important change had been the considerable expansion of the Popular Force and People's Self-Defense Force organizations. The combined effect of these changes was to make it much

[116] Komer (1986), pp. 151, 154 (emphasis in original).

[117] Hunt, p. 257, and Sorley, p. 305.

> more difficult for revolutionary operatives to penetrate populated areas to gather food, intelligence, and recruits.[118]

Blaufarb, another critic of the U.S.'s Vietnam policy, describes the developments in the years following Tet this way:

> The evidence is impressive that a completely changed situation prevailed in the rural areas and that the insurgency in the countryside – the people's war – was effectively contained. This was certainly the impression of observers on the scene based on indicators evident to all. . . Moreover, similar evidence confirms that these gains were firmly established and that the situation did not significantly change until shortly before the sudden collapse of 1975.[119]

Even Robert Thompson, advisor to both Presidents Diem and Nixon, and long a critic of U.S. Vietnam policy concluded flatly: "The VC side of it is over. The people have rejected the VC."[120]

Perhaps even more revealing is the view of trends in counterinsurgency from the North Vietnamese Communists, themselves. Hunt reports that at the beginning of 1971, ". . . viewing with alarm the progress of pacification and Vietnamization and the declining military fortunes of communist forces, the leadership in Hanoi decided on a massive offensive to win the war militarily."[121] The manner of the war's continuation and its ultimate resolution clearly reflected this judgment and generally took on the character of a conventional interstate war between North and South Vietnam.

Evaluation

Considering the American involvement in the Vietnam War from 1962-1973 as two separate cases presents an interesting contrast in the variables of this study's analytic

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[118] Race, p. 270.

[119] Blaufarb, p. 270.

[120] Sorley, p. 317.

[121] Hunt, p. 255.

framework. First, ethno-religious identities, and therefore any related political agreements, were not very salient issues in Vietnam. Second, prior to 1968, it seems clear that security operations were generally poor and efforts to improve governance were neglected, poorly executed, or both. And the counterinsurgency was fairly clearly unsuccessful. After 1968, the security and governance-related operations both improved significantly, and the fortunes of the counterinsurgency clearly followed. To claim outright, as some do, that the counterinsurgency was a success may take this analysis a step too far. But such a categorical judgment is not necessary to recognize the clear correlation between positive trends in the independent variables of security and governance and positive trends in the dependent variable of counterinsurgent success.

At one level, this is simply a vindication of the conventional wisdom that security and governance are the keys to successful counterinsurgency strategy. But it also highlights one of the central challenges of this analysis – to tease apart the relative contributions of security and governance. Here we must return to the basic model outlined in Chapter 3, depicting the linkages operating between inputs of good governance and outputs related to sustainable peace. There it was asserted that understanding the dynamics of cause and effect depends on an appreciation for local dynamics. Jeffrey Race's study of the Long An province took just this approach. One key point from his study was that the VC absolutely conceived of the war as a competition of government between themselves and the South Vietnamese officials, not only a competition of control.

> By developing policies more congenial to the interests of these classes than were the policies of the government, the Party ensured that when the conflict crossed into the military phase the majority of the population would choose to fight against the government in defense of its own interests . . . The Party's demonstrated organizational

> superiority in Long An came about through the development of social policies leading to superior motivation.[122]

The GVN, by contrast, conceived of the insurgency more in terms of criminal behavior in its earliest days, and therefore did not develop a strong governance program to compete with the VC.

And it appears that it was precisely this dynamic that was reversed in many places in South Vietnam during the years after the Tet Offensive. Samuel Popkin was another scholar who conducted extensive interviews among the South Vietnamese peasants during the war. After a series of interviews in 1969, he concluded that "The increase in GVN control results in large measure from a drastic decline in the appeal to peasants of life in areas controlled by the Viet Cong, and from the grave danger of fighting for them."[123]

So, while separating the causal effects of security and governance remains difficult, the dynamics of these variables as observed in Vietnam provide some evidence that improvements in governance can yield large benefits in security, not just the other way around.

Summary Analysis

The summary analysis will proceed in two parts, corresponding to the two purposes for this chapter outlined at its beginning: first, to assess the study's hypotheses using the cases presented here; second, to consider what refinements and augmentations to the study framework these cases might suggest.

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[122] Race, pp. 150, 165.

[123] Quoted in Blaufarb, p. 271.

Applying the Framework to the Cases

Table 3 below summarizes the codings applied in the preceding case studies for each of the framework's key variables. As indicated in Chapter 3, binary codings of these factors are crude and meant to be useful as points of analytic departure rather than as conclusions.

	Independent Variables				**Dependent Variable**
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**c (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Malaya	Ambiguous	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Algeria	Yes	Yes	Ambiguous	No	Ambiguous
South Vietnam (1962-1968)	No	No	No	No	No
South Vietnam (1968-1973)	No	Yes	Yes	No	Ambiguous

Table 3: Case Study Variable Summary for Malaya, Algeria, South Vietnam

Given these values, what do the cases say about the initial hypotheses advanced in Chapter 3?

> *H1: Good governance is not necessary for counterinsurgent success.*
> *Would be supported by: c=No, y=Yes.*

None of the cases here strongly supports this hypothesis. The Algerian case, however, does provide some provocative evidence in this direction. As indicated, the quality of French attempts to improve Algerian governance and the campaign's overall success are difficult to classify. But the French achieved a great deal of success in defeating the FLN's challenge to its rule in spite of a checkered record of governance. Perhaps the key counterfactual question is what would have happened if French

governance improvements had been no better (or even worse), but if the pieds noirs had pursued more extensive efforts to expand Muslim Algerian political participation and autonomy? If such compromises short of granting independence had been negotiated, it is possible that the counterinsurgency would be generally remembered as a success, even in spite of its brutality, the harshness of its regroupement camps, and its mixed record of improving standards of living. From this perspective, the Algerian case supports the plausibility of hypothesis H1, but does not confirm it.

> *H2: If ethno-religious cleavages are not present, then good governance and good security are sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be supported by: a=No, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=Yes.*

Both the Malayan and post-Tet Vietnam cases provide some qualified evidence in support of this hypothesis. For the Malayan case to support the hypothesis, we must accept that ethno-religious cleavages were not a major factor in that conflict. Such a judgment is certainly defensible on the grounds that the ethno-religious dimension of the Malayan Communists' insurgency was a default condition, not a primary source of grievance. The MCP neither wanted its movement to be ethnically-based nor exploited its ethnic dimensions beyond a tactical level. Given this judgment, the Malayan case fits the pattern suggested by hypothesis H2.

Still, the key counterfactual question in applying the Malayan case to this hypothesis is what would have happened if the UMNO-MCA alliance had failed or never come about? In order for the Malayan case to support hypothesis H2, the successful multi-ethnic power sharing alliance must be judged as unnecessary to the counterinsurgent success. Such a judgment is plausible, but certainly not a foregone conclusion.

Hypothesis H2 is also supported by the record of counterinsurgency in the later years of the Vietnam War, when U.S. and GVN focus on security and governance in the South Vietnamese countryside made great strides in marginalizing Viet Cong influence and capability. The great qualification for this case, of course, is that the GVN ultimately lost its war against Communism, making whatever "counterinsurgent success" it can claim somewhat Pyrrhic.

In a sense, hypothesis H2 is a modified statement of the conventional wisdom of traditional counterinsurgency strategy – that the key to victory is to focus on providing security and a better life for the civilian population. So in this sense, we should not be surprised to see some supporting evidence about this from some of the major counterinsurgencies of the past century. Indeed, these cases were important sources of the conventional wisdom in the first place. But what is most striking about this evidence is not its clear alignment with the traditional hypothesis about counterinsurgency, but rather its tentativeness and ambiguity. If these cases do not clearly replicate the logic of conventional wisdom, which cases will?

Two broad explanations might account for this ambiguity. First, it might come from limitations of the analysis, itself. Second, the phenomena under examination might actually be much harder to generalize about than we are conditioned to assume by mainstream policy literature and discourse.

Certainly, the analysis has its limitations. The brevity and small number of cases considered here are among them. The simplicity of the analytic framework is another. But, as outlined in Chapter 3, the framework has offsetting benefits such as analytic

tractability and the fact that its simplifications match those that frequently serve as decision variables in strategic decision making.

The second explanation for the ambiguity is also important. One lesson of these case studies is that easy generalizations about cause and effect in counterinsurgencies should be treated with suspicion. With regard to these cases, conventional wisdom asserts that 1) improving the quality of governance was vital to Britain's victory over communist insurgents in Malaya; 2) France was defeated by Algerian insurgents because it surrendered its perceived legitimacy through the practice of torture; and 3) the United States lost its war against communist insurgents in South Vietnam because it fundamentally misunderstood the type of war it was fighting. The facts of these cases suggest that such conclusions are only partial truths, and, as such, can be quite misleading. The analytic framework applied here highlights the fact that both success in Malaya and failure in pre-Tet Vietnam were overdetermined, while the outcomes in Algeria and post-Tet Vietnam provide evidence of both success and failure.

Beyond the hazards of conventional wisdom, what about the study's hypothesized role of identity politics in subverting the contributions that traditional tools of counterinsurgency do make?

> *H3: If ethno-religious cleavages are present, then good governance and good security together are not sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be supported by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=No.*

And the other overarching hypothesis stated at the beginning of Chapter 3 is also relevant here:

> *In the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.*

Unfortunately, the Malayan, Algerian, and Vietnamese cases do little to resolve this question. Of the two cases where ethno-religious cleavages mattered at all, in only one did they constitute a defining motivation for the insurgency – Algeria. In that case, it is fair to conclude that those cleavages did subvert the effectiveness of the traditional tools of counterinsurgency. In particular, the insurgency drew much of its appeal and its claims to legitimacy from its support for independence from French rule, an issue which created a stark fault line between large numbers of Algeria's Muslim Arabs and Berbers on one side and its largely Christian Europeans on the other. Population security and improved governance by the existing regime did not directly address these concerns.

The trouble is, however, French methods of prosecuting the war through providing security and improving governance often subverted their own effectiveness. Consequently, it is impossible to be sure how much of the ultimate French failure was an irreducible product of intractable ethnic conflict and how much could have been avoided by better application of the principles of providing good governance. Still, as was suggested earlier, the balance of evidence suggests that even much better French performance in this regard would have been unlikely to be decisive. If this is true, then the Algerian case could be seen as providing some evidence to support the above hypothesis. But more evidence and analysis is clearly required.

Applying the Cases to the Framework

What analytical lessons can be drawn from these case studies to help in refining or augmenting the study framework?

One very simple yet important point is that the cases support the framework's treatment of security and governance as complexly interacting but separable factors.

Each case offers evidence that the factors are mutually reinforcing and that details of their interaction at local levels can help in explaining those dynamics. A second and directly related point is to emphasize the limitations of observing and analyzing such phenomena at the national level. These limitations validate an analytic approach that adds a "micro-level" focus other types of analysis.

From a substantive perspective one important insight for the subsequent analysis concerns treatment of the "identity-based cleavages" variable, and is raised by the Malayan case. That case makes clear that the depth and political salience of ethno-religious conflict, together with prospects for harmonization or compromise thereof, may not be obvious at the outset of a conflict. Ethno-religious conflict did not turn out to define the Malayan war. But perhaps this was not the only possible path the war could have taken. For example, one can read the strong performance of the UMNO-MCA alliance as evidence that ethno-religious divisions were never a crucial element of the conflict, that they were surmountable from the beginning. But was this predictable, much less inevitable? As Donald Horowitz describes, there was a considerable amount of chance involved in the circumstances that led to the alliance's success.[124] On the other hand, the British were committed from the outset to a multi-ethnic nation. So perhaps the prospects for defusing ethnic conflict were predictable, since in some sense, the British did predict at least the feasibility of that outcome. Did the British understand the ethnic dynamics correctly, did their strategy change the dynamics for the better, or were they just lucky? Put another way, was the success of the UMNO-MCA alliance a cause of the

[124] Horowitz, p. 402.

counterinsurgent success, or was it the result of underlying conditions that would have allowed for counterinsurgent success independent of the alliance?

Interestingly, the same questions are relevant to Iraq. Like the British in Malaya, the Americans in Iraq were committed from the outset to a multi-ethnic nation. But unlike the British, they have not fully realized that goal – at least not yet. Did they understand the dynamics incorrectly, did their strategy change the dynamics for the worse, or were they just unlucky?

Quite possibly, the answers to these questions all flow directly from the answer to this question: how severe were the ethno-religious cleavages at the beginning of the conflict? The argument was made in Chapter 2 that, though group loyalties are not fixed, they are likely to be very difficult to influence over the relatively short timeframes faced by counterinsurgents. If this is true, then the severity of cleavages at the beginning of the conflict is likely to be highly influential in shaping outcomes. Accordingly, gauging that severity would be a first-order priority for strategy development. The need to be particularly sensitive to this question is one lesson learned for the rest of the empirical work. Some recent work by Kalyvas and Kocher, cited earlier, expresses skepticism for the notion that the "depth" of ethnic cleavages is determinative in civil wars.[125] However, the point made here is slightly different; deep cleavages need not *compel* the onset of ethnic civil wars in order for them to raise their likelihoods and - more important for the counterinsurgent who must fight the wars, not predict them – substantively shape their dynamics.[126]

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[125] Kalyvas and Kocher.

[126] This is consistent with a point Kalyvas makes elsewhere. See Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 75.

Counterinsurgency experiences in Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam also suggest the possible utility of an additional framework for addressing the issues of this study, one that treats the role of ethno-religious identity implicitly rather than explicitly. A theme that recurs in the scholarship about Vietnam in particular is that peasant grievances there were not so much driven by their level of poverty or their absolute standard of living as by the *distribution* of wealth and power in their communities. Clearly, this distinction is critical to any counterinsurgency strategy designed to address popular grievances. Race explains this logic as it operated in Long An province in the early and mid-1960s:

> Economic development would go on regardless of who won, although it might be delayed while deciding who would win. Thus it was simply not an issue in the struggle. . . Government programs were focused largely on providing a general *increment* of wealth or income, whereas what attracted people to the revolutionary movement was that it represented a new society in which there would be an individual *redistribution* of values, including power and status as well as material possessions. . . Those unsympathetic to the government were glad to have dispensaries, roads, loans and farmers' associations, but they went right ahead and cooperated with the revolutionary movement, for *the same groups were still going to be at the bottom no matter how much assistance the government provided*.[127]

Race argues that one of the reasons the VC were so effective in the first half of the war was that they recognized this redistributive imperative. Of course redistribution of wealth would come naturally to Communist insurgents, central as it is to their political philosophy. But Race points out another important distinction in this regard – that participants in the insurgency, themselves, distinguished between "policies redistributive of wealth and income" and "policies redistributive of power and status."[128] Or, to put it another way, grievances about distribution had both economic and political dimensions, and they were separable.

Blaufarb makes a similar point in his analysis of Vietnam, arguing that

[127] Race, p. 176 (emphasis in original).

[128] Ibid., p. 165.

> the critical aspect of rural development aid for counterinsurgency purposes was the process by which decisions were made and the aid distributed. . . Grievance processes are [more important] than the more common emphases on education, health services, roads, and the like, although the latter should not be ignored. In all these matters, the process . . . is more important than the material details. It must be a process in which the beneficiaries are confirmed in their essential goal of achieving greater control over what is done for them and to them by the power structure.[129]

The decision "processes" to which Blaufarb refers must by definition reflect the distribution of "power and status" that Race's interview respondents found to be more important than the distribution of material goods and services.

In Blaufarb's view, it was limitations in the reform of distribution of political power where the South Vietnamese counterinsurgency ultimately fell short. Importantly, he separates this phenomenon from the distributive problems of wealth, which were quite extensively addressed by the U.S.-GVN pacification campaign and the Land to the Tiller legislation.

> In the end, the peasant was left to his own resources, with no organization to speak for him above the village level. The government thus failed – despite the economic and development benefits of its programs, despite the increased security in the countryside – to create among the peasantry a strong, positive motivation to engage in the struggle on the official side. . . The programmatic aspects of pacification in Vietnam were therefore a substantial success, but they were unable to come to grips with the most deep-seated problems in rural life in Vietnam. These could only have been solved by providing the villagers with political levers linked to the national political process.[130]

What emerges from this analysis is a new pair of hypotheses, that among the factors that win the loyalty of a population and establish legitimacy, distributional effects may be more important than absolute effects, and political effects may be more important than economic effects. This latter observation echoes Horowitz's caution cited in Chapter 2, that while political power is often an instrument for determining allocation of material benefits, "power may also *be* the benefit. . . Broad matters of group status

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[129] Blaufarb, pp. 289, 309-310.

[130] Ibid., pp. 272, 277.

regularly have equal or superior standing to the narrow allocative decisions often taken to be the uniform stuff of everyday politics."[131]

Table 4 below presents a graphical representation of these hypotheses together with some examples of the kinds of government measures that might fit into each of the four categories implied by the interaction of the hypotheses.

	ECONOMIC MEASURES & EFFECTS	**POLITICAL MEASURES & EFFECTS**
ABSOLUTE MEASURES & EFFECTS	Examples: direct aid, job creation, economic growth, public works Hypothesized Effectiveness: least effective	Examples: enfranchisement Hypothesized Effectiveness: moderately effective
DISTRIBUTIONAL MEASURES & EFFECTS	Examples: allocation of public resources, tax policy, land ownership Hypothesized Effectiveness: moderately effective	Examples: constitutional structure (national and local level), representation in decision-making processes Hypothesized Effectiveness: most effective

Table 4: An Alternative Assessment Framework for Effectiveness of Governance Measures & Effects in Counterinsurgency

Note that this framework is silent on the role of group identities and ethnic and religious conflict. But ethnic and religious identities can be related to the framework in at least two important ways. First, such affiliations may define the key groups among which wealth and political power is distributed. In more homogenous societies, the most important groups might be defined by class or alignment with other interests. Second, perhaps the presence of ethnic or religious conflict could accentuate the relative importance of political power over economic power, in the spirit of Horowitz's comments above.

[131] Horowitz, p. 187 (emphasis in original).

So, for example, despite the GVN's failings in establishing equitable political processes between federal and local governments, it was able to score a major victory against the VC through land reform, a fundamentally economic redistributive measure. Would such an initiative have had such an effect in an ethnically divided society? In Algeria, where ethno-religious conflict was at the center of the insurgency, strong economic growth and job creation seemed not to matter a great deal, and it is hard to imagine as strong an effect of land reform on the fortunes of the FLN as the effect the VC experienced.[132]

The framework derived from these insights could benefit from greater theoretical scrutiny, but may offer promising opportunities for further research.

In conclusion, the Malayan, Algerian, and Vietnamese cases examined here suggest the following insights regarding the study's hypotheses:

- Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam provide some evidence to support the conventional wisdom that providing good governance is an effective strategy for counterinsurgents.
- However, all three cases suggest that the efficacy of governance-based strategies is more ambiguous and complicated than is usually assumed.
- The Algerian case provides some qualified support for the hypothesis that the politics of ethnic identity can subvert the effectiveness of governance-based strategies.

[132] Melnik, pp. 232-233.

From a methodological stand-point, one of the key lessons of these cases is the need to examine the dynamics of legitimacy in counterinsurgency at more local levels, a task taken up in the next few chapters.

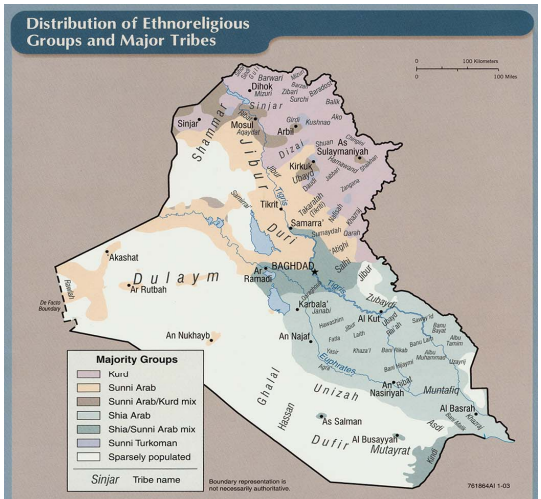
Chapter 5: Governance, Identity, and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

This chapter presents an overview of identity politics in Iraq and how those politics have been manifest in the insurgency and counterinsurgency conducted there following the American-led Coalition invasion of 2003. It provides a national-level background for, and introduction to, the local case studies in the two chapters that follow. It is organized into three sections on the following topics: 1) identity politics and ethno-religious conflict in Iraq; 2) insurgency and counterinsurgency; and 3) local case study selection.

Identity Politics and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq

Demographics, Geography, and a History of Cleavages

Figure 2: Map of Iraqi Ethno-religious Groups[1]



Ethnic Group	Estimated Population	Also Found In	Religion	Language
Arabs	16 to 20 million	Throughout North Africa and the Middle East, Iran	65-80 percent Shia, 20-30 percent Sunni, less than 5 percent Christian	Arabic (Iraqi dialect)
Kurds	3.6 to 4.8 million	Turkey, Iran, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan	Mostly Sunni, Shia, and Yazidi minority	Kurdish
Turkomans	300,000 to 800,000	Related to other Turkic peoples in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkmenistan	Primarily Sunni	South Azeri Turkish
Others	As many as 1 million	Mostly Christians, Iranians, and other groups found in the Middle East	At least 50 percent Christian; Shias, Sunnis, and members of other religions account for the balance	Mostly Arabic, some Persian and other languages

In the Bible's Book of Genesis, humanity's great ethnic and linguistic diversity is explained as a divine retribution for mankind's hubristic attempt to build the Tower of Babel and thus seek worldly glory in place of fealty to God.[2] Iraq is the modern home of that ancient story, which lends a sense of poetic depth to its recent strife. As the world has learned in the years since 2003,

[1] Central Intelligence Agency, January 2003. Available at: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/iraq_ethno_2003.jpg (accessed July 26, 2009).

[2] Bible, Book of Genesis, 11:1-9.

the politics of ethno-religious identity in Iraq are complex and volatile. While Iraq's sectarian cleavages have only recently gained geopolitical significance on a global scale, they have been central, enduring features of Iraqi politics since the state was carved out of the defunct Ottoman Empire under a British mandate in 1920.

The most significant of these cleavages are those between Sunni Arab and Shi'a Arab populations and between Arab and Kurdish ethnic populations. These cleavages create three major Iraqi communities around which much commentary on Iraqi politics revolves: Sunni Arabs, constituting approximately 20% of the population; Shi'a Arabs, constituting approximately 50-55% of the population; and the mostly Sunni but generally more secular Kurds, constituting approximately 18-20% of the population. Most of the remaining several percent of Iraqis are Turkmen, Christian Arabs (many of whom are also known as Chaldeans or Assyrians), and Yezidis.[3]

As shown in the map above, large areas of Iraq are relatively homogeneous with respect to the country's three major ethno-religious communities, with Kurds dominating the northeast, Shi'a Arabs dominating the southeast and Sunni Arabs dominating the north-central and western Euphrates river valley areas. However, significant parts of the country are heterogeneous, including some of the major population centers, such as Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, and the central provinces of Diyala and Babil.

Iraq's starkest and most persistent ethnic conflict has been between Arabs and Kurds. The Kurdish people, sometimes referred to as the world's largest nation without a

[3] CIA World Factbook, 2008, CIA map referenced in note 1 above, and Jasim Muhammad Tuzlu, "The Demographic Map, Elections, and Forecast Figures of Social Components," FBIS Report in Arabic (GMP20041210000187), December 8, 2004.

state,[4] are spread mainly across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria and have long harbored designs to establish an independent Kurdish state. As minorities in their home states, however, their ambitions have always been thwarted by more powerful forces.

Iraqi Kurds' efforts to free themselves from Baghdad's rule date from the beginning of Iraq's statehood under the British mandate,[5] and Kurds and Arabs in Iraq have clashed repeatedly over the decades since then. These fights were not only political, but military as well, with large-scale armed hostilities breaking out between Kurdish guerrillas and Iraqi government forces in 1930, 1943-45, throughout most of the 1960s, 1974-5, and 1988-90. The last of these conflicts is the most infamous, featuring Saddam Hussein's "al Anfal" campaign in which eighty percent of Kurdish villages were destroyed and probably more than 100,000 Kurds were killed, many of them women and children, and some by chemical weapons.[6]

On at least two occasions, Baghdad actually made short-lived commitments in recognition of a legitimate Kurdish nationalism, if not quite independence. The Declaration of 29 June 1966 and the Manifesto of 11 March 1970 essentially "recognized the 'legitimacy of the Kurdish nationality', and promised Kurdish linguistic rights, Kurdish participation in government, and Kurdish administrators for the Kurdish area."[7] In short order, however, Baghdad reneged on these commitments, proving either unable

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[4] Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics 2nd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 44.

[5] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 33-38.

[6] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq, 2nd Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 245, and Peter W. Galbraith, *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), pp. 26-27.

[7] Marion Forouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship, 3rd Edition* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 104, 131.

or unwilling to implement them. In effect, then, Arabs and Kurds have never truly accepted the others' claims to legitimate control over Iraqi Kurdistan. Kurds, though often suffering from internal political conflicts, have generally operated under the premise that legitimacy flows first from Kurdish ethnic identity. One particularly compelling piece of evidence of this can be found in a referendum conducted in the Kurdish areas during the first post-Saddam Iraqi elections in January 2005. The referendum asked for a yes or no vote on whether the Kurds preferred independence for Iraqi Kurdistan. Of the two million who voted, 98 percent said yes.[8]

The history of cleavages between Iraq's Sunni Arab and Shi'a Arab populations is more complex and varied than the history of Arab-Kurd conflict. Prior to 2003, Iraq – and before Iraq its three constituent Ottoman provinces ("vilayets") – was always ruled by groups dominated by the Sunni Arab minority. This practice dates almost to the beginning of Ottoman rule in the early sixteenth century[9] and was replicated by the British when they took over in the aftermath of World War I.[10]

To varying degrees over time, this Sunni Arab rule tended to be chauvinistic and discriminatory. Under Saddam Hussein, that discrimination included mass murder of his opponents. To be sure, regimes throughout Iraq's modern history made attempts to build an Iraqi national identity that transcended ethnicity and religion. In the early days of the monarchy, the 1920s and 1930s, Iraqi and British leaders tried to build on tribes and theirs sheikhs as non-sectarian bases for the legitimacy of their rule. In 1958, the

[8] Galbraith, p. 171.

[9] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq, 2nd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 6.

[10] Tripp, p. 31.

monarchy was overthrown in a coup orchestrated by a group of reformist military officers. They established a constitutional republic for the first time in Iraq's history. The new regime's prime minister, Abd al-Karim Qasim, himself the product of mixed Sunni-Shi'a parentage, pursued a secular reform agenda, emphasizing the need for socio-economic changes. Then with the rise of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq in the 1960s, the government submerged the concept of Iraqi nationalism beneath calls for a secular Pan-Arab identity.

These different visions of cross-sectarian political identity advanced by the Iraqi government sometimes served to moderate Sunni-Shi'a cleavages, but they fell far short of eliminating them. The simple fact that Sunnis dominated the senior ranks of the government and the military in spite of being less than half as numerous as Shi'a was perceived as a persistent injustice. As one Shi'a student put it in 1931, "[Have] the Shi'is sacrificed their men, orphaned their children and widowed their wives in order to set up governmental chairs for the Sunnis on the skulls of their martyrs?"[11] The most straightforward means of redressing this Shi'a grievance – free elections – remained unavailable to the Iraqi people. Moreover, for many Iraqi Shi'a, the strong secularism of first Qasim and then the Ba'ath party represented a threat to Shi'ism, itself. The 1960s saw a religious revival among Shi'a youth, and, as historian Phebe Marr explains, "the Shi'a also used the period of upheaval and declining central control to develop a new religious and communal identity at odds with the secular nationalism of the central

[11] Quoted in Lukitz, p. 62.

government and to strengthen Shi'i groups, like the [Shi'a Islamist political party of] Da'wa and the clergy."[12]

The brutal reign of Saddam Hussein did nothing to alleviate the sense of grievance among Iraqi Shi'a. From the early days of his regime, Saddam kept a tight rein on popular Shi'a clerics who openly opposed his rule, which included the execution of revered Da'wa party founder Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al Sadr in 1980, as well as restricted public recognition of Shi'a religious holidays and pilgrimages. After Iraq's eviction from Kuwait in 1991, many Shi'a groups in southern Iraq revolted in an attempt to overthrow Saddam. The revolts were viciously suppressed, and Saddam's economic and military retribution for the uprising continued for years, resulting in massive suffering and dislocation among the overwhelmingly Shi'a population of the south.

In sum, Iraq's modern history has seen persistent and relatively deep identity-based cleavages among its major ethno-religious populations. Most important, Iraqi politics was sufficiently sensitive to such cleavages that when the opportunity arrived in 2003 to build a plural democracy, the basis for cross-ethnic, cross-sectarian cooperation was relatively weak. As analyst Andreas Wimmer put it, "As at independence, no trans-ethnic networks of civil society organizations exist[ed] that could provide alternative channels for the aggregation of interests."[13]

The Limitations of Ethno-religious Cleavages in Explaining Iraqi Politics

While identity-based cleavages have clearly been a major feature of Iraqi history, it is important to note that these divides have not always and everywhere dominated

[12] Marr, pp. 103, 138.

[13] Andreas Wimmer, "Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq," *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 4 (Winter 2003-4), p. 119.

Iraq's political dynamics. As noted, much of Iraq's population lives in heterogeneous cities, which has resulted in development of some deep cross-sectarian cultural ties through intermarriage, education, and commerce. And by the same token, political conflicts have often formed along fault lines other than those of ethnicity and sect. As in many other states, politically salient identities have also included those generated by tribal, class-based, urban, rural, and nationalist affiliations.

In particular, tribes – extended kinship networks – have been and continue to be an important building block of Iraqi society. While many Iraqi tribes are ethnically and religiously homogeneous, they are not uniformly so, and those identities coexist with ones defined according to the tribe itself. The political relevance of tribes and the sheikhs who lead them has waxed and waned over the decades. After a steep decline in power during the nineteenth century, tribal leaders regained some of their influence under British rule, which tended to use the sheikhs as proxies for government authority and legitimacy. For two decades following the revolution in 1958, Iraqi leaders sought to marginalize tribal elements, which they viewed as "premodern"[14] and as "remnants of colonialism."[15]

But under the stress of the Iran-Iraq war, the Persian Gulf war, and their aftermaths, Saddam Hussein revived Baghdad's courting of tribal leaders as extensions of government authority. In exchange for loyalty and providing local security and intelligence, Saddam provided many tribal leaders with land, weapons, and money.[16]

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[14] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 162.

[15] Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies, 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (February 1997), p. 1.

[16] Ibid., pp. 1-31, Marr, p. 262, Tripp, pp. 265-266.

This support during the 1980s and 1990s rejuvenated tribal identities as an important feature of Iraq's 21st century political landscape.

Even so, many Iraqis continue to view tribalism as a relic of more primitive times. As one local religious leader in Amarah told a British official of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in 2003, "We are modern people. We reject the tribes."[17] This speaks to another politically salient division in Iraqi society, that between urban and rural (often tribal) communities. As scholar Hosham Dawod points out, ". . . it is not very long since Iraqi society, like all Arab societies, was divided into three interdependent yet strongly antagonistic groups: nomads, agriculturalists and town-dwellers."[18] While nomads are mostly gone in Iraq, the "town-and-country" distinction remains relevant to some degree in a society where modern, secular, highly educated, technologically driven, urban communities coexist with uneducated, agricultural ones.[19] And these communities certainly cut across ethno-religious lines. For example, Charles Tripp describes different communities of Iraq's Shi'a Arabs during the 1980s like this: "The rural Shi'a, whose social world was still largely influenced by considerations of particular kinship, family and clan codes of honour and behaviour, differed markedly from the various established groups of urban Shi'a, whether these comprised the clerics, the lay professionals or the urban poor."[20]

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[17] Rory Stewart, *The Prince of the Marshes (And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq)* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Inc., 2006), p. 99.

[18] Hosham Dawod, "The 'State-ization' of the Tribe and the Tribalization of the State: the Case of Iraq," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), p. 113.

[19] See Lukitz, p. 58, and Faleh Abdul-Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998," in Abdul-Jabar and Dawod, eds., p. 73.

[20] Tripp, p. 246.

Another important political identity in Iraq has been affiliation with socio-economic class. In discussing social fault lines in Iraq since the 1958 revolution, historians Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett argue that, "the fundamental division . . . was not 'religious' or 'sectarian,' but socio-economic, between the haves, and the have-nots . . ." This division had a sectarian color to it because of the largely rural, largely impoverished, and largely Shi'a population in the South. But the Shi'a were not necessarily poor primarily because they were Shi'a, but because the tribal estates where they lived had been "appropriated by powerful tribal leaders, and the tribesmen had been left either entirely without land or with insufficient land for their subsistence."[21]

Finally, nationalism represents a politically salient identity that cuts across ethno-religious identities in Iraq. Iraqi leaders over the years have certainly made vigorous attempts to establish and appeal to a transcendent national political identity. The Sunni-Shi'a alliance during the Revolt of 1920 against British occupation is often remembered as the first instance of Iraqi national identity formation, though the alliance was only tactical and short-lived.[22] Since then, leaders from King Faisal to Saddam Hussein have sought to rally Iraqis behind the notion of a common shared identity. At different times, this process has taken different forms. In the early years of Ba'ath party rule, Iraqi nationalism was subordinated to a Pan-Arab vision of political identity, an ethnic, secular tack that was especially unwelcome to Iraq's Kurds and to its deeply religious communities of many sects. During the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein launched an

[21] Forouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, pp. 190-200.

[22] Ibid., p. 10, Lukitz, p. 61, Tripp, p. 44, Thair Karim, "Tribes and Nationalism: Tribal Political Culture and Behaviour in Iraq, 1914-20," in Abdul-Jabar and Dawod, eds., p. 283.

aggressive propaganda campaign to buttress Iraqi patriotism which emphasized Iraq's heritage of Babylonian civilization, the Abbasid caliphate and the Arab identity of its Shi'a population as distinct from Persian Shi'a identity.

Ultimately, however, these nationalist projects have largely failed to overcome the various forms of factionalism in Iraqi politics described in this chapter. Charles Tripp summarizes this failure:

> . . . neither the state as an abstraction, nor the groups or individuals who have commanded it, have managed to ensure that the multiple histories of the Iraqis are subsumed into a single narrative of state power . . . Authoritarianism and skill at exploiting the fracture lines within the population, as well as restrictive understandings of political trust, have kept hierarchies of status and privilege intact. This has subverted the very idea of national community in whose name successive governments have claimed to act.[23]

Perhaps it is most accurate to say that Iraqi nationalism is a real and a politically salient identity, but only one among several competing identities. In historian Juan Cole's view, "Iraqi nationalism exists as a complicated social and psychological phenomenon, coexisting with what Anthony Smith has called subnationalisms."[24] Also, many different Iraqis may claim strong nationalist feelings and identity, and yet among them have a wide variety of understandings of what the Iraqi "nation" is, generating what Reidar Visser calls "battles for sectarian hegemony within a single national framework."[25]

Summary of Identity Politics in Iraq

In summary, what general premises can be established regarding identity politics in Iraq? First and perhaps most important, group loyalties clearly matter a great deal in

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[23] Tripp, pp. 4-5.

[24] Juan R.I. Cole, "The Rise of Religious and Ethnic Mass Politics in Iraq," in David Little and Donald K. Swearer, eds., *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq: A Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 43.

[25] Reidar Visser, "Introduction," in Reidar Visser and Gareth Stansfield," eds., *An Iraq of Its Regions: Cornerstones of a Federal Democracy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 21.

determining perceptions of legitimacy. In part due to the artificiality of Iraq's creation, and in part due to its history of serial minority dictatorship, a Western-style model of the social contract between citizens and the state has never really taken root. Legitimacy has continued to be based in groups and institutions external to the state, a problem the British confronted – and in time helped reinforce – from the beginning of their mandate in Iraq. As historian Toby Dodge describes, "at the heart of British thinking was a dichotomy between the explanatory weight to assign to individuals as independent agents and that to assign to social structure and 'traditional' institutions and practices."[26] In opting to use tribal structures as proxies of governance, the British resolved that dichotomy in favor of "traditional" institutions and helped perpetuate the importance of non-state, group-based political legitimacy, a legacy which was adopted in different ways by subsequent indigenous rulers and which still echoes in Iraqi politics today. Again, Charles Tripp summarizes the consequences of this phenomenon succinctly:

> . . . many Iraqis have tried to champion . . . the idea of politics as civility, advocating a framework of laws and a shared space for political activity. A minority view in Iraq's political history, this tendency has generally been overwhelmed by people organized according to very different notions of trust, where the community is not one of citizens, but of family and clan members, fellow tribesmen or conspirators.[27]

The second premise Iraq's history yields is that group loyalties and cleavages based on ethno-religious identity in particular have been among the most important foundations for political organization and competition.

Third, however, is that other cleavages and sources of legitimacy apart from ethno-religious ones have been important, too; politically salient identities have included those generated by tribal, class-based, urban, rural, and nationalist affiliations. In his

[26] Dodge, p. 2.

[27] Tripp, p. 2.

landmark study of Iraqi social history, historian Hanna Batatu refers to these complex interactions as overlapping identities.[28]

For the purposes of this study, then, it would be inappropriate to assume that one particular cleavage or identity is most important in any given instance. While we can be confident that ethno-religious identities will be relevant at some level, we cannot, a priori, be sure how, and therefore should not project conflicting interests or motivations on populations without empirical verification. This understanding will help frame the cases studies in the following chapters.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

The Insurgencies

Political violence in Iraq in the years since the American-led Coalition invasion of 2003 has been complex and diverse in its origins and dynamics. A comprehensive taxonomy and description of this violence is beyond the scope of this study, but a few general words about insurgency in Iraq are necessary to provide proper context for the case studies that follow. These comments, as well as the case studies, are focused mainly on the war as it evolved up until 2006, when al Qaeda in Iraq's bombing of the al Askariya Mosque in Samarra initiated a shift in the nature of the violence in Iraq. While much debate in 2006 surrounded whether Iraq was in the midst of a "civil war," few contested that the nature of the war had undergone a transformation in the wake of the Samarra bombing. In April of that year, U.S. ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and Coalition forces commander General George Casey acknowledged that "the principal

[28] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 1978), quoted in Lukitz, p. 153.

threat to stability is shifting from an insurgency grounded in rejection of the new political order to sectarian violence grounded in mutual fears and recriminations."[29]

The definition of insurgency introduced in Chapter 3 was: "an indigenous military or paramilitary challenge to the sovereignty of a constituted government over all or part of its territory." By this definition, three principal, different insurgencies can be identified in the years following 2003: Sunni "rejectionists," Salafi jihadists, and Shi'a militias affiliated with Moqtada al-Sadr.[30]

"Rejectionists" were a diverse compilation of groups themselves, but were generally drawn from the ranks of those elements of society whose access to power was destroyed by the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime: dedicated Ba'athists, loyal former regime soldiers, and members of the tribes most favored by Saddam's government. These groups also appealed to a broader set of Sunni Arabs – those who did not necessarily support Saddam but after nearly a century of draconian minority rule over Iraq feared political marginalization of Sunnis, if not outright repression, at the hands of their ethnic and sectarian rivals. Another common bond among the Sunni rejectionists was a strong distaste for both the fact and the principle of occupation. Hatred of the U.S. military presence contributed to at least tactical cooperation among secular nationalists, tribal sheikhs, and Islamists alike. As one former Ba'ath official said, "the circumstances

[29] Zalmay Khalilzad and George W. Casey Jr., "A Path to Success in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2006.

[30] Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) during this period used a somewhat different taxonomy, but one that is consistent with this one. They grouped Sunni rejectionists and Sadrist militias under a single heading of "rejectionists," but also split out "Saddamists" or "Former Regime Loyalists," which this taxonomy groups under "Sunni rejectionists." See *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2006), p. 23. For other alternative taxonomies of the insurgents in Iraq, see Bruce R. Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006)* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), pp. 22-23, and Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics and Society*, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 186-187.

have obliged all forces to be united with each other to guarantee the liberation of Iraq. The Islamist organizations are fighting side by side with progressive and secular forces, which is very important and necessary to kick out the imperialist occupation."[31]

On the far end of the spectrum of Islamist insurgents in Iraq were the Salafi jihadist[32] groups, including, but not limited to, al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). These insurgents were also composed overwhelmingly of Sunni Arabs and cooperated extensively with the rejectionists in the first several years of the conflict. However, their strategic objectives differed considerably from the rejectionists. The jihadists were interested not in reinstating a pre-war status quo, but rather in advancing a particular fundamentalist interpretation of Koran-inspired good living and in creating a new caliphate of holy rule in a swath of historically Muslim territory stretching from North Africa to South Asia.[33]

The Shi'a insurgency prior to 2006 was very different from the Sunni insurgency. Perhaps most importantly, it was not as large or intense. Much of the violence that occurred in predominantly Shi'a areas during those years was more a result of internal fighting among various Shi'a militia than of an organized insurgency against Coalition forces or the new Iraqi government. Most Shi'a did not share the Sunnis' sense of disenfranchisement and fear of marginalization. To the contrary, the Coalition invasion in 2003 handed Iraq's Shi'a their best opportunity in all of the country's checkered

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[31] Quoted in Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 185-186.

[32] "Jihadist" is controversial as a descriptive term for violent Islamic extremists, but that controversy is immaterial to this analysis, so the term is used here as a matter of convenience. See *Words That Work and Words That Don't: A Guide for Counterterrorism Communication*, Counterterrorism Communications Center, vol. 2, issue 10 (March 14, 2008).

[33] Commander Randall Peck, et al, *Voices of the Enemy: Quotations from Al-Qaida and Associated Movements* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, March 2007).

history to take political advantage of their majority status. To some extent, this large stake in the successful development of a new Iraqi state has served as a disincentive among Shi'a communities to pursue insurgency in response to political frustrations.

A major exception to this generalization, of course, has been the persistence of Muqtada al Sadr and his Mahdi Army ("Jaysh al-Madhi" or JAM). Sadr has led opposition to Coalition rule since the early days after the invasion, and JAM even fought some pitched battles with U.S. forces in 2004. Sadr strikes some of the same notes as Sunni insurgents, especially those having to do with the illegitimacy of the occupier, and the need to establish a regime that is more in tune to Islamic values. But there the similarities end. Sadr's vision of Iraqi nationalism resembles an Arab version of Iranian theocracy ("vilayet al-faqih" or rule by clerics) more than it does either Ba'athist totalitarianism or a Salafist caliphate. Additionally, Sadr's social support is based primarily in the impoverished, uneducated segments of Iraq's Shi'a communities. As a result, in many ways, the Sadrist insurgency has been a populist one, giving it a socio-economic flavor quite distinct from its more strident religious focus. Harangues against Coalition and government failures to provide basic services, together with Hizbollah-style grass-roots campaigns to provide such services outside the government, became central features of the Sadrist movement.[34]

The variation in motivations evident across these different insurgent groups provides one rationale for an analytical approach focused on local rather than national case studies. In particular, motivations and grievances based on ethno-religious

[34] Sudarsan Raghavan and Ellen Knickmeyer, "Sadr, A Question Mark Etched in Black," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2006, p. 10, Ahmed Hashim, "Iraq's Chaos: Why the Insurgency Won't Go Away," *Boston Review*, May 2005, Hashim (2006), pp. 255-264.

cleavages are intermingled with other motivations and grievances, such as those related to the quality of governance. For the rejectionists, the key grievance appears to be a combination of sectarian disenfranchisement, fear of sectarian retribution, mixed in with some sectarian chauvinism. In one Sunni tribal leader's view, Shi'a "cannot take charge of Iraq in the same manner as the Sunnis. The [Shi'a] are backwards. They are barbarian savages, they do not know true religion, theirs is twisted, it is not the true religion of Muhammad."[35]

At the same time, however, some evidence also suggests that Sunni popular support for Coalition forces was significantly affected by the Coalition's general failures to return Iraqi society and infrastructure to working order, that is, failures of governance. For example, one Sunni Arab commented that "if the Americans came and developed our general services, brought work for our people, and transferred their technology to use, then we would not have been so disappointed. But it is not acceptable to us as human beings that after one year, America is still not able to bring us electricity."[36] Another commented that "the mind of the Iraqi is on electricity. He wants to find a generator to get a little electricity in his house so that he can drink cold water."[37]

By contrast, jihadist insurgents have seemed fairly unconcerned with prosaic issues such as drinking water and electricity. The Salafist strain of Islam subscribed to by these insurgents is mostly silent on the nuts and bolts of governance, even to the point of

[35] Hashim (2006), pp. 71-72.

[36] Hashim (2005), p. 2.

[37] Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), p. 217.

rejecting the legitimacy of political parties.[38] For example, in internal discussions, the al Qaeda's theorist Abu Badr Naji unabashedly downplayed the importance of governance for the movement's doctrine: "It is not a prerequisite that the mujahid movement has to be prepared especially for agriculture, trade, and industry . . . As for the one who manages the techniques in each ministry, he can be a paid employee who has no interest in policy and is not a member of the movement or the party."[39] This focus on religious precepts at the expense of political and economic ones manifest itself in Fallujah in 2004 where, while controlling the city for several months, insurgents governed principally by policing moral behavior rather than by organizing and executing municipal services.[40]

On the surface, then, the pattern of different insurgent motivations in Iraq conforms to an identity-based interpretation of insurgency. Sunni insurgents, who saw Sunni Arabs as a group to be gravely disadvantaged by the new political order, were likely to define their goals in terms of re-establishing sectarian primacy or simply defending themselves against sectarian reprisals. Shi'a insurgents, in the midst of long-awaited political ascendance for Shi'a Arab group interests, seemed at least as much concerned with the nature and quality of governance being executed by the Coalition and the new Iraqi government as by any sectarian grievances. The cases studies in the following two chapters are first steps in a full accounting of whether these superficial

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[38] *Understanding Islamism*, International Crisis Group, Middle East/North Africa Report No. 37, March 2, 2005, p. 12, *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No. 50, February 15, 2006, pp. 15-19, Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, *Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency* Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #50, December 2005, p. 33, Hashim (2006), pp. 121-124.

[39] Quoted in Lawrence Wright, "The Master Plan: For the new theorists of jihad, Al Qaeda is just the beginning," *The New Yorker*, September 11, 2006.

[40] *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, p. 16.

dynamics were strongly representative of what was really happening in the first few years of the Iraqi insurgency.

Counterinsurgency

Like the insurgencies in Iraq, the U.S.-led counterinsurgency defies generalization. Its dynamics varied greatly over geography, organization, and especially over time. Some of this variation was a consequence of the United States' lack of preparation for counterinsurgency and the subsequent decentralized improvisation practiced by tactical commanders throughout the country. Variation also came over time through organizational learning and a growing willingness of senior political leaders to acknowledge an operational environment that differed starkly from expectations.

As a result of this variation, it is difficult to discern a clear national pattern in how the U.S. addressed the factors of interest in this study: governance and identity politics. Consider, for example, the following two statements from senior officials in the CPA regarding the relative importance of economic and political factors in stabilizing the country. CPA administrator L. Paul Bremer believed that "if we don't get their economy right, no matter how fancy our political transformation, it won't work."[41] Meanwhile, CPA's Governance Coordinator in Anbar province concluded that "a good political settlement without economic aid can still lead to stability, while no level of macroeconomic support can produce stability absent a viable political process."[42] With

[41] Quoted in Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Knopf, 2006), p. 62.

[42] Keith Mines, "Economic Tools in Counterinsurgency and Post-conflict Stabilization: Lessons Learned (and Relearned) in al Anbar, Iraq, 2003-04," E-Notes, Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 29, 2006.

no clear priority between these two sets of policy levers, U.S. strategy pushed forward opportunistically and incoherently on all fronts.

During this time, U.S. policy drew criticism both for emphasizing the role of ethno-religious identity too much and not enough. Representative of the former critics was Baghdad University professor Saad Jawad, who complained that "We never saw each other as Sunnis or Shiites first. We were Iraqis first. But the Americans changed all that. They made a point of categorizing people as Sunni or Shiite or Kurd."[43] Representative of the latter camp was democracy scholar and CPA advisor Larry Diamond, who argued that "'good governance' will have little meaning in Iraq if political order is not restored and preserved, through means that will need to be more political than military. The overriding initial task must be to fashion a political bargain in which all major Iraqi groups feel they have a stake in the country's political future."[44]

Not until November 2005 did the U.S. articulate a comprehensive statement of its national-level plan, the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq (NSVI).[45] The NSVI defined three "tracks" for U.S. efforts – political, security, and economic – that together attempted to address both the politics of ethno-religious conflict and improvements in the quality of governance. By this point, however, over two years of conflict had already passed. And less than three months after the new strategy's publication, the Askariya Mosque bombing set the war off in a new and perilous direction.

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[43] Quoted in Chandrasekaran, p. 196.

[44] Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2005), p. 335. Also see Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

[45] *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (Washington: Executive Office of the President, November 2005).

Up to this point it is probably fair to say that the U.S.-led counterinsurgency had produced mixed results, but overall was not successful. The proceeding discussion outlines the counterinsurgency through the lens of this study's analytic framework, addressing security, governance, political agreements, and outcomes as distinct variables.

Security

Like people throughout history who have been caught in the midst of insurgencies, Iraqis were concerned most of all with security for themselves and their families. When asked what Iraqis wanted from their government, one woman replied, "We want security and we want stability. Anybody who comes along is fine as long as he brings security and stability."[46] As noted above, the U.S. military's early security operations in Iraq were relatively decentralized and therefore diverse. In general, however, commanders were slow to conceive of their situation in terms of counterinsurgency. As a result, "security" operations tended to resemble the aggressive, large-scale, violent combat operations for which most units were trained. Very often, the result was the use of excessive, even indiscriminate force. For example, troops in Baghdad frequently returned insurgent mortar fire with artillery barrages that were more likely to destroy homes and kill innocent civilians than to find their targets.[47] U.S. forces also conducted wide sweeps of suspicious neighborhoods featuring arrests of all military-

[46] Shadid, p. 149.

[47] Sean Rayment, "U.S. Tactics Condemned by British Officers," *The Daily Telegraph*, April 11, 2004, quoted in Jim Baker, "Systems Thinking in Counterinsurgencies," *Parameters*, Winter 2006-07, p. 32. Also see Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November-December 2005, pp. 2-15.

age males. One brigade commander in the 4th Infantry Division declared that his forces were there to "kill the enemy, not to win their hearts or minds."[48]

As a result of these tactics, stories abound of neutral or friendly Iraqis turning to sympathy for the insurgents after harrowing or brutal experiences with brusque, hair-trigger, culturally insensitive U.S. forces.[49] A retired U.S. Army officer summed up the problem this way:

> Most of the generals and politicians did not think through the consequences of compelling American soldiers with no knowledge of Arabic or Arab culture to implement intrusive measures inside an Islamic society. We arrested people in front of their families, dragging them away in handcuffs with bags over their heads, and then provided no information to the families of those we incarcerated. In the end, our soldiers killed, maimed and incarcerated thousands of Arabs, 90 percent of whom were not the enemy. But they are now.[50]

The Coalition's security operations also suffered from some important early strategic errors. For example, the U.S. war plan assumed that most key government services, including the police, would be quickly re-established in the wake of regime change, and therefore made no provision for general post-combat security operations.[51] In the face of widespread looting and collapsing civil order that immediately followed Saddam Hussein's removal, Coalition forces were slow to respond. Even as the severity and importance of the breakdown of law and order began to dawn on Coalition leaders,

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[48] Colonel David Hogg, quoted in Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 236-238, 250-252.

[49] See, for example, Anna Badkhen, "Balancing Act," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 13, 2005, Anthony Lloyd, "Bungling Raids by U.S. Troops Fuel Iraqi Anger," *Times (London)*, December 11, 2004, Edward Wong, "In Anger, Ordinary Iraqis Are Joining the Insurgency," *New York Times*, June 28, 2004.

[50] Colonel Douglas McGregor (ret.), quoted in Hashim (2006), p. 326.

[51] Ricks, Chapters 5-6, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction, 2009), pp. 7-16, Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York, Pantheon Books, 2006), Chapter 8, George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), Chapter 4, Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 148, 342-343.

the size of the invasion force was too small to re-establish and maintain security throughout the country.

Then, as the security situation continued to unravel, the CPA exacerbated its problems by abruptly disbanding the Iraqi Army and ordering comprehensive de-Ba'athification throughout the Iraqi government. In almost a single stroke, the Coalition had alienated many thousands of Iraqis who possessed most of the country's technical capability for re-establishing security and the functioning of government and had created many thousands of unemployed, armed, military-trained young males.

From the perspective of "winning hearts and minds," clearly the Coalition got off to a poor start from the strategic to the tactical level. At the same time, an important caveat applies to this judgment, at least to the tactical criticisms regarding excessive force. In some instances, as is often the case in counterinsurgencies, no good alternatives to aggressive tactics were available to U.S. forces due to the persistence or brutality of insurgent forces and by ineffectual attempts to put a more friendly face on the counterinsurgency. For example, in the spring of 2004, the 1st Division of the U.S. Marine Corps relieved an Army unit in Anbar province and attempted to implement a policy more geared to winning hearts and minds than the policy that had been in place previously. Among other reforms, the Marines began patrolling the cities on foot rather than in armored vehicles. This policy was quickly reversed when the Marines found that conditions were too violent and the people in the cities too unresponsive to their efforts for the new policy to be worth the additional risk being taken.[52]

[52] Ricks, pp. 311-320, Hashim (2006), p. 327.

Also, U.S. forces did demonstrate the ability to learn from their mistakes over time, and in many places they backed away from the more damaging security practices that prevailed in the early days of the counterinsurgency. Major General Peter Chiarelli, as commander of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad during 2004 and 2005, for example, became a particularly vocal champion of focusing military operations at least as much on securing the civilian population as on killing and capturing insurgents.[53] By the end of 2005, many military and civilian leaders had picked up on the importance of this shifting emphasis. The NSVI codified the change in labeling its security track as a "clear, hold, and build" strategy.[54] By 2007, under the command of General David Petraeus, population security was to become the central mission of Coalition forces in Iraq.

Governance

The Coalition's goals for providing good governance in Iraq were nothing if not ambitious. The CPA set out to establish new, modern governance practices in a staggering array of domains, from health care to jurisprudence to stock trading. Billions of dollars were poured into reconstruction efforts aimed not only at repairing war damage, but at improving the fraying infrastructure of a poorly managed country crippled by years of economic sanctions. Indeed, since the CPA effectively was the Iraqi government from May 2003 to June 2004, its commitment to improving governance in Iraq was deep. In the judgment of Coalition leaders, the legitimacy of the mission depended on delivering on the promises of improved lives for the Iraqi people.

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[53] James Rainey, "Aiming for a More Subtle Fighting Force," *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2006.

[54] *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, pp. 18-22.

This commitment to improving governance across a wide range of domains was sustained when the CPA transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi government in June 2004. The centerpiece of U.S. efforts was the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), which allocated over $18 billion to improve Iraq's quality of life and functionality as a state. Budgeted project categories were: security and law enforcement, justice, public safety infrastructure, civil society, electric sector, oil infrastructure, water resources, sanitation, transportation, telecommunications, road and bridge construction, health care, private sector employment development, education, refugees, human rights, democracy, and governance.[55] Beginning in late 2005, the U.S. added to this effort several Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to oversee programs and assist local leaders at provincial levels to build provincial capacity, foster economic development, strengthen rule of law, and promote reconciliation.[56]

Also, at more tactical levels, good governance was a central part of the military's efforts to shift toward a more population-centric approach to combating the insurgency. Soldiers and Marines became heavily involved not only in security operations but in reconstruction projects, local politics, and re-establishing functional essential service systems such as sewage, water, electricity, and trash ("SWET"). Local commanders were allocated discretionary funds from the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) to spend on local projects that promised to build good will, solve acute community problems, provide quick employment, and the like. For the most part, these

[55] For detailed descriptions and accounting of IRRF projects, see any of the reports: *Section 2207 Report on Iraq Relief and Reconstruction*, published by the United States Department of State since October 2004. Available at: http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/2207/index.htm (accessed 7/26/09).

[56] United States Agency for International Development, *Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, Fall 2007.

types of operations had not been part of the military's original mission or their training, but conducting them was simply a pragmatic response to the environment in which they found themselves. As one company commander in Baghdad during 2003-2004 put it, "Electricity, sewage, and security were the top three concerns of the citizens [in my area of operations] and thus the top priorities for my unit."[57]

Despite the enormous effort applied to improve governance in Iraq, its effectiveness in resolving the sources of conflict seems to have been hampered by two key factors. The first was one of the classic conundrums of counterinsurgency discussed in Chapter 3: while stable security may be well served by good governance, good governance is difficult to achieve without some initial semblance of security. In some instances this dilemma led to an impasse between the military and civilian agencies, each of whom tended to see their own success as dependent on the prior success of the other.[58]

The second obstacle to the effectiveness of Coalition governance efforts, which is central to this study, was the politics of identity. In some instances, Coalition projects went unappreciated simply by virtue of their association with the Coalition. CPA official Rory Stewart explained the challenges of governance efforts based on his experience in southern Iraq:

> Many of our most expensive ventures, though beneficial, won us no thanks: water purification projects cost millions but were mostly underground and produced water that, although safer, looked the same as the old water. We were blamed for the disrepair of schools that Saddam had taken the credit for building, and got no credit for refurbishing them; no one saw the equipment we bought for ministry offices or thanked us for providing a municipal rubbish dump. Even the most popular projects – large bridges, rural regeneration grants, or mass employment schemes – seemed to have little influence

[57] Tyson Voelkel, "Counterinsurgency Doctrine FM 3-24 and Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Bottom Up Review," in Jay W. Boggs and Joseph R. Cerami, eds., *The Interagency and Counterinsurgency Warfare: Aligning and Integrating Military and Civilian Roles in Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), p. 538.

[58] Shadid, p. 261.

> on whether people voted for armed militias. . . Iraqis were reluctant to trust us or work with us and because of this lack of cooperation, the Coalition achieved little of what it hoped and it received almost no credit for its efforts. Despite thousands of troops and tens of millions invested in essential services, despite a number of impressive reconstruction projects, despite ambitious programs in police training and in developing "good governance and civil society," the Coalition had only a minimal political impact in southern Iraq. . . the invasion was crippled not by what we did but by who we were.[59]

This problem was echoed throughout the country as well. A Marine civil affairs officer with seven months of experience in Ramadi lamented that "goodwill physical infrastructure projects, while generating some positive public sentiment, are poor measures of success against the insurgency."[60]

And being an occupying power was far from the only identity-related challenge to the Coalition's governance efforts. Distribution of the benefits offered up by the Coalition also posed a political minefield. For example, as the CPA official Stewart noted, "jobs given to the wrong people would be worse than no jobs at all."[61] Depending on the location and the context, various social groups, including ethnic and religious groups, felt entitled to preferential treatment and were aggrieved if such treatment was not forthcoming.

So good governance was certainly a central element of the Coalition's approach, and this aspect of the counterinsurgency was generally not starved for resources or leadership attention. But at least in the first few years of the counterinsurgency, these efforts gained only uneven traction.

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[59] Stewart, pp. 198, 393, 397.

[60] Quoted in Hashim (2006), p. 298.

[61] Stewart, p. 203.

Political Agreements Addressing Ethno-religious Cleavages

As noted above, when it comes to the politics of ethno-religious cleavages in Iraq, the Coalition has been accused of being both too sensitive to this issue and not sensitive enough. The former charge is based in part on the Coalition's insistence on ethno-religious balance in formation of the Iraqi Governing Council, its management of other transitional political processes, and its supposed accommodation of strongly ethno-sectarian parties during the drafting of the constitution during 2005. According to this logic the Coalition's influence contributed to the unnecessary "Lebanon-ization" of Iraqi politics, whereby key positions of power are allocated to pre-determined ethno-sectarian groups.

The opposing viewpoint is that accommodation of ethno-sectarian interests and allocation of power along these lines is a natural and necessary prerequisite for stability in Iraq, and that the Coalition's attempts to impose excessive unity and centralization on the Iraqi polity have exacerbated civil conflict.[62]

Both arguments are supported by ample evidence, largely because Coalition policy essentially amounted to attempts to compromise between competing centrifugal and centripetal political forces. However, given that as of this writing, the viability of unified, democratic, pluralist Iraqi state remains an unresolved question, it is difficult to assess the validity of these opposing arguments. Ultimately, they rest on quite different assumptions about the depth or the importance of the prevailing ethno-religious cleavages in Iraq. And, as the first section of this chapter tried to demonstrate, any meaningful

[62] For a summary of "integrationist" vs. "accomodationist" positions, see John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Iraq's Constitution of 2005: Liberal Consociation as Political Prescription," *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, vol. 5, no. 4 (October 2007), pp. 670-676.

macro assessment of that question is exceedingly difficult in Iraq, given its great social complexity and the long historical suppression of inter-ethnic dynamics at the hands of serial dictatorships.

The Coalition's (and many Iraqis') attempt to compromise between accommodating and overcoming Iraq's ethno-religious cleavages were centered around implementing federalism, whereby many powers would be decentralized and other centralized powers would be shared among competing factions. CPA democracy advisor Larry Diamond summarized both the need and the challenge for this approach:

> From an analytic perspective, and from my experience studying divided countries around the world, federalism made eminent sense. Indeed, it was hard to see how Iraq's deep regional, ethnic, and sectarian divisions could be managed in a democracy without constitutional guarantees of autonomy. Yet Iraq had always been highly centralized, and for many Iraqis, the unitary state was a bedrock principle of their nationalist identity.[63]

Iraqi opponents of Saddam Hussein had been talking about federalism at least since 1992, when both the Kurdish parliament and the dissident Iraqi National Congress endorsed it as the most promising basis for a future democracy in Iraq.[64] In 2002, the Democratic Principles Working Group of the State Department's "Future of Iraq" project debated many alternative forms and degrees of decentralization, but agreed that federalism should become "a cornerstone of the new Iraqi body politic."[65] The Bush administration then adopted the mantra of federalism during the CPA's reign.

Overshadowing all of the policy and academic debates on federalism at that time was the long-standing de facto autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan. Whatever structural

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[63] Diamond, p. 163.

[64] Kanan Makiya, "A Model for Post-Saddam Iraq," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 14, no. 3 (July 2003), pp. 5-12.

[65] U.S. Department of State, Future of Iraq Project, Democratic Principles and Procedures Working Group Report, "Final Report on the Transition to Democracy in Iraq," November 2002, p. 91.

solution was to prevail would need to account for the decentralized authority the Kurds had already claimed for themselves. And so, when Iraq adopted its constitution in 2005, Kurdish autonomy was enshrined in the form of a powerful "regional" government, which would have the authority to raise its own "internal security" forces and would hold legal primacy over the federal government on any issue not enumerated in the constitution as an exclusively federal power. The constitution's division of power between the federal government and the provinces – as opposed to regions – was much murkier, with language allowing for conflicting interpretations of what the provinces could and could not do.[66]

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the constitution's formulation of federalism was not its recognition of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), but its provision that any province or combination of provinces would also be allowed to form regional governments that would enjoy the same status as the KRG. For many, especially Sunni Arabs, this looked like a formula for disintegration, not decentralization. Even supporters of decentralization found this medicine too strong. Influential Iraqi dissident Kanan Makiya saw the constitution as "unwittingly paving the way for a civil war that will cost hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives."[67] Federalism scholar Donald Horowitz complained that "the Iraqi state created by this constitution is probably the weakest federation in the world."[68]

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[66] Iraqi Constitution, especially Article 121 on regional powers and Articles 115 and 122 on provincial powers.

[67] Kanan Makiya, "Present at the Disintegration," *New York Times*, December 11, 2005.

[68] Donald Horowitz, "The Sunni Moment," *Wall Street Journal*, December 14, 2005.

As of this writing, however, nothing like the radical decentralization feared by many has occurred. A smaller-scale version of Makiya's feared civil war did occur, but it was precipitated by terrorist incitement and militia adventurism, not by constitutionally-sanctioned changes in Iraq's political structures. Instead, practically all of the structural questions on left hanging by Iraq's constitution in 2005 remain in limbo. In particular, no new regions have been formed, according to ethno-religious logic or otherwise. Also, the constitution established a key executive power-sharing mechanism in the form of a transitional tripartite "presidency council," composed of a president and two vice presidents. Though allocation of the three positions by ethno-religious group is not specified in the constitution, the positions have been filled by one Kurd (President Jalal Talabani), one Shi'a Arab (Vice President Adel Abdul al Mahdi), and one Sunni Arab (Vice President Tariq al Hashimi). This presidency council, which has effectively provided veto power to representatives each of Iraq's major ethno-sectarian communities, is scheduled to expire with the parliamentary elections in 2010, after which the presidency will be filled by a single person.

In sum, Coalition and Iraqi officials have certainly pursued political agreements aimed at addressing ethno-religious cleavages. As described, the Iraqi constitution, itself, written and approved in 2005, contains some major elements of such agreements. At the same time, however, these agreements have proved highly controversial. They may or may not prove to be durable over time, but it is clear that the agreements embodied in the constitution did not succeed in ending the insurgency in Iraq. If anything, perceived inequalities in the constitution may have contributed to the sharp worsening of violence in 2006. After all, the constitution was narrowly ratified in an October 2005 referendum

in which perhaps as many as 90% of Sunni Arabs voted against it.[69] As for how this record relates this study's variables, a clearer picture of how ethno-religious political agreements affected the insurgency requires a more granular look at local case studies.

Counterinsurgency Outcomes

As with each of the variables described in the preceding sections, measurements of counterinsurgency outcomes in Iraq during the period considered here tell an incomplete story if looked at in aggregate. National averages hide large variations across locales. What will be important for this analysis are the measures of counterinsurgency outcomes at local levels in the case studies.

Nevertheless, a few general observations on counterinsurgency outcomes over the years 2003-2006 may be made. By the most obvious measure – violence levels – the counterinsurgency would have to be judged unsuccessful over this timeframe. As shown in Figure 3, the average number of weekly attacks on Coalition and Iraqi security forces almost tripled from early 2004 to the beginning of 2006. Coalition and Iraqi security force casualties followed a similar trend.[70]

Public opinion polls also show a deteriorating condition with respect to counterinsurgent success in defeating the insurgents. One national poll asked respondents to say "whether you feel that the security has gotten better, worse or stayed the same over the last three months." In April 2005, 13% of respondents answered "worse" or "much worse." When the same question was asked in March 2006, "worse"

[69] Diamond, p. 350.

[70] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2006), p. 27.

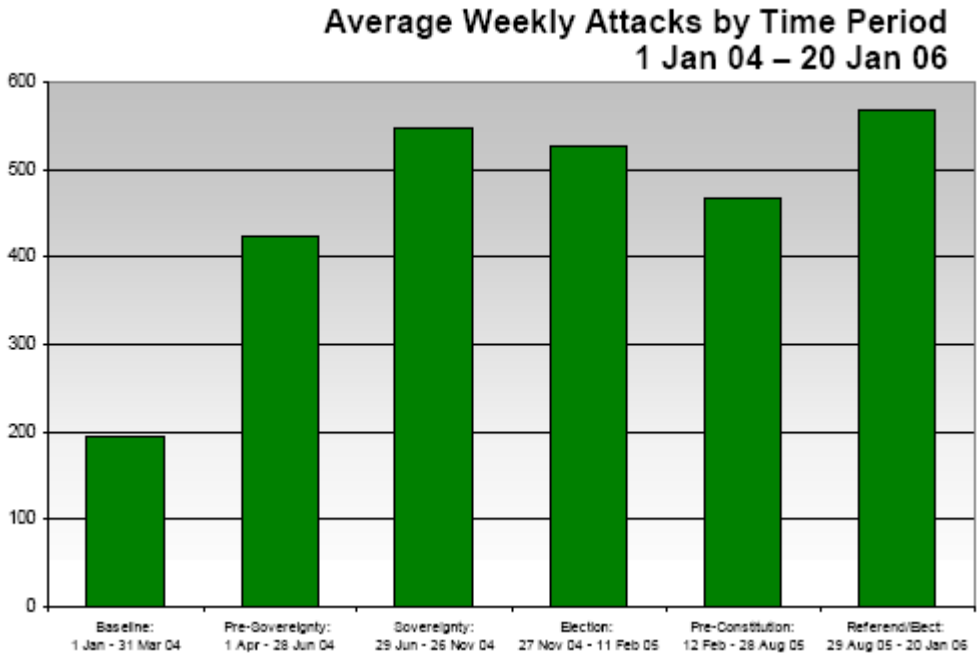

Figure 3: DoD Estimates of Insurgent Attacks on Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces

and "much worse" comprised 55% of the answers.[71] Between March 2005 and March 2006, the portion of Iraqis who expressed no confidence or "not very much" confidence in their federal and provincial governments to improve the situation in the country doubled from around 15% to around 33%.[72] The popularity of Coalition forces was even less impressive. From February 2004 to March 2007, the percent of Iraqis who opposed the presence of Coalition forces rose from 51% to 78%. Over the same time period, Iraqis claiming they believed that attacks on Coalition forces were "acceptable" rose from

[71] *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, International Republican Institute, April 11-20 2005, p. 12, and *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, International Republican Institute, March 23-31 2006.

[72] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, May 2006), pp. 10, 12.

17% to 51%.[73] In the aggregate, it is clear in this period that Coalition forces did not succeed in winning Iraqi hearts and minds.

By late in 2006, even Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's assessment of progress was downbeat. In November, he wrote to the president that "Clearly, what U.S. forces are currently doing in Iraq is not working well enough or fast enough."[74] The next month, the Iraq Study Group, a blue-ribbon panel of elder statesmen, began their highly anticipated report with the words: "The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating."[75]

The period from 2003-2006 was not without its accomplishments, of course. Most prominently, two rounds of relatively safe elections and the writing and ratification of the constitution in 2005 stand as significant achievements for the Iraqi government and its Coalition partners. But from the perspective of counterinsurgency strategy, it is clear that at the national level, these achievements were not sufficient for success.

Local Case Study Selection

A common theme of first-hand accounts of counterinsurgency in Iraq has been the primacy of local conditions in explaining the course of events. Rory Stewart found that

> . . . what mattered most were local details, daily encounters with men of which we knew little and of whom Iraqis knew little more. . . We prefer the universal and the theoretical: the historical analogy and the statistics. But politics is local, the catastrophe of Iraq is discovered best through individual interactions.[76]

Stathis Kalyvas's and Matthew Kocher's analysis of Iraq also leads them to conclude that the dynamics of violence are mainly locally-driven, and to recommend that "scholars and

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[73] Gary Langer, "Security Gains Reverse Iraq's Spiral Though Serious Problems Remain," ABC News/BBC/NHK/ARD National Survey of Iraq, March 17, 2008, pp. 30, 33.

[74] Michael R. Gordon and David S. Cloud, "Rumsfeld's Memo on Iraq Proposed Major Change," *New York Times*, December 3, 2006.

[75] James A. Baker III, Lee H. Hamilton, et al, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, December 2006, p. 6.

[76] Stewart, pp. 46, 405.

policy makers should pay less attention to supposedly intractable cleavages and more to the internal dynamics of violent conflict."[77]

The preceding overview of governance, identity, and counterinsurgency in Iraq provides further impetus for focusing analysis at more local levels. The answers to most questions of interest at the national level appear to be "it varies," or "it depends." As summarized in Table 5, the settings for three of this study's five framework variables are ambiguous when considered at the national level. Ethno-religious cleavages were certainly present and salient. And the counterinsurgency as of early 2006 was clearly not successful. But the quality of security and governance operations was highly variable across time and geography. And while high-profile ethno-religious political agreements were reached, they seem to have locked-in perceived grievances rather than settle them. The resulting picture is not very useful analytically.

	Independent Variables				**Dependent Variable**
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**c (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Iraq (2003-2006)	Yes	Ambiguous	Ambiguous	Ambiguous	No

Table 5: Case Study Variable Summary for Iraq

Accordingly, the case studies in Chapters 6 and 7 provide a first step in extending this analytic framework to local levels. The two cases considered are the experiences of the U.S. Army's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division in and around Ramadi from September 2004 to July 2005 and the experiences of the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in and around Tal Afar from April 2005 to February 2006.

[77] Kalyvas and Kocher, pp. 209-210, 216.

Of all the potential case studies to choose from, why do these two rise to the top? Together, six factors constitute the rationale for this selection.

1. The choice to examine two cases rather than three or ten is driven by time constraints. More cases are always desirable, but trading depth for breadth would defeat the purpose of this analysis, so two comparative cases will suffice to shed light on the research's main hypothesis.
2. A superficial examination of these two cases suggests that they share a positive value on the framework's key conditional variable – the significance of ethno-religious cleavages – while having differing values for the dependent variable of counterinsurgent "success." Closer examination may or may not bear out these impressions, but this combination is analytically desirable in seeking to explain which of the other variables (security, governance, political agreements) may help to explain the differing outcomes. Note that this choice violates a typical rule of thumb for case selection – avoiding selection based on the value of the dependent variable. However, this research does not purport to be drawing a random or representative sample from the full population of cases, nor will it draw deterministic conclusions based on the results of these case studies. As a result, for the purposes of this research, the need to observe variation in the dependent variable trumps the usual rationales for avoiding selection on the dependent variable.
3. There is value in comparing cases from similar time frames.
4. There is value in comparing cases with similar insurgent threats.
5. The time frame covered by these cases – late 2004 to early 2006 – has some analytically useful properties. The Iraqi government became sovereign in June 2004,

so this period avoids crossing over the transition of control between Coalition and Iraqi authority. At the same time, this period precedes a couple of key environmental shifts: the February 2006 Samarra mosque bombing and the 2007 "surge" of increased U.S. forces and changed tactics. So during this time, the insurgency in the western and northern parts of Iraq was somewhat mature. And most of the large set-piece battles, such as those in Najaf, Sadr City, and the first assault on Fallujah were past, and U.S. operations had settled into a focus on counterinsurgency.

6. Ramadi has an additional attractive property, which is that it underwent a famous reversal of fortunes in late 2006 and 2007 in the form of the so-called Tribal Awakening. This research will not include a separate case study on this development, but a simple comparison between the 2004-2005 case and the subsequent dramatic turn-around there is relevant to the questions examined by this research.

Chapter 6: Ramadi (September 2004 – July 2005)

This chapter presents a case study of U.S. operations in and around the city of Ramadi from September 2004 – July 2005. Its focus is on the operations of the U.S. Army's 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division (2/2ID) and its subordinate units during that time period. Like the cases in Chapter 4, but in expanded form, the cases in this chapter and the next are presented in seven parts covering the following topics: 1) an overview of the background and major events of the case; 2) the role of ethnic and religious identity politics in the case; 3) counterinsurgent actions with respect to providing security; 4) counterinsurgent actions with respect to improving governance; 5) any efforts toward political agreements that address ethno-religious cleavages; 6) an assessment of the outcome of the counterinsurgency; and 7) a concluding discussion and evaluation of the case in the context of this study's questions and analytic framework.

Case Background

Ramadi and the Insurgency

Ramadi is the capital and the largest city of Iraq's western Anbar province. It is located in the upper Euphrates river valley, situated mostly on the southern banks of the river, about 70 miles west of Baghdad. In 2004, the World Food Program estimated its population to be 456,853,[1] though the total likely declined from that level during the course of the violence that occurred during the time period of this case study. Ramadi's population is ethnically and religiously homogeneous, with Sunni Muslim Arabs comprising more than 90% of the population.

[1] *Baseline Food Security Analysis in Iraq* (World Food Program, September 2004), p. 78.

Founded in 1869, the city sits along the primary road and rail lines connecting Baghdad and the heart of Iraq with Jordan and points westward. This location has long given Ramadi an important commercial role, in both legitimate and illicit economic activity, and it also became a major transit point for foreign insurgents entering Iraq to fight U.S. and Iraqi security forces.

In part due to its role as a hub for international trade and transit, Ramadi has been a somewhat more cosmopolitan and secular city than its Anbar neighbors, such as Fallujah. It is the home of Anbar University, and has been a relatively liberal center for intellectual and cultural life.[2] Ramadi witnessed large scale demonstrations against Saddam Hussein in 1995, a phenomenon virtually unheard of in the Sunni Arab portions of Iraq.

At the same time, however, Ramadi was also home to many Ba'ath party officials, and the local and provincial government hierarchies in Ramadi were closely tied to Saddam Hussein's regime. The city served as the hub of Saddam's turbulent but largely successful program of co-opting the support of Anbar's tribal leaders,[3] and was also home to the Iraqi Army's combat engineers,[4] its special forces,[5] and a large number of active and retired senior officers. Consequently, the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) Orders number 1 and 2, banishing all Ba'ath party officials from office and disbanding the Iraqi Army, hit Ramadi especially hard. Formerly powerful people in

[2] Lieutenant Colonel Justin C. Gubler and Command Sergeant Major Dennis P. Bergmann, Jr., "Task Force Rock Operating Guidance," undated annotated briefing, p. 8, Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[3] Interview 7 (Capt Sean Kuehl).

[4] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

[5] Pamela Hess, "Ramadi Posts Seen As 'Symbol of Occupation'," *Washington Times*, September 7, 2004, p. 11.

Ramadi had both the motivation and the tactical and technical expertise to mount an effective military opposition to the U.S. presence.

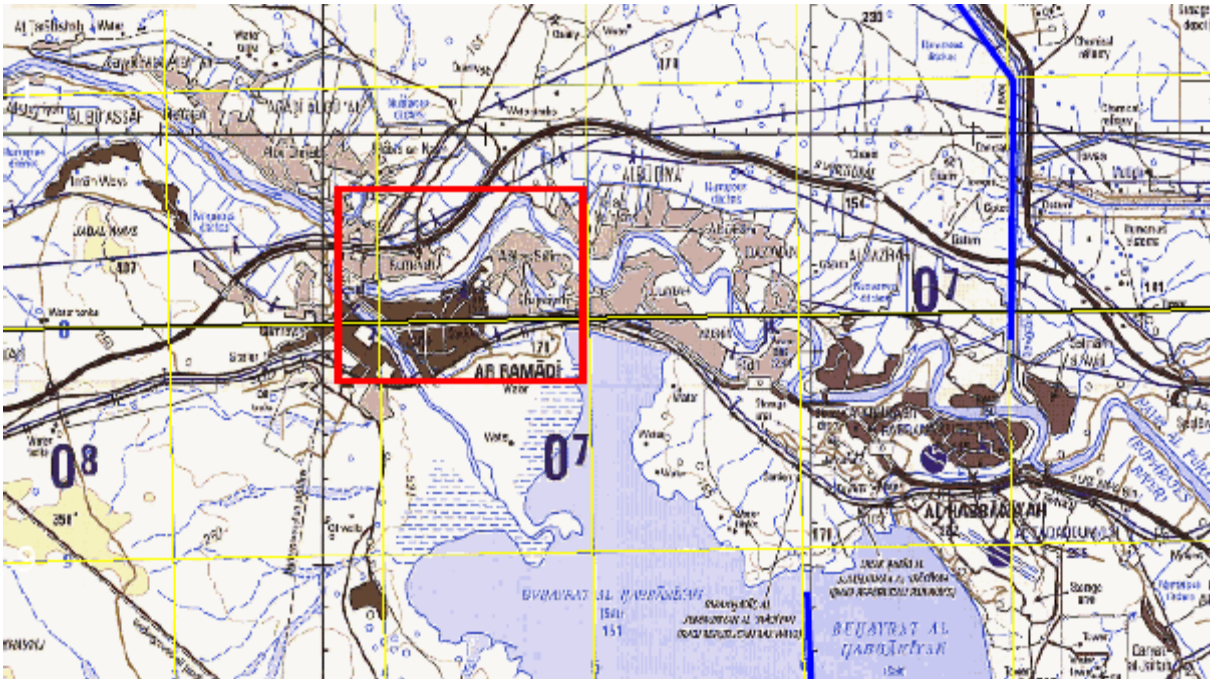

Figure 4: Ramadi and Surrounding Area[6]

The insurgency in Ramadi was multi-faceted and evolved over time, but generally comprised three overlapping groups. One U.S. battalion staff described the groups this way, using the labels most commonly used by the local population (and written in inimitable Powerpoint syntax):[7]

- Resistance – fighters who are resisting occupation by a foreign army; they fight U.S. and this is seen as an honorable endeavor; no central control of resistance groups.
- Terrorists – foreigners who are not from Ramadi, Al Anbar, or Iraq. There are locals who support Islamic extremist (global Salafi jihad / Wahabbist) groups.

[6] Lieutenant Colonel Justin C. Gubler and Command Sergeant Major Dennis P. Bergmann, Jr., "Task Force Rock Introduction to Ar Ramadi: Its People and the Enemy," undated briefing, p. 3.

[7] Gubler and Bergmann, "Task Force Rock Operating Guidance," p. 5.

- Criminals – primary motivation is money, organized crime support both Terrorists and Resistance fighters.

The staff also estimated that 25% of "resistance" fighters worked with the "terrorists." According to a civilian analyst working in Anbar during this period who conducted extensive interviews with insurgency supporters, "people always distinguished between the foreign jihadists and the Sunni nationalists, even though they tolerated the common cause that had been made between them."[8] However, the relative importance of the "resistance" and the "terrorists" shifted over time; specifically, al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and its Islamic extremist compatriots gradually evolved from being the less important insurgent element of the two, to being the clearly predominant one.[9]

By September 2004, Ramadi was one of the hot spots of the insurgency, forming the southwestern corner of the so-called "Sunni Triangle" that extended to Baghdad in the east and Tikrit in the north. Though Fallujah was considered the center of the insurgency in Anbar, Ramadi was not far behind it in operational and strategic significance and in the intensity of combat. To cite just one indicator of this intensity, the brigade that 2/2ID replaced (the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, or 1/1ID) suffered more than 500 casualties, including 50 fatalities, during its tour from September 2003 to September 2004.[10] More than half of those casualties were suffered in just the six months prior to 2/2ID's arrival by the Marine battalion operating under

[8] Interview 1 (Andrea Jackson).

[9] Interview 6 (Cpl Peder Ell), Interview 23 (Carter Malkasian), Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

[10] Seth Robson, "2nd BCT Settles Into Iraqi Home," *European Stars and Stripes*, September 11, 2004.

1/1ID that alone had responsibility for the city of Ramadi (2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment).[11]

The Counterinsurgents

During the period of this case study, the U.S.'s operational military headquarters in Iraq was known as Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I). Operations in Anbar province were overseen by Marine headquarters units, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and 1st Marine Division (1 MARDIV) until March 2005, then subsequently the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) and 2nd Marine Division (2 MARDIV).[12]

2/2ID, somewhat unusually, was an Army brigade operating under a Marine division-level headquarters. The brigade commanded 5,560 soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors. Its main combat forces were three organic infantry battalions, one attached Marine infantry battalion, and an artillery battalion.[13]

2/2ID arrived in Ramadi at the end of August 2004 and officially took over responsibility for the "battlespace" known as "AO [Area of Operations] Topeka" from 1/1ID on September 12. AO Topeka covered approximately 6,500 square kilometers of Ramadi and its surroundings, up to Lake Thar Thar in the north, Fallujah in the east, Hit in the west, and Lake Razazah in the south.[14]

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[11] F.J. Bing West, "Iraqification, Part II," *Wall Street Journal*, August 2, 2004, p. 10.

[12] First Marine Expeditionary Force, http://www.i-mef.usmc.mil/div/history.asp (accessed July 26, 2009).

[13] 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, *After Action Review: Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06, August 2004 – August 2005*.

[14] Ibid.

Figure 5: 2/2ID Unit Insignia[15]

The brigade deployed to Iraq (via Kuwait) directly from its home near the Korean Peninsula's demilitarized zone, where its mission and training had been entirely focused on deterring and waging high-intensity conventional war against North Korea's armed forces. Apropos of this long-standing mission, the brigade's nickname was "Strike Force" and its motto was "Kill the Enemy!" (see Figure 5).

Like so many other Army units deploying to Iraq in the same period, 2/2ID had to prepare to deploy and re-orient its training and operating mindset on short notice, having received its deployment orders less than three months prior to its departure from Korea.

After 11 months in Iraq, 2/2ID was relieved in place at the end of July 2005 by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, from the Pennsylvania National Guard.

What Happened (September 2004 – July 2005)

Anbar province, after initially seeming ready to cooperate with Coalition forces immediately following the 2003 invasion, rapidly evolved into the main home of the Sunni insurgency. In the early days, U.S. forces in Ramadi, especially the Marine Corps, believed in the promise of showing a friendly face to the local population as a means of winning its loyalty.[16] As one reporter described, "Commanders worked to instill sympathy for the local population through sensitivity training and exhortations from

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 327.

higher officers. Marines were ordered to show friendliness through 'wave tactics,' including waving at people on the street."[17]

These attitudes proved short-lived, however, as attacks against U.S. forces quickly escalated in frequency and sophistication. In one particularly well-publicized and deeply felt incident in April 2004, a dozen Marines were killed in a single ambush in the city. Naturally, this environment hardened the attitudes of many U.S. forces, even those whose original intent had been to do what was necessary to win the hearts and minds of Ramadi residents. In the words of one Marine non-commissioned officer (NCO) who was deployed in Ramadi in the spring and summer of 2004, "My whole opinion of the people here has changed. There aren't any good people."[18] U.S. forces developed a strong sense that the general population was largely complicit in many insurgent attacks against the U.S. Another Marine NCO relates the story of a rocket-propelled grenade attack on his platoon.

> When the Marines responded, the attacker fled, but they found that he had established a comfortable and obvious position to lie in wait. There, in an alleyway beside the shops was a seat and ammunition for the grenade launcher--along with a pitcher of water and a half-eaten bowl of grapes. . . 'You could tell the guy had been hanging out all day. It was out in the open. Every single one of the guys in the shops could tell the guy was set up to attack us.'[19]

By the summer of 2004, U.S. forces were taking measures to reduce their disruptive effects on normal life in Ramadi, based on the premise that U.S. presence was an irritant and stoked some of the violence in the city. The Marine battalion there ceased patrolling the city almost entirely and instead set up observation posts throughout the

[17] Mike Dorning, "Marines Grow Weary of Even Friendly Faces," *Chicago Tribune*, September 16, 2004.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

city. But the change generated little improvement in the violence.[20] Indeed, the security situation had deteriorated to the point that the U.S. was not confident it would be able to hold the planned January elections safely in the city.[21]

This period also witnessed the disintegration of what semblance of governmental authority had remained in the city. In August and September alone, Anbar's governor resigned after his sons were kidnapped and his own life was threatened,[22] the deputy governor was kidnapped and murdered,[23] and Ramadi's police chief was arrested by U.S. forces for having begun working with the insurgency. By late September, Anbar's beleaguered acting governor, who doubled as Ramadi's acting mayor, could only lament that "We do not know who the attackers are or who is backing them. Are they backed from outside? Nobody knows."[24]

This was the environment in which 2/2ID took command of Ramadi in September. Commanders were determined not to let Ramadi "become another Fallujah," where insurgents operated with impunity. Accordingly, 2/2ID took an aggressive early approach, launching three separate brigade-level offensive operations in its first three weeks in command.[25] These operations, according to a brigade press release, were

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[20] Anne Barnard, "US Forces, Hit By Raids, Fault Their Iraqi Allies," *Boston Globe*, August 1, 2004, p. 1, Hess, "Ramadi Posts Seen As 'Symbol of Occupation'".

[21] John F. Burns and Erik Eckholm, "In Western Iraq, Fundamentalists Hold U.S. at Bay," *New York Times*, August 29, 2004, p. 1.

[22] "Highlights: Iraqi Press 2 Aug 04," August 2, 2004, FBIS Report GMP20040802000241, "Highlights: Iraqi Press 29 Aug 04," August 29, 2004, FBIS Report GMP20040829000187.

[23] Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraqi City On Edge Of Chaos," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 2004, p. 1.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Seth Robson, "2nd BCT Hopes to Keep Ramadi From Turning Into Another Fallujah," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, September 20, 2004.

designed to "deny anti-U.S. forces safe haven, round up suspected anti-U.S. leaders and exploit weapons caches used against legitimate forces in the area."[26] The tactics employed were mainly large-scale cordon-and-search operations.

These operations produced some results in terms of detained suspects and confiscated weapons, and yet seemed to have little effect on the level or intensity of attacks against U.S. forces. On a day-to-day basis, U.S. forces in Ramadi had their hands full simply securing the city's main east-west road, known to the U.S. as Route Michigan, and maintaining safe resupply of their own bases.[27]

By late October, 2/2ID had already suffered 12 soldiers killed in action,[28] and the leader of Anbar's dominant Dulaym tribe declared that "the city is chaotic. There's no presence of the Allawi [federal] government." A Marine civil affairs NCO said: "We hit the deck one and a half months ago, and the area has changed for the downhill very quickly."[29]

In the face of this deteriorating situation, 2/2ID commander Colonel Gary Patton, decided to realign his forces. Up until that point, only one of the brigade's four attached infantry battalions, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (2/5 Marines) was based inside Ramadi. The other battalions were based in the areas immediately surrounding the city, including two full battalions in Ramadi's eastern suburbs. With approval from the

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[26] Seth Robson, "2nd Brigade Combat Team Roundup Has Yielded 75 Suspects in Iraq," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 8, 2004.

[27] Interview 27 (Capt Eric Dougherty), Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

[28] Joseph Giordono, "2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers Round Up Suspected Insurgents in Iraq," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 24, 2004.

[29] Edward Wong, "Provincial Capital Near Falluja Is Rapidly Slipping Into Chaos," *New York Times*, October 28, 2004, p. 1.

divisional headquarters, Patton moved one of those two battalions, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry (1/503rd), from the east into the city, effectively doubling the number of U.S. combat forces inside Ramadi.

Before the increased troop levels could show much of an effect on security in Ramadi, however, operations in the city were overshadowed by the preparation and execution of the Coalition's major November assault on nearby Fallujah. Ramadi saw an uptick in attacks as insurgents pulling back from Fallujah sought refuge or transit there. U.S. operations focused on shielding the city from these collateral effects, with only partial success. An Al Jazirah reporter described the situation in Ramadi on November 17 this way:

> U.S. forces closed off the city's main entrances, preventing anyone from entering or departing the city. Life inside the city has completely stopped, and shops are closed. For several weeks now, students have not gone to schools and colleges. Electricity has been out for eight days. The U.S. forces entered the city from the western side trying to reach the eastern neighborhoods; they, however, were confronted by the fierce resistance of gunmen. Eyewitnesses said that fires blazed in several parts of the city due to the shootout, and warplanes are flying over.[30]

In the aftermath of the so-called "second battle of Fallujah," security conditions actually improved in Ramadi, and in December and January, the city began to show some signs of a return to normal life. By this time, the focus of U.S. operations had shifted to ensuring the relatively peaceful implementation of national elections at the end of January 2005. Much had been staked strategically on the elections as evidence of Iraq's democratic transition, and the participation of Anbar province's Sunni Arab population seemed particularly important. "From a symbolic and a political standpoint, conducting a

[30] "Al Jazirah Interviews Journalist on Situation in Al-Ramadi," *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television*, November 17, 2004, FBIS Report GMP20041117000050.

successful election in Ramadi, the provincial capital, is critical," remarked Brigadier General Joseph Dunford, the assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division.[31]

Ultimately, election day in Ramadi produced both good and bad news for the U.S. No major attacks occurred, which was both a surprise and a major victory for the security forces in the city. Turnout, however, was extremely paltry. Province-wide, turnout was only 2%, and early unofficial figures in Ramadi showed that only 1,700 of the city's 400,000 residents voted.[32] Intimidation by insurgents was a major factor in the low turnout, as was grave suspicion of the legitimacy and reliability of the process. Even the Ramadi director of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq resigned, together with his staff, a few days before the elections due to death threats.[33]

In the wake of the elections, the U.S. launched a new offensive throughout the upper Euphrates river valley, known as Operation River Blitz. In Ramadi, this effort was marked by the establishment of checkpoints at the main entrances to the city, as well as a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.[34] The checkpoints helped to limit insurgents' freedom of movement,[35] though they were also manpower intensive[36] and drew some complaints

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[31] Tony Perry, "Ramadi At Heart Of Iraq Election Hopes," *Los Angeles Times*, January 22, 2005.

[32] Tony Perry, "Polls Stand Empty In Sunni Stronghold," *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 2005. One officer estimated that only 65 people voted in his battalion's area of operations, which covered approximately half the city. Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra)

[33] "IECI Head, Members in Al-Ramadi Tender Resignation," *Al-Sharqiyah*, January 28, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20050128000194.

[34] Jackie Spinner, "Marines, Iraqi Forces Launch Offensive in Ramadi," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2005.

[35] Joseph Giordono, "A Year On the Edge: 2nd BCT Bound for Colorado After Grueling Tour in Ramadi," *Stars and Stripes*, July 31, 2005.

[36] Interview 15 (anonymous Army officer).

from local residents for impeding commerce and daily life.[37] By April, 2/2ID was claiming some success for these measures, crediting them with "a drastic decline in the amount of insurgent activity."[38]

The late winter and spring of 2005 also saw a growing role for Iraqi security forces in Ramadi. Up to this point, those efforts to shift responsibility for security to local forces had been almost entirely fruitless. The local police force mostly disintegrated in the fall, the Iraqi Army was not present, and a unit of the Iraqi National Guard, recruited largely from the local population, had been disbanded in November due to its being completely ineffectual and compromised by the insurgents. But by the spring, some Iraqi Army units had deployed to Ramadi. In most cases, these units were a double-edged sword in terms of working with the local population. Most of the Army units were majority Shi'a Arab. Most of the soldiers were not happy to be in Anbar, and many Ramadi residents resented their presence, even interpreting it as a validation of their suspicions about American complicity in a Shi'a takeover of Iraq. These concerns were exacerbated further with the appointment in 2005 of Bayan Jabr Sulagh as the Minister of the Interior. Jabr was widely thought to be affiliated with the sectarian Badr Corps militia and soon gained a reputation for using elements of the national police to conduct ethnic cleansing.[39]

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[37] Ann Scott Tyson, "To The Dismay Of Local Sunnis, Shiites Arrive To Police Ramadi," *Washington Post*, May 7, 2005, p. 13.

[38] Tom Roeder, "Carson Unit Says Tide Is Turning," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, April 18, 2005.

[39] Interview 1 (Andrea Jackson).

On the other hand, many of the Iraqi Army units, especially over time, proved capable of professionalism and avoidance of overtly sectarian behavior.[40] And their effectiveness in understanding the local environment, developing intelligence, and identifying insurgents was naturally far superior to that of the Americans.[41]

Importantly, the early months of 2005 also brought the first signs of an emerging rift between Ramadi's tribal leaders and the Islamist insurgents operating in the area, especially AQI. Some of the earliest evidence of a split came in the execution of seven foreign AQI members in retaliation for the assassination of a Dulaimi clan leader and Iraqi National Guard commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sulaiman Ahmed Dulaimi.[42] This was near the same time that reports surfaced of U.S. military officials as well as the Iraqi Defense Minister holding secret meetings with elements of the insurgency.[43] Unnamed sources told Al Jazirah that as a result of some of these meetings, "a military unit will be formed in the city of Al-Ramadi to preserve security. The unit will consist of former Iraqi army personnel and commanders and will not take orders from the U.S. forces or the Iraqi Defense Ministry . . ."[44] At the same time, U.S. forces in the far western deserts

[40] Interview 3 (anonymous Army officer), Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

[41] Interview 13 (COL David Clark), Interview 15 (anonymous Army officer), Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[42] John Ward Anderson, "A Gruesome Find, With A Difference," *Washington Post*, March 19, 2005.

[43] "U.S. Holds Secret Talks With Insurgents in Iraq," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2005, "Behind the News," *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television*, June 27, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20050627535004.

[44] Hamid Abdallah, "With the Americans' knowledge and consent, the Iraqi defense minister holds negotiations with the Iraqi resistance," *Al-Jazirah*, April 4, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20050404000175.

of Anbar had just begun working with the Albu Mahal Desert Protectors, a tribally-based militia formed to combat AQI.[45]

Notwithstanding these developments, however, the U.S. faced a major obstacle in attempting to exploit the emerging hostility between groups of erstwhile insurgent allies – namely, its own policy. As a rule, the U.S. remained extremely leery of creating local militias with no formal ties to the Iraqi government. After all, this was essentially the model that was attempted in handing off authority to the "Fallujah Brigade" in April 2004, an experiment generally viewed inside and outside the Coalition as a disastrous failure.[46] Instead, the U.S. was still hoping to marry up the local legitimacy enjoyed by Anbar's tribal leaders with the formal institutions of the Iraqi government, in particular the Iraqi Army. Bing West, a writer, former Marine, and former Pentagon official who spent many months in Anbar province during this period provides a stark illustration of this policy in action:

> The sheikhs offered a deal in March of 2005. They wanted arms and ammunition, plus vehicles. They would protect their turfs with a tribal force of roughly 5,000 men. They would agree to boundaries and point out the takfiris [Islamic extremists]. That would stop the IED attacks along the main roads. [Assistant commander of 1 MARDIV, Brigadier General Joseph] Dunford refused. You have an elected national government, he said, with a new army. Send your tribal sons to [the Army training center in] Taji. . . Asked if he could promise they would return to their tribal areas, Dunford said no. There was an elected government and no need for another militia. The days of the tribes were over.[47]

Dunford went on to explain, "In the spring of 2005, I met with dozens of sheikhs. They were shaken up by what we had done in Fallujah. They said they'd fight on our side, but

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[45] John A. McCary, "The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 1 (January 2009), p. 48, Austin Long, "War Comes to Al Anbar: Political Conflict in an Iraqi Province," unpublished paper presented at the International Studies Association conference, February 2009, p. 11.

[46] Interview 23 (Carter Malkasian), Interview 33 (MajGen Richard Natonski).

[47] Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 75.

refused to go through the government in Baghdad. In 2005, we weren't willing to accept that deal."[48]

In part because of this gap between the tribes and the U.S., relationships between U.S. forces and the local population in Ramadi continued to develop slowly. 2/2ID did begin to make progress in identifying some local leaders in and around the city who were willing to work with them in trying to re-establish governance in the city, and the U.S.'s local intelligence networks slowly expanded.[49] At the same time, though, the local population continued to bristle at the restrictions imposed by U.S. forces. And AQI attacks and intimidation continued to undermine efforts to stabilize the city. In May, the new Anbar governor was kidnapped in Ramadi and found dead a few weeks later.[50] AQI also aggressively targeted the growing number of sheikhs who appeared willing to challenge its strong influence. A new city council was just being stood up as 2/2ID prepared to depart the country in July 2005.

Unclassified statistics on overall attack trends in Ramadi during this period are not yet available. Anecdotal evidence is mixed, with some participants identifying reduced violence between the beginning and the end of 2/2ID's tour and some identifying roughly similar levels at the beginning and end of the period. Estimates of casualties

[48] Ibid., p. 96.

[49] Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler), Interview 34 (SSG Brian Fennema).

[50] Nancy A. Youssef and Yasser Salihee, "Gunmen Kidnap A Governor In Iraq," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 11, 2005, p. 1, Ellen Knickmeyer and Othman Mohammed, "Governor In Iraq Is Found Dead," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2005, p. 16.

suffered by 2-2ID and its subordinate units range from 68 to 98 killed in action with approximately 700 more wounded.[51]

What does seem clear, however, is a sharp deterioration in security in Ramadi subsequent to 2/2ID's departure. A few journalistic accounts chart the city's downward spiral. From August 2005:

> Insurgents in Anbar province, the center of guerrilla resistance in Iraq, are fighting the U.S. military to a standstill. After repeated major offensives in Fallujah and Ramadi, . . . many U.S. officers and enlisted men have stopped talking about winning a military victory in Iraq's Sunni Muslim heartland. . . Today, the street [in Ramadi] is pocked with holes left by bombs intended for U.S. convoys, storefronts are ripped by shrapnel, bullet holes tattoo walls, buildings have been blown to rubble by U.S. missile strikes and insurgent mortar volleys, and roofs are caved in by U.S. bombing. At the main U.S. base in Ramadi, artillery booms every night, sending more shells to pound insurgent positions in and around the city.[52]

From October 2005:

> [In Ramadi,] Sunni Arab insurgents are waging their fiercest war against American troops, attacking with relative impunity just blocks from Marine-controlled territory. Every day, the Americans fight to hold their turf in a war against an enemy who seems to be everywhere but is not often seen. The cost has been high: in the last six weeks, 21 Americans have been killed here, far more than in any other city in Iraq and double the number of deaths in Baghdad, a city with a population 15 times as large. . . more than two years after the American invasion, this city of 400,000 people is just barely within American control. The deputy governor of Anbar was shot to death on Tuesday; the day before, the governor's car was fired on. There is no police force. A Baghdad cellphone company has refused to put up towers here. American bases are regularly pelted with rockets and mortar shells, and when troops here get out of their vehicles to patrol, they are almost always running.[53]

From December 2005:

> It is clear that the U.S. forces are not present inside the city . . . there are no Iraqi forces either. Gunmen have assumed full control of the city. There is intensive shelling of the

[51] Joseph Giordono, "A Year On the Edge: 2nd BCT Bound for Colorado After Grueling Tour in Ramadi," *Stars and Stripes*, July 31, 2005, Interview 3 (anonymous Army officer).

[52] Tom Lasseter, "Insurgents Have Changed U.S. Ideas About Winning," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 28, 2005, p. 1.

[53] Sabrina Tavernise, "Unseen Enemy Is At Its Fiercest In A Sunni City," *New York Times*, October 23, 2005, p. 1.

> governorate building, the citizenship affairs building, which the U.S. forces use as their headquarters, and the main headquarters west of the city . . .[54]

It was only in late 2006 that Ramadi became the focal point of the Tribal Awakening that transformed the counterinsurgency in Anbar.

Were ethno-religious identity-based cleavages significant?

Having experienced many generations in power, Iraq's Sunni Arab community has come to view political power as an important element of its identity. As one recent study of Anbar's tribes reported,

> The modern Sunni Arabs of Iraq take a great deal of pride in their religious and political history. They tend to regard themselves as the descendents and heirs to a long history of intellectual development, wealth, and political rule over the massive Islamic empire. They regard other ethnic and religious groups throughout the history of Iraq as less worthy of political power and influence.[55]

One commonly noted manifestation of this sense of political identity is that so many Sunni Arab Iraqis dispute the generally accepted population estimates that show Shi'a Arabs with a clear majority of Iraq's population. This view is not limited to the poor and uneducated, but is shared by many Sunnis who are wealthy, educated, well-traveled, and even pro-Western.[56]

Given this context, it is difficult to overstate the sense of disenfranchisement felt by many Sunni Arabs following the U.S. invasion in 2003. Even Sunni opponents of Saddam Hussein who welcomed the invasion and the change of regime were extremely upset by the influence granted to Shi'a exiles – pro-Western and pro-Iranian alike – in the

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[54] May al-Shirbini, interview with correspondent Ammar Ali, *Al-Arabiyah Television*, December 1, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20051201546007.

[55] Lin Todd, et al, *Iraq Tribal Study – Al-Anbar Governorate* (Global Resources Group, June 2006), p. 2-24.

[56] Patrick Graham, "The Message From The Sunni Heartland," *New York Times*, May 22, 2005.

Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and subsequently the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG).[57] Beyond the chagrin of coming up short in the division of spoils, Iraq's Sunni Arabs found the new political arrangement to be unnatural and a transgression of cultural norms. As noted in Chapter 5, a Sunni tribal leader captured this feeling well in his assertion that, Shi'a "cannot take charge of Iraq in the same manner as the Sunnis. The [Shi'a] are backwards. They are barbarian savages, they do not know true religion, theirs is twisted, it is not the true religion of Muhammad."[58]

In Ramadi, this sense of sectarian disenfranchisement was not the only driver of the insurgency, of course, but it was clearly one of the most important factors. While Ramadi, itself, is very homogeneous, one of its people's primary grievances was a view of the new Iraqi federal government as a sectarian Shi'a force, with the Iraqi Army and the Coalition serving as agents of that sectarian force. As a home to many Ba'athists and military officers, Ramadi in particular struggled to come to terms with the idea of an Iraq where its influence was weak.

The prominent counterinsurgency expert John Nagl, who was a brigade operations officer in AO Topeka during 2003-2004, just prior to 2/2ID's deployment recalled:

> As the task force proceeded through its year in Al Anbar, we came to realize that a very high percentage of the population – almost exclusively Sunni in our AO – did support the objectives of the insurgency, which was a restoration of Sunni ascendancy over the Shi'a. The Sunnis saw the American occupation as propping up the Shi'a and therefore targeted us. We couldn't win this fight at the local level. Success demanded national-level reconciliation between the Sunnis and the Shi'a . . .[59]

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[57] Carter Malkasian, "The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004-05," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (September 2006), pp. 371-373.

[58] Hashim, pp. 71-72.

[59] Christopher K. Ives, "Interview with LTC John A. Nagl," from the collection *Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, January 9, 2007).

And according to Lieutenant Colonel Justin Gubler, battalion commander of the 1/503rd Infantry,

> Ramadi residents' biggest fear was being repressed and abused by the Shi'a government, and that was the biggest obstacle toward their working with us. We heard that from the sheikhs and from professionals and from former military officers. We were the ones that installed the Shi'a government, which they knew would mistreat them the way the Ba'ath party mistreated the Shi'a.[60]

Gubler's executive officer, Major Greg Sierra, said simply, "the Sunnis just weren't ready to play in the new Iraq – they hadn't accepted that things were going to be different."[61]

One especially commonly cited Sunni complaint was a belief that Iraq was being handed over to Iran. Just prior to the national elections in January 2005, the 1st Marine Division's commander, Major General Richard Natonski, was touring polling stations. A group of Iraqi men gathered to describe their views to the general. One man told him "the election will only create a Shiite Muslim-dominated government in Baghdad that will ignore Sunni Muslim cities like Ramadi."[62] On election day, a professor told an American reporter that he was boycotting the election because he believed that it would be manipulated by pro-Iranian Shiite politicians. "Iraq will become part of Iran after this. I want no part of it."[63] Another Ramadi resident pleaded with a Marine intelligence officer at one point, "don't leave us with this Iranian army."[64] Shortly after the elections,

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[60] Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler).

[61] Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[62] Tony Perry, "U.S. General Gets Earful From Men In Sunni City Who May Forgo Polls," *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 2005.

[63] Perry, "Polls Stand Empty In Sunni Stronghold".

[64] Interview 7 (Capt Sean Kuehl); a very similar comment was made in Interview 15 (anonymous Army officer).

insurgent leaders told U.S. representatives in secret meetings that they saw the Shi'a-dominated government as being controlled by Iran and that their "aim was to establish a political identity that can represent disenfranchised Sunnis."[65]

It is telling that Ramadi remained among the most obstinate of the Sunni-dominated areas in coming to terms with participation in the national government. In the fall of 2005, the U.S. headquarters in Baghdad was claiming progress in bringing Sunnis into the political process. They cited public opinion survey results from June 2005 showing that majorities of Sunnis in most areas, including approximately 80% of Sunnis in Baghdad, believed that boycotting the January elections had been a "bad idea." But in Ramadi, only 40% believed the boycott had been a bad idea, while 46% still described the boycott as a "good idea."[66]

Other evidence of significant sectarian cleavages can be found in the reactions of Ramadi residents in the first half of 2005 to the increased deployment of largely Shi'a security forces to the area. One Shi'a Iraqi soldier in Ramadi commented, "Of course they don't like us. They don't like people from the south, so when we search them, they make faces at us." Another called Ramadi hostile territory, complaining that "it is a problem that we are Shiite. [The local people] think we are all spies." Naturally, insurgents exploited these tensions to maximum effect, distributing literature and graffiti referring to the Shi'a Army units as "rapists," "Jews" and "dogs of the Americans."[67]

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[65] "U.S. Holds Secret Talks With Insurgents in Iraq," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2005.

[66] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, October 2005), p. 7.

[67] Tyson, "To The Dismay Of Local Sunnis, Shiites Arrive To Police Ramadi".

For all the importance of sectarian Sunni identity in Ramadi, it is important to note that the salience of this identity was to some degree eclipsed by tribal identities. These identities overlapped heavily due to the city's homogeneity, but political identification and loyalties in Ramadi did tend to adhere more to tribal hierarchies than to religious ones, per se. As one intelligence officer described it, "the tribal identity trumped everything. It gives the leaders legitimacy."[68] The strength of tribal identities and loyalties tended to be more pronounced in the surrounding areas than in the city, itself, where tribes were intermixed.[69]

It is also important to note the weakness of Iraqi national identity that might otherwise have mitigated some of the divisive effects of strong tribal and sectarian identification. Several interviewees noted the absence of any Iraqi nationalism in Ramadi, except of the sort tied to Saddam Hussein's regime. For example, Colonel David Clark, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (1/506th), commented that "The Iraqis that we knew and worked with were three or four things before they were Iraqis – clan, tribe, religion, all before they were Iraqis. Those interests came first, all above the national interest."[70]

In sum, it is clear that despite the absence of much sectarian violence in Ramadi, conflict between Iraq's Sunni and Shi'a Arabs was quite central to the origins and evolution of the insurgency there.

[68] Interview 7 (Capt Sean Kuehl).

[69] Interview 23 (Carter Malkasian), Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler).

[70] Interview 13 (COL David Clark).

Were good security operations conducted?

Evaluating the quality of U.S. security operations during this period is not simple. The record is mixed and complex. Several interviewees felt that a "conventional" mindset prevailed in the brigade for too long. This mindset manifested itself in 2/2ID's planning and operations in an emphasis on targeting of insurgents rather than population security. "We were too kinetic, too focused on offensive operations," said one officer. "There was a tendency toward focusing on raids, killing and capturing bad guys, etc."[71] A reporter embedded with the brigade commented that "U.S. forces were still in Cold War mode – they were all about fighting and killing. . . there were a lot of raids, detentions and the like that alienated the populace."[72]

This view, though not universal among the interviewees, was held up and down the chain of command. Marine Corporal Peder Ell did not see great value in large offensive sweep operations, saying, "we'd pick up bad guys and disrupt their operations, but it only worked for a while. They would just come back in after the operation had ended."[73] Colonel Patton, the brigade commander, agreed: "We did a lot of those brigade-level and battalion-level ops and it never got us much of anything important. They were fruitless, and they pissed people off."[74] Besides alienating the local population, operations that involved raiding a lot of houses, arresting a lot of people, and taking away people's guns, also served to confirm some Anbaris' suspicions that the U.S.

[71] Interview 3 (anonymous Army officer).

[72] Interview 4 (Seth Robson).

[73] Interview 6 (Cpl Peder Ell).

[74] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

was making war on the whole community of Sunnis on behalf of the sectarian federal government.[75]

According to 2/2ID's artillery battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John Fant, "It took us a long time to understand that this was not a brigade fight, it was a platoon and squad fight. I think our conventional training clouded our approach to the problem. . . The brigade's role should be political and resource provision. . ."[76] Yet these brigade roles were not consistently pursued. Another officer summarized the problem this way:

> What I ranked as important were developing governance and developing the Iraqi police and military. If you just looked at our resource allocation, though, you might assume that the main priority was killing bad guys. There was a lot of variation across different operating units and staff in terms of their relative focus on governance vs. kinetic operations. I don't think we ever had a common picture across the AO of the center of gravity, whether it was the population or the enemy.[77]

Two other officers interviewed questioned the brigade leadership's appreciation for the importance of cultivating relationships with local leaders. One recalled an incident early in the brigade's deployment in which Colonel Patton cancelled consecutive meetings with a local leader who had had a relationship with the previous brigade commander, and then sent a lieutenant colonel to meet with him. In a culture that places a high value on seniority and respect, this officer believed, this approach "was an affront to [the leader] that set the tone for the whole time we were there." Like other interviewees, he attributed such mistakes in part to a "conventional mindset."[78] Another interviewee believed that

[75] Interview 1 (Andrea Jackson).

[76] Interview 35 (LTC John Fant).

[77] Interview 15 (anonymous Army officer).

[78] Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

the brigade commander "did not embrace his role as the person to lead engagement with the local leaders" until the latter half of the brigade's deployment.[79]

On the other hand, the brigade's focus on conventional combat operations was at least partly a result of the level of threat it faced nearly immediately upon its arrival in Ramadi. The fall of 2004 was "brutal, just really violent," said one officer.[80] In the words of Colonel Clark, the 1/506th commander, "We were up to our eyeballs fighting those guys, so we weren't able to concentrate on the political and social and economic aspects."[81] In this environment, traditional counterinsurgency approaches had difficulty taking root. Another officer offered this example:

> In the fall, we planned to set up a 'place of hope' in one neighborhood, where we were going to try to concentrate some security and reconstruction efforts. It was essentially an ink spot approach, classic clear, hold, and build. We wrote the plan, but then as we were getting ready to execute the plan, one of our battalions got engaged in pretty heavy fighting and the decision got made that we're not going to implement the 'place of hope'. And I felt like this was a turning point when we turned away from the idea of focusing on securing the population.[82]

The serious challenges posed by the high threat level led some interviewees to reject the charge that the brigade had been "too kinetic."[83]

Another major limitation 2/2ID faced in establishing security for Ramadi's population was its relatively small number of troops. AO Topeka had over half a million people, and 2/2ID totaled only around 5,500 personnel. And, as with any modern military unit, a substantial number of those personnel were engaged in support functions

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[79] Not for attribution comment from interviewee.

[80] Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

[81] Interview 13 (COL David Clark).

[82] Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

[83] For example, Interview 6 (Cpl Peder Ell), Interview 7 (Capt Sean Kuehl), Interview 31 (LCpl Jamie Sutton).

and were not combat troops. Colonel Patton estimated that even after he moved an additional battalion into the city – a choice he called one of the best decisions he made during the deployment – there were only about 1,800 U.S. combat forces in Ramadi proper.[84] This means the U.S. had approximately one soldier in the city for every 222 residents, a ratio more than four times smaller than the ratio the 2006 counterinsurgency field manual identifies as a "minimum force density" for effective counterinsurgency.[85] Representative of the many comments from interviewees on the subject of troop numbers is this assessment from a 2/5 Marines company commander, Captain Eric Dougherty:

> The biggest problem was that we were so undermanned, that we couldn't give the people confidence that we'd be around. As soon as you're gone, the people could count on the insurgents to show up and intimidate them or punish them in retribution for their cooperation with the Coalition. That puts the population in a precarious position – they were waiting to see who would win before they picked a side.[86]

The natural solution to the problem of inadequate forces is augmentation with indigenous forces. And, indeed, the development of Iraqi security forces was a key component of 2/2ID's operations. However, this proved to be problematic on two related levels. First, for most or all of 2/2ID's tenure in Ramadi, Iraqi security forces there were totally inadequate to the task of providing security. In the first half of the brigade's deployment, Iraqi security forces were virtually non-existent. The police force was heavily infiltrated, unreliable, ill-equipped, and eventually quit en masse.[87] A local Iraqi

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[84] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

[85] Field Manual (FM) 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006), p. 1-13.

[86] Interview 27 (Capt Eric Dougherty). For a broader treatment of this subject see Carter Malkasian, "Did the U.S. Need More Forces in Iraq? Evidence from Al Anbar," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 46 (3rd Quarter 2007), pp. 120-126.

[87] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

National Guard brigade was entirely ineffective, partly due to a lack of training, but also due to systematic insurgents' intimidation of Guard soldiers' families. U.S. forces disbanded the brigade altogether in the fall of 2004.[88] There was some improvement over time, especially among Iraqi Army units deployed to Ramadi from other parts of Iraq during the spring of 2005.[89] But these units remained a weak supplement to the U.S. combat forces in the area.

The second related problem was that Coalition policy at the strategic level emphasized the importance of transition of authority and control to Iraqi forces, not population security. In the words of the Corps commander who took charge at MNC-I in January 2005, Lieutenant General John Vines, the goal was "rapid progress in training and preparing Iraqis to assume responsibility for security in every province."[90] Thus any U.S. officers advocating a greater focus on population security had not only the inadequacy of available resources to contend with, but also a policy that pointed in the opposite direction.

Perhaps inevitably in this environment, the approaches employed by U.S. forces in Ramadi varied by subordinate unit and in general improved over time. Brigade-level sweeps were eventually replaced by more small-unit patrolling, and the establishment of checkpoints, which provided a modicum of consistent presence in at least a few locations in the city.[91] This enabled units to improve their ability to collect intelligence and to build relationships with the local population to some degree. Even these adaptations

[88] Interview 13 (COL David Clark).

[89] Interview 3 (anonymous Army officer).

[90] West, *The Strongest Tribe*, p. 71.

[91] Interview 5 (Capt Ed Rapisarda).

were hamstrung, though, by the limited numbers of troops available. And it was only near the very end of 2/2ID's deployment that units began to refocus their intelligence collection efforts away from targeting and toward understanding the socio-political dynamics of the local population.[92]

Overall, this record returns a somewhat ambiguous answer to the question, "were good security operations conducted?" From a strategic perspective, even allowing for variation and improvement over time described above, the variety of problems outlined here point to an answer closer to 'no' than 'yes,' but a qualified answer in any case.

Was good governance provided?

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Ramadi during this period was the thoroughgoing dysfunction of the government. Leaders of the provincial and local government and of the police were routinely targeted by insurgents for intimidation and assassination. Those who chose to continue to serve in the face of threats against them were often killed. Mayors, provincial governors, and police chiefs in Ramadi tended to have short tenures in office that ended in death, resignation, or arrest for participation in the insurgency.

Hence governance of any sort, good or otherwise, was a scarce commodity in Ramadi during 2004-2005. Most interviewees stressed the severe limitations on reconstruction efforts that prevailed due to the violence and intimidation. Reconstruction projects were regularly attacked, and Iraqis who were seen or suspected of working with the U.S. or taking funding from them were threatened and murdered.[93] One interviewee,

[92] Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler), Interview 36 (anonymous Army officer).

[93] Interview 4 (Seth Robson), Interview 6 (Cpl Peder Ell), Interview 27 (Capt Eric Dougherty).

who did not want this story attributed, related the following illustration of the severity of this problem:

> One time, we detained a guy for two weeks, just so he could then go back out into the city and profess to have a major grievance against the U.S. as a cover for taking U.S. money and starting a sewer renovation project. That's how reluctant people were to be seen to take American money.

This dynamic was particularly damaging because it subverted not only U.S. reconstruction efforts and attempts to improve governance, but also efforts to provide jobs for Ramadi's thousands of unemployed military-age males. Interviewees differed on the extent to which unemployment was a cause of the insurgency, but there is no question that it facilitated recruitment for the insurgents.[94]

Even when U.S.-sponsored projects went forward, they were inevitably more complicated and costly than planned. Bing West reports a good illustration of these difficulties:

> One contractor had bid $70,000 to fill a dozen potholes. [A U.S. Civil Affairs officer] estimated that the work should cost $5,000. The contractor protested that he had to buy his own cement trucks. No one would rent a truck to go to Ramadi. He had to hire guards who insisted on driving their own vehicles. He paid local officials for 'licenses' and paid the sheikh who owned the street. The insurgents demanded their cut. His work crew refused to stay overnight in the city, choosing a four-hour round-trip from Baghdad that cut the actual workday to three hours. Hence, $70,000 for a $5,000 job.[95]

Insurgents also occasionally targeted civilian infrastructure, further suggesting a deliberate attempt to make the city ungovernable. For example, just in 2/2ID's first month in Ramadi, insurgents blew up an agricultural center and the Red Crescent office, and then blamed the attacks on U.S. forces.[96] Another obstacle to improving governance

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[94] John Hendren, "U.S. Troops Still Dying In Ramadi Amid 'Relative Peace, Tranquility'," *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 2004, Interview 35 (LTC John Fant).

[95] West, *The Strongest Tribe*, p. 97.

[96] "US Military Says 'Insurgents' Blew Up Red Crescent Offices in Al-Ramadi," *Agent France Press*, October 8, 2004, FBIS Report EUP20041008000429.

was corruption and a certain lack of civic culture. Colonel David Clark offered one of many examples:

> We spent a lot of money getting the water purification system rebuilt and operational, and we got that all set up – should have been a tremendous victory for the people. But before long, it shut down, why? Because the guards were stealing the gasoline for the engine and selling it on the black market. And all the people along the line were tapping into it and contaminated it.[97]

This general problem was recognized from the lowest to the highest levels of the ranks. U.S. Central Command chief, General John Abizaid, told reporters in May 2005, "There are areas where there is relatively little reconstruction because of insurgent activity. You go out to Al Anbar province, for example. It's pretty grim out there in terms of what has been done versus what could be done."[98]

Shortcomings in the U.S.'s own capacity and planning also hampered governance-related initiatives. One Marine officer complained that

> there was very little done in the way of working with the government. . . I never felt that there was a State Department presence or a [provincial reconstruction team]. . . We had a civil affairs reservist in our battalion – his job was to coordinate the civil reconstruction efforts – it was totally ineffective, we couldn't get anything done because there was no supporting bureaucracy and no unified vision.[99]

The training of the brigade's staff and leadership was also quite limited regarding execution of infrastructure and civil planning projects.[100]

In spite of all these difficulties, there were some governance improvements pursued and some success seen, mostly on a relatively small scale. 2/2ID ran a number of missions aimed at rebuilding infrastructure and providing humanitarian aid to the

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[97] Interview 13 (COL David Clark).

[98] Mark Mazzetti and Solomon Moore, "Insurgents Flourish In Iraq's Wild West," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 2005.

[99] Interview 7 (Capt Sean Kuehl).

[100] Interview 35 (LTC John Fant).

city's residents.[101] Projects included building medical clinics, soccer fields, refurbishing schools and Anbar University, expanding police stations, and restoring a badly damaged mosque.[102] A Marine company commander recalls an attempt to set up a 'model city' in their area.

> We never quite got there. But the idea was, how do we get to the future of Ramadi, so we envisioned a model city where everything was working the way it should be, with sanitation, education, security. . . And we were also able to run some humanitarian aid . . . on the western side of the city. The local people in those areas loved it. They appreciated the help.[103]

Of the projects that were pursued, improving electrical power generation and distribution was prominent, and some slow progress was made in this area. Anbar province was receiving less than eight hours per day of electric power as of May 2004, which was down from its pre-war standards of 9-15 hours per day.[104] By March 2006, Anbar had gone up to 12-16 hours per day.[105]

One measure of the U.S.'s level of activity in attempting to improve the quality of life in Ramadi can be found in the records of the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). This program provides money that brigade commanders and their subordinate commanders can use at their discretion to meet local needs in their areas of operation. CERP spending typically, though not exclusively, goes to relatively small, relatively short-term projects, and is also used to pay reparations for property damaged in

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[101] Giordono, "2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers Round Up Suspected Insurgents in Iraq".

[102] Rubin, "Iraqi City On Edge Of Chaos".

[103] Interview 5 (Capt Ed Rapisarda).

[104] United States General Accounting Office, *Rebuilding Iraq: Resource, Security, Governance, Essential Services, and Oversight Issues* (GAO-04-902R, June 2004), p. 90.

[105] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, May 2006), p. 25.

combat or to family members of killed and wounded civilians. In Ramadi, estimated CERP spending increased significantly over the months of this case study (see Figure 6). Estimated spending by quarter rose from $1.1M (Aug-Oct) to $2.0M (Nov-Jan) to $2.1M (Feb-Apr) to $2.4M (May-Jul).[106] This represents an increase from beginning to end of a factor of 2.2.

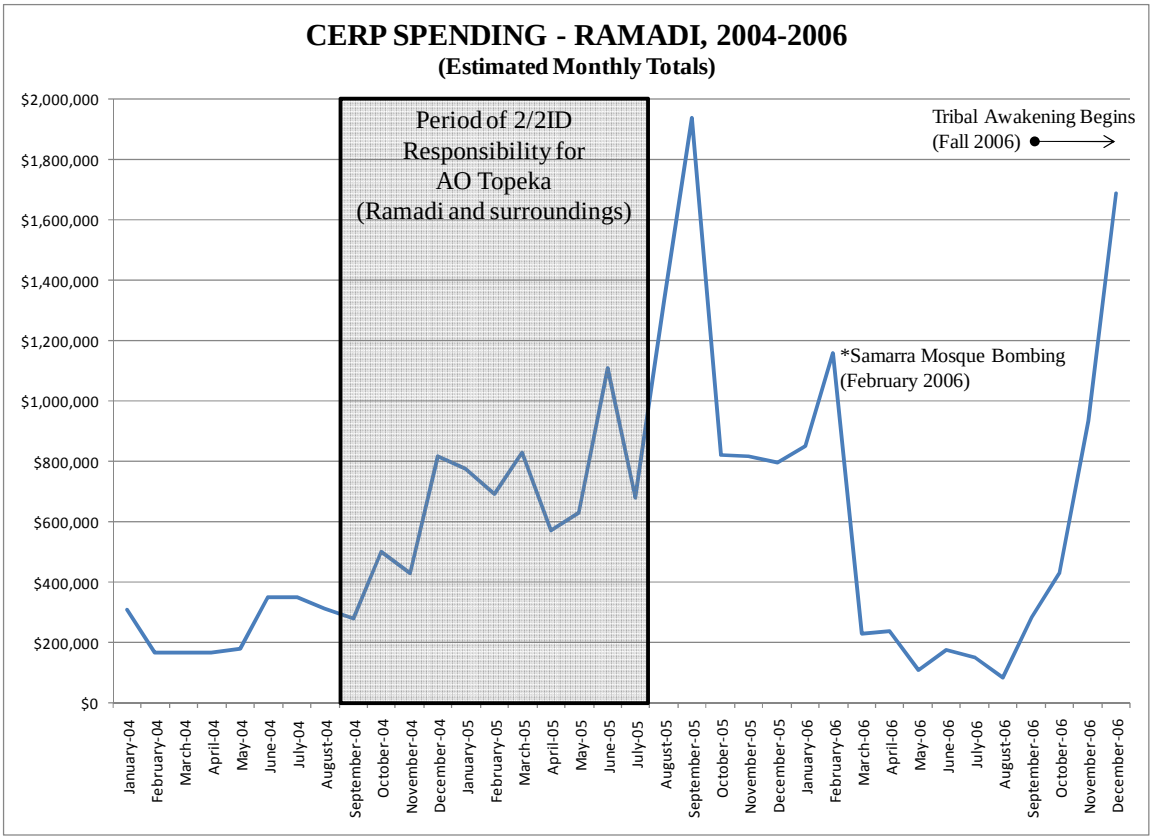

Figure 6: Estimated Monthly CERP Spending in Ramadi

Some commanders in Iraq claim to have noted a pattern of declining violence in the wake of CERP spending, including Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, the MNC-I

[106] Iraqi Reconstruction Management System, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, June 2008. Available data on CERP spending totals include total funds distributed and project start dates and end dates. The author has estimated monthly and quarterly spending totals based on equal division of total funds spent over the number of active months per project. Project lengths in the database range from 1 to 40 months, but the average length is 4 months. As a result, aggregate quarterly spending summaries (as reported in the text above) are less likely to be distorted by this estimation technique than the monthly spending estimates (as shown in the figure).

commander during 2006, and Colonel John Charlton, who commanded U.S. forces in the Ramadi area during 2007.[107] Charlton, who spent $87 million in CERP funds during 15 months in his area of operations, claimed that "We did more to win counterinsurgency with our CERP dollars than we did with our weapons."[108] However, there is reason to question the causal link between CERP spending and violence.

In the first multivariate statistical analysis conducted on district-level Iraq data,[109] Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro and Joseph Felter found no significant relationship at all between CERP spending and insurgent violence through 2006. They do find some correlation between the two starting in 2007, so their work perhaps qualifies Carlton's statement rather than contradicts it. This analysis will be addressed further in Chapter 8, but it does serve here to cast doubt on the often-asserted efficacy of reconstruction spending.

One specific example that suggests a complicated causal relationship between spending and security is one of Charlton's own reconstruction success stories, a glass and ceramics factory that Charlton's forces invested heavily in and got up and running in Ramadi in 2007. CERP was clearly not the decisive factor in this success story, because the U.S. spent over half a million dollars in CERP funds across 11 different contracts on

[107] Dana Hedgpeth and Sarah Cohen, "Money as a Weapon," *Washington Post*, August 11, 2008 (see both article and the transcript of the online discussion: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2008/08/10/DI2008081001774.html?sid=ST2008081002653&s_pos=list) (accessed July 26, 2009).

[108] Dana Hedgpeth and Sarah Cohen, "In Ramadi, a Counterinsurgency in Cash," *Washington Post*, August 11, 2008.

[109] Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," NBER Working Paper 14606 (December 2008).

that same glass factory during 2005 without it ever opening.[110] Only after Anbar's Tribal Awakening began in the fall of 2006 did the spending begin to have its intended effect.

Charlton's comments, themselves, also reveal a certain degree of ambivalence about the direction of causation with regard to CERP spending and changes in violence levels. On the one hand, he asserted that ". . . the results [of CERP] were clearly evident on the ground. Attacks in my area went from 30-35 per day down to essentially zero." But he also argues that "The key to any type of reconstruction or stabilization project is to establish a secure environment first. . . Once we had [that], we were then able to work with the Iraqis to rebuild."[111]

This kind confusion is familiar, and reflects one of counterinsurgency's classic recurring dilemmas that has been discussed in earlier chapters – that security is a pre-requisite for good governance while good governance is a pre-requisite for security. For some interviewees, this dilemma resonated with their experience in Ramadi.

On the other hand, other interviewees questioned whether this dilemma was, in fact, at work in Ramadi. Without exception, they believed in the dependency of good governance on some threshold level of security. But some doubted the necessary causal link in the opposite direction, suggesting that Ramadi residents' attitude toward U.S. forces and the local government was far more linked to security than to any other aspect of governance. In fact, some interviewees reported indifference among the population

[110] Hedgpeth and Cohen, "In Ramadi, a Counterinsurgency in Cash".

[111] Hedgpeth and Cohen, "Money as a Weapon".

about demonstrations of good governance – the people were far more interested in reliable security.[112] 2/2ID's commander commented that

> Security was first and foremost what people wanted. That was the feedback we always got. . . We gave the hospital medical supplies, conducted road repair, installed trash receptacles. But basically, this stuff couldn't take root while we were there – it didn't do any good coming from us – it had to come from the government. So for us, these things didn't end up making critical contributions to the fight.[113]

This observation came not only from U.S. forces, but also from local leaders. For example, the acting governor of Anbar and mayor of Ramadi in October complained, "The marines are not protecting us. It's true that they've helped us with some projects such as improving the water supply and sewage disposal and rebuilding schools. But people think all that is worthless. They need security."[114]

Moreover, even measures that were having some positive effects on security were viewed with hostility by some of the local population. In May 2005, some Ramadi residents staged a "sit-in" to highlight their grievances against U.S. forces. According to Al-Sharqiyah television news, Ramadi "looked completely empty and paralyzed this morning with the start of a two-day sit-in in protest against the US forces' practices against its residents." Protesters "called for ending the siege imposed on the city for two months, the departure of the U.S. forces from the city, the release of prisoners, stopping the acts of harassment against the residents of Al-Ramadi, putting an end to raid operations against citizens' houses, and stopping indiscriminate shooting."[115] Whatever

[112] Interview 13 (COL David Clark), Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler).

[113] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

[114] Wong, "Provincial Capital Near Falluja Is Rapidly Slipping Into Chaos".

[115] "Al-Ramadi Residents Begin 2-day Sit-in in Protest of US Forces' Practices," *Al-Sharqiyah Television*, May 7, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20050507542005.

the validity of those particular complaints, it was clear that the U.S. had a very high bar to clear in establishing any modicum of legitimacy for its governance activities in the city.

Overall, it appears that good governance generally remained beyond the reach of the counterinsurgents in Ramadi during this time period.

Were political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages pursued?

Two major cleavages defined the insurgency in Anbar and Ramadi during 2004-2005. The first was between the Sunni Arabs and the new government of Iraq. The second was between those Sunni Arabs and the U.S.-led Coalition. These two cleavages were closed related since, as noted above, many Anbaris saw the U.S. forces as working in concert with a Shi'a-led federal government. To a significant degree, this perception was correct – the U.S. was very clearly in concert with the new Iraqi federal government. The U.S. would have categorically rejected the characterization of that government as "Shi'a-led" or as sectarian in any other way. Nevertheless, the U.S.'s policies were based on a fundamental premise that the institutions of the new Iraqi government were the sole instruments of legitimate political power in the new Iraq.

Proceeding from this premise, U.S. policy from the establishment of the CPA at least through the period of this case study was to insist that U.S. cooperation with tribal sheikhs and other non-governmental power brokers was contingent on the integration of those groups into the security and governance mechanisms of the federal government. In 2003, Anbar CPA representative Keith Mines lobbied to create a "loya jirga," or tribal council, to negotiate the distribution of political power in the new Iraq or, failing this, to at least empower the sheikhs who came forward to support the U.S. But the CPA leadership was not interested in this, ever fearful of empowering non-governmental

militias and hence undermining the larger state-building effort.[116] As one intelligence officer working in Iraq in 2003 put it, "the standard answer we got from Bremer's people was that tribes are a vestige of the past, that they have no place in the new democratic Iraq."[117]

This policy then served as a major stumbling block to negotiating any sort of political compromise with local leaders in Ramadi. Colonel Clark acknowledged that, "it would have been way outside the box for us to accept [tribal overtures for creation of militias] at that time. It was against the policy, and it would have been difficult to predict how large the phenomenon was going to be."[118] General Joseph Dunford's comments cited earlier in this chapter neatly summarize the situation: "[The sheikhs] said they'd fight on our side, but refused to go through the government in Baghdad. In 2005, we weren't willing to accept that deal."[119] The 1st Marine Division commander concurred and defended this view: "The problem we had with local militias was that they did not work. The Fallujah Brigade is an example. So I don't think this kind of initiative would have succeeded in 2005. It wasn't a missed opportunity at all."[120] This same reluctance continued to prevail under II MEF, which took over control of U.S. operations in Anbar province in March 2005. And the limitations of this policy were certainly not mitigated by the 2/2ID leadership's previously noted slowness in embracing its role in engaging local leaders.

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[116] West, *The Strongest Tribe*, p. 24.

[117] Joe Klein, "Saddam's Revenge," *Time*, September 18, 2005.

[118] Interview 13 (COL David Clark).

[119] West, *The Strongest Tribe*, p. 96.

[120] Interview 33 (MajGen Richard Natonski).

This is not to suggest that U.S. leaders were unaware of or unwilling to address the sectarian grievances of the Anbari Sunnis more generally. MEF commanders did pursue several initiatives to try to bridge the gap between Anbar and the federal government, such as achieving better Sunni representation in Baghdad, moderating de-Ba'athification, and advocating a greater role for Sunni officers in the Iraqi Army.[121] But the effects of such efforts were hampered so long as the U.S. held the tribes' claims to having their own legitimacy at arm's length. This attitude tended to reinforce the common cause between the local "resistance" and the Islamist extremists. The 1/503rd commander, Lieutenant Colonel Gubler, explained the problem this way: "For Sunnis, the fledgling Iraqi government can be seen to rely on illegitimate security forces – the U.S. and/or Shi'a militias. Hence, as the [Iraqi Army] becomes larger and more effective as a security force, the less likely it is that the Shi'a government will negotiate a power-sharing deal with the Sunnis."[122]

And for the first several months of 2/2ID's tenure in Ramadi, seeking local leaders who were willing to work with the Coalition and were also not working with the insurgents was a challenge. A Marine company commander who left Ramadi in March lamented that "We never really nailed down who the real power brokers were. We dealt with the provincial government, but they weren't the guys who were pulling the strings."[123]

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[121] Malkasian (2006), pp. 373-374.

[122] Lieutenant Colonel Justin C. Gubler, "Reconciling Counterinsurgency with Civil War: A Strategy for Stabilizing Iraq," unpublished paper, March 26, 2007, p. 7.

[123] Interview 5 (Capt Ed Rapisarda).

As the split between AQI and the tribes began to open, however, opportunities to work with tribal leaders began to present themselves to the U.S. during the spring and summer of 2005. Effective response to these opportunities was slow, given the difficulty of even distinguishing real leaders from charlatans and profit-seekers (so-called "fake sheikhs"[124]). But over time, beginning at company and battalion levels, the U.S. began to build some relationships with sheikhs who showed promise as potential allies. As it became clear that the U.S. forces were not leaving the city, even some sheikhs who had been working with the insurgency seemed interested in seeking some accommodation with the U.S. Colonel Patton described the evolution of his own thinking on this point:

> The real power base in Ramadi was in the tribes, so if we were going to make any inroads in governance, we figured out that we would have to work through the sheikhs and the tribes. That wasn't something that we understood on day one, it took us time to figure that out. . . Why did it take so long to get to this realization? Because we were trying to work through the government and were not enthusiastic about propping up centers of power outside government channels.[125]

By the summer, 2/2ID units had developed a "sheikh security council" comprising two dozen sheikhs.[126] Still, these relationships proceeded fitfully, with a few steps forward often matched by a few steps back. For example, some tribal leaders in the 1/503rd's AO requested that the U.S. lift their checkpoints and extend the evening curfew by a couple hours. The U.S. forces complied, but that resulted in violence immediately rising again. The battalion's executive officer reports,

> At that point, in June, several of the tribal leaders planned a major meeting when they were going to get everyone together to discuss and coordinate their actions as part of a new effort to oppose the insurgents. We were prohibited from attending this meeting because they were going to great lengths to avoid their efforts being seen as associated

[124] Interview 26 (Tony Perry).

[125] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

[126] Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler).

> with us. But al Qaeda knew what they were doing, they assassinated guys, and scared them away, so the meeting didn't even happen.[127]

Carter Malkasian, a civilian analyst at the I MEF headquarters, cited such setbacks in tribal organization against AQI as evidence that in 2005, the environment was not yet ready for a major shift. He suggests, "Maybe what was happening was that the leadership had started to change its views, but the majority of the insurgents – the foot soldiers – were still committed to the cause."[128]

In parallel with trying to cultivate tribal allies, development of a city council became a key focus for the 2/2ID brigade staff beginning in the spring of 2005. One of the principal challenges of this effort was simply identifying who would be amenable to gathering to discuss issues. Eventually, this effort did bear fruit, and a city council was just being stood up when the brigade turned over control of the city to its successor.[129] Even so, there remained a critical gap between the authority exercised by the official government and by the tribal leaders. Colonel Patton explains, "The provincial and city governments that were just starting to function were not especially pleased with the tribal leaders' influence. We knew that bridging this gap was the end game, but basically, the sheikhs controlled a lot more people and resources than the nearly absent government did."[130] Some interviewees viewed these early in-roads into tribal alliance building as the

[127] Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[128] Interview 23 (Carter Malkasian).

[129] Interview 15 (anonymous Army officer).

[130] Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton).

earliest roots of what would become the Tribal Awakening movements the following year.[131]

On balance, though, in spite of these early instances of building relationships with the city's tribal leaders, the evidence suggests that during the period of this case study, the U.S. was not able to pursue any serious political agreements that would address the fundamental sectarian cleavage between the disenfranchised Sunnis of Ramadi and the new Iraqi government. U.S. policy at the strategic level resisted the avenues of political compromise that were most salient to that cleavage, and the need to move in this direction only became clear gradually to counterinsurgents at the operational and tactical levels.

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

The outcomes of the counterinsurgency over the course of 2/2ID's deployment are mixed. If success is measured only by attack statistics over the course of the brigade's 10 ½ months in command in Ramadi, then some degree of success is discernable. Unclassified attack data is sparse, though the 1/503rd's executive officer reported that attacks in the eastern half of the city went from 10 per day to 2-3 per day over those 10 ½ months.[132]

After returning to the U.S., that battalion's leadership noted a variety of improvements in their area of operations, as shown in Table 6.[133]

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[131] Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra), Interview 29 (COL Gary Patton), Interview 32 (LTC Justin Gubler).

[132] Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[133] Gubler and Bergmann, "Task Force Rock Introduction to Ar Ramadi: Its People and the Enemy," p. 41. (RPG=Rocket Propelled Grenade, RPK=assault rifle, PKM=machine gun, ISF=Iraqi Security Forces, IP=Iraqi Police, IED=Improvised Explosive Device, SVBIED=Suicide Vehicle-Borne IED, MSR=Main Supply Route, BLACK=unsafe, CF=Coalition Forces.)

September 2004	July 2005
• Enemy contact everyday – Direct fire (RPG, RPK, PKM) & indirect fire (rocket & mortar). • People did not go into the street, to work, school, or market. • People scared & refused to talk to or support U.S. forces. • No ISF; IPs worked w/the enemy • Electricity was intermittent • No running water in half the city • Sewers clogged and trash was piled in the city.	• Enemy contact < once per week – IED/SVBIED ***or*** Indirect fire • MSR Michigan remained 'BLACK' • Life normalized – People drove & walked on the streets; children played, Schools, markets & businesses were open. • People felt safer & tolerated or supported CF. • ISF present; IP units were forming. • Electricity restored to the city. Power outages 2-3 times per wk. • Running water to all the city. • Sewers were unclogged & trash was picked up routinely.

Table 6: Changes in Eastern Ramadi, September 2004 – July 2005

The brigade reported a somewhat more modest list of ten "Brigade Achievements" in the unclassified portion of its own After Action Report:[134]

- Executed a historic deployment from Korea into a combat zone
- No serious heat casualties during the entire deployment
- Supported and participated in combat operations in Fallujah, preventing Ramadi from becoming a second insurgent stronghold
- Provided a secure voting environment in Ramadi for the 30 January national elections
- Local leader engagement facilitated the formation of a Ramadi city council and multi-agency security council
- Re-enlisted over 800 soldiers in combat
- Enabled 99% of 2BCT soldiers to participate in the R&R leave program

[134] 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, *After Action Review: Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06, August 2004 – August 2005*.

- Developed and employed 5 new Iraqi Army battalions, and built/renovated 6 new Iraqi Army compounds
- Over 2,100 insurgents captured or killed
- Captured a brigade-equivalent amount of weapons and resources

The only achievement on the list that resembles something like strategic success – the claim of preventing Ramadi from becoming a "second insurgent stronghold" – was always a close-run thing, and proved to be quite fragile in the months following the brigade's departure.

Interviewees expressed a wide range of views on how successful their mission had been. Of sixteen interviewees who answered a question about the success or failure of the mission, five characterized it as success. Interestingly, four of those five were Marines who left Ramadi in March 2005. One called the mission a failure. Ten interviewees felt that 2/2ID had achieved something in between success and failure. The following two quotes are representative of that view. From 1/503rd executive officer Major Greg Sierra:

> Was this success in counterinsurgency or just success in combat ops? Even though we had multiple lines of effort, it was almost all combat ops. So even though we didn't manage to build much in terms of political and economic development, we did start to set the conditions, and helped lay the foundation for what happened later, in terms of working with the sheikhs.[135]

And from 2/2ID's artillery battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John Fant:

> I've come to the conclusion that we just held the place in check. We may not have won, but we did prevent it from getting so out of control that it would require another Fallujah type operation. We resisted the overall collapse, and in some ways set the conditions for the brigades that followed to help develop the Awakening.[136]

[135] Interview 19 (MAJ Greg Sierra).

[136] Interview 35 (LTC John Fant).

Whatever degree of success the brigade achieved during its time in Ramadi, there is little doubt that it was short-lived. As shown earlier in the chapter, reports from Ramadi in fall of 2005 were relentlessly grim, depicting an environment as bad or worse as the one that had greeted 2/2ID upon its arrival in 2004. By March 2006, a "Provincial Stability Assessment" conducted jointly by the U.S. Embassy and MNF-I rated Anbar province as "Critical" on a scale of stable, moderate, serious, and critical. This designation was meant to signify the following characteristics:[137]

- a government that is not functioning or has not formed, or that is only be [sic] represented by a single strong leader;
- an economy that does not have the infrastructure or government leadership to develop and is a significant contributor to instability; and
- a security situation marked by high levels of [insurgent] activity, assassinations and extremism.

Clearly, 2/2ID cannot be held responsible for the deterioration in Ramadi's security environment following its departure from the city. And without much more investigation, it is impossible to estimate how much of that deterioration resulted from changes in the environment or the insurgency, itself, as opposed to changes in the U.S.'s policy or operations. Still, it seems fair to conclude, based on both the modesty and the evident fragility of the progress achieved by the U.S. during the period of this case study that the counterinsurgency mission was not successful in a strategic sense.

[137] United States Government Accountability Office, Statement of David M. Walker before the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, *Rebuilding Iraq: Governance, Security, Reconstruction, and Financing Challenges* (GAO-06-697T, April 25, 2006), p. 11.

Evaluation

	Independent Variables				Dependent Variable
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**C (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Ramadi 2004-2005	Yes	Ambiguous	No	No	No

Table 7: Case Study Variable Summary for Ramadi

Table 7 summarizes the simple codings for the study's framework variables that are suggested by the evidence presented in this chapter. It is clear that identity-based cleavages were at the heart of the insurgency in Ramadi and Anbar province. Fundamental disagreement over the legitimacy of Sunni versus Shi'a Arab rule in Iraq and in Anbar was not the only source of conflict, but it was the most important among insurgents other than the religious extremists who flocked to the banner of al Qaeda in Iraq. This problem was evident from the beginning of the conflict, and the evidence presented here confirms that this dynamic, while evolving, continued to prevail throughout the time period of this case study.

It is also clear that as of mid-2005, the U.S. was not yet prepared to pursue political strategies that would directly address these cleavages. More precisely, the U.S. had staked everything on achieving a grand political bargain at the national level that was supposed to have addressed the grievances of Sunnis in Anbar. But as national-level reconciliation efforts remained bogged down, counterinsurgents in Anbar were left to fight their inherently political war with little discretion for addressing political grievances.

To say this is not necessarily to indict the policy choices made. U.S. leaders in Washington and Baghdad were loath to undermine the fragile sovereignty of the new

Iraqi government by empowering tribal leaders in Anbar province. Moreover, as noted above, there were good reasons to doubt the viability of Sunni tribal groups fighting AQI effectively. The failed experiment with the Fallujah Brigade loomed large over proposals for arming tribal militias. In retrospect, the advantage of empowering the tribes is evident, but the costs of this strategy to the stability of the Iraqi state remain to be seen.[138] Even so, should this case be counted as evidence in support of the general hypothesis on the greater importance of identity politics relative to good governance?

Whatever support the case does provide must be qualified by the fact that the U.S. counterinsurgents do not score very highly on security operations or good governance in this case. With security, there is substantial evidence that 2/2ID's initial approach to fighting the insurgency through large cordon and search operations was unproductive at best and counterproductive at worst. At the same time, the decision at strategic levels to allocate a single brigade combat team to a population center with around a half million people did not set 2/2ID up to succeed in its security mission. On the other hand, both of these negative factors were partially mitigated over time, first by 2/2ID's gradual adaptation to smaller scale operations with a growing focus on securing the population; and second, by the deployment of Iraqi security forces into the city. While these improvements appear to have been incremental and uneven, they belie an easy negative categorization of the quality of security operations for the case.

The coding of the good governance variable is more clear. Good governance cannot be said to have failed in this case, exactly; perhaps it is more accurate to say that it was barely attempted. By most accounts, U.S. forces believed in the potential value of

[138] For one expression of such concern, see Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival*, vol. 50, no. 2 (April-May 2008), pp. 67-68, 83.

improving governance in Ramadi, as signified, for example, by the growing CERP expenditures over time. But they were unable to make significant and sustained investments in this objective due to the persistent levels of insurgent violence and intimidation in the city.

So together, the weak contributions of security and governance in this case make the marginal impact of the political agreement variable on the outcome harder to isolate.

Still, the causal link between U.S. policy in 2004 and 2005 of discouraging the legitimation of local Sunni tribes and the persistence of the insurgency in Ramadi during this period seems strong. Fundamentally, what institutions of governance existed in Ramadi at that time – principally the U.S. and, to a lesser degree, the Iraqi security forces – were perceived as illegitimate. And this perception was not based on failures of performance, but rather on presumptions of inherent legitimacy tied to ethno-religious identity. So in this sense, this case does provide some evidence of the relative importance to counterinsurgency of political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages.

A relevant counterfactual question here would be, if the U.S. had managed to stand up a local government and provide a greater amount of infrastructure improvements, basic service provision, and economic development, would the insurgency have retained the strength that it did? The question is impossible to answer, though as described above, some interviewees were skeptical that more success in improving the quality of governance in the city would have had a great impact on the insurgency. In any case, the conditions that would probably have been necessary to allow for such a scenario seem almost categorically precluded by the prevailing political situation.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of this interpretation of causal factors in Ramadi can be found in the Tribal Awakening developments there and elsewhere in Anbar in 2006-2007. A more detailed investigation of the Awakening using this analytic lens awaits future research, but even its basic storyline is instructive for these purposes. In early 2006, the Coalition was already reporting some positive effects of the expanding split between Sunni rejectionists and jihadists among the insurgents.[139] AQI had continued to alienate Sunni Iraqis with its intolerance and intimidation. At the same time, the first instances of cooperation between U.S. forces and tribal groups were bearing fruit in al Qaim in the Western Anbar desert. Former insurgents began openly fighting each other. In February 2006, six insurgent groups, including the 1920s Brigades and the Islamic Movement for Iraq's Mujahideen, released a statement announcing a cooperative effort to form a "people's cell" to oppose AQI and to provide security in Anbar.[140]

Over the course of the next year and a half, Ramadi was transformed from "the blackest rat-hole in the dark insurgent sewer of the upper Euphrates valley", as David Kilcullen memorably called it, to a model for effective cooperation between the U.S. and the local Iraq population. Attacks dropped from 100 a day to only a few.[141] The reasons for this transformation, of course, are numerous and complex. But improvements in the quality of governance in Ramadi or Anbar are conspicuously absent from the explanations offered by analysts and participants, alike.[142] Bing West dismisses the

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[139] *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2006), pp. 24-25.

[140] Oliver Poole, "Insurgents Turning Against Al-Qa'ida in Iraq," *The Daily Telegraph*, February 6, 2006.

[141] David Kilcullen, "Religion and Insurgency," Small Wars Journal Blog, May 12, 2007.

[142] See Major Niel Smith and Colonel Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review*, March-April 2008, pp. 41-52, Long (2008), Long (2009), McCary.

importance of such factors explicitly: "The Awakening wasn't attributable to economic development; Anbar was starved for funds. It wasn't due to enlightened governance; [Awakening leader Sheikh] Sattar referred to the Baghdad government as 'those Persians.'"[143]

Instead, what appears to have been decisive in the Awakening was the popular rejection of AQI's brutality and the U.S.'s newfound willingness to partner directly with and empower local tribes as agents of security and governance. U.S. Army Colonel Sean MacFarland, who took over AO Topeka in the summer of 2006 lists as one of the most important lessons from his experience the realization that "The tribes represent the people of Iraq . . . No matter how imperfect the tribal system appeared to us, it was capable of providing social order and control through culturally appropriate means where governmental control was weak."[144] The often-used short hand that the U.S. bought off the insurgents or paid them to switch sides, therefore, is extremely misleading. No doubt some individual insurgents may have had their loyalties manipulated by money. But for the insurgency in general, the U.S.'s payments to former insurgents cum tribal militias is more accurately described as a consequence of the change in loyalties than as a cause of the change.

In Ramadi, who governed appears to have been much more important than how those people governed.

[143] Bing West, "Counterinsurgency Lessons From Iraq," *Military Review*, March-April 2009, pp. 10-11.

[144] Smith and MacFarland, p. 52.

Chapter 7: Tal Afar (May 2005 – February 2006)

This chapter presents a case study of U.S. operations in and around the city of Tal Afar from May 2005 – February 2006. Its focus is on the operations of the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3ACR) and its subordinate units during that time period. Like the cases in previous chapters, this case is presented in seven parts covering the following topics: 1) an overview of the background and major events of the case; 2) the role of ethnic and religious identity politics in the case; 3) counterinsurgent actions with respect to providing security; 4) counterinsurgent actions with respect to improving governance; 5) any efforts toward political agreements that address ethno-religious cleavages; 6) an assessment of the outcome of the counterinsurgency; and 7) a concluding discussion and evaluation of the case in the context of this study's questions and analytic framework.

Case Background

Tal Afar and the Insurgency

The commander of the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Colonel H.R. McMaster, commented that "If you take all the complexities of Iraq and compressed it into one city, it is Tal Afar."[1] Tal Afar is a small city in Iraq's northern Ninewah province. It is located roughly equidistant (50-60 miles) between Ninewah's capital city of Mosul to the east and the Syrian border to the west. Though population estimates for Tal Afar range as high as 300,000,[2] most estimates are closer to 200,000, and some

[1] Richard A. Oppel Jr., "Magnet For Iraq Insurgents Is A Crucial Test Of New U.S. Strategy," *New York Times*, June 16, 2005, p. 1.

[2] *Baseline Food Security Analysis in Iraq* (World Food Program, September 2004), p. 105.

interviewees were convinced that the city's population by 2005 was much lower, perhaps only 100,000 people or fewer.[3] Tal Afar's population is distinct for being less than ten percent Arab; 90 percent of the population is ethnic Turkmen. Tal Afar's Turkmen are Muslims, but split between about 75 percent Sunni and 25 percent Shi'a.

In spite of its somewhat remote and isolated position, Tal Afar has been a strategically important city throughout Iraq's history, including during the most recent war. Like Ramadi, it has served as something of a gateway for travelers, merchants, and smugglers, as well as oil pipelines, transiting in and out of Iraq. It also straddles the boundary among Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab ethnic communities and bears the imprint of each of those rival groups. Though predominantly Turkmen, it was heavily Arabized culturally during Saddam Hussein's rule, and its strategic location is coveted by the nearby Kurds.[4]

In recent decades, Tal Afar's economy was primarily based on four sectors: agriculture, trucking, smuggling, and government.[5] This latter sector became particularly important in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. Many of Tal Afar's Turkmen were very loyal Ba'athists and had been strong supporters of Saddam. And, again like Ramadi, many current and former soldiers of Iraq's Army resided in Tal Afar, creating a solid basis for technical and tactical expertise in organizing armed opposition to the new forces

[3] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh), Interview 17 (1LT Gavin Schwan), Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly).

[4] Zeynep Gurcanli, "Why Tall Afar?" *Istanbul Star*, September 17, 2004, FBIS Report GMP20040917000111, Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 370.

[5] Hashim, p. 373.

in power.[6] Tal Afar was disproportionately represented in Saddam's secret police, so much so that the idiomatic expression, "watch out for him, he's from Tal Afar," was understood to signify a person with connections to Saddam's ruthless internal security institutions.[7]

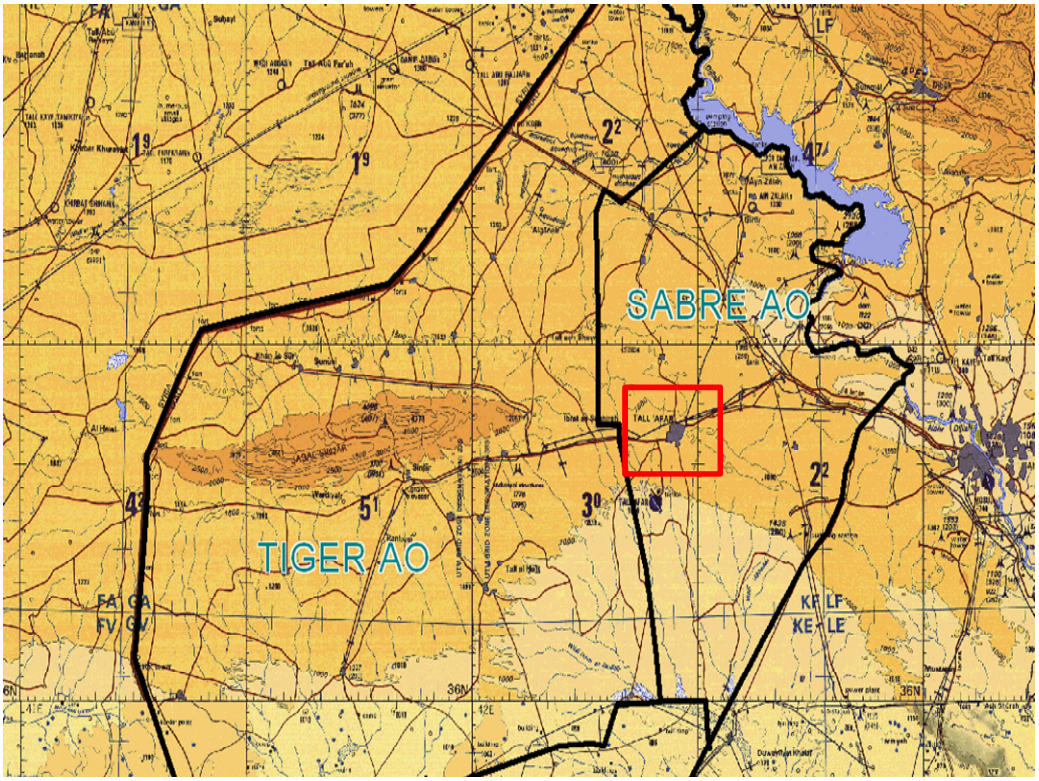

Figure 7: Tal Afar and Western Ninewah Province[8]

Partly as a result of these relationships, and partly because of its location, the city fairly quickly became a focal point of insurgent activity in 2003-2004. It was both a strategic transit point for foreign insurgents entering Iraq, and a home to many local

[6] Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster), Interview 17 (1LT Gavin Schwan), "Interview with LTC Paul Yingling," from the collection *Operational Leadership Experiences in the Global War on Terrorism* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, September 22, 2006), p. 5.

[7] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

[8] 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, "Operation Restoring Rights O&I Update," unpublished briefing, August 27, 2005.

Sunnis who were strongly opposed to the U.S. presence and the installation of a new government in Baghdad that was friendly with Iran and that equated Ba'athists with terrorists. As in Ramadi, this common cause became the basis for an early alliance between Islamic radicals and more secular Iraqis opposed to the new order. In the summer of 2004, this alliance of insurgents routed the local police force and all but took control of the city.[9] One report referred to the city at the time as a "guerrilla bastion where the U.S.-backed interim Iraqi government exerts only limited control."[10]

In September 2004, the U.S.-led Coalition initiated a major offensive against Tal Afar, known as Operation Black Typhoon, in an attempt to dislodge the insurgents from their stronghold in the city. Coalition forces conducted what amounted to a siege of the city for two weeks. Then on September 12, two U.S. battalions and an Iraqi National Guard battalion moved into the city in a major assault. As it turned out, they encountered little resistance from insurgents, most of whom had apparently fled.[11]

But American officials at the time were not committed to conducting counterinsurgency in the city. Instead, in keeping with the Coalition's larger strategy of transition, as well as with the "economy of force" levels of resources available, they wanted to get out of the city quickly. The senior U.S. officer in the area, Brigadier General Carter Ham, said, "Having us stay there is exactly the wrong thing. First of all, we don't have enough forces to stay in the city. But it also sends a message to those that

[9] Steve Fainaru, "U.S.-Led Forces Retake Northern Iraqi City," *Washington Post*, September 13, 2004, p. 17.

[10] Patrick J. McDonnell, "U.S. Targets 3 Iraqi Cities," *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 2004, p. 1.

[11] Fainaru, "U.S.-Led Forces Retake Northern Iraqi City".

oppose us. It lets them say, 'See, we told you, they really are occupiers. They've taken over a city.'"[12]

The aftermath of Operation Black Typhoon was very difficult for the people of Tal Afar. Essential services were left non-functional and many of the city's residents were denied the freedom to return to their homes. Half or more of the city's residents were temporarily displaced. The resulting humanitarian problems generated grave protests against the U.S. from the Turkish government.[13] And insurgents fairly quickly reasserted their freedom of action and control in the city.

The Army unit that took over responsibility for Tal Afar in the spring of 2005 divided the insurgency there into two groups, borrowing locally-used terms that echoed the threat assessment in Ramadi: "Resistance" and "Takfiri." According to that unit's reports,

> The 'Resistance' was made up of primarily Sunni Turkoman, supported by internal and external Islamic Extremist elements, whose fundamental goal was to prevent the Iraqi Transitional Government from succeeding, stall the growing power of the Shia local leaders throughout the AO, and prevent the re-establishment of security forces which were not representative of the Sunni Turkoman population or its long term desires. The 'Takfiri' consisted of Islamic Extremist elements . . . [that] sought to end the occupation of the area by Coalition Forces, force the failure of the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG), and establish a Muslim Rule of Law based largely upon the ideology adopted by Al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan.[14]

As in Anbar, these two groups were somewhat distinct but were operating in concert against their common enemies, the Coalition and the Iraqi government.

The "takfiri" elements within the insurgency in Tal Afar received a great deal of attention, partly due to the U.S. government's public emphasis on fighting al Qaeda, and

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[12] Ibid.

[13] "Turks Angry at U.S. Over Killings in Iraq," *New York Daily News*, September 14, 2004.

[14] Lieutenant Colonel Christopher M. Hickey, "Memorandum for Record, 2/3 ACR Actions During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 04-06," January 30, 2006, p. 5.

partly due to their truly grisly acts of terrorism in the city, which featured suicide bombings and leaving beheaded bodies lying in the streets. Colonel McMaster described the enemy in Tal Afar as "the worst of the worst . . . people in the world."[15] Nevertheless, the available evidence, including from the interviews conducted for this research, shows that most of the insurgents in the city were local Sunni Turkmen, not foreigners.[16] For example, one cavalry troop detained over 350 people over the course of its time in the city, 90-95% of whom were local Sunni Turkmen.[17] As the regiment's operations officer, Major Michael Simmering indicated, "Everyone talks about Tal Afar being an important logistical hub for the foreign fighters coming into the country from Syria, but we didn't really see a lot of that. . . [C]ertainly AQI was present and definitely fed the fire, but the insurgency was primarily locally-funded, locally-led, locally-focused."[18]

The Counterinsurgents

Like 2/2ID in Ramadi, 3ACR operated under a divisional headquarters (known at the time as Multi-National Forces – Northwest) and a corps headquarters (Multi-National Corps – Iraq) in Baghdad. 3ACR, a unit slightly larger but roughly equivalent to a brigade combat team, is composed of five squadrons, each the rough equivalent of a battalion: three cavalry squadrons, one aviation squadron, and one support squadron. The design and training of a cavalry regiment features elements potentially both advantageous

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[15] "3rd ACR Chief: Rebels 'Worst of the Worst,'" *Colorado Springs Gazette*, September 14, 2005.

[16] Hashim, p. 379, Borzou Daragahi, "Nationalism Drives Many Insurgents As They Fight U.S.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 2004, p. 9, Captain Travis Patriquin, "Using Occam's Razor to Connect the Dots: The Ba'ath Party and the Insurgency in Tal Afar," *Military Review*, January-February 2007, p. 21.

[17] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

[18] Interview 10 (MAJ Michael Simmering).

and disadvantageous to conducting counterinsurgency. In conventional, high-intensity armored warfare, the role of cavalry units is primarily as scouts, performing reconnaissance and screening missions in support of larger armored formations. These missions put a premium on both mobility and collection and processing of intelligence. The former requirement means that cavalry units tend to be very tied to the armored vehicles around which their units are built. This tactical culture is perhaps an obstacle to adapting to counterinsurgency operations that involve foot patrols and extensive interaction with the local population. On the other hand, the focus and force structure that a cavalry unit normally dedicates to intelligence does provide a solid foundation for adapting to counterinsurgency, a traditionally intelligence-driven type of mission.

3ACR was originally designated to operate in an area just outside Baghdad, but as U.S. commanders grew more concerned about Tal Afar's deterioration, four of its five squadrons were reassigned to western Ninewah province shortly after arriving in Iraq. First Squadron ("Tiger Squadron") moved into the expansive Syrian border area and western desert, while Second Squadron ("Sabre Squadron") took responsibility for Tal Afar, itself. The aviation and support squadrons also moved with Tiger and Sabre. The regiment's units began arriving in Ninewah in April, with about 4,000 troops having settled in by the middle of May. Sabre Squadron, with around 1,300 troops, officially assumed responsibility for the city of Tal Afar on May 1, 2005. 3ACR transferred authority to its successor on February 19, 2006.[19]

[19] Ricardo A. Herrera, "Brave Rifles at Tall Afar, September 2005," in William G. Robertson, ed., *In Contact! Case Studies from the Long War, Volume I* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), pp. 125-152.

What Happened (May 2005 – February 2006)

In the months after Operation Black Typhoon, western Ninewah province had received only the thinnest coverage by U.S. forces. When 3ACR took control of the area, it approximately quadrupled the number of troops in the area of operations. With so few forces in the area, the U.S. and the still very weak Iraqi security forces had not been able to resist a gradual takeover of Tal Afar by insurgents. Soldiers describe the city as a "ghost town"[20] where economic activity had all but ceased,[21] families feared leaving their homes, and U.S. forces were attacked every time they ventured out from their bases.[22] A Sabre Squadron platoon leader reported that "the first 3 months were essentially an extended armed reconnaissance."[23]

The city's neighborhoods had become tribal and sectarian enclaves where, for example, Sunni Farhats rarely ventured into Shi'a Jolaq areas and vice versa.[24] Tal Afar's mayor, a Sunni, was widely known to be working with the insurgents. The police force, meanwhile, or at least what remained of it, was entirely Shi'a. Described by some interviewees as little more than a sectarian "death squad,"[25] the police tended to stay holed up at the city's Ottoman-era hilltop castle in a Shi'a neighborhood, only venturing out to conduct attacks on rival tribal groups.

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[20] Interview 17 (1LT Gavin Schwan).

[21] Interview 16 (2LT Andrew Shealy).

[22] Interview 28 (CPT Alan Blackburn).

[23] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

[24] Interview 25 (COL Joel Armstrong).

[25] Interview 9 (CPT James Dayhoff), Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster).

3ACR's first moves were to try to clear some key locations in the city, like around the hospital, to secure the main east-west highway and to attempt to start reconstituting the police force. After initial unsuccessful attacks against the U.S. forces, insurgents began targeting civilians more. One local tribal leader complained, "Anyone not helping the terrorists can't leave their homes because they will be kidnapped and the terrorists will demand money or weapons or make them join them to kill people. If they refuse they will chop their heads off." A flier posted at a school read, "If you love your children, you won't send them to school here because we will kill them."[26] This trend was punctuated by a pivotal attack on May 23 when Sunni insurgents detonated two large suicide car bombs in the neighborhood of the Jolaq tribe, one of the city's largest Shi'a tribes, killing or injuring more than 40 people. Sabre Squadron's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hickey, called this incident a turning point for the Jolaq tribe, who turned to the U.S. for help and "created the opening needed to allow our soldiers and leaders to finally begin understanding the city."[27]

On June 4, in what was to be the beginning of one of Sabre Squadron's main efforts in Tal Afar, Hickey hosted a summit of tribal sheikhs to discuss how to solve the security situation in the city. More than sixty local leaders attended, and to the Americans' surprise, amid a great deal of tension, argument, and raised voices, many of the sheikhs in attendance advocated a major military assault on the city.[28] In large part, however, this reflected a deep sectarian split among Tal Afar's tribes. Shi'a tribal leaders

[26] Oppel.

[27] Hickey, p. 12.

[28] Oppel.

were much readier for a military solution than were Sunni tribal leaders, and they each lobbied the provincial and federal governments to this effect.[29] The minority Shi'a saw the U.S. as a potential ally in protecting them from their Sunni rivals and were quite ready to paint those groups with a broad insurgent brush. As one Sabre trooper put it, "These guys weren't interested in fighting insurgency. They were interested in using an armored cavalry regiment to carry out their tribal vendettas."[30]

For the first half of the blazing hot summer, 3ACR resisted entreaties for a major assault on the city, continuing to try to identify and target known insurgents in the city while trying to build relationships with the complex network of competing sheikhs in the city. In spite of tactical successes, however, the city remained gripped by fear and violence. By late July, the regiment had decided that a major offensive would be necessary to clear some parts of the city of the worst of the insurgents there. Thus began an elaborate, multi-week preparation for an attack focused on Tal Afar's eastern Sarai neighborhood, an attack that would be known as Operation Restoring Rights.

Key features of these preparations included marshalling several Iraqi Army and police commando units, together with their U.S. Special Forces advisors, building a dirt berm around the city to limit movement in and out of the city, and constructing a large facility outside the city for residents to take shelter away from the combat.[31] The regiment also brought more than half of Tiger Squadron into the western half of the city from its posts in the desert and along the border, and arranged for a battalion of the 82nd

[29] Hickey, p. 30.

[30] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

[31] Hickey, pp. 24-25.

Airborne Division (2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2-325) to move into the targeted Sarai neighborhood immediately following the assault.

In some respects, these preparations and the plans for the operation, itself, bore the hallmarks of a very conventional combat operation. Its intent, however, was aligned with the regiment's understanding of the political dynamics in the city, as Lieutenant Colonel Hickey explains:

> The overarching purpose of Operation Restoring Rights (ORR) was to set the conditions in which political and economic development could proceed. More specifically, by attacking the Takfirists and guarding against the tendency to attack the population directly, the Sunni could be reintegrated into the mainstream political process once the veil of terror was lifted from their ranks. Meanwhile, maintaining the support of the Shiites could eventually bring unity to the city and establish an environment that finally allowed for reconstruction operations and reconciliation of tribal conflicts.[32]

With this objective in mind, U.S. and Iraqi security forces kicked off the operation on September 2. For nearly two weeks, U.S. and Iraqi forces cordoned off and then moved through the Sarai district and other eastern portions of the city, facilitating civilian evacuation, targeting known insurgent strongholds, and clearing city blocks. Resistance to the assault force was much lighter than anticipated, in part because of the Iraqi government's insistence on a seven-day pause for civilian evacuation, which some believe allowed many insurgents to escape.[33]

By September 15, the operation had concluded, with U.S. and Iraqi forces having killed around 150 insurgents and captured another 850.[34] Crucially, U.S. forces opted to remain stationed inside the city for the first time, with the newly arrived 2-325th battalion taking over the Sarai neighborhood and Sabre Squadron taking up headquarters in the

[32] Ibid., p. 32.

[33] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh), Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly), Herrera, p. 142.

[34] President George W. Bush, Remarks to the City Club of Cleveland, Ohio, March 20, 2006.

northern and central areas of the city. This began a period of major reconstruction and political activism on the part of 3ACR. In October, Sabre Squadron established the following goals for its operations in the city:[35]

- Quickly establish security forces throughout the depth of the city to secure the population prior to the return of the majority of the civilians.
- Establish [traffic control points] and obstacles throughout the city to control the ability of the [anti-Iraqi forces] to maneuver freely throughout the city.
- Recruit, train, equip, and employ a police force representative of the population.
- Immediately address any claims of damages made by the citizens and pay compensation.
- Begin large scale reconstruction operations to immediately begin altering perceptions of security.
- Target anti-Iraqi forces operating within the city to prevent them from reinitiating their campaign of intimidation on the population.
- Immediately establish new operational police stations throughout the city to begin the process of transitioning security responsibilities to local forces.
- Conduct information operations in order to emphasize the legitimacy of the government, the necessity of [Operation Restoring Rights], and the return of peace and security to Tal Afar.
- Ensure each citizen of Tal Afar [is] afforded the opportunity to vote in the October Referendum.

[35] Hickey, p. 40.

Three of these goals stood out in importance. First was the establishment of new security stations throughout the city, jointly manned by U.S. and Iraqi forces. The idea behind this initiative was to establish a ubiquitous presence in the city and thus raise the confidence of the population while expanding intelligence collection and limiting insurgents' freedom of movement.

Second was the recruitment of a new police force. In particular, U.S. forces aimed to create a police force that was representative of the sectarian demographics of the city, as opposed to being dominated by the Shi'a minority as had been the case previously. As Lieutenant Colonel Hickey explained,

> Prior to [Operation Restoring Rights], Sabre attempted to recruit police from throughout the city. Because of the enemy's campaign of intimidation, Sunni citizens did not volunteer in significant numbers. The police recruiting process began upon the completion of ORR and became an immediate success. In the first two days of police recruiting, over 300 people arrived at the castle to volunteer to become [Iraqi police]; the more important part of the number was that 60-70% of the people that arrived were Sunni.[36]

Third was the preparation for the fall elections, the constitutional referendum in October and national elections in December. Substantial popular participation in these elections was seen as a critical measure of political development in the fledgling state. Sabre Squadron counted the elections as a significant success in Tal Afar. There were no major attacks and an estimated 17,000 people voted in October, and 40,000 in December, a great improvement over 1,000 estimated voters in the January 2005 election.[37]

These efforts were accompanied by a significant push to re-establish the basic functioning of the city's infrastructure and services, especially provision of clean water and food. And 3ACR commanders continued their attempts to bring Tal Afar's tribal

[36] Ibid., p. 41.

[37] Ibid., pp. 44, 51.

sheikhs into a political process that might eventually form the foundation for a new city government.

Violence in Tal Afar plummeted over the fall of 2005. Figure 8 shows the average number of daily attacks in each of the ten months from April 2005 to January 2006.[38] These numbers include attacks by multiple methods against U.S. forces, Iraqi security forces, as well as civilian targets in the city. Attacks declined over this period from an average of six per day in June 2005 to about one per day in December. At the end of that month, the 2-385th battalion left the city, leaving Sabre Squadron as the main U.S. unit in the city. Nevertheless, violence continued its decline into January, when Tal Afar experienced only 18 insurgent attacks all month.

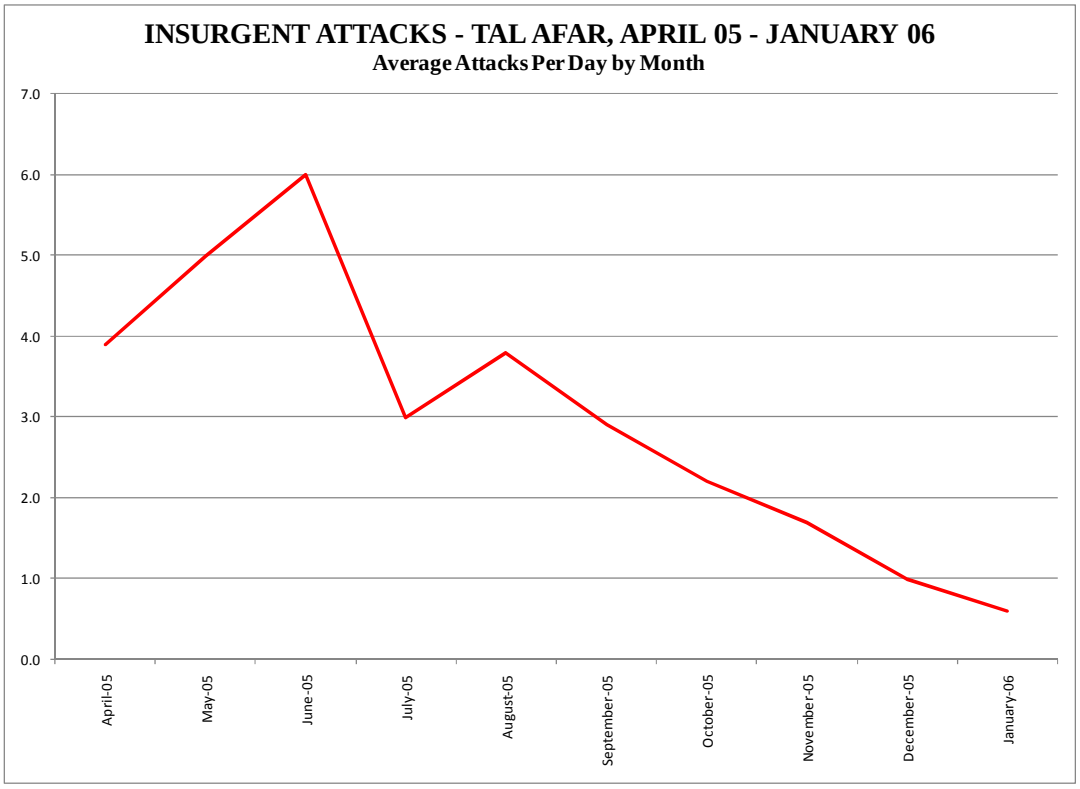

Figure 8: Average Attacks Per Day in Tal Afar

[38] Ibid.

In February 2006, shortly before 3ACR turned Tal Afar over to its successors, the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division, the city's sheikhs held a tribal reconciliation meeting. Leading sheikhs from both Sunni and Shi'a tribes held civil discussions about the future administration of the city and proclaimed themselves to be not just Sunni or Shi'a, but "Iraqian".[39]

In the months after 3ACR's departure, Tal Afar was not free from insurgent activity or from sectarian violence. Some of the same tensions that had plagued the city before persisted,[40] not least because of the sectarian violence that swept much of Iraq in the wake of the bombing of the al Askariya Mosque in Samarra, only three days after 3ACR left Ninewah. But the city did not regress back into the ungovernable war zone that it had been.

The transformation of Tal Afar from insurgent stronghold to a moderately functional city quickly became a touchstone for policymakers in conceiving of a shift in U.S. strategy in Iraq toward the concept deemed to have been practiced there: "clear, hold, and build." In October 2005 Senate testimony, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice cited Tal Afar as a successful example of this approach.[41] President George W. Bush dedicated an entire speech to 3ACR's experiences in Tal Afar as an illustration of what was possible for the U.S. to achieve in Iraq.[42] And subsequently, it was featured in the

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[39] Ibid., p. 51.

[40] Peter Baker, "An Iraq Success Story's Sad New Chapter," *Washington Post*, March 21, 2006, p. 1, Louise Roug, "Fear Casts A Shadow On 'Free City' Touted By Bush," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 2006.

[41] Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, "Iraq and U.S. Policy," Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, October 19, 2005.

[42] Bush.

Army's and Marine Corps's new counterinsurgency manual, again as a successful example of "clear, hold, and build."[43]

Were ethno-religious identity-based cleavages significant?

There is no question that Sunni-Shi'a identity-based conflict was central to the insurgency in Tal Afar. The conflict was manifest in two mutually re-enforcing dimensions: the national conflict between Sunnis who were increasingly afraid of disenfranchisement at the hands of the allegedly sectarian central government; and local conflict among tribes who were predominantly Sunni or Shi'a.

This sectarian cleavage is something of a historical curiosity because it had not been a significant problem among Tal Afar's Turkmen population prior to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.[44] To the contrary, Tal Afar's Sunni and Shi'a were united to some degree by pride in the distinctness of their Turkmen culture and language in a majority-Arab country. But in the aftermath of the Coalition invasion of Iraq, the Turkmen were experiencing what one scholar called an "identity crisis."[45] Their political mobilization had been almost entirely based in the Ba'ath party, which was now not only out of power but illegal, a problem one interviewee likened to "pulling the spinal column out of Iraq."[46] What would replace Ba'athism was uncertain, but to the extent Tal Afar's Sunnis could discern the intentions of the new Iraqi government, they feared sectarian discrimination. One interviewee characterized the views of the Sunni Turkmen elites as

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[43] Field Manual (FM) 3-24 / Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006), pp. 5-22 – 5-23.

[44] Hashim, pp. 371-372, Patriquin, p. 17.

[45] Hashim, pp. 374.

[46] Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly).

nationalist, but with "almost a colonial mentality; 'our Shi'a' are OK, we can handle them. But the 'other Shi'a', they are compromised, they have come under the sway of the Iranians."[47]

Additionally, with the collapse of the state that had provided virtually everything to the city, from security to food, the people of Tal Afar increasingly looked to their tribes for sources of support. While Tal Afar's tribes are not entirely religiously homogeneous, they do tend to be predominantly Sunni or Shi'a.[48] Soon these emerging tribal – and increasingly sectarian – grievances were being stoked by the Islamist extremists who were taking up residence in the city in growing numbers, thanks in part to its strategic location as a transit point between Syria and Mosul and then Baghdad. This was the environment that became fertile ground for an alliance of convenience between nationalist local "resistance" insurgents and the Islamist radicals of al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and Ansar al Sunna. Very quickly, then, the city descended into a nightmare of tribal feuds and terror imposed by the insurgents. In this sense, as one interviewee put it, the conflict in Tal Afar was "sectarian-fueled" but not "sectarian-based."[49]

The sectarian cleavage was further exacerbated by the behavior of many of the Iraqi security forces that operated in and around the city. The police were taken over by a Shi'a chief who quickly purged the leading Sunni officers from the force, prompting rumors of the growing local influence of the Iranian-backed Badr Corps militia.[50] The

[47] Interview 24 (anonymous regional specialist).

[48] Interview 2 (Louise Roug), Interview 10 (MAJ Michael Simmering), Interview 11 (Monte Morin), Interview 28 (CPT Alan Blackburn).

[49] Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

[50] Hashim, pp. 374-375, Hickey, p. 3.

Iraqi Army also tended to reinforce the fears the Sunnis had of being marginalized or worse. In Operation Black Typhoon, the Army's Scorpion Brigade, a heavily Shi'a commando unit, was deployed to Tal Afar from Baghdad, inciting loud protests from Tal Afar's Sunnis. Voicing a common complaint, one resident complained that all the official security forces "are from the Badr Organization and the [Kurdish] pesh merga. They wear the military uniform for disguise. Their treatment is very bad. They were taking people to detention prisons just because they are Sunnis since the start of the military campaign." Another resident agreed, saying: "The Iraqi army are the real terrorists. Even what they write on our walls is evidence, like 'Long live pesh merga' or 'Long live Badr.'"[51] And just as Tal Afar's Sunnis had begun to see Badr behind every Shi'a, Shi'a were quick to label any Sunni as a terrorist.[52]

Another measure of the division and animosity that had developed in the city was the reactions of Sunnis in the Sarai district when told that they needed to evacuate through a Shi'a neighborhood. The majority of them refused to do so, having been warned that Shi'a residents and police in that neighborhood would attack them if they left in that direction. One man explained, "I would rather die from American bombs in my home with my family than walk south. People are saying the Shiites will kill you or kidnap you." Another resident of the Sarai neighborhood commented: "There are no bad people in Sarai. If you come with me, I will take you to all the houses and you can see. The bad people are the Shiites in the south [of the city]."[53]

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[51] Jonathan Finer, "Iraqi Forces Show Signs Of Progress In Offensive," *Washington Post*, September 22, 2005, p. 1.

[52] Hickey, p. 3.

[53] Jonathan Finer, "With Death At Their Door, Few Leave Iraqi City," *Washington Post*, September 7, 2005, p. 20, Interview 2 (Louise Roug).

Tal Afar's appearance as something of a microcosm of a brewing civil war was not lost on Iraqi leaders in Baghdad. As Operation Restoring Rights went forward in September 2005, debates raged over it in Baghdad, with Sunni and Shi'a politicians leveling accusations of sectarianism with equal gusto. Shi'a politicians cast the operations as a legitimate government intervention aimed at ceasing Sunni oppression of the city's Shi'a minority. For example Ali Al-Dabbagh claimed that "we support [what the government is doing] 100 percent. Tall Afar has been a bleeding wound in Iraq's heart for a year now. There was a clear case of racial and ethnic cleansing in the city." Others contended that the conflict was not originally a sectarian one, but that the government response was making it one. Sunni lawmaker Salih al-Mutlaq, for example, said, "The tension is between the people and the government, not between the Sunnis and Shiites. [In Tal Afar, the government is waging] a very ugly ethnic war."[54] Another Sunni politician, Fakhri al-Qaysi, argued that accusations of terrorism were only a pretext for marginalizing the political participation of Sunni communities. "The ruling political parties and the U.S. forces are trying to provoke the Sunni Arabs . . . and press to harp on the tune of sectarianism as they have been doing since the first day of occupation."[55]

Were good security operations conducted?

A description of security operations in Tal Afar may usefully be divided into the periods before and after Operation Restoring Rights. Before the operation, U.S. forces mostly lived on forward operating bases outside the city and would move into and around

[54] "Defense Minister Discusses Tall Afar, Urges Iraqis To 'Drive Out Terrorists,'" *Al-Arabiyah Television*, September 12, 2005, FBIS Report GMP200509125380002.

[55] "The Iraqi Scene," *Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television*, September 18, 2005, FBIS Report GMP20050918564001.

the city in their armored vehicles. Dismounted patrols were conducted regularly as well, but the "commute" to work was an important feature of operations. Frequently, operations took on the character of "movement to contact," where the patrol's agenda would be set by responding to enemy engagements.

3ACR forces also conducted a good deal of targeted operations – raids, and strikes – against insurgent suspects or facilities. However, the quality of the intelligence it used for targeting was significantly hampered by two closely related factors. First, because of their sporadic presence in the city, they had to rely on informants to generate much of what intelligence could not be gathered electronically. But in the regiment's first couple months in the area, members of Shi'a tribes were the only local residents willing to work with the U.S. forces. Over time, 3ACR learned that many of these allies were not only unreliable, but counterproductive. Interviewees report incidents where informants had identified individuals, or even just groupings of houses as being tied to the insurgent, when in fact, they were simply pursuing tribal rivals.[56] As a result, until U.S. forces recognized that they were being manipulated, they "actually exacerbated the problem to some extent, by rolling up Sunnis, not all of whom were bad guys," said Major Simmering.[57] One troop commander lamented that "our increased cooperation with the Shi'a tribes confirmed the Sunni population's worst fears."[58] Another said simply, "up until Operation Restoring Rights, we were pretty much fighting a losing battle."[59]

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[56] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh), Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly).

[57] Interview 10 (MAJ Michael Simmering).

[58] Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

[59] Interview 28 (CPT Alan Blackburn).

After Operation Restoring Rights, however, the situation changed dramatically. Many factors changed in that period, including some of those that will be described in the next two sections. But one of the most important initiatives of this time was the movement of U.S. forces (specifically Sabre Squadron and 2-325th) into the city and into small, neighborhood outposts that were jointly manned by U.S. and Iraqi forces.

It was only at this point that U.S. forces were really able to start providing a strong, constant presence, which in turn allowed them to develop the relationships with the people that generated good intelligence. Troop commanders reported that staying in the city was a tough sell to their troops at first, but that the visible changes their presence brought were eventually very good for morale.[60] More patrolling was done, both by U.S. and Iraqi forces, and it was done at section and squad level rather than platoon level, because the improved security environment allowed it. As a result, Lieutenant Colonel Hickey said, "the perception of the amount of coalition forces operating within the city changed significantly as more and more units became visible to the populace on a daily basis."[61]

U.S. security operations in Tal Afar were also aided significantly by the availability and generally good performance of Iraqi security forces. Through most of its tenure in Ninewah, 3ACR was partnered with the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Iraqi Army Division. The brigade was predominantly Kurdish and Shi'a, which did sometimes generate friction with Tal Afar's Sunni majority, as noted above. However, the unit received praise from many interviewees for its skill, professionalism, and leadership,

[60] Ibid., Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

[61] Hickey, p. 41.

especially the commander of the 3rd Iraqi Army Division, Major General Khorsheed Saleem al-Dosekey.[62] In Colonel McMaster's judgment, "the most important aspect of building local legitimacy was the legitimacy of the [Iraqi security forces]."[63]

Another key factor in security operations was the sheer number of forces that the Coalition was able to bring to bear on the fight for Tal Afar. Precise counts are difficult, and the forces focused on the city varied considerably over time. But by virtually any measure, the military presence in Tal Afar was quite large relative to the size of the city and its population. At its peak during Operation Restoring Rights, the force presence in the city included 2,000-4,000 U.S. troops and 3,000-6,000 Iraqi troops, including Army, police, and commando units. As noted, population estimates for this time also vary greatly, but even the most conservative estimate of the force-to-population ratio would be 1:40, and it could have gone as high as 1:10.[64] Anywhere in this range would qualify as a relatively high troop density, especially considering that the city of Tal Afar only covers approximately 9 square kilometers. Interestingly, McMaster initially wanted even more troops for the assault.[65] His judgment on the importance of troop density was that success "could have been possible with a smaller number of troops, but it would have taken a lot longer."[66] Of course fewer forces were present for most of the period of the case study, but during the critical months of September to December, both Sabre

[62] Interview 8 (2LT Dan Driscoll), Interview 9 (CPT James Dayhoff), Interview 18 (SGT Chad Stapp), "Interview with LTC Paul Yingling", p. 6.

[63] Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster).

[64] Interview 17 (1LT Gavin Schwan), Interview 25 (COL Joel Armstrong), Interview 28 (CPT Alan Blackburn), Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly), Herrera, pp. 140-141.

[65] Interview 9 (CPT James Dayhoff).

[66] Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster).

Squadron and 2-325th Battalion, as well as large portions of the Iraqi Army's 1st Brigade, 3rd Division were exclusively focused on the city.

The combination of troop density and persistent presence throughout the city clearly played a major role in reducing the violence in Tal Afar and setting the city back on a path toward a semblance of normalcy. On balance, this record suggests that good security operations were conducted in Tal Afar.

Was good governance provided?

As with security operations, the 3ACR's efforts to improve governance in Tal Afar were quite different before and after Operation Restoring Rights. When the regiment arrived, Tal Afar's city government was all but abandoned, and basic services had drastically deteriorated. Responsibility for taking care of the city's people had largely devolved to the city's many tribal leaders,[67] but economic activity had largely ceased, creating an epidemic of unemployment for many of those who did not leave the city. In some cases, infrastructure failures fell disproportionately on the Shi'a tribes. One prominent grievance was the collection of the raw sewage that drained into a wooded area next to one of the city's mainly Shi'a neighborhoods – a site that 3ACR soldiers dubbed the "Shitwood Forest."

Echoing 2/2ID's experience in Ramadi, most of 3ACR's efforts to re-establish good governance in its first few months in the city were frustrated by the persistent violence and the absence of many reliable Iraqi partners willing to work with them. First Lieutenant Brian Tinklepaugh described an example of the difficulties facing projects aimed to improve governance during this time. His troop established a program to

[67] Oppel.

deliver water in trucks to a predominantly Sunni neighborhood that was suffering from unreliable water pressure and electricity. They hired Sunni truck drivers and sent along police to provide security for the trucks. The Shi'a police soon told the U.S. soldiers that they were hiring insurgents. When the U.S. then arrested the truck drivers, they alienated those drivers' tribes, whose leadership stopped supporting the Coalition's reconstruction operations.[68]

Rebuilding the city and re-establishing the basic functions of governance beyond security were central to the planning behind Operation Restoring Rights. Lieutenant Colonel Hickey called reconstruction the most important phase of the operation. He explains,

> Regardless of how many people Sabre captured or killed, if the people didn't feel secure, essential services were not re-established, and viable alternatives to engaging in terrorist activities were not made available, Tal Afar would fall back into the trap of being a home for terrorist activities. Immediately upon completion of combat operations, water trucks, food & water drops, and other humanitarian assistance missions became the standard throughout Tal Afar.[69]

Over the course of October and November, the Coalition initiated projects worth millions of dollars focused especially on the restoration of water, electricity, schools, and medical services. Sabre Squadron created a civil military operations center in the city that became a focal point for interacting with the local population on a wide variety of issues. Similarly, Sabre Squadron soldiers were active in rejuvenating the city council and several other municipal institutions.[70]

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[68] 1LT Brian Tinklepaugh, personal correspondence with the author, April 10, 2009.

[69] Hickey, p. 39.

[70] Ibid., p. 42.

The Coalition's spending in Tal Afar via the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) also rose dramatically in the fall of 2005. As outlined in Chapter 6, this program provides money that brigade commanders and their subordinate commanders can use to meet local needs in their areas of operation. CERP funds typically go to relatively small, relatively short-term projects, and are also used to pay reparations for property damaged in combat or to family members of killed and wounded civilians. Estimated CERP spending in Tal Afar increased significantly over the period of the case study. Estimated spending by quarter rose from $399K (May-July) to $418K (Aug-Oct) to $1.1M (Nov-Jan) to $1.3M (Feb-Apr).[71] This represents an increase from beginning to end of a factor of 3.3.

The results of these large investments, not only CERP, but other investments made by the Coalition and the Iraqi government, were evident in relatively short order. Tal Afar's markets and schools re-opened, and basic services were gradually restored to some level of working order. A British reporter visiting Tal Afar in December 2005 reported that "the streets are full of building sites. New sewers have been dug and the fronts of shops, destroyed in the U.S. assault, were replaced within weeks. Sunni police have been hired and 2,000 goats were even distributed to farmers. More remarkably, the approach of an American military convoy brings people out to wave and even clap."[72]

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[71] Iraqi Reconstruction Management System, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, June 2008. Available data on CERP spending totals include total funds distributed and project start dates and end dates. The author has estimated monthly and quarterly spending totals based on equal division of total funds spent over the number of active months per project. Project lengths in the database range from 1 to 40 months, but the average length is 4 months. As a result, aggregate quarterly spending summaries (as reported in the text above) are less likely to be distorted by this estimation technique than the monthly spending estimates (as shown in the figure).

[72] Oliver Poole, "Iraqis In Former Rebel Stronghold Now Cheer American Soldiers," *The Daily Telegraph*, December 19, 2005.

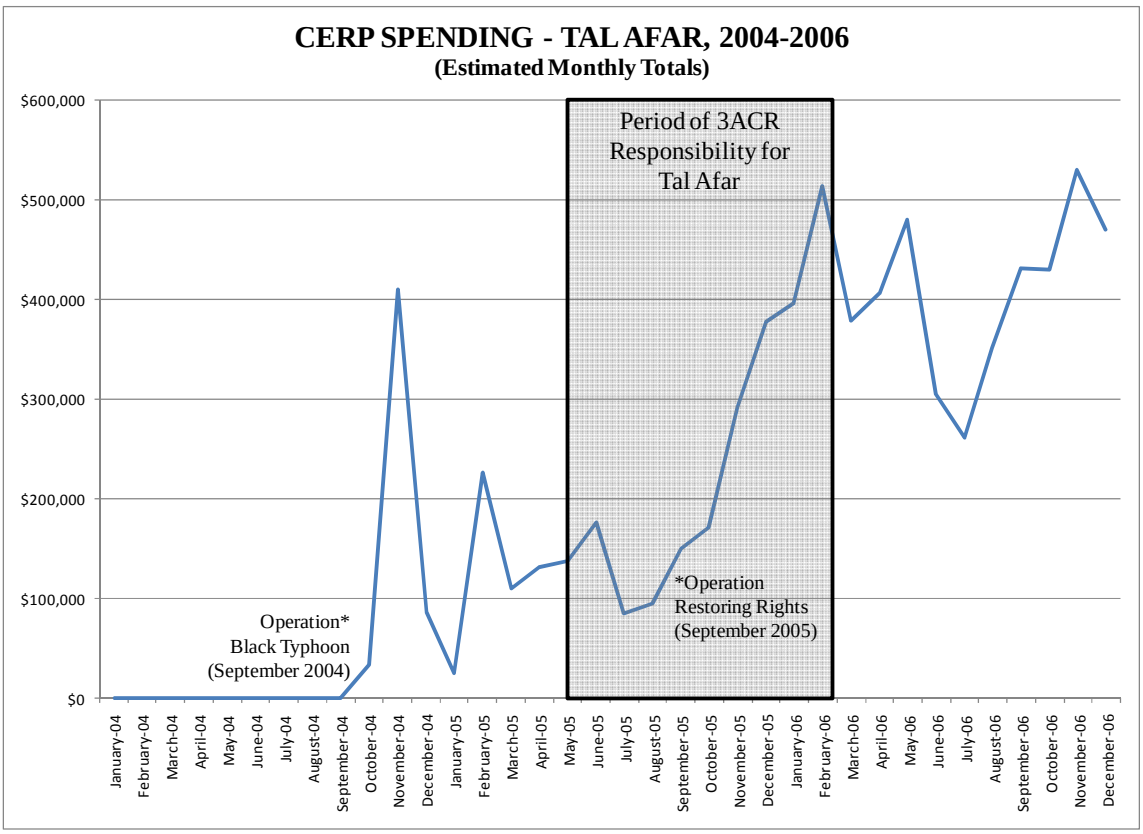

Figure 9: Estimated Monthly CERP Spending in Tal Afar

Some interviewees noted the importance of improvements in governance in building the legitimacy of the Coalition and the local government in the eyes of the local population. One U.S. squad leader called the difference made "night and day – people really appreciated it."[73] A troop commander said "The population continuously gave us praise for what we did there. They were very appreciative and looked on us favorably."[74] An engineering platoon leader believed that "Improving those kinds of quality-of-life conditions was one of the most important things that swayed the population over to supporting the Coalition."[75]

[73] Interview 18 (SGT Chad Stapp).

[74] Interview 28 (CPT Alan Blackburn).

[75] Interview 20 (2LT Jared Leinart).

At the same time, as in Ramadi, some interviewees noted serious limitations to the effects of some of the reconstruction projects pursued, and believed that the local population was far more interested in and appreciative of the security provided by the Coalition. A regimental staff officer commented that "We dumped a ton of money into construction projects that they weren't interested in – schools, parks, etc."[76] A reporter who spent a few months in Tal Afar during this period commented that "People would always complain about water and electricity. . . [But] that whole argument about basic services – the main public utility is security. This is more important than anything else."[77] Another interviewee, Lieutenant Tinklepaugh, stated plainly that,

> the reconstruction activities that we engaged in were a consequence of our success in marginalizing the insurgency, not a cause of it. The population was appreciative, but they rarely commented on it. What they were much more appreciative of was the security. . . They were real upset about the lack of electricity and the lack of water pressure (and these problems exacerbated each other). And this created a problem with the sewage system, which was also exacerbated by all of the drainage issues created by the problems in the streets – caused by our vehicles as well as by the combat. But these problems didn't cause people to want to become insurgents, it caused people to become apathetic.[78]

3ACR's commander, Colonel McMaster, seemed to share this perspective, arguing that "The most important thing is securing the population. And you can't do much positive until you've established this. . . Governance projects were important factors in our progress, but they came at a different time – it was more of a reward for cooperation. It happened in areas that were already secured."[79]

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[76] Interview 9 (CPT James Dayhoff).

[77] Interview 11 (Monte Morin).

[78] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

[79] Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster).

Were political agreements addressing ethno-religious cleavages pursued?

From fairly early in 3ACR's deployment, its leaders were focused on the importance of reaching a political accommodation among Tal Afar's tribal groups, whose increasingly sectarian loyalties were pushing the city toward something like civil war. Lieutenant Colonel Hickey was the regiment's point person in this effort, and by all accounts he focused tirelessly on building relationships with Tal Afar's sheikhs and on attempting to bridge the divides between them.

Initially, as noted, only the Shi'a sheikhs were willing to talk seriously with U.S. leaders about the future of the city. Hickey began spending forty or fifty hours a week with these sheikhs, working to convince them of the U.S.'s commitment to securing their people. Then, as Hickey began to make inroads with Sunni sheikhs, "the Shia freaked out," as Hickey told journalist George Packer. They questioned the purpose of, as they viewed it, consorting with the enemy. "Because I'm trying to be balanced," Hickey recalled telling the Shi'a leaders. "I'm trying to stabilize your city. If I just talk to you, I'm not going to stabilize your city." [80]

This shift toward cultivating relationships among the Sunnis was not necessarily an intuitive choice on the U.S. side either. "At the troop level," Captain Jesse Sellars said, "this was unpopular, because this means we have to go make friends with the guys who are blowing us up instead of with the guys who are feeding us fried chicken. But [Hickey] was absolutely right."[81]

[80] George Packer, "Letter from Iraq: The Lesson of Tal Afar," *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2006, p. 53.

[81] Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

Whenever possible, Hickey tried to arrange and moderate meetings among sheikhs where they could air grievances with each other and with U.S. forces and discuss potential resolutions. In time, one theme Hickey came to stress in such meetings and that the regiment tried to impress more broadly upon the city's residents, was the common cause Tal Afar's Sunnis and Shi'a ought to share against the terrorism being perpetrated against them by the "Takfiris." As Hickey described, "the 'Resistance' had the potential to be quelled through involvement in the ongoing political process *IF* they could escape the intimidation campaign of the [insurgents] living among them."[82] In Major Simmering's view, the real purpose of Operation Restoring Rights was not "to clear the town of insurgents . . . it was to protect the Sunni population who were willing to participate in the political process."[83]

After Operation Restoring Rights, rebuilding the police force also became one of 3ACR's most important tools for addressing the sectarian conflicts in the city. Abuses by the Shi'a police force had been a major contributing factor to Tal Afar's downward spiral, and as a result, U.S. forces believed that "the first step towards reconciliation among the populace meant recreating a police force that was representative of the population."[84] Police recruiting focused heavily on the city's Sunni population.

The insurgents may well have recognized the strategic importance of this development and tried to counter it. In the first several weeks after the end of Operation Restoring Rights, Tal Afar was rocked by three major suicide bombing attacks, which

[82] Hickey, p. 23 (emphasis in original).

[83] Interview 10 (MAJ Michael Simmering).

[84] Hickey, p. 41.

together killed around 70 people and injured more than 130 others.[85] Two of these three attacks were directed specifically at police recruits. Nevertheless, the police recruiting efforts remained a focus of the regiment's strategy, and ultimately saw a great deal of success. By the end of its deployment in Tal Afar, 1,400 new police officers had been recruited, 60 percent of whom were Sunnis.[86]

The rebalancing of the police force was part of a broader attempt by the 3ACR's leadership to rebuild a sense of national identity in the city. As the regiment's executive officer, Major Chris Kennedy, told a reporter, "What we're working toward is a national army, a national security force, not a Shiite or a Kurdish force, and anyone who thinks otherwise doesn't know the situation."[87] George Packer describes seeing Lieutenant Colonel Hickey "ask a group of police trainees at a new station whether they were Sunni or Shiite, and when they started to answer he said, 'No – Iraqi!'"[88]

In combination with all of the Coalition's other operations, these political overtures aimed at reducing sectarian antagonism did appear to pay off over time as the city's sheikhs began to take steps toward aligning their own activities with those of the nascent city government, as well as with the counterinsurgency goals of the U.S. and Iraqi security forces. A 3ACR intelligence officer described the progress he saw over the fall of 2005:

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[85] Sabrina Tavernise, "Suicide Blast by Woman in Iraq Kills 8 Others; 57 Are Hurt," *New York Times*, September 29, 2005, Associated Press, "More Than 50 Dead Following Series of Attacks," *USA Today*, October 12, 2005, p. 13, Louise Roug, "Suicide Attack Kills 30 in Northern Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 2005.

[86] Thomas E. Ricks, "The Lessons Of Counterinsurgency," *Washington Post*, February 16, 2006, p. 14.

[87] Finer, "Iraqi Forces Show Signs Of Progress In Offensive".

[88] Packer, p. 54.

> The real difference since [Operation Restoring Rights] has been in the reporting and cooperation from the locals, both Shia and Sunni, to turn in anyone who is causing problems and there have even been fights reported between Sunni groups as the previously-intimated are fighting back, even against members of their own tribe or sect. The long-simmering feud in Tal Afar between the Shia Jolaqs and the Sunni Farhats . . . has cooled down significantly after several weeks of sheikh meetings to iron out their long-running disputes.[89]

In describing the evolution of the meeting with the city's sheikhs, Major Simmering said, "Where we got to wasn't perfect, but what was a screaming match in June was a civil conversation in January."[90]

None of this is meant to imply that the sectarian conflicts that had created so much strife had been solved. Indeed, the wounds of the tribal feuding ran deep, even though they were young in historical terms. Those tensions and grievances persisted. Sectarian murders continued, and discrimination on the basis of sect and tribal affiliation was rampant. In December, a self-appointed council of sheikhs and clerics published a formal statement complaining about the persecution of the Sunni population in Tal Afar.[91]

And Tal Afar's reformed police were not necessarily a picture of professionalism or blind justice. George Packer had this exchange with an officer named Hassan one during his visit in early 2006. Hassan told Packer,

> "If the Americans weren't here, we could get more out of our interrogations."
> "You mean torture?"
> "Only the terrorists."
> "How many terrorists and sympathizers are there in Tal Afar?"
> Hassan considered it for a moment. "A hundred and fifty thousand." This was approximately the number of Sunnis in the city.[92]

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[89] Craig T. Olson, *So This Is War: A 3rd U.S. Cavalry Intelligence Officer's Memoirs of the Triumphs, Sorrows, Laughter, and Tears During a Year in Iraq* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007), p. 132.

[90] Interview 10 (MAJ Michael Simmering).

[91] Ferry Biedermann, "Tel Afar's Ethnic Tug Of War Puts Iraq Army To The Test," *Financial Times*, January 18, 2006.

[92] Packer, p. 56.

What the record does demonstrate, however, is that the U.S. forces fighting the counterinsurgency in Tal Afar were keenly aware of the sectarian roots of some of the insurgency they were facing and they took deliberate and extensive measures to reach accommodation between competing sectarian parties. As journalist Louise Roug observed, "the military leadership had a very sophisticated understanding of the groups in the city, and who was aggrieved and why. And they did try to prop up the groups who felt disenfranchised."[93]

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

According to the journalist Tom Ricks, "When U.S. military experts conducted an internal review of the three dozen major U.S. brigades, battalions, and similar units operating in Iraq in 2005, they concluded that of all those units, the 3rd ACR had done the best at counterinsurgency."[94] There is no doubt that 3ACR's operations in Tal Afar have been widely perceived by policymakers and the press as a model of successful counterinsurgency. As noted above, the experience was cited in this vein by, among others, the military's new counterinsurgency manual, Secretary of State Rice, and President Bush.

This view was not confined to Americans. During Operation Restoring Rights, the Iraqi Defense Minister, Sa'dun al-Dulaymi (a Sunni Arab) told the press that Iraq's

[93] Interview 2 (Louise Roug).

[94] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), p. 420.

leaders "consider what is going on there an example and a model to be followed in other areas . . . in Iraq."[95]

Tal Afar's mayor during 3ACR's deployment, Najim Abdullah al-Jabouri, asked for the regiment's tour to be extended and wrote a letter of glowing tribute to the unit. He credited the regiment with liberating the city, transforming it "from a ghost town, in which terrorists spread death and destruction, to a secure city flourishing with life." He said "this military operation was clean, with little collateral damage, despite the ferocity of the enemy. With the skill and precision of surgeons, they dealt with the terrorist cancers in the city without causing unnecessary damage." He called the American soldiers "not only courageous men and women, but avenging angels sent by The God Himself . . ."[96] Even allowing for some inevitable public relations spin[97] and Arabic hyperbole, this registers as high praise and recalls the letter to Captain David Galula from a town mayor in Algeria that was quoted in Chapter 4.

Sabre Squadron summed up its own performance as follows:

> . . . the 1,300 cavalrymen of Sabre Squadron decisively defeated the insurgents, re-established legitimate security forces at nearly 41 locations throughout the area and revived a local government and economy on the brink of annihilation. . . the citizens of Tal Afar and the surrounding areas . . . acknowledge that participation in the political process is the primary avenue to a future peace in Iraq.[98]

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[95] "Iraqi Defense Minister Says 18 Arms Caches Found in Tall Afar, Gives Update," *Al-Sharqiyah Television*, September 11, 2005, FBIS Report, GMP20050911538001.

[96] Quoted in Olson, pp. 193-194.

[97] As one interviewee pointed out, Mayor Najim was not from Tal Afar and may have owed his position to the Coalition. Interview 22 (Jon Finer).

[98] Hickey, pp. 1-2.

The regiment listed the following comparisons of the "enemy situation" in its area of operations near the beginning and the end of its deployment.[99]

June 2005	January 2006
• Enemy retained the initiative, capable of complex attacks and defensive ops • Western Ninewah avenue for insurgents and access to external support • Tal Afar safe haven for leadership and "Title 10" functions • HUMINT access limited • Organization was cohesive and militarily structured • Multiple cells in urban areas • Tribal violence pervasive	• Enemy reactive, only capable of IED and IDF attacks • Western Ninewah difficult to traverse with reduced external support • Tal Afar now a non-permissive environment • HUMINT unlimited • Leadership disrupted and displaced • Few cells operating in small communities outside urban areas • Tribal tensions exist, no open violence

Table 8: Changes in Western Ninewah, June 2005 – January 2006

These assessments are supported by the striking drop off in insurgent attacks experienced in this time period and shown in Figure 8. And interviewees universally, albeit with varying degrees of qualification, described Tal Afar as a counterinsurgency success story.

As with any celebrated event, a certain mythology has developed around the 3ACR's experience in Tal Afar, and in fact, the success the regiment enjoyed there was not as "decisive" as the paeans above suggest. There were troubling signs just a month after the regiment left Iraq. One resident told a reporter, "the armed men are fewer, but the assassinations between Sunni and Shiites have increased." Another resident said, "Al-Qaeda has started to come back again. They have started to kill Shiites and Sunnis who cooperate with the Americans."[100] Another report suggested that "Fear is palpable

[99] 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, "Operations and Intelligence Brief," undated briefing, p. 5. ("Title 10"= training and equipping, HUMINT=human intelligence, IED=Improvised Explosive Device, IDF=Indirect Fire.)

[100] Baker.

in the streets . . . Residents complain that the city is increasingly divided as tribal violence sharpens the boundaries between Sunni and Muslim neighborhoods." Even with a large Iraqi and U.S. troop presence, "families complain of no-go areas in the city, boundaries drawn up by sectarian violence or intimidation by rebels.[101] The insurgency continued in western Ninewah province, and U.S. forces continued to fight there for months and years after the period of this case study.

Moreover, interviewees fully acknowledged the fragility of the stability that Tal Afar had attained on their watch. In one platoon leader's judgment,

> We defeated the insurgency, but we weren't really able to rebuild the government – there wasn't enough time for that. . . When I first saw the city on April 21 or so, it was just an absolute ghost town. That day seven IEDs went off, people were shooting, everybody in the city was hiding from us, but watching us. Compare that to the last patrol I did on February 13, the market was open, the place was mobbed, there was garbage pick-up, we were talking to people . . . That said, for the most part, people still tended to stick to their areas. The neighborhoods remained somewhat segregated, like Route Barracuda, everything south was Shi'a, everything north was Sunni, and many people were not comfortable crossing that line.[102]

A regimental staff officer concluded, "I certainly won't say we solved or defeated the insurgency throughout the province. I will say, though, that with the help of very effective Iraqi leaders . . . we were able to establish security conditions that allowed progress in security force development and essential services."[103]

Tal Afar never, at least through the time of this writing, fell back into the terrorized state of dysfunction that it had suffered through during 2004-2005. And the alliance that had formed between the Sunni tribes and the Islamist extremists of AQI was radically diminished. A reporter visiting Tal Afar in April 2005 was told by a soldier in

[101] Roug, "Fear Casts A Shadow On 'Free City' Touted By Bush".

[102] Interview 17 (1LT Gavin Schwan).

[103] "Interview with LTC Paul Yingling," p. 6.

the city's operations center that there were then 3-5 sectarian murders a week in the city. The Coalition did not seem especially concerned about it, and the reporter said, "at that time, this sounded like success to me too, not only compared to other places in the country, but also compared to Tal Afar the previous year."[104]

This is where the difference between "victory" and "success" becomes analytically important. Counterinsurgency operations in Tal Afar during this period did not result in victory in the sense that they ended the insurgency. But it is more than fair to call the 3ACR's achievements there a success on the basis of the significant and lasting gains in security made there.

Evaluation

	Independent Variables				**Dependent Variable**
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**c (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Tal Afar 2005-2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 9: Case Study Variable Summary for Tal Afar

Table 9 summarizes the simple codings for the study's framework variables that are suggested by the evidence presented in this chapter. Conditions for positive codings of all five variables were present in this case. Sunni-Shi'a conflict was very clearly central to the insurgency, not only along the local-national axis as in Ramadi, but also along local tribal axes. On balance, counterinsurgents conducted good security operations. Following Operation Restoring Rights, the Coalition committed a large number of troops to security, kept them living among the people to focus better on population security, and worked closely with relatively professional indigenous security

[104] Interview 11 (Monte Morin).

forces. And the counterinsurgents dedicated significant resources, manpower, and leadership focus both to improving governance in the city and to working toward political agreements among the city's warring groups that would address their sectarian and tribal grievances.

From an analytic perspective, the Tal Afar case shares the same problem as the Malayan case: success was overdetermined, thereby clouding any effort to parse the relative contributions to success of different factors. This is where the opinions of participants on causation must be given special weight.

Even here, though, the evidence is mixed. Some interviewees emphasized the dominant role of the force density that the U.S. was able to bring to bear in Tal Afar. Tiger Squadron's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Greg Reilly argued that "saturating the area with forces is guaranteed to have a major effect. Up until the regiment left, it still had a pretty sizable footprint in the city, and this accounts for a lot of the improvement in security and stability. But there was still a high level of sectarian tension."[105]

Other 3ACR soldiers certainly saw some causal connection between their initiatives to improve governance and the marginalization of the insurgents in Tal Afar. Sabre Squadron troop commander Captain Sellars laid out the case for this logic succinctly: "Getting people back to a more normal life, giving them something to lose, provides the foundation for getting more to the political processes, and addressing tribal and sectarian differences."[106] Lieutenant Colonel Chris Gibson, who commanded 2-325 in the Sarai neighborhood, later wrote, "The nascent governing entity must provide basic

[105] Interview 30 (LTC Greg Reilly).

[106] Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

services to bolster its legitimacy with the people. . . The water and electricity departments were key – they must be effective and impartial in the distribution of service."[107] Lieutenant Colonel Hickey, in many ways the principal architect of the Tal Afar success, concluded that "the ability of the Squadron to enable the Iraqi Government to meet the needs of the population served to strengthen relations between the local government and the populace as well as establish a path towards reconciliation."[108] Here the implied causal chain goes from government performance to political reconciliation among competing groups.

But in the very same document, in explaining the strategic logic behind Operation Restoring Rights, Hickey also says,

> . . . by [the Coalition] attacking the Takfirists and guarding against the tendency to attack the population directly, the Sunni could be reintegrated into the mainstream political process once the veil of terror was lifted from their ranks. Meanwhile, maintaining the support of the Shiites could eventually bring unity to the city and establish an environment that finally allowed for reconstruction operations and reconciliation of tribal conflicts.[109]

In this description, the apparent causal chain runs from political reconciliation to improved government performance, not the other way around. This logic matches two of the comments cited earlier in the chapter: Lieutenant Tinklepaugh's assertion that "the reconstruction activities that we engaged in were a consequence of our success in marginalizing the insurgency, not a cause of it"[110]; and Colonel McMaster's observation that "Governance projects were important factors in our progress, but they came at a

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[107] Lieutenant Colonel Chris Gibson, "Battlefield Victories and Strategic Success: The Path Forward in Iraq," *Military Review*, September-October 2006, p. 54.

[108] Hickey, p. 42.

[109] Ibid., p. 32.

[110] Interview 12 (1LT Brian Tinklepaugh).

different time – it was more of a reward for cooperation. It happened in areas that were already secured."[111]

And, of course, some indeterminate degree of security must precede both of those other factors. Lieutenant Colonel Gibson, while lauding the importance of "basic services," also argues that "No amount of money or kindness, and no number of infrastructure programs, will facilitate winning over the populace if COIN forces cannot provide security to the population."[112]

Are these counterinsurgents contradicting each other and themselves? That is one plausible interpretation of the evidence. Equally plausible, however, is that these perspectives on causal relationships are compatible with each other. By this logic, because the variables are at least somewhat mutually dependent, different causal directions among the variables may predominate at different times. The implication of this explanation would be that it may not be possible to draw a more precise conclusion than that a positive value for each of the variables may be necessary but not sufficient by itself for success in counterinsurgency. In his own summation of what accounted for his squadron's success, Hickey takes just this approach and does not discriminate among factors:

> The cumulative effect of Sunni participation in the political process, establishment of security throughout the city, reconstruction, money distribution, positioning of [2-325] in Sarai, and the establishment of a comprehensive reconnaissance and surveillance plan resulted in a dramatic drop in attacks during the period following [Operation Restoring Rights].[113]

[111] Interview 14 (COL H.R. McMaster).

[112] Gibson, p. 49.

[113] Hickey, p. 46.

McMaster seemed to be of a similar mind, observing near the end of 3ACR's tour, "It is so damn complex. If you ever think you have the solution to this, you're wrong, and you're dangerous."[114]

[114] Packer, p. 57.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications

This final chapter sums up the preceding analysis in five sections: an application of the analytic framework to the Iraq case studies, conclusions, policy implications, methodological implications, and an overview of potential priorities for further research.

Applying the analytic framework to Coalition experience in Iraq – comparison of the cases

Table 10 summarizes the codings applied in the two Iraq case studies for each of the framework's key variables. The table also includes codings for the Awakening movement in Ramadi and elsewhere in Anbar province during 2006 and 2007. Clearly, as this case was not addressed formally in the analysis, these codings are tentative. But they are included as potentially useful discussion points. And, to reiterate an earlier point, binary codings of these factors are inevitably crude and meant to be useful as points of analytic departure rather than as conclusions.

	Independent Variables				**Dependent Variable**
Cases	**a (identity cleavages)**	**b (good security)**	**c (good governance)**	**d (political agreement)**	**y (success)**
Ramadi 2004-2005	Yes	Ambiguous	No	No	No
Tal Afar 2005-2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ramadi Awakening (notional)	Yes	Ambiguous	Ambiguous	Yes	Yes

Table 10: Variable Summary for Iraq Case Studies

Given these values, what do the cases say about the initial hypotheses advanced in Chapter 3?

H1: Good governance is not necessary for counterinsurgent success.
Would be supported by: c=No, y=Yes.

The Iraq cases do not strongly support this hypothesis. Many interviewees did believe that good governance was a less important contributor to success than addressing ethno-religious cleavages and, especially, simply providing security. And good governance does appear to have played a subordinate role in the Anbar Awakening. However, no one claimed outright that good governance is unnecessary. To the contrary, some cited the important contribution social and economic reconstruction played in building people's confidence in the capabilities and the good will of the Coalition and the Iraqi government.

This result is similar to the one identified in Chapter 4, where the Algerian case cast doubt on the decisiveness of good governance's effect on counterinsurgent success, but certainly did not prove that it was an unnecessary factor.

Hypothesis H2 addresses cases with no ethno-religious cleavages and therefore is not relevant to the Iraq cases.

H3: If ethno-religious cleavages are present, then good governance and good security together are not sufficient for counterinsurgent success.
Would be supported by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=No.

This hypothesis goes hand in hand with the study's overarching hypothesis stated at the beginning of Chapter 3:

In the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.

Essentially, hypothesis H3 is a stronger, more categorical form of the latter hypothesis.

The Iraq cases considered in this study do not satisfy the conditions of hypothesis H3, but they do support the hypothesis in its more general form. In Ramadi, the

grievances that fuelled the insurgency had far more to do with a deep sense of disenfranchisement within Iraq's Sunni community and the related fear of sectarian persecution than it did with any failure in the government's performance. The causal links between variations in the quality of governance and the fortunes of the counterinsurgents are difficult to establish precisely given the simultaneous weaknesses of the security and political lines of operation in Ramadi. Nevertheless, the evidence from the interviews in this case points toward major limitations to how much popular loyalty and legitimacy could be won through the improvement of governance. Other factors – namely security, itself, and identity-based concepts of legitimate rule (both tribal and sectarian) – appeared more decisive. This interpretation is strongly supported by the dramatic shift that eventually occurred in Ramadi, which seems to have been rooted in two key changes: the exhaustion of the population with violence and terror; and a new willingness of the Coalition to decouple the legitimacy of local rule from the legitimacy of national rule.

Tal Afar's story is quite different, but suggests a similar conclusion. There is no doubt that the quality of governance mattered to the way both the population and the counterinsurgents conceived of legitimacy. At the same time, however, it appears that what improvements in governance were achieved in Tal Afar were at least as much a consequence as a cause of successful counterinsurgency. Without both the 3ACR's dense presence in the city and its intensive focus on brokering compromises among the city's largely sectarian tribal conflicts, improvements in governance likely would never have taken root. And, even recognizing some degree of mutual reinforcement, the dependency of the factors probably did not run in the opposite direction. This

interpretation echoes that of the Algerian case in Chapter 4, where ethno-religious cleavages were shown to subvert the effectiveness of the governance-based tools of counterinsurgency.

Further evidence in support of the general form of the hypothesis can be found in the only quantitative analysis of the Iraq war published to date that uses official Department of Defense time-series, district-level data.[1] Authors Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter use multivariate econometric techniques to assess the relative importance of, among other things, economic factors and provision of basic services in affecting levels of violence across 104 districts (the sub-provincial administrative level) in Iraq. At first glance, the results of their analysis, which show a correlation between at least the economic dimensions of good governance and subsequent improvements in violence, appear at odds with this dissertation's hypothesis.

However, their conclusions are qualified by two critical factors that actually bring them closer into alignment with the arguments presented in this dissertation. First, the authors make the following explicit assumption in their model:

> non-combatants make a decision about sharing information based on a rational calculation of self-interest, rather than due to an overwhelming ideological commitment to one side or another. This is not to say that such an ideological commitment is irrational or unusual, just that on the margin both governments and rebels can influence the decisions of noncombatants through concrete action: provision of services and threats of retaliation.[2]

This assumption is plausible, but it bypasses the central question at issue in this dissertation regarding the sources of legitimacy. It is difficult to rebut the idea that the mechanisms of loyalty would work the way they are assumed to here "on the margin";

[1] Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," NBER Working Paper 14606 (December 2008).

[2] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

but for those marginal effects to be representative of the main dynamics of the system, the noncombatants would need to be basically indifferent between rule by the insurgents and rule by the government apart from the factors of service or retaliation. This premise is not consistent with observed group solidarity of various kinds, including ethno-religious.

The other critical caveat to that analysis is that it shows that up until 2007, CERP spending, the model's proxy for service provision, had essentially no effect in reducing violence. Only beginning in 2007 – a very different environment from previous years due to the Awakening and the Coalition troop "surge" – does the beneficial effect of CERP spending become evident.[3] The authors attribute this change to the military's improved ability to garner intelligence in part because of its better integration with the population, but mainly because tribes were willing to share information. This explanation is fine as far as it goes, but what accounts for that shift, itself?

The Ramadi case here suggests that the shift had much to do with a change in the Coalition's political strategy as it related to Iraq's sectarian rivalries. Specifically, in 2004-2005, U.S. policy was to insist that Coalition cooperation with the Sunni tribal groups in Anbar was contingent on their integration into the security mechanisms of the federal government. This was a deal breaker for the tribes because they viewed the federal government as a tool of Shi'a sectarian interests. Those political institutions were illegitimate by virtue of their perceived identity. Cooperation became possible only when the Coalition decoupled its own support from the requirement to integrate with Baghdad. By this logic, it was not primarily better intelligence that allowed CERP to have its

[3] Ibid., pp. 31-36.

natural salutary effect. Instead, what made the difference was the establishment of an authority, in the form of tribal leaders, that had both capacity and local legitimacy, both of which had been lacking theretofore. So the service provision improvements followed the legitimacy, not the other way around.

Conclusions

In assessing the meaning of this research beyond Iraq, what conclusions emerge about counterinsurgency?

Chapter 2 attempted to establish a few important premises for the research based on observations about the intellectual history of counterinsurgency strategy. Those points can be summarized as follows.

- Prevailing policy and strategy for counterinsurgency in the United States have tended to reflect assumptions about the bases of political legitimacy that are rooted in Western political philosophy and Cold War history.
- In particular, conception of counterinsurgency as a competition of governance between insurgents and counterinsurgents is based on a materialistic view of social welfare, justice, and legitimate authority that is not universally held.
- A substantial body of scholarship establishes that conflicts where ethnic and religious identities are politically salient have different dynamics than other conflicts.

From these premises was derived the study's main hypothesis that in the presence of major ethno-religious cleavages, good governance will contribute much less to counterinsurgent success than will efforts toward reaching political agreements that directly address those cleavages.

Following from this question, the analysis presented in the study suggests three conclusions about the nature of counterinsurgency.

1. Identity politics shape counterinsurgency outcomes.

The case studies presented in this research demonstrate the importance of ethno-religious identity politics in shaping the outcomes of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. In all three of the cases analyzed where ethno-religious cleavages were clearly salient to the conflicts – Algeria and both Iraq cases – direct causal relationships are evident between the counterinsurgents' attentiveness to the politics of ethno-religious identity and the subsequent course of the insurgencies.

These cases also provide some qualified support of the study's central hypothesis. In Algeria and Iraq, competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents over the quality of governance was a clearly less important factor in determining the conflict outcomes than the disposition of political agreements related to ethno-religious cleavages. Furthermore, though the evidence is not conclusive, it is even plausible that providing good governance was neither necessary nor sufficient for achieving counterinsurgent success in Algeria, Ramadi, or Tal Afar.

This is not to say, however, that providing good governance was irrelevant. Even if good governance is evidently less important than cross-cleavage political agreements, it still is shown in the case studies to be a contributor to counterinsurgent success, and its absence an impediment to success. As will be discussed in the next section, the policy implication of this conclusion about the relative importance of providing good governance is not that counterinsurgents should ignore the quality of governance in the

places they are fighting. Rather, it is that they should not invest all their hope of establishing legitimacy through activities focused on improving governance.

This conclusion should be seen as a qualification, but not a contradiction of recent insights from the academic literature on the endogeneity of group identity and violence.[4] To conclude that identity-based factors affect the dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency is not to deny that the reverse is also true to some extent. This conclusion should not be interpreted as a deterministic assertion of the intractability of ethno-religious conflict. Rather, the point is simply that such loyalties have important linkages to perceptions of legitimacy and therefore to the viability of counterinsurgent strategies. Or to put it in the terms used at the beginning of the study, who governs can be even more important than how whoever governs governs.

2. Identity politics are local.

One implication of the first conclusion is the need for a subtle shift in analytic and planning emphasis away from considering individual loyalties and preferences toward considering group loyalties and preferences. However, this shift in emphasis should not be extended to its logical extreme, which would be an assumption that ethno-religious groups will be reliably similar across wide swaths of geography, time, and circumstance. That assumption is not valid. Iraq demonstrates that national-level observations of identity-group politics in the midst of counterinsurgency are relevant but inadequate guides to explaining and affecting local behavior.

Tal Afar's sectarian conflict certainly mirrored Iraq's national sectarian conflict in some ways. But both the conflict's escalation and its subsequent moderation in 2005-

[4] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics and Society*, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 188-223.

2006 were driven primarily by local grievances, local conditions, and local compromises. The connection between Tal Afar's Sunni-Shi'a political rivalries and those in Baghdad were much more symbolic than causal. Even in Ramadi, where sectarian conflict existed primarily in relation to Baghdad, not locally, the fortunes of the counterinsurgents turned at least as much on local manifestations of those identity politics as on national ones. Specifically, the tribal Awakening movement that did so much to undermine the insurgency in Anbar province did not result from the successful resolution of national issues that were dividing Sunnis and Shi'a, such as constitutional provisions for power sharing, federalism, allocation of oil revenues, or control of federal ministries. To the contrary, the Awakening occurred in spite of ongoing rancor over these issues in Baghdad. Instead, the transformation in Anbar was based, in combination with mounting popular frustration with al Qaeda, on the Coalition's willingness to expand tribal and other local leaders' degree of control over their own territory and people.

It seems clear that local legitimacy and loyalty develop with a significant degree of independence from national identity group dynamics and institutions. A cavalry troop commander summed it up this way: "Ninety percent of the population does not look at the situation from a strategic standpoint. They think of it as 'how does this affect me on my block.' They're not just neutral, waiting to be influenced – they're leaning. But they will be strongly influenced by what happens on their own blocks."[5]

[5] Interview 21 (CPT Jesse Sellars).

3. Population security is still the most important factor in shaping counterinsurgency outcomes.

Recognizing the importance of ethno-religious identity politics should do nothing to take away from the fundamental primacy of population security in counterinsurgency strategy. This conclusion is not new, but the Iraq case studies clearly underscore the point, so it bears repeating here. Almost all of the counterinsurgents interviewed for this research emphasized the criticality of establishing people's confidence in their own physical security as a prerequisite for accomplishing anything else in a counterinsurgency environment. Civilian analyst Andrea Jackson, who conducted hundreds of interviews with Iraqis during 2003-2006, reported that "I asked every person I interviewed . . . what's the biggest concern for you and your family? They all said security, uniformly."[6]

In this research's case studies, good security operations are always associated with counterinsurgent success, and in two instances – Algeria and Vietnam after 1968 – are associated with ambiguous counterinsurgency outcomes. This suggests that establishing population security is necessary, but perhaps not sufficient for counterinsurgent success. This interpretation is intuitive and is also borne out by the narratives of the case studies in question.

It is important to note one key caveat to this conclusion. As described in Chapter 3, there is a tautological hazard in discussing the causality between security and counterinsurgent success. The distinction between the cause and the effect – between what Jeffrey Race calls tactical security and strategic security[7] – can be subtle and

[6] Interview 1 (Andrea Jackson).

[7] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 146.

subjective. If "success" is defined too narrowly in terms of short-term levels of violence, then the link between good security operations and success is mere tautology. What is required to maintain this distinction, in both analytic and strategic planning contexts, is a definition of success that focuses on the sustainability of security over time and with diminished commitment of military resources.

As with the first conclusion, this one benefits from being situated in the context of Stathis Kalyvas's recent work. Kalyvas proposes that in the midst of civil conflict, "collaboration" of local populations is more a consequence than a cause of successful physical and institutional "control" by politico-military actors.[8] This study corroborates that theory, though it continues to emphasize the importance of popular loyalties, attitudes, and grievances in explaining the viability of such control over time. As Kalyvas understands, the causation here runs in both directions, but the key is that security, or the fear of insecurity, "operates as a first-order condition that makes the production of loyalty possible."[9] That conclusion seems clear from the evidence in the Iraq cases. It is the dynamics of the second-order conditions that are the province of identity politics as well as more materialist sources of legitimacy, and where the first conclusion above becomes most relevant.

In sum, these conclusions do not overturn any of the traditional tenets of counterinsurgency, but instead should help to sharpen some of them. Based on this research the conventional wisdom that successful counterinsurgency depends on

[8] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapters 4 and 5.

[9] Ibid., p. 115.

establishing legitimacy, which in turn demands coordinated political and military programs, remains valid. To the extent that "winning hearts and minds" is used to describe this principle, that phrase remains applicable.

What this research adds to our understanding of counterinsurgency is an appreciation for identity-based sources of legitimacy which can rival and even eclipse the legitimacy that flows from good governance. Accordingly, the political component of a counterinsurgency strategy must be political not only in the sense of being focused on government and how government exercises power. It must also be sensitive to the distribution of that power across key identity groups.

Policy implications

Moving from description and analytic inference to prescription is an inevitably treacherous step on the scholarly path. Few single studies of complex social phenomena can hope to be comprehensive or definitive enough to produce unambiguous policy recommendations with much confidence.

On the other hand, the applicability of the work's insights to real-world problems is, in the end, one of the most important measures of its quality. And, while this study's results are far from the final word on its subject, they do suggest several important implications for policy makers and counterinsurgent leaders.

1. *Counterinsurgency strategy must account for the role of traditional social hierarchies and forms of legitimacy.*

The intermediation of relationships between people and their government by tribes or clerics or other non-governmental group leaders is a strategically important factor in counterinsurgency. Iraq is a clear illustration that these traditional hierarchies

can be relevant even in societies that appear in many respects to be quite "modern" or developed according to the Western model. This creates an imperative for counterinsurgents, at a minimum, to understand what power hierarchies exist among the people where they are fighting, and to explicitly examine the role of group loyalty and identity politics in their assessments of their operational environment. In instances where these factors appear salient, they must become integral to strategy development as well. These traditional hierarchies and identity-based loyalties may be potential assets for the counterinsurgents, or they may be obstacles to their larger strategic goals.

Or, as with the tribes of Anbar province, they may be assets and obstacles simultaneously. Empowering those tribes was a step backward in the Coalition's effort to create a strong, unified central government, but at the same time was critically important in undermining the worst elements of the insurgency. Even participants in the counterinsurgency during that time may continue to differ about whether the proper trade-off was made in that case.[10] All the same, it is not necessary to settle this point in order to simply recognize the utility of anticipating the importance of such trade-offs in advance rather than stumbling upon them a few months or years into a conflict. That is what makes this factor a critical element of the initial assessment and strategy development phase for any prospective counterinsurgency.

[10] For example, contrast David Kilcullen, "Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt," Small Wars Journal blog, August 29, 2007, with Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival*, vol. 50, no. 2 (April-May 2008). Both Kilcullen and Long were advisors to Coalition forces during that time.

2. Counterinsurgents should always be prepared to employ the full range of tools addressing security, governance and identity.

David Galula believed that each military, political, judicial, and other line of operation in counterinsurgency is indispensible, arguing that "if one is nil, the product will be zero."[11] This may not always be the case, but it remains a valid, conservative guide to planning.

Notwithstanding this study's emphasis on the potentially high importance of addressing ethno-religious cleavages, the dynamics of identity politics and group loyalties are likely to be so fluid, opaque, and variable across localities that counterinsurgents cannot afford to neglect any element of its legitimacy-building tool kit. They should be prepared to build political stability on foundations of both identity and quality of governance simultaneously. This is not to say that it is impossible to make distinctions about where certain tools may be more or less effective. Rather, it is saying that the complexity and uncertainty associated with the problem recommends a conservative approach that does not exclude any potentially valuable contributor to building support of the people for the counterinsurgent's control.

To reiterate the point made under the first conclusion above, the policy implication of recognizing the limitations of providing good governance is not that counterinsurgents should ignore the quality of governance in the places they are fighting. Rather, it is just that counterinsurgents should adopt a heightened sense of caution regarding what can be achieved through improving governance alone in the absence of the larger political strategy that addresses power distributions among identity groups.

[11] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 87.

It is worth noting that this implication is consistent with a recent recommendation coming from a U.S. Department of Defense study on "ungoverned areas" that argued for a shift in the focus of foreign assistance from "capacity-building" to "legitimacy-building."[12] According to this perspective, "capacity-building," which is focused on states' abilities to execute certain governance functions, is insufficient to enhance stability if it is not coordinated with locally specific ways in which legitimate power is distributed and exercised. As in the context of counterinsurgency, this concept does not discredit capacity-building, per se, but rather invests it with limited promise and expected utility as the singular basis for building political stability.

3. Local, specialized knowledge trumps doctrine and theory.

Because the dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency are so sensitive to variations in local conditions and events, strategies should be based to the maximum extent possible on local, specialized knowledge and relationships. Counterinsurgency doctrine and theory are useful for providing frameworks and guidelines for strategy development, but in developing strategies for particular conflicts, as David Kilcullen said, "There is simply no substitute for what we might call 'conflict ethnography': a deep, situation-specific understanding of the human, social, and cultural dimensions of a conflict, understood not by analogy with some other conflict, but in its own terms."[13]

The U.S. military's new Capstone Concept for Joint Operations document recognizes the importance of this point, imploring its readers to "Address each situation

[12] Robert D. Lamb, "In the new security environment, 'capacity-building' should give way to 'legitimacy-building.'" unpublished working paper, December 2008.

[13] David Kilcullen, "Religion and Insurgency," Small Wars Journal blog, May 12, 2007.

on its own terms, in its unique political and strategic context, rather than attempting to fit the situation to a preferred template."[14]

4. Do not economize on force size.

No matter how sophisticated the counterinsurgency strategy, it is unlikely to succeed without the allocation of enough security forces to create a visible and ubiquitous presence where the insurgency is active. Case study interviewees consistently reported that some degree of physical population security was a pre-requisite for gaining traction on any other element of the counterinsurgency strategy. The contrast between the two Iraq case studies illustrates the value of large densities of troops in urban counterinsurgency as well as the challenges of spreading troops thinly. Stalin's famous dictum on conventional war applies to irregular warfare just as well: quantity has a quality all its own.

5. Avoid getting involved in counterinsurgency.

One final implication of this research is simply a reinforcement of the enduring and yet apparently unpersuasive point that winning counterinsurgencies is extremely difficult, especially for foreign powers. In important respects, the issues at stake in insurgencies are not especially amenable to change through the instruments of foreign governments and militaries. For governments under attack, of course, this is a moot point. However, for governments making commitments beyond their borders to fight this kind of warfare, it is quite salient. While the track record of counterinsurgency is not entirely one of failure, it is universally one of costs and complications that far exceeded initial expectations.

[14] *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 3.0* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, January 15, 2009), p. 12.

This point recapitulates some of the closing words of Douglas Blaufarb's analysis of the first "counterinsurgency era" of the 1950s and 1960s:

> No lesson is easier to state and harder to apply than that a decision to become involved once again in a counterinsurgency situation should be preceded by intense and prayerful study. . . The fundamental lesson to draw from our misadventures of the counterinsurgency era is the one already emphasized by many – the lesson of the limits of American power.[15]

And if counterinsurgency in general is difficult, it is made only more difficult, by the presence of significant ethno-religious cleavages. This dynamic is intuitive, but at the same time has perhaps been underappreciated by Western leaders unaccustomed to looking at politics through the eyes of peoples beyond their borders. Journalist Jeff Stein captured this phenomenon nicely in a darkly comic piece where he exposed several senior U.S. government officials' ignorance of the distinctions between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. One member of Congress, after hearing Stein's description of the difference between the two sects and their history of contentious politics, commented, "Now that you've explained it to me, what occurs to me is that it makes what we're doing over there extremely difficult, not only in Iraq but that whole area."[16] These are words to the wise.

Methodological implications

Analysis of the case studies in Chapters 4-7 suggests a revision of the model for counterinsurgency strategy's causal logic that was presented in Chapter 3. Figure 10 shows a new version of that logic. Recall that events are represented by the lettered descriptions, and causal processes are represented by numbered arrows. This version of the diagram adds one event and two causal processes. Event I represents

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[15] Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance 1950 to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), pp. 301-302, 310-311.

[16] Jeff Stein, "Can You Tell a Sunni from a Shiite?" *New York Times*, October 17, 2006.

counterinsurgent attempts to achieve a political agreement addressing ethno-religious cleavages. This leads directly, via process 10, to event D, the decline of popular support for the insurgency.

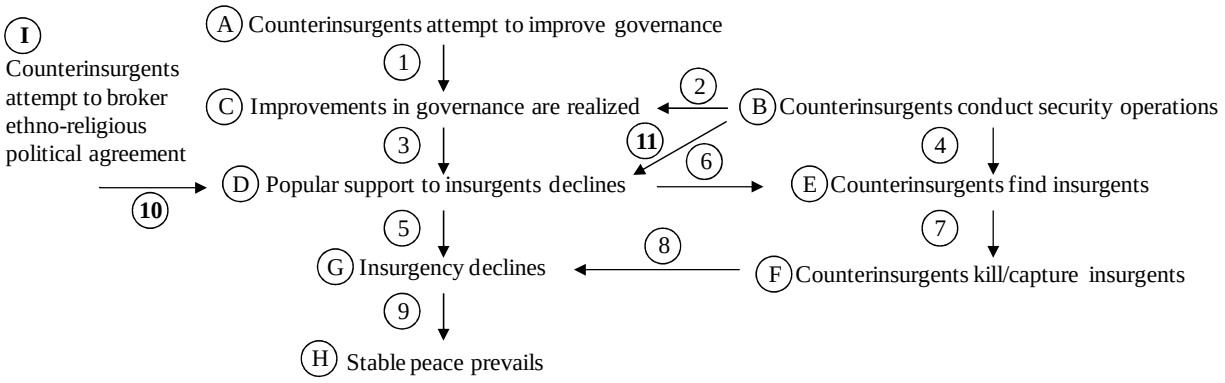

Figure 10: Revised Causal Logic of Counterinsurgency Strategy

The other addition to this model is causal process 11, which directly links counterinsurgent security operations to popular support for the insurgency. This addition reflects the strong findings from the case studies that popular attitudes can change based on who is effective at providing security, independent of the factors of governance and political agreements. This type of militarized security does not lead directly to event H, stable peace, but it does contribute to it, not only through events E and F, but also through event D.

The effect of these updates is not to invalidate any of the prior assumptions about causal relationships. Instead, as is consistent with the evidence from the case studies, it dilutes the apparent importance of process 3, which links improvements in governance to decline in popular support for the insurgency. That process remains valid, but shares its influence on event D with events B and I.

In relating this research to the literature on ethnic conflict, the conclusions offered here clearly seek to raise the profile of ethno-religious identity as a causal factor in

explaining the dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency. However, these conclusions should certainly not be construed as an endorsement of a primordialist view of identity or of deterministic theories of group conflict. To the contrary, the evidence compiled here corroborates those accounts of identity and conflict that propose the most complex and fluid descriptions of their interactions.

Such complexity has a major methodological implication that has been alluded to throughout this study: the most important variables in analysis of civil conflict – such as grievances, popular loyalties, mechanisms of control, and violence – are all partly endogenous to the conflict environment, itself. As a result, isolating and coding values for such variables and inferring causal relationships among them can only be done with much validity by close examination of detailed, localized history of causal processes. It does not follow from this implication that the dynamics of counterinsurgency cannot be effectively explored with statistical techniques. It does mean, however, that aggregating data over geography and time means sacrificing a great deal of important information. It also means that statistical correlations of factors should be accompanied wherever possible by micro-level investigations of how those factors interacted, or else policy implications derived from such correlations risk placing the analytic cart before the horse.

Priorities for further research

An almost unavoidable hazard of research is raising as many or more questions as one has answered. This research is no exception. Additionally, there are many ways in which the analysis in this study could be strengthened. Some of the most potentially valuable priorities for further research on this subject are as follows.

In Chapter 4, two hypotheses were offered about governance and counterinsurgency. Specifically, these hypotheses suggested that among the factors that win the loyalty of a population and establish legitimacy, *distributional* effects may be more important than *absolute* effects, and *political* effects may be more important than *economic* effects. These hypotheses are worthy of greater specification and, if a suitably specific framework can be built from such specification, empirical testing.

A key limitation of the analysis presented in this study is the absence of significant input from Iraqi sources. Practical considerations prevented collection of much of this kind of data, but clearly, a fuller examination of how Iraqis think about legitimacy and the politics of ethno-religious identity would include the results of direct discussions with Iraqis, themselves. If this research inspires further work on Iraq or any other cases of counterinsurgency or civil conflict, investigators should certainly seek opportunities where possible to draw in perspectives of the people whose loyalty and security is being contested.

Future research on this topic may also benefit from employing an analytic framework somewhat more complex than the one used in this study. Complex frameworks have clear drawbacks, and as described in Chapter 3, the relative simplicity of the five-variable framework employed here was adopted purposefully, in part so as to capture the kinds of intuitive categories of decision variables that actually prevail in real policy-making. However, there is a price that is paid for this strategy in terms of precise specification and explicit inclusion of some variables. Accordingly, the analytic strategy adopted in this study would be well complemented by research using a more detailed framework with a larger number of more specific variables.

This analysis would also certainly benefit from inclusion of a larger number of case studies. Small numbers of case studies inevitably constrain the process of generalizing insights to draw conclusions and derive recommendations for policy and strategy.

Finally, though further analysis of these topics will of course not be limited to recent American experiences with counterinsurgency, it is worth noting that more detailed analysis of more local cases should become increasingly feasible as data from Coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan becomes more available, in both classified and unclassified contexts. Those experiences will provide a rich basis for comparative case analysis of counterinsurgency for the next generation of scholars and analysts and beyond.

A U.S. Army veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan recently wrote that "The problem with war narratives isn't lying. The problem is there's too much truth. . . The enterprise is so vast that almost everything is true, and writers can choose whichever truths support a particular thesis."[17] Even as an analyst armed with data and the time to think long and hard about the problem, it is difficult to avoid drawing the same conclusion as this veteran does. Few hypotheses about insurgency and counterinsurgency seem to be completely without evidence, and even fewer seem immune to counterexamples.

[17] Roman Skaskiw, "E-Mail From Afghanistan," *The Atlantic*, October 2008.

But if this research has done nothing else, it has highlighted one truth about counterinsurgency to place alongside the others: that who governs can be even more important than how whoever governs governs.

Appendix: Interview List

I conducted 37 interviews in support of the case studies detailed in Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation. Interviews were conducted over the period of March 29 – May 13, 2009. Four interviews were conducted in person, the rest by telephone. Interviews ranged in duration from 40 minutes to 140 minutes, and averaged around 70 minutes.

The single criterion for invitation to be interviewed was having first-hand knowledge of events at the times and places addressed in the case studies. Interviewee candidates were identified by their names appearing in contemporary news coverage or in other primary source documents or through recommendations by other interviewees. Initial contact was made via e-mail, and all interviewees reviewed and agreed to the terms of the Informed Consent Form required and approved by the Institutional Review Board for the purposes of conducting this research. In all cases, requests for attribution to be withheld were honored. In most cases, this applied to a small number of the interviewees' comments, if any. However, four interviewees requested that none of their comments be attributed, so these interviewees are identified in the lists below only by their interview number, date of interview, and general professional background.

Legend for Abbreviations in Tables

1/3 ACR: 1st Squadron (Tiger), 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (U.S. Army)

1/503rd Infantry: 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (U.S. Army)

1/506th Infantry: 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (U.S. Army)

2/2ID: 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division (U.S. Army)

2/3 ACR: 2nd Squadron (Sabre), 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (U.S. Army)

2/5 Marines: 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Infantry Regiment (U.S. Marine Corps)

2/17th Field Artillery: 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (U.S. Army)

3ACR: 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (U.S. Army)

4/3 ACR: 4th Squadron (Longknife), 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (U.S. Army)

I/II MEF: 1st / 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (U.S. Marine Corps)

CNA: Center for Naval Analyses

MNC-I: Multi-National Corps – Iraq

Table A1: Interviews for Ramadi Case Study (Chapter 6)

Number	Date (in 2009)	Name	Rank (at time of case study)	Organization	Job/Title	Interview Mode
1	March 29	Andrea Jackson	Civilian	II MEF, MNC-I	researcher	in person
3	April 1	anonymous Army officer				
4	April 2	Seth Robson	Civilian	Stars and Stripes	reporter	phone
5	April 5	Ed Rapisarda	Captain (Capt)	2/5 Marines	company commander	phone
6	April 6	Peder Ell	Corporal (Cpl)	2/5 Marines	combat engineer	phone
7	April 8	Sean Kuehl	Captain (Capt)	2/5 Marines	battalion intelligence officer	phone
13	April 11	David Clark	Colonel (COL)	1/506th Infantry	battalion commander	phone
15	April 13	anonymous Army officer				
19	April 15	Greg Sierra	Major (MAJ)	1/503rd Infantry	battalion executive officer	phone
23	April 21	Carter Malkasian	Civilian	I MEF, CNA	analyst	in person
26	April 22	Tony Perry	Civilian	Los Angeles Times	reporter	phone
27	April 22	Eric Dougherty	Captain (Capt)	2/5 Marines	company commander	phone
29	April 23	Gary Patton	Colonel (COL)	2/2ID	brigade commander	in person
31	April 26	Jaime Sutton	Lance Corporal (LCpl)	2/5 Marines	weapons platoon marine	phone
32	April 27	Justin Gubler	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	1/503rd Infantry	battalion commander	phone
33	April 28	Richard Natonski	Major General (MajGen)	First Marine Division	division commander	phone
34	April 29	Brian Fennema	Staff Sergeant (SSG)	2/2ID	tactical humint team member	phone
35	May 1	John Fant	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	2/17th Field Artillery	battalion commander	phone
36	May 8	anonymous Army officer				
37	May 13	Jamie Braddock	Sergeant (SGT)	2/2ID	tactical humint team member	phone

Table A2: Interviews for Tal Afar Case Study (Chapter 7)

Number	Date (in 2009)	Name	Rank (at time of case study)	Organization	Job/Title	Interview Mode
2	April 1	Louise Roug	Civilian	Los Angeles Times	reporter	phone
8	April 9	Dan Driscoll	Second Lieutenant (2LT)	2/3 ACR	platoon leader	phone
9	April 10	James Dayhoff	Captain (CPT)	2/3 ACR	battery cmdr / regimental ops officer	phone
10	April 10	Michael Simmering	Major (MAJ)	2/3 ACR	squadron operations officer	phone
11	April 10	Monte Morin	Civilian	Stars and Stripes	reporter	phone
12	April 10	Brian Tinklepaugh	First Lieutenant (1LT)	2/3 ACR	platoon leader	phone
14	April 13	H.R. McMaster	Colonel (COL)	3ACR	regimental commander	phone
16	April 13	Andrew Shealy	Second Lieutenant (2LT)	4/3 ACR	air defense officer	phone
17	April 14	Gavin Schwan	First Lieutenant (1LT)	2/3 ACR	platoon leader	phone
18	April 14	Chad Stapp	Sergeant (SGT)	2/3 ACR	squad leader	phone
20	April 17	Jared Leinert	Second Lieutenant (2LT)	113th Engineers	platoon leader	phone
21	April 17	Jesse Sellars	Captain (CPT)	2/3 ACR	troop commander	phone
22	April 17	Jon Finer	Civilian	Washington Post	reporter	phone
24	April 22	anonymous regional expert				
25	April 22	Joel Armstrong	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	3ACR	deputy regimental commander	phone
28	April 23	Alan Blackburn	Captain (CPT)	2/3 ACR	troop commander	phone
30	April 25	Greg Reilly	Lieutenant Colonel (LTC)	1/3 ACR	squadron commander	phone

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