

Surging: The Tale of Two Bloody Bailouts

A Comparative Study Between the Outcomes of the American
Surges in Iraq (2006-2009) and in Afghanistan (2009-2013)

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Abstract

During the years from 2006-2009 and 2009-2013, both Iraq and then Afghanistan were under extreme duress, succumbing to the pressures from violent armed non-state groups. This occurred while both cases were already under US occupation. In order to resolve the growing instabilities posed by these non-state groups, the US escalated its initial military efforts first in Iraq and then in Afghanistan. The escalation of military efforts was conceived as a “Surge” strategy. The Iraq Surge was implemented first, starting in 2006. By 2009, the situation in Iraq dramatically changed because there was a significant reduction in the direct violence experienced by Iraqis. Furthermore, the new Iraq government gained political momentum and for a short period, it was able to centralize the states political authority and gain more legitimacy amongst the Iraqi people. Much of the conventional wisdom amongst policy experts and some academics is that the Iraq Surge worked, and the premise for this is the reduction of violence and the growing strength of the Iraqi government from 2006-2009. In light of the success in the Iraq Surge, another Surge was employed in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Surge started in late 2009 and carried on through 2012.

The Afghanistan Surge was conceived using the same political plan, and the same military manuals and tactics deployed during the Iraq Surge. However, Afghanistan did not experience the same radical decline in direct violence that was seen in Iraq. Moreover, Afghanistan’s central government did not achieve the same semblance of growing central political authority as seen in Iraq. The divergence in outcomes presents a research puzzle, and this thesis sets to explore it.

To the Victims of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

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Glossary

Afghanistan National Army	ANA
Al-Qaeda	AQ
Al-Qaeda Iraq (Zarqawi's Organization)	AQI
Afghanistan National Security Forces	ANSF
Counterinsurgency	COIN
Counterterrorism	CT
Coalition Provisional Authority	CPA
Department of Defense	DoD
Global War on Terror	GWOT
Improvised Explosive Device	IED
Islamic State of Iraq	ISI
Irregular Warfare	IW
Joint Strategic Assessment Team	JSAT
Kurdish Workers Party	PKK
Low Intensity Conflict	LIC
Military Operations other than War	MOOTW
Mujahadeen Shura Council	MSC
National Security Council	NSC
National Security Strategy	NSS
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NATO
Osama Bin Laden	OBL
Secretary of Defense	SECDEF
September 11, 2001	9/11
US Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Manual	FM3-24
Quadrennial Defense Review	QDR
Weapons of Mass Destruction	WMD's

Surging:

A Comparative Study Between the Outcomes of the American Surge in Iraq (2006-2009) and the American Surge in Afghanistan (2009-2013)

Introduction and Theoretical Background to this Study

During the years of 2006-2009 and 2009-2013, both Iraq and Afghanistan were under extreme duress and suffered during its conflict between the state and a diverse group of armed non-state actors. This occurred while it was under US occupation after the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 (Afghanistan), and Saddam Hussein in 2003 (Iraq). Increasingly over the time that US forces were in Iraq and Afghanistan, the armed non-state groups strength and prowess increased, and the security in both cases rapidly deteriorated. In response, the US attempted to assist both of the Iraq and Afghan governments by offering an increase of its initial military efforts. This occurred first in Iraq in 2006/2007, and then later in Afghanistan in 2009/2010. The attempt to stabilize both theatres was popularized in the media through the tactic used in both cases, which was identified as counterinsurgency (COIN hereafter). In both cases, the COIN strategy was commonly referred to as “the Surge”.¹

Identifying when the Surges occur is relatively easy, but defining what either Surge was can be elusive. The Iraq Surge occurred first, and was comprised of both a quantitative and qualitative adaptation in policy and plans from the preexisting “Shock and Awe” operations (Shaffer 2013). The first defining characteristic of the Iraq Surge was the addition of US forces. Specifically, this addition entailed five US Army brigades and the extension of

¹ The reason that the terms Iraq Surge, and the Afghanistan Surge will be capitalized throughout this thesis is to be consistent with Oxford Universities writers thesaurus. The thesaurus indicates, “The full name of a battle or a war is capitalized” e.g. Shay's Rebellion, the Battle of the Bulge, D-Day, the Battle of the Atlantic, the European

ongoing US Marine deployments.² This increase made the overall number of US brigades in Iraq move from 15 and escalating into 20. The five additional brigades added a total of 20,000 additional troops (Nagl 2013, Kagan 2009). The units deployed were as follows:

1. 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division 3,447 troops. Deployed to Baghdad, January 2007
2. 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division 3,447 troops. Deployed to Baghdad, February 2007
3. 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division 3,784 troops. Deployed to southern Baghdad Belts, March 2007
4. 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division 3,921 troops. Deployed to Diyala province, April 2007
5. 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division 3,784 troops. Deployed to the southeast of Baghdad, May 2007 (Kagan 2009, Mansoor 2013, Nagl 2013)

The Marine Corps contribution to the Surge was an additional 6-month extension to the preexisting 12 month long deployments. This was most noticeable by the 4,000 Marines in Anbar province. The Marine units that were extended, included the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines, the 1st Battalion 6th Marines and the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (Kagan 2009, Mansoor 2013, Nagl 2013).

The numbers are an important quantitative element in defining the Iraq Surge. However, the numbers do not entirely tell the story of what occurs as the additional forces enter in Iraq. There are three defining qualitative characteristics of the Iraq Surge. This is found in what actions the additional troops performed. The Surge made an adaptation in operations by applying FM3-24, the US COIN manual. When the US added FM3-24, “the US had an official operational strategy to finally stabilize Iraq” (Kilcullen 2013). “This was a dramatic change from the years prior in Iraq” (Nagl 2013). “The years prior to FM3-24 were years wasted trying to build up a country that wasn’t quite at peace after deBaathification” (Mansoor 2013). This operational change empowered the Surge forces to unify stability operations across the country.

² This thesis carries a significant amount of data that uses numbers to describe military units, military nomenclatures, and quantities of troop sizes. This thesis will spell out the words 1-10. This is with an exception to identify the chapters of the thesis, different military nomenclatures, as well as the “3-stages” used in the model.

The second characteristic of the Surge is the ruthless direct action campaign, conducted by Special Operations Forces, against top insurgent leaders (Harvey 2014). The Special Forces provided the Surge with increased ability for direct action raids. The direct action raids “killed the top insurgent leaders, while the other units performed stability operations and controlled the rest of society” (Cohen 2014).

The third defining characteristic of the Iraq Surge is an increased combined civil-military engagement across Iraqi Society. With an increased troop presence, civilian leaders in the State Department could coordinate rebuilding Iraq in a more coherent direction. This includes getting power plants working, reopening banks, uplifting the new Iraqi government, and open to governmental and constitutional reforms (Malkasian 2014). The increased civil-military partnership was most obvious as Prime Minister Maliki increased his cooperation with General Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

The Iraq Surge occurred first, starting in 2006, and its initial success was apparent because of a, “rapid reduction in direct violence that occurred over the next two years” (Nagl 2012). Starting in 2008, news headlines and policy discussion circles gained a conventional wisdom that argued the Iraq Surge worked. Most of the consensus, that adopted this point of view, claimed that the Surge was the single greatest causal factor accounting for the reduction of violence and the growing strength of the Iraqi government.³

The Bush administration’s success with the Iraq Surge created significant momentum in Washington. Policy makers and senior military commanders began plans for an additional Surge, but this time in Afghanistan. The consensus of many in Washington was that the Afghanistan Surge would mirror the results of Iraq.

Indeed, after the Iraq Surge, a second Surge was employed by the Obama

³Mansoor, P. (2008). "How the surge worked." The Washington Post, McCain, J. and J. Lieberman (2008). "The Surge Worked." P. A15 in The Wall Street Journal 10., Beinart, P. (2009). "Admit It: The Surge Worked." Washington Post.

administration for Afghanistan in 2009/2010. The Afghanistan Surge was, “engineered, using the same operational manuals of Iraq, and the same tactics deployed during the Iraq Surge” (Kilcullen 2013). This is most evident through the “deployment of FM3-24 the US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual” (Ricks 2013). Similar to the Iraq Surge, the Afghanistan Surge is best captured through both quantitative and qualitative characteristics. Quantitatively, the Afghanistan Surge was an increase of 33,000 US troops as well as additional support from NATO allies (Malkasian 2014). These were comprised of five additional US Army brigades that were randomly assembled from a selection of units that included, 1st Brigade Combat Team, the Army's 10th Mountain Division, 6,200 Marines of Regimental Combat Team 2, and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (Shaffer 2013).⁴

Also similar to the Iraq case, there was a qualitative characteristic to the Afghanistan Surge because of a new strategy that was employed. The new strategy for Afghanistan consisted of two parts. First, the larger US presence will perform a COIN strategy in which the US will push forward into population centres to force out the insurgency. While acting as the lead aggressor, the US would then, overtime, move to an “advise and assist” strategy in which the US will primarily support the Afghan National Security Forces (Kilcullen 2013). Then, the ANSF will “transition” from being the backup force to “slowly stepping into the lead” while continuing the COIN strategy with the support of the US (Hoh 2013, Cohen 2014).

In summary, the defining characteristics of the Afghanistan Surge are qualitatively and quantitatively similar to those of the Iraq Surge. First, the quantitative increase in military power is significant it added more forces to conduct a new operational strategy called COIN. The second defining characteristic of the Surge was the adopting of the new US COIN

⁴ Many of the units deployed were augmented, or constructed units that were not full brigades as in the Iraq case. Understanding the exact makeup of the particular units is more convoluted, and for more details on this consult: http://www.army.mil/article/31457/Officials_announce_first_Afghanistan_surge_units/

manual. This shows an operational refocusing of US efforts in theatre. The final defining characteristic of the Afghan Surge was the attempts to increase civil-military partnership to increase the functions of the state, and train the new Afghan military.

Unlike the Iraq Surge, as the Afghanistan Surge was underway, it did not experience similar results of Iraq. The rapid decline in direct violence that occurred in Iraq during 2007-2009 was not occurring in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Afghanistan Surge did see a dramatic increase in the Afghan governments capabilities. The divergence in outcomes presents a research puzzle, and this thesis sets to explore it. By comparing the Iraq Surge case and the Afghanistan case this thesis casts insight into the study the COIN in theory and practice, and it inquires about the lessons to be learned in future policy making for other potential Surge cases.

Research Question

Why did the Iraq Surge (2006-2009), and Afghanistan Surge (2009-2013) achieve different outcomes?

This question offers a research scope to discover the outcomes of the Surge cases, and compare the background Surge policies as well. Currently, there exists some interesting research into the individual Surge cases. However, very little work exists that compares the two. Some individual research of the Iraq Surge case that is notable is Steve Biddle's, *Testing the Surge*, and Kim Kagan's *The Surge*. However, these fail to consider the background and process of how the Surge was developed in Washington D.C. and how it relates to the specific outcomes. David Ucko's, *The New Counterinsurgency Era*, investigates the background of the Iraq Surge policy, but does not compare it to the Afghanistan Surge policy.

Similarly, to the research of Iraq from Biddle, Kagan, some analysis has been done on Afghanistan as well, specifically; Antonio Giustozzi's *Decoding the New Taliban*, and David Kilcullen's *Accidental Guerilla*. However, with the exception of Ballard, Lamm, and Wood's *From Baghdad and Back Again*, little work investigates the Surge policy in both cases, the

Surge outcomes in both cases, and then compares them between each other. It is out of this survey of the existing literature, and the debates within the literature surrounding both Surges that this thesis is contrived.

The Thesis Argument

This thesis argues that the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges achieved different outcomes because there exists a 3-stage causal mechanism that links together and enabled temporary success in Iraq and the same causal mechanism accounts for the failures in the Afghanistan Surge. The 3-stages are as follows:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.⁵

The argument is original because it takes a new understanding to the Surge outcomes in a way that is not previously performed. By using a causal 3-stage model, the argument equally weighs the conditions in the cases that occur before and during the Surge, the actions of the US before and during the Surge, and the actions of its adversary before and during the Surge.

Lastly, by equally considering events that predate the Surge, US actions during the Surge, and the actions of the indigenous groups, this 3-stage model adopts a transitive approach that is established in conflict theory. By using the 3-stages, this thesis can observe what Johann Galtung identifies as visible and invisible components of a conflict. This theory

⁵ The research focuses on these three main mechanisms because the data gathered during fieldwork directed the research focus to these components. This is for many reasons, but more thoroughly explained in the literature review and research methods portion in the following chapters.

helps to explain why the Surge cases have different outcomes. This will be covered more in the theory portion of the thesis.

Background Data to Support the Premise of the Thesis

The operating premise of this thesis is that the Iraq and Afghan Surges had different outcomes. This needs to be demonstrated rather than simply asserted. The premise is found in both quantitative and qualitative data openly available. The quantitative metrics used in the premise of this thesis come from the *Iraq Index* and the *Afghanistan Index* (published by the Brookings Institution).⁶ In addition, the qualitative evidence used in this thesis relies the public statements by administration officials and experts close to this issue.

Indicators in the Quantitative Data

The numerical data supplied by the Brookings institution indicates that the violence in Iraq substantially declines during and after the Iraq Surge. Indeed, the data identified below outlines that from 2007-2014 that violence against civilians and against the state dramatically reduced. Furthermore, enemy insurgent attacks dramatically reduced after the Surge became underway. The decrease in violence correlates to the general increase in the safety and security of Iraqi civilians. The reduction of enemy attacks indicates the lessening of their ability to fight as the Surge continued. This is the central point from administration officials whom argue for the Iraq Surge success.

In Afghanistan, the opposite is true. The Brookings report identifies that the Afghan civilians did not see the same kind of dramatic reduction in violence during or after the Surge. The data from Brookings indicates that since 2009, violence has only increased in Afghanistan. Secondly, the general capabilities for the state of Afghanistan, also has failed to strengthen its power in any meaningful way. This is evident by the enemy insurgents ability

⁶ The data from Brookings is considered as reliable as any available through open sources. However, as this thesis reviewed the material, routinely the data sets were crosschecked from other reporting institutions and agencies. This included, the UNHCR, the Institute for the Study of War, public reports from the US DoD, and New American foundation, and the Watson Institute at Brown University.

to maintain attacks during the Surge.

Iraq by the Numbers

Once Iraq was under US occupation the domestic security for Iraqis rescinded into a perpetual violent state and this was complicated by political dysfunction. This is most evident in fatalities listed below from 2004-2008. As the Surge started in 2006, and since then the security of Iraq increased and this was evident by the decrease in insurgent attacks, and the drop in civilian casualties. The reduction in violence against civilians, and the reduction of insurgent attacks is the prime indicator of the arguments for the success of the Iraq Surge.

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
7,300	16,800	20,200	34,500	23,600	6,400	3,000	2,500	1,578	1,317	1,666

Table 1: Total Estimated Iraqi Civilian Fatalities, by Year (DoD/GOI/Press)

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
12,093	11,608	16,180	19,114	25,501	9,839	5,132	4,109	4,147	4,573	1,629

Table 2: Total Estimated Iraqi Civilian Fatalities, by Year (Iraq Body Count)⁷

⁷ The chart and data represented here comes from the Brookings report previously identified.

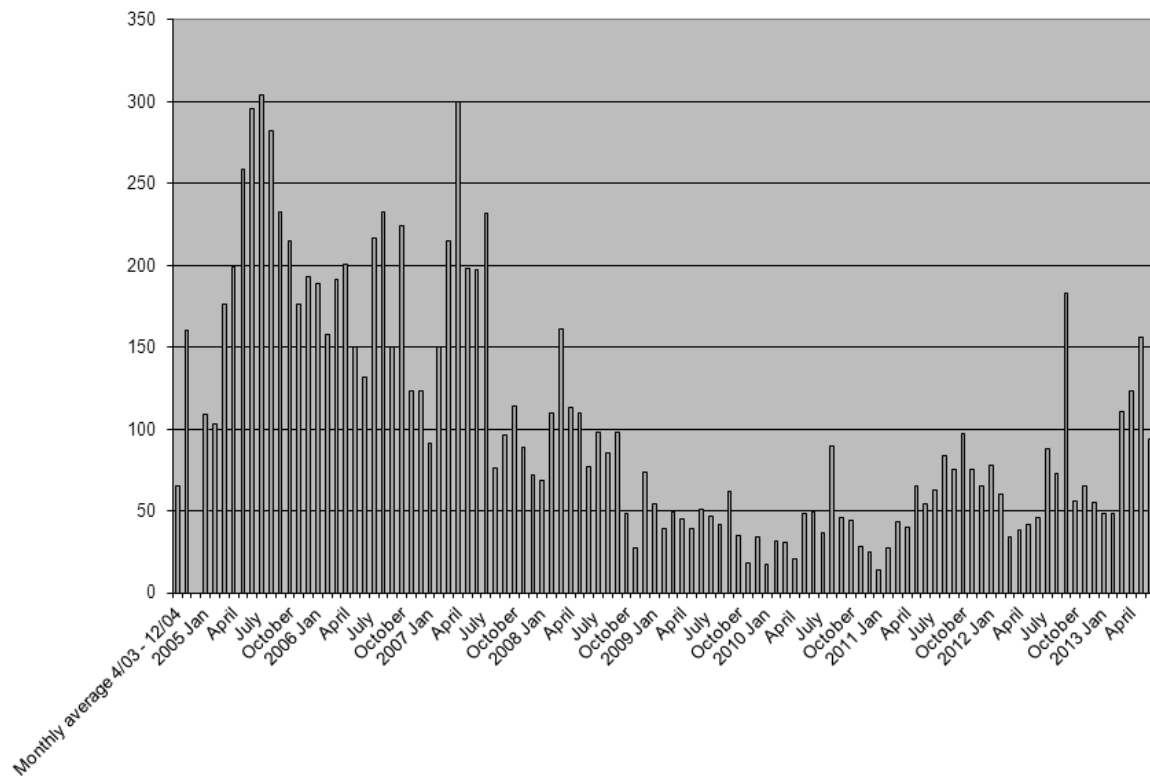


Figure 1: Number of Insurgent Attacks in Iraq (Brookings)

Afghanistan by the Numbers

As Afghanistan came under US occupation, civilian casualties and insurgent attacks continued to increase similarly to Iraq. However, during and after the Afghanistan Surge, civilian deaths and injuries continued to rise. The chart below shows the numbers.

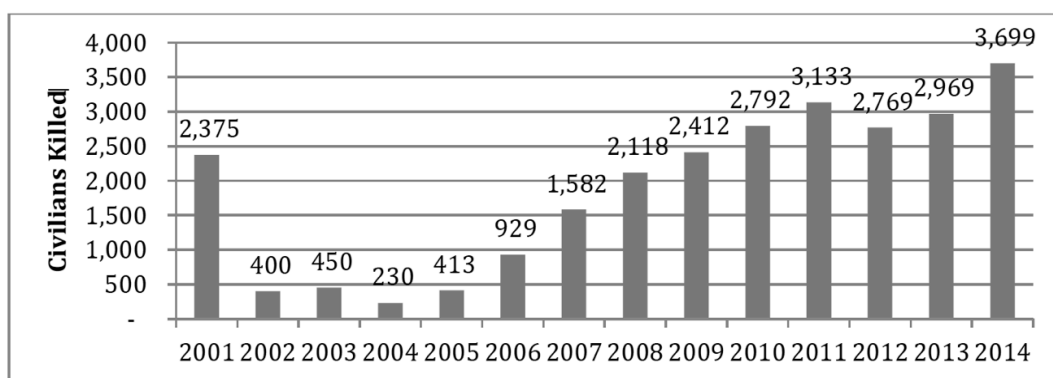


Figure 2: The Afghanistan Civilian Death Chart ⁸

⁸ The numbers from Brookings is supported by other sources including the Watson Institute. This chart from Watson is a more clear than the chart in the Brookings report. It came from the Watson Institute at Brown

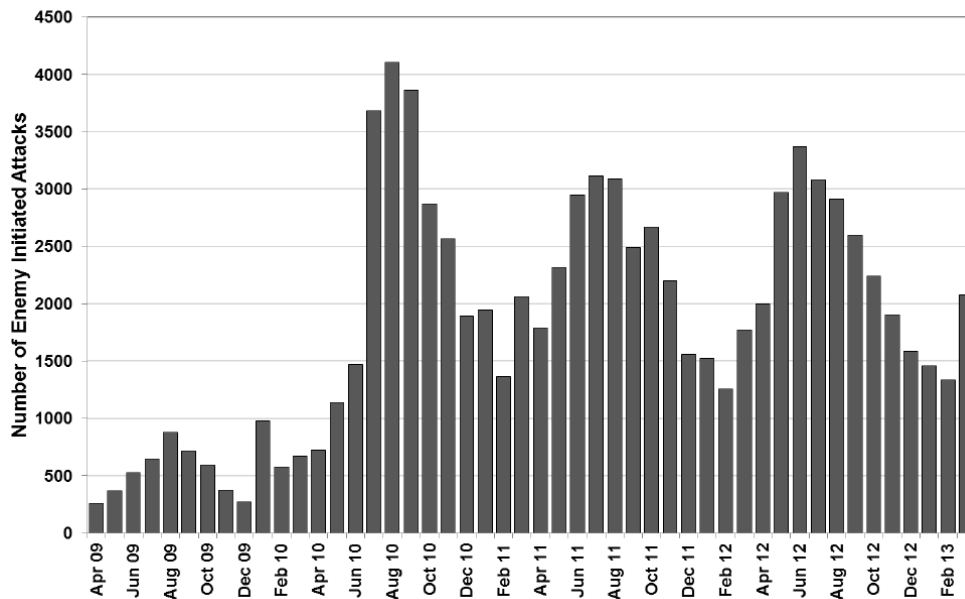


Figure 3: Number of Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan

Indeed, the two cases show a different pattern of violence against civilians, and a difference in level of attacks from the insurgency. It is from the quantitative data provided above, that this thesis proceeds to investigate the diverging outcomes.

Having identified the premise of the argument in this thesis, this chapter will proceed to identify how the 3-staged argument of this thesis answers the research question.

Explaining the Data within the 3-stage model

Stage 1

Stage 1 identifies the preexisting historical and cultural components that contribute to the outcome of each case. Stage 1 performs this portion of the argument by identifying the compositions of each state. This includes the components of political history and internal political differences between the two cases. Stage 1 surveys the political makeup to each state, as they formed in the 20th century. This is important to do because the political structure of each case is very different. Because the political history is different in each case, the

differences assist in the outcomes of the Surge. It is not the definitive reason for the diverging outcomes, but stage 1 does interact with the others stages and plays an equal role as the other stages in explaining the differing outcomes. Stage 1 will show that both states have troubled political histories and both countries are rich in a legacy of political dysfunction. The type of political dysfunction includes vapid electoral corruption, coup d'états, and state sponsored executions of political dissidents. Furthermore, stage 1 describes how each state develops in spite of their political dysfunctions. This history plays a part in the central states abilities as the Surge occurs.

Stage 1 of the Iraq case study, shows that Iraq was once a reasonably strong state. However, since the 1970's, Saddam Hussein, and his Baath party, as well as the strength of the Iraqi state increasingly jeopardized its political stability. As a result, Iraq's domestic political tensions continued to rise. This problem culminated when the states central power disappears after the 2003 invasion. As a result, the central political power increasingly diffuses into a variety of sectarian factions with local leadership that eventually emerged as opposition political groups or insurgent organization.

In contrast, Afghanistan's history shows a dysfunctional central political authority, and primary political power locates itself in the rural tribal areas. This is a point to notice as the Surge occurs.

Iraq's ability to rebuild some strength in the government is for of two reasons. First, Iraq's central government previously demonstrated strength, and this was most obvious in the Baathists security forces, as well as the state infrastructure, including its waterways, power stations, schools, hospitals, roads and other infrastructure. Secondly, the domestic day-to-day infrastructure for Iraqis and their day-to-day life was far more sophisticated than Afghanistan, there was wide spread banks, storefronts, schools, power, plumbing, running water etc., and the literacy of the people more than doubled Afghans (Ollivant 2014). This made some

elements such as training judges, lawyers, city planners, bankers, as well as training the Iraqi military, and working with tribal Iraqis far easier than Afghans.

Afghanistan's history created a much larger set of infrastructure and manpower difficulties because of the absence of a strong central state, and an absence in the human capabilities of Afghans. Afghanistan's agrarian society, and sheer size also made it more difficult for the central state to establish control and provide basic needs such as schools, roads, and electricity. As a result, the US encountered much larger problems during the Surge because of these preexisting conditions.

In addition, stage 1 provides clarity on the preexisting historical factors that assist in creating different insurgent organizations. Stage 1 shows the political disputes that inform why the Taliban become a dominant political force existed before the US presence in Afghanistan. This is a key point of comparison as well. The Taliban had been in Afghanistan for nearly a decade before the US arrival. In the Iraq case, the Taliban equivalent, AQI, was a relatively foreign organization. Without this particular section of background context, the details of domestic political power are lost and these important factors are essential to understanding how and why COIN forces succeed and failed in these two cases.

Stage 1 underscores the political problems in each case, and shows the historical development of sectarian groups. This is important to understand because as sectarian groups form, so do political tensions, and this in part explains why the insurgency develops and diffuses as it does, and this also informs how the governments in each case respond to them. A more clear comparison will be demonstrated in the comparison chapter, but a point to notice as the chapters disclose, is the Sunni/Shiite/Kurd/AQI relationship in Iraq compared to the Pashtun/Tajik/Hazara/Taliban relationship of Afghanistan. However, stage 1, by itself, is not a conclusive final argument.

The comparison chapter will perform a point-by-point comparison between the

differences in political history and make the comparison more clearly. Iraq's history is one that shows a relatively strong central government and demonstrates the ability to regulate society, provide some goods and services, and build central security forces in Iraq. Afghanistan's political history indicates the exact opposite. This an important background point to expose, because as shown later in the comparative chapter, Iraq's history of strong central political authority, returns during the Surge. This is absent in Afghanistan. As shown in the Afghanistan case study, the central governments main failure is its inability to gain control of the rural countryside or gain domestic support. Stage 1 shows that Iraq and Afghanistan have obvious differences, and this is seen when the US is able to assist the new post-Baathist Iraqi state in regaining strength, and increasingly becoming more capable as the Baathists were in the past. In the Afghanistan case, the Surge was going against the history of powerful political systems in Afghanistan. The Surge was supposed to aid and assist the new Afghan government and centralize political power, and that proved at least one of its challenges. In summary, between the two cases, the political history sets up Iraq to be a less difficult case to perform COIN inside, which partly explains why the Iraq Surge experience temporary success and Afghanistan did not.

Stage 2

Stage 2 of the argument analyzes US actions before both Surges and then during the Surges. Analyzing both is important because neither Surge occurred in a vacuum. Both Surges occurred while both Iraq and Afghanistan was already under US occupation because of the ongoing GWOT. Furthermore, both Surges occurred in sequence, first it occurred in Iraq, and then later in Afghanistan. It is the contention of this thesis, that it is impossible to understand the outcome of either Surge without first analyzing US actions before the Surge.

In the Afghanistan case, the US was occupying Afghanistan for seven years before the Surge, and during this time, the US made many mistakes that prevented it from unifying the

country in the post-Taliban era. In the Iraq case, the Surge occurred just three years after the initial occupation, giving the US far less time to make mistakes. Both case studies will show how US actions prior to the Surge make an impact on indigenous reactions to the Surge (stage 3), and this affects, at least in part, the outcomes in both cases.

Stage 2 will also show that the Iraq Surge benefitted from a military leadership that was consistent throughout the Surge. This is different from the Afghanistan Surge, because, there were a variety of leadership changes, and these affected how the US behaved in theatre.

Lastly, stage 2 shows a difference between the two cases in that the US was required to do much more civil-military work in Afghanistan than in Iraq. This includes, training judges, civil service members, and forming a parliament. This is partly because of the lack of state infrastructure as discussed in stage 1.

Stage 3

Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous groups that created political conditions that assisted in the diverging outcomes of both cases. Stage 3 shows, that in Iraq, small groups across Anbar province, and in the south show competence in policing their own communities that coincided with the US actions and plans and with the Iraqi government. In the Afghanistan case, the population shows a general tolerance for the insurgency. As chapter 7 will show, this is because the Taliban and other insurgent groups were seen as less corrupt than the US and the central government. This is a major difference between the cases, and assists in making the argument.

In conclusion, it is the contention of this thesis that all 3-stages are necessary to understand why the Iraq Surge and the Afghanistan Surge achieved different outcomes. It is the contention of this thesis, that the outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan are different because of the differences in political history as described in stage 1 of both cases. If the unique factors were not in play in both cases, the outcomes of each Surge would be very different.

Moreover, the argument of this thesis depends on stage 2, which is what the US did, and how that contributed to the successes and failures of each Surge. This is important because the US was directly acting inside both cases, and US actions play a part of the outcome. However, as this thesis has articulated, giving the US exclusive claim on the successes and failures of either Surge is a misreading of the data available for two cases.

Lastly, stage 3 discovers the indigenous reactions to US Surge forces and leads to the conclusion of the argument. In review, it is the contention of this thesis that all 3-stages are necessary to understand the outcomes of both Surges.

Original Contribution

This thesis contains four components of original contribution. These entail two principal contributions, and two secondary contributions. The first contribution is conducting a cross-case study comparison between the outcomes of the Surges in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The case studies provide a new account of how US policy interacted with the local political groups. The second component of original contribution lies in its account of the development of ideas that occurred on the American side in the buildup to the Surge. The closest there is to this contribution is the work of David Ucko and Fred Kaplan, yet their work looks at the innovations in military doctrine, not innovations in US strategy. This is discussed in the background chapter. By investigating this in chapters 4 and 6 this thesis provides a background comparison to US policy and plans.

The third original contribution comes with an improved model to investigate the outcomes of COIN in general. By observing the outcome of the Surges through the transitive 3-stage model, this thesis provides a new framework to investigate future insurgency wars. The fourth and final original contribution is the expanded theories of insurgency developed in the literature review. This is important because it gives a fresh framework to investigate future insurgency wars.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 serves as the introductory chapter. It provides an introduction to the research topic. Furthermore, this chapter will outline the overall thesis.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 sets out to identify the research methods, methodology, and the structural framework used for this thesis. This chapter will identify the nature of the qualitative research in this study. This chapter will also identify the limitations of this study, and show how this thesis approached challenges related and within the research design, the research gathering mechanisms, reflexivity, and academic rigor.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is a review of the scholarly literature, which seeks to clarify the necessary definitions and explores the theories necessary to evaluate each of the case studies. It will identify the gap in the existing literature and debates about both cases. Chapter 3 argues that how scholars understand insurgencies needs to be expanded. This perspective is important to consider because as this thesis introduces a framework identified as a “post-Maoist” insurgency. This new framework applied to both case studies, assists in identifying a more nuanced and specific way in which social divisions, created by the political history in each case, contributes to the rise of different non-state groups in each case. This also allows for a more nuanced understanding of the indigenous reactions to the US in each case. By doing so, the literature review assists in developing a more sophisticated understanding to the phenomenon under question in this thesis.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 serves as a background chapter to the first case. This chapter as well as

chapter 6, possesses three distinct purposes. The first is to identify the process in which US decision-making occurred for each of the Surge cases. The second purpose of the background chapters is to identify what the Surges were in policy terms. The third purpose of the background chapters is bridge the case studies together. Both Surge campaigns occurred during the ongoing GWOT. This sets out the contextual factors within US policy and plans that led to the development of the Surge strategy in Iraq. This helps understand the context for the overall argument, as well as assists in understanding stage 2 of the overall argument. This is essential because it identifies where the Surge originated from, who was involved in designing it, why was the Surge necessary, what was the Surge supposed to execute, and what was at stake in this decision in Washington. This is necessary background material because it puts the entirety of US policy into a proper perspective during the GWOT and it evaluates the ideas of the Iraq Surge as they appear from US policy at the outset of the GWOT. By including the background chapter in this way, it sets up a clean comparison for the background in US policy and plans of both case studies. As the comparison chapter will identify, the difference in backgrounds of US policy and plans is one component that assists identifying the Surge policy, though it is not a contributing stage in itself.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 consists of the Iraq Surge case study. This chapter identifies that the Iraq case contains 3-stage model that explains how the Surge created, for a short period, a semblance of success. This case study seeks to construct a balanced account of the successes achieved by the Iraq Surge and the limits of those successes, avoiding the binary conception of success and failure adopted in some polemical approaches. It proceeds chronologically to first move into stage 1. Stage 1 demonstrates how historical factors and Iraqi political and societal structures developed into social divisions in Iraq. These social divisions were at play and influenced the insurgency. After reviewing stage 1, the case study will move onto stage

2, which reviews the US actions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge. The case study will then move onto stage 3, which are indigenous reactions to the Surge. This portion will demonstrate how the social divisions inside stage 1 evolved and disseminated into various insurgencies that affected the overall outcome of both cases. Furthermore, this chapter will demonstrate, that the interaction of these 3-stages created a synergistic mechanism that allowed for the reduction of violence in Iraq, and temporary political stability.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 discusses the background in US policy and plans for the Afghanistan Surge. This is a similar analysis as chapter 4. Chapter 6 helps to identify where the Afghanistan Surge originated from, who was involved in designing it, why the Surge was necessary, what was the Surge supposed to achieve, and the risks in this decision making for Washington policy makers and military leaders. The background to the Afghanistan Surge is unique as well as the background to the Iraq Surge. However, the development of both Surges' was very different. The point-by-point comparison will expose this more in chapter 8.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 is the Afghanistan case study. This case study will proceed similarly to the Iraq case study. It will begin with stage 1, a chronological depiction of the domestic Afghan factors that influence Afghan political history, and how that guides the social divisions in Afghanistan. Furthermore, these social divisions assist in understanding some elements to where the insurgencies in Afghanistan emerged. Moving from stage 1, the case study discovers stage 2, which is a US action prior to the Surge and during the Surge. US actions are important because it is central to understanding the outcome of either the Afghanistan or the Iraq Surge. Finally, this case study will illustrate how Afghans reacted to US efforts.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 directly compares the two cases. Following the case studies, this thesis will

follow a four-part, point-by-point comparison. The four-part comparison will compare the background chapters, stages 1-3 of each case, and then conclude with other themes and issues at play between the two cases that are not essential to the argument, but important to identify for future research.

The comparison chapter will compare the US policy and plans as developed in chapters 4 and 6. This is important to go through as it demonstrates the differences in the historical backdrop of the US policy and planning between the two cases. The differences and the similarities in the backgrounds of both cases are important elements that assist in understanding the different outcomes.

Following the comparisons between the US policy and plans, chapter 8 will then proceed to a point-by-point comparison and find the converging and diverging components inside of the 3-stages within the central argument of this thesis. During this point-by-point comparison, the comparison chapter will draw out the themes that emerge during the 3-stages that contribute to the different outcomes. Then lastly, the comparison chapter will quickly touch on some outlier comparisons that are not necessarily contributing factors to the different outcomes, but might be useful for any future research. In summary the comparison chapter will perform a four-part comparison:

- Comparisons in US policy that set the backdrop for the different Surges
- Comparisons in political historical considerations in both cases
- Comparisons in US behavior prior and during both Surges
- Comparisons in indigenous reactions to both Surges

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 is the conclusion chapter, which reviews the overall structural components in this thesis. It reviews the research question, the overall argument of this thesis, and overall conclusive findings. Lastly it identifies areas of weakness in the thesis, and options for future research.

Structuring the Framework of the Research:

The adequacy of a research method depends on the purpose of the research and the questions being asked (Lock 1989)

Designing the Research

This chapter will explain the research methods used to conduct this study. This chapter will proceed by addressing questions related to research strategy, and research methodology. Furthermore, it will proceed to discuss the types of data gathering mechanisms employed to ensure a robust and rigorous study. It will then set out to demonstrate how the research process proceeded through four research phases, and finally will address the issues of bias in research, ethics, and reflexivity.

Methodological Journey

A number of different methodological approaches were attempted to complete this research project. Given the principal researchers primary preferences, the first approach considered was a quantitative research model. This would involve seeking to establish correlation and causality data sets between strictly controlled sets of input and output variables.

Early on in the project, it became very clear, that the qualitative data in this project would be difficult to code and then analyze through a quantitative model. In an effort to retain some of the advantages offered by the principal researchers desire for quantitative methods, a mixed-methods approach was considered. Ultimately, however, it did not prove possible to reconcile a mixed-methods approach along with the desire to keep the rich

normative data available from the field interviews. As a result, the research process eventually settled to pursue a qualitative, comparative case-study research project.

Comparing the Surge outcomes presented some initial challenges. Given the rich historical data in each case, and the complicated overlapping themes between the cases, choosing how to conduct the comparison proved challenging. Initially, the researcher developed three independent variable studies that focused on one portion of the argument. These entailed one portion of the argument followed by the second case with the second portion of the argument, and so on: (An example: case X, the historical background for Iraq and Afghanistan: then moving ahead to case Y which was US actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and then case Z, the indigenous reactions). As this was attempted, it became clear that this specific plan did not do justice to the data gathered during the fieldwork. It was then decided upon that by performing the country specific case studies, in their entirety, would be best. Meaning, the case studies would proceed to do, stages 1-3 of case A, and stages 1-3 of case B. Performing the case studies this way paved the clearest way for comparisons to be made later. Having identified the principal researchers methodological journey, the following sections will identify the research was designed and the research methodology.

Addressing the Limitations in Method of Previous COIN Research

Addressing the limitations in methods of previous COIN research is important to start with. Previous scholars have used case study research to make arguments surrounding COIN. While case study research is one useful route to generating knowledge, it is not a silver bullet. Many scholars have come before and made sound, logical, scientific arguments surrounding COIN. An example of COIN research using case studies is John Nagl's, *Learning how to Eat Soup with a Knife*. Nagl argues that militaries acting against an armed militia can use innovation model "x" and will adapt and learn how to "win or lose wars" (Nagl 2002). Nagl's

work from Oxford is informative, but Nagl's case studies are engineered in a way, so that the shades of difference between the two cases are lost in his strict methodology. Nagl's structured focus comparison is so strict, that his methodology leads the reader to believe each case is so similar that they are almost the same. Moreover, his strict focus comparisons conclude his arguments that are at least slightly over assertive.

There is also a different method of research from Jacqueline Hazelton who argues that COIN forces who fight armed militias produces a set of strict results (Hazelton 2010). Hazelton argues that COIN achieves direct outcomes, regardless of particular nuances between cases. The methodological issues here are problematic because she uses cases from the 20th century, without accounting for the phenomenal political/social changes occurring in the modern era. Therefore, Hazelton's conclusions maybe right in her research, but her cases are not applicable to the modern environment.

Nagl and Hazelton are respected scholars, yet their methods developed strict assertions about COIN campaigns. These studies then derive at prescriptive conclusions for COIN based on predictable relationships between input and outcomes concluded from their case studies. That is exactly what this thesis is trying to avoid. The method and methodology used in this thesis will assist in providing an answer to the research question, and will conclude with a sound argument, but it will not offer ubiquitous arguments for COIN.

The method and methodology of this thesis seeks to underline the vital importance of case-specific local variables, as well as the variables of US intervention, and how these play a role together in the outcomes of a conflict. By taking this approach, this thesis can extend existing scholarships by generating new approaches to view the insurgency, and the outcomes of these kinds of conflicts.

Designing the Case Studies and Explaining their Comparison

This thesis sets out to discover the following research question:

Research Question:

Why did the Iraq Surge (2006-2009) and Afghanistan Surge (2009-2013) achieve different outcomes?

This research question indicates that two cases need to be constructed, and then these two need comparing in order to explain the different outcomes. This requires at least two components of case study research. First there needs to be two independent case studies to demonstrate what happened during each Surge case, and then secondly there needs to be a comparison between the two, to confirm the facts of the research and conclude the argument of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis will proceed with case study A and case study B, followed by a comparison between the two cases. However, there is more required to understand the comparisons.

Theory and Rationale for 3-stage Model in the Case Studies

The preliminary research conducted for this thesis indicated that a variety of factors are at play in the outcome of a COIN case. In order to understand either Surge outcome, this thesis requires an investigation into military theory (COIN), social phenomenon in anthropology such tribal politics, as well as broader theories related to statehood, conflict, and violence. While researching this thesis, the existing literature surrounding the Surges, largely overlooked the preexisting political history of both cases. This oversight occurs with the exception of scholars who researched either case as a part of post-conflict studies. Furthermore, absent from any arguments surrounding the Surges, was an established theory of conflict and violence. Most of the arguments surrounding either Surge mostly look at the violence occurring in each case.

Experts in post-conflict studies such as Gareth Stansfield, Toby Dodge, and Stefan

Wolff appreciate Iraq's history as it matters in relation to the rebuilding of Iraq, as well as in the Afghanistan case, Seth Jones and David Kilcullen have paid special attention to its political history and how it affects the rebuilding effort. However, in both cases there is little political history accounted for in the outcomes of the Surges. This is most evident as one surveys much of the COIN literature surrounding each Surge. By combining the strengths of military studies of COIN, and the importance of political history in post-conflict studies, this thesis can bridge these two-fields of research and can offer new insights to both the Surge cases.

How the 3-stages Illustrate the Different Surge Outcomes

The research question seeks an answer to the different Surge outcomes. The question infers causal factors or transcending themes as the explanation to the question. Therefore, before proceeding to answer the research question, it is logical to pin-point a precise plan that can explain what are the causal factors or the transcending themes, and why they occur. The following section will explain how 3-stage model performs this task.

Theoretically, the 3-stage model explains what are the causal factors and why the differing outcomes occur, and this is done in the variation of the 3-stages.⁹ The model adopted in this thesis, using the 3-stages, does not follow the methodology of previous scholars, but it is not required. As Clark identifies, "models should be assessed for their usefulness for a particular purpose, and not solely for the accuracy of their deductive/inductive explanations" (Clarke 2007). Clark goes onto to explain that causal models (like the one adopted in the 3-stages here) may be foundational, structural, generative, explicative, and/or predictive, and must be judged on the appropriate metric. By default, the research question narrowly places the 3-stage model in the case studies as a model of

⁹ Robert Yin argues that case studies are best applied when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

explanation. Therefore, if this study would use the terminology of variables, the dependent variable, is the outcome of the Surge, and there are three causal variables, and they are:

1. The political history of each case study and the political relationships of sectarian groups before the Surge.
2. US political decisions and military actions prior to Surge and during the Surge
3. The responses from indigenous groups to US actions prior to the Surge and during the Surge

The following section will look at causation and the 3-stage model applied in this thesis. Upon covering this material, the following sections will make clear whether the 3-stage model is transitive or cumulative.

Causality and the 3-stage Model

As previously identified, 3-stage model applied in this thesis is a model of explanation, but another need arises and that is an identification of the kind of causality inside the 3-stage model. Meaning, how do the variables function to cause the outcomes of each case, and is there a possibility of multiple causes?

Causality is a large contribution in political science research. Causation is a theory in political science that shows the causes of a social phenomenon. Causality is defined by Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff as, “a connection between two entities that occurs because one produces, or brings about, the other with complete or great regularity” (Rofling 2012). The purpose of causality is to determine whether changes in outcomes (dependent variable) are based on variance of clear features (independent variables).

Determining causality can be challenging since causation and correlation are confused in what is called the “fundamental problem of causal inference” (Rofling 2012). Confusing causation and correlation can also occur when discussing the outcome of either Surge cases.

An important example to consider is: One could hypothesize that either the Iraq Surge was successful or the Afghanistan Surge was not because of the variance of presidential leaders in office. However, this argument is not found in any method that logically answers the research question. Furthermore, it fails to meet minimal consistencies commonly found in causal factors. One variable can cause an outcome of a case, but failing to consider counterfactuals or hypotheticals means that the causal argument is more likely a correlation, or simply untrue. Often these kinds of arguments are polemical and correlate the outcomes of the cases but logically fail to meet a rigorous scientific test for causation. By using the 3-stage model, the argument helps the argument of this thesis to avoid this kind of oversimplification or polemical arguments described above.

A second example is: One could argue the Surges experienced different outcomes because the military possessed the correct time and tools required in Iraq, but it did not have them in Afghanistan. This argument has been previously used in more partisan and public debates. This argument is rather weak because it makes an overly assertive argument surrounding complex case of Afghanistan, failing to consider other variables necessary to understanding how COIN conflicts start and end. Moreover, it fails to consider both parties of the conflict, the insurgency and the US.

Avoiding oversimplified arguments such as the ones above, and confusing correlation vs. causation is a pitfall that methodology assists in preventing. Understanding some of these preliminary issues quickly resolves the question what the 3-stage model sets up. The 3-stage model as one using complex causation, and by conducting complex causation, this thesis avoids the traps above.

Before using the explanative 3-stage model, a basic requirement remains, and that is to identify whether the complex causal model is cumulative or transitive. Meaning if the 3-stage model is cumulative (stage 2 takes effect because of the influence of stage 1, stage 3

because of stage 2 etc) then the type of model will be rather definitive in the cumulating of variable data. Meaning there would be some form of dependent path in which one thing occurred and was directly linked to another. However, if the 3-stage model is transitive (stages 1 and 2 equally important as stages 2 and 3, and also equally important as stages 1 and 3) then the type of causation that occurs will be more considerate of the broader data between the stages.

Complex Causation in the Transitive 3-stage Model

Indeed, the complex set of circumstances that contribute to ending a conflict is important to consider. Scholars researching COIN theory, often argue that the outcome of each COIN conflict occurs because of a set of circumstances that is not always the same (Nagl 2013, Kilcullen 2012). As a result, understanding the outcome of the Surges requires a model that applies complex causation. Complex causation occurs when, “an outcome results from several different combinations or conditions” (Braumoeller 2003: 209-233). Indeed, the the 3-stage model could apply a number of complex causal models. These could include anyone of the following models:

- Multiple conjuncture causation: X_1 and X_2 and X_3 produce Y
- Substitutability: X_1 or X_2 or X_3 produces Y
- Contexts: X_2 produces Y , but only in the presence of X_1
- Necessary and sufficient conditions: X_1 and X_2 produce Y , or X_1 or X_2 produces Y
- INUS (“insufficient but necessary part of a condition which in itself is unnecessary but sufficient for the result”) conditions: $(X_1 \text{ and } X_2)$ or $(X_3 \text{ and } X_4)$ produce Y .¹⁰

The model applied in this thesis will be a transitive model to equally recognise the key differences in each stage. This transitive model functions with a multiple conjuncture causation where the totality of inputs X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 equally play a role in producing the outcome Y . This is the most appropriate for this thesis because the 3-stage model does not focus on one variable over another. Secondly, it does not mandate that one ingredient in a

¹⁰ Also from Braumiller cited above

case study must cause the outcome in any future cases. The approach taken in this thesis simply applies a model to understand the research question in the cases of this study. This is most applicable in observing how stages 1-3 equally contribute to the Surge outcomes.

Summarizing the Transitive 3-stage Complex Causal Model

In summary, this thesis adopts 3-stage model that uses each stage as an equally contributing variable to find the cause of the Surge outcome. The 3-stage model was chosen because it considers more variables than found in much of the pre-existing COIN literature. Secondly, it takes into account the theories applied in post-conflict literature. This improvement gives the 3-stage model some unique authority not previously used.

Considering each stage as a variable in the larger 3-stage model means there is complex causation occurring. The 3-stage model adopted in this thesis is a transitive model, meaning that each stage equally contributes to the outcome of each case. The combination of the similarities and differences in each stage helps to answer why the Surges have different outcomes.

Role of the Background Chapters in the 3-stage Model

The framework of this thesis is set up with a background chapter to each of the case studies. The background chapters serve three purposes. The first is to identify the process in which US decision-making occurred for each Surge case. This is captured in the data showing where the Surge ideas are initiated, and why leaders in Washington decided upon each Surge. The detail of that material is necessary to include because the outcome of each Surge was different. As a result, the preliminary question that surrounds the background is, “Did the Iraq Surge and the Afghanistan Surge have the same background in terms of the policy and plans, or were there significant divergences in the US policy and plans?”. If the Surge policy was the same in both cases, meaning the end goal or end plan was similar in their political, strategic, operational, and tactical goals, then there must be a different

explanation to why the Surge cases achieved different outcomes. Indeed, the background chapters will show that the Surge policy in Iraq and Afghanistan do emulate each other.¹¹

By eliminating the differences/similarities in US policy, as apart of the argument for the diverging outcomes, this thesis can more clearly answer the central research question. Chapter 4 and 6 makes clear that US policy and plans is not a central cause to the diverging outcomes of the Surges. Thus the background chapters are not an added stage to the model applied, but they are still necessary precursors to understand the case studies.

The second purpose of the background chapters is to identify what the Surges were in policy terms. The Iraq and Afghan Surges could be easily confused as a simple alteration in ongoing/preexisting US policy in Iraq and Afghanistan from the GWOT. However, Chapter 4 and 6 identify that the Surge was a dramatic shift in policy and plans. Indeed, starting in 2005, the DoD went through an extensive Revolution in Military Affairs. This RMA restructured how the military would operate in both cases. This is crucial background information that provides clarity for what US troops were instructed to do, and how they went about it. This is important data to comprehend, as stage 2 is uncovered during the case studies.

The third purpose of the background chapters is bridging the two case studies together. Both Surge campaigns occurred during the ongoing GWOT. This means that both Surges occur while Iraq and Afghanistan were under US occupation. The background chapters serve as a bridge to understand some key issues that the US faced as its started and attempted to end both conflicts. Without these chapters, the two cases can appear as independent islands that are somewhat incoherent anomalies as they stand.

¹¹ The plan for each Surge was to stabilize Iraq and later Afghanistan. The Surge would stabilize both countries by rapidly deploying an escalation of military and civilian resources. In doing so, the Surge would strengthen the capacity of both governments, with the end goal of gaining the support of the population.

Regional Issues Surrounding the Case Studies

While writing this thesis, a reoccurring question emerged, and it was, “to what extent do the regional factors matter in answering the research question?”. Arguing that regional factors matter in all cases would be a logical fallacy, because its easy to find cases where regional factors play a minor to insignificant role.¹² However, simply ignoring the regional aspects to each case study would not be fair to the reality of each case either. In addition, providing an overemphasis is equally hyperbolic to answering this research question.

While investigating this thesis, David Kilcullen argued that most counterinsurgency campaigns have some “regional factors to consider”, but they are not always essential to understanding the outcome of each case (Kilcullen 2013). Regional factors are somewhat important to understanding the outcomes of the Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan, but regional problems should not be prioritized over the domestic political history, US actions, and the host governments political stability during and after the Surges. Moreover, as it relates to this thesis, regional factors are only relevant to the extent in which they affect how the US end goals were assisted or otherwise how US efforts found difficulties in managing each Surge. Therefore, regional factors will be included in the data of the case studies, but the exact context will only occur as they relate to assisting in answering the research question. In addition, regional factors will not be used as a stage either, and this is the case because they are not necessary contributors to the successes and failures, the regional issues are considered inside the stages as they relate to the necessary contributions to the outcome.

Role of Regional Factors and Answering the Research Question

Throughout the research gathering stages of this thesis, it became obvious that surrounding regional political considerations are important to consider in the model used for this thesis. However, there is a difference in the importance of regional factors for each case.

¹² The American Revolution and the Sri Lankan COIN campaign are ones that stand out.

Micheal Cohen noted, “the regional issues to Iraq are not even close to being a factor in the same way they could be considered for Afghanistan” (Cohen 2014). A further point was raised by Derek Harvey. Harvey stated, “Pakistan is a sanctuary for the antigovernment insurgency, and its something to consider, but Pakistan is not the reason we failed in Afghanistan” (Harvey 2014). A key architect of both Surges, David Kilcullen agreed, but he argues regional issues are not a central ingredient to understanding the Surge outcomes:

“Pakistan as a sanctuary, is a problem, but the US could have still succeeded without negotiating the sanctuary.... in the succesful COIN cases where a neighboring state harbors the insurgency, COIN campaigns have still succeeded 67% of the time without confronting the neighboring security problem. However, in COIN campaigns where the host country can successfully negotiate the neighboring safe haven, there is an 80% success rate. So you can win without touching Pakistan, but if the coalition was able to effectively navigate the Pakistani problem, the odds improve” (Kilcullen 2013).

Kilcullen identifies that the difficulties emerged in Afghanistan’s domestic politics are a much more principle/primary contribution to the outcome of the Afghan Surge, not Pakistan.

Kilcullen states,

“Even if Pakistan was reliable, and they adequately executed an anti-insurgency campaign... thus preventing a sanctuary it would only partially matter, the root of Afghanistan’s security problem is in the predatory and dysfunctional behavior of the Afghan state, and the failure to govern” (Kilcullen 2013).

The continuity of the arguments, by Harvey and Kilcullen make a compelling case, that in the Afghanistan case, Pakistan is important, but it is not a definitive factor in the Surge outcome. Regional factors are important, but they are not principle componants in the argument of this thesis. It is sufficient to then recognize that regional factors play a part in the outcome of each Surge, but the regional factors are not required to discover the divergent outcomes.

The necessary considerations of regional factors will still be included throughout the case studies where the relevant and necessary material is required to assist in answering the research question as it pertains to the 3-stage model. However regional considerations are not a mandatory element to the outcome of either Surge, and they do not warrant an independent

further stage in the model used, but some attention will emerge within the case studies as considerations and factors that are required to answer the research question.

Comparative Method for Cases

By comparing similar COIN cases, and by using the transitive 3-stage model of causation previously described, the case studies set up a comparison. The comparison from the case study method used in this thesis is required to answer the research question. The comparative method is routinely used in political science to contribute to inductive discovery just as in this thesis. Lijphart emphasizes that, “certain types of case studies can even be considered implicit parts of the comparative method” (Lijphart 1971: 693-694). Furthermore, the comparative method is a fundamental tool of analysis, because it sharpens the ability to describe, and it plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases. Lijphart defines the comparative method as the analysis of small number of cases (Lijphart 1971: 693). The comparative research gained by using a small number of easily comparable case studies, and a strict set of variables is precisely what this thesis attempts to perform. However, some methodological issues arise in a systematic analysis of small number of case studies.

The weaknesses of the comparative method, described by Lijphart, found in the systematic analysis of small number of cases can easily be negotiated by 1.) focusing on similarly comparable cases and 2.) employing a strict set of variables. By focusing on similarly comparable cases, and employing a strict set of variables, the method of comparison, according to Lijphart, is an improvement because this method uses comparable cases by employing a strict set of variables. By doing so, the researcher gains an “opportunity for making explicit comparisons” (Lijphart 1971: 693). Agreeing with Lijphart, Cambel argues, “case studies are the basis of most comparative research, and they offer more

opportunities than is often recognized” (Liphart 1971: 693). In light of this, the thesis will perform a comparison between the two cases once the two cases are complete.

The comparison chapter will compare four points (see figure 1 at the end of this chapter for visual description). First, it will draw out the background comparisons in US policy and plans for each case. This is important, as previously mentioned, because it identifies the ideas in US policy that originated the Surge, the key individuals involved in planning and implementing the Iraq and Afghanistan Surge, and the processes in which both of the Surges were employed. Then it will proceed to a point-by-point comparison between the two cases by comparing the 3-stages of the cases. This is necessary because it will highlight the converging and diverging components within the case studies. Then lastly, the comparison chapter will quickly identify some outlier issues that are not necessarily contributing factors to the different outcomes, but are necessary to identify for future study.

In summary the comparison chapter will perform four-part comparisons that will go through a point-by-point comparison. The four-parts are as follows:

- Comparisons in US policy that set the backdrop for the different Surges
+ Comparing who was involved in both cases, how the Surge was conceived, and the process in why the Surge was chosen.
- Comparisons in political historical considerations in both cases
+ Specifically the comparisons of historical political relationships, social divisions of sectarian groups, history of state political authority, national infrastructure, and general political makeup of each case prior to the conflict.
- Comparisons in US behavior prior and during both Surges
+ Specifically, US military actions prior to Surge and during the Surge that affected American relationships with civilians and armed groups
- Comparisons in indigenous reactions to both Surges
+ The responses from indigenous groups to US decisions and military actions

Bridging the Research Fields

One of the central conclusions from the post-conflict literature is that it is impossible

to rebuild a country, unless one knows its political legacy of the past leaders and political structure. It is the contention of this thesis that this same component applies in the cases of COIN and this is equally important in both of the Surge cases. Unless the researcher understands the political history of the country in question, there is little one can possibly understand about the long-term trajectory of any military intervention, and therefore there is little that one can understand about the outcomes of either Surge without first understanding the political history of each case.

The premise of stage 1, and the rationale of its presence in the 3-stage model, is that political history impacts the outcomes of both Surge cases. Summarizing this concept, E.H. Carr argues, understanding the social phenomenon in history requires a look into both the past and present through the interrelation between them (Carr and Cox 1964). Carter Malkasian, who spent considerable time in both Afghanistan and Iraq, argues,

“There are a minimal of three factors that affect the outcomes of an insurgency and a counterinsurgency campaign- the historical context to the battlefield is one of them” (Malkasian 2014).

David Kilcullen indicates, “the outcomes of a COIN fight depend on getting your actions right, and capitalizing on what the [indigenous] people want, you don’t have to be perfect, you just have to do it better than your opposition” (Kilcullen 2012).

Contributing to their assessments, COIN expert and author to US military COIN doctrine, John Nagl argues, there are a few components to analyze when researching the outcomes of insurgency wars, “one thing: you need know what your unit is doing, and the other thing you must have, is the working knowledge of your enemy and what drives them to fight” (Nagl 2012). E.H. Carr, Nagl, Malkasian, and Kilcullen and make a compelling case. It is from these arguments, as well as the survey of preexisting literature, that the preexisting history is important to understanding the outcomes of both Surges. As a result, the argument of this thesis, in part, relies on the context, or political history as the first portion of the overall argument.

In, summary, stage 1 is a precursor to stages 2 and 3. It sets up a context to understand how dominant political groups play a role in each case, where social cleavages emerge, and how this contributes to each the development of conflict. Stage 1 does not cause stages 2 and 3, but it plays an equal role as those stages do in the overall Surge outcome.

Stage 2 looks at US actions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge. Stage 2 relies on understanding how US actions made a positive/negative impact on both cases. Throughout the research portion of this thesis, it became obvious that most of the arguments surrounding either Surge were centered¹³ on specific actions of specific military units during the Surge. However, this form of research overlooks US actions prior to the Surge that played a crucial part in the outcomes.

Stage 3 discovers the indigenous reactions prior to, and during each Surge. The importance here will be more obvious in the case studies. The Iraq case will show, indigenous reactions were one of the lynchpins that allowed for some temporary breakthroughs, and the indigenous reactions were not mirrored in Afghanistan. This is just one element that explains the different outcomes.

In summary, the 3-stage model shows why temporary success occurred in Iraq, and why it did not in Afghanistan. Presenting the argument of this thesis in this fashion presents the most concise and thorough route to answer why the Surges achieved differing outcomes. By identifying one of these stages, there is only an anecdotal argument that can only partially explain the different outcomes. By using the 3-stage model, this thesis makes a strong and original argument. The concluding rational for the 3-staged model used in this thesis, is that these 3-stages used independently only correlate to why the Surges achieve different outcomes, but linking these stages together, in a transitive model, the combination of the stages causes a synergistic mechanism that allowed temporary successes in Iraq that was not

¹³ This thesis will use the standard Oxford dictionary spelling for centre as commonly used in the UK. The spelling of center, using an “er” instead of “re” will be used for American titles and institutions.

experienced in Afghanistan. The model applied here provides a more rigorous explanation to the research question, and it is less anecdotal than the previous arguments made concerning each case. The following sections will explain this in more detail.

In review, the 3-stages that explain the differing Surge outcomes are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in both outcomes of the cases.¹⁴

These 3-stages allow each of the case studies to discuss the same key components that affect the outcomes of both cases.

Justification for Size and Scope of Case Studies

This project involves the study of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan across the entire nations. A smaller scale case study, such as a single-province case study comparison, (ex. comparing Anbar in Iraq to Helmand in Afghanistan), could have been attempted. However, this approach would not provide an adequate demonstration to the complexity and diversity within each case. Some smaller portions of each case were nominally comparable, such as the urban comparisons during the Surge, between Baghdad/Ramadi and Kabul/Marjah. Still though, the dynamic anthropological differences from Iraqis and Afghans over the course of each campaign create more issues that are required to discover. Therefore, the conclusion was made that a countrywide case study best negotiates these challenges.

Conducting the Research

In order to conduct this study, there was a requirement to gather data from firsthand

¹⁴ The research focuses on these three main mechanisms because the data gathered during field work directed the research focus to these components. This is for many reasons, but more thoroughly explained in the literature review and methodology portions.

accounts, as well as secondary sources to investigate the social phenomenon occurring in these cases.¹⁵ The research process of this thesis proceeded through four periods.

First period of the Research

The goal of this period is to provide an account of the background history, and debates surrounding the development of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. This involved extensive and detailed study of secondary literature and some primary documents. This process occurred from in fall of 2011 to the spring of 2012. Including, open sources available through open publications from the US Naval War College, and the US Army Center for Lessons Learned as well as an extensive variety of other governmental sources including open congressional hearings, senate reports, and advocacy group's accounting of events, as well as applicable non-governmental publications.

Second Period of the Research

The second period was to conduct fieldwork-gathering firsthand accounts to the accounting the emergence/construction of US strategy to both cases. This fieldwork involved conducting semi-structured interviews with 45 key individuals who were involved at some level in shaping the policy process. In addition to initially scheduled interviews, this fieldwork allowed for a "snowball" process making use of contacts gained throughout this period of research. This particular process occurred in summer 2012 to fall 2012. This process began by using Skype interviews, as well as face-to-face interviews conducted across Washington DC, Virginia and Maryland.

Third Period of the Research

The third period was analyzing the interviews and the previous archival data and crosschecking the initial observations. This was important for qualitative analysis because a

¹⁵ Ngaire Woods argues, history is not a data store which might overly negate theory, but as a narrative which permits a greater appreciation of the origins, evolution and consequences of an event" Woods, N. (1996). Explaining international relations since 1945, Oxford University Press.

qualitative account depends on the identification of key elements in the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, there needs to be some triangulation to ensure an accurate accounting of narratives and experiences. This process occurred in Birmingham from fall 2012-fall 2013.

Fourth Period of the Research

The fourth and final period performed a combination of periods 1, 2, and 3. Combining the data gained in the previous periods, the research process concluded a comprehensive review of the data gathered in the field of research. This process occurred in Washington DC from fall 2013-fall 2014. In producing a comparative case analysis, this study concluded to understand the answer to the research question.

Conducting Interviews and Navigating Bias in Research

This research project sets out to find the complex set of social phenomenon that contributed to the outcome of each case. In order to discover these issues, the primary researcher performed interviews, along with document analysis. This is performed because as Rubin, Brinkman have identified, this is the principle method for qualitative researchers generate and collect data (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2006; Seidman 2006). Indeed, the interviews are a key component in this qualitative research, and their importance is that the first hand accounts can avoid general observations from media sources, but talk about their experiences.

Risks and Qualitative Research

As Rubin identified, the primary way a researcher can investigate social phenomenon is to speak to people who themselves possess the experiences of it, in this thesis, these would be the individuals who took part in advising, planning, and carrying out the process of either Surge. Conducting these type of interviews can be challenging, because as Myburgh identifies,

“It is through the researcher's facilitative interaction that a context is created where respondents share rich data regarding their experiences and life world. It is the researcher that facilitates the flow of communication, who identifies cues and it is the researcher that sets respondents at ease (Poggenpoel & Myburgh 2004: 418).

In order to deal with the difficulties of interviews, during the preliminary background research, the primary research needed to identify the individuals best suited for this study. Indeed, this was very straightforward. Due to the willingness of high-level government officials (see appendix), it was decided to carry out the maximum number of interviews that were possible during the fieldwork time available. The individuals interviewed during the fieldwork were high-caliber government officials, experts, soldiers, diplomats, etc who served in a variety of way during the US COIN campaigns.

However, before proceeding, this project requires an evaluation of risks and biases associated with interviews from the respondents and the primary researcher. Upon completion of acknowledgement of these risks, this thesis can move forward with a plan to remove these risks, at least as much as possible. Upon doing so, this thesis will proceed to research the question identified in the opening chapter.

As previously identified, the research in the thesis, is a qualitative discovery-oriented project. With that said, the actual composition of rigor and bias management are the major challenges posed for a project such as this.

These types of projects tend to create study-specific arrangements of questions that are open-ended in nature so the investigators can provide openings through which interviewees can contribute from their point of view with little or no limitations imposed by more closed-ended questions. In qualitative research, a semi-structured interview, “increases the validity of the response and are best for the kind of exploratory and in depth work” (Aberbach and Rockman 2002). While the open-ended nature of the questions posed may be a weakness in the context of some types of research, the approach does allow the interviewer the opportunity to frame contexts and backgrounds with greater ease, and this is most

important to this study. Furthermore, in cases where the researcher is likely to use the more closed-ended style of questions, there is a tendency to create a confirmatory type of study. Therefore, the purpose of interviews in this project is not to test theory, not to get answers to questions, and not to evaluate. Meaning, the purpose is to understand real life experiences, or as some call it lived experiences. Therefore, semi-structured formats with open-ended questions were judged the most appropriate way to gather the necessary data.

Risks Associated to the Bias from Respondents

Qualitative research, in any form, has a certain risks of bias. In this research project, two risks stand out. The main two risks that stand out is the bias from the respondents, and bias from the principal researcher. The following sections will address these issues, and it will show how this project addressed them. Indeed, eliminating or at least minimizing the risks associated from bias is a difficult task. However, this task is not an impossible one. With proper research methods/methodology, these problems can be avoided. While conducting the interviews, the primary researcher conducted a 4-step process to avoid, and minimize bias.

The first step applied to minimize bias and irregular feedback in the response, was choosing respondents who agreed to an ample amount of time to conduct the interview. This was done because, studies have shown that not allowing enough time to do an interview decreases accuracy and may prevent respondents from giving feedback in an semi-structured interview (Bauer Baltes, 2002, Blair Banaji 1996, Martell 1991). Making sure enough time for questions, was key to getting ample and quality feedback.

The second step to avoid bias, was gaining a diverse group of respondents. This meant interviewing a variety of civilian, diplomatic, and military respondents. This is important because if the data gathered were exclusively from military personal, the qualitative richness of the case studies would be one point of view. This type of bias is avoided in having diverse sets of respondents.

The third step applied was structuring criteria of questions that lead to accurate evaluations. By applying questions such as,

“What do you recall from your experience at X”

“What outcomes did you observe from Y”?

“From your observation, what impact did X have on Y”

“Can you describe personal X,Y,Z, and his/her contribution at A,B,C”?

The feedback is original and it personalizes the experiences from the respondents (Guzzo 1991). Furthermore, in order to achieve accurate evaluations, there was a structured process for recording respondent feedback. This method of recording increases accuracy from respondents and reduces bias (Baltes 2002). The respondent’s interviews were saved and reviewed after the interviews were complete.

The fourth step used to increase the accuracy of evaluations, was a self-imposed requirement for interview note taking. These were made available to the respondents in case clarifications were required. By using this 4-step process, the respondents and the primary researcher were able to cooperate in discovering the data required for a rigorous case study.

Risks Associated to Researcher Bias

As a former US Marine, deployed to both cases, there is a plausible inference for researcher bias. Some steps were made to minimize these as well. These are covered in the following section.

When conducting the qualitative research for this thesis, the primary risk for someone close to an issue is confirmation bias. This is a tendency for a researcher to seek out information that supports a preconceived belief about the research question, that has been formed before the research process has begun (Phillips and Dipboye 1989). However, there are options available for any researcher close to the subject of research. When conducting this research, the principal researcher proceeded with a process to minimize confirmation bias.

The first step applied was to have a set of questions that guide the interviews in a process of discovery. Meaning, this project needed to apply questions that allow the respondents freedom to answer without the researcher guiding the respondent to their conclusion. Ensuring this outcome is straightforward. First, the questions for this thesis needed to go through an ethical examination from the University of Birmingham's ethical review process. The questions were selected as acceptable.

The second step applied was a pre-interview "self-bias" assessment. This is a process of writing/recording thoughts, feelings, and impressions which might lead to bias in the study if unchecked. Before conducting the interview, the primary researcher made notes of any preconceived feelings, thoughts, and impressions related to this study. By doing this before the interviews, the primary researcher can identify preconceived ideas after the interview process.

Upon completing the interviews, the researcher reviewed the notes from before the interview, and listened to the interviews in their entirety for change in speech, tone, etc. If there was a dramatic change, or a divergence in the questions previously planned, then it was obvious in there would be confirmation bias.

The second major risk associated to researcher bias, is called affective heuristic bias. This type of bias is where interviewer is influenced by rapid and cursory evaluations. The affective heuristic bias is most common in matters of race, gender, and personal background affecting the researchers composure (Postuma 2002). In order to address this potential bias, there was 2-steps taken that are covered below.

Firstly, affective heuristic bias can be addressed by selecting diverse respondents. By spreading the field between, male and female respondents, diplomatic, military, and outside analysts, the selection of respondents was a diverse pool of candidates for data to be gathered.

In order to avoid a bias related to quick evaluations, a second step was applied. The

second step, applied, was a minimum period of time that all respondents were required to fulfill. By doing so, the respondents were equally allowed to share their experiences, and provide their data. Some respondents chose to speak for longer periods, however, there was a minimum that was required from all participants.

Ethics and Reflexivity

Ethics and reflexivity are important issues to consider for this study. Bryman's four principals of ethical research were used to guide this study.¹⁶ Bryman indicates a researcher first must ensure there is no harm to the interview participant. This study does not present any potential risks for indigenous Iraqis or Afghans because the interviews their interviews were generated by previous field researchers with unprecedented access. This work is available through a variety of media outlets. In the case of interviews with policy experts, there is little or no risk to the interviewee. Most of these individuals possessed a high profile either publicly or academically, through the public media.

Bryman's subsequent principals focus on ensuring there is informed consent and ensuring that there is no deception in the study. Ensuring this component was extremely important for the integrity of the study.

All of the interviewees willingly went on record, and verified through oral confirmation, and electronic email. Furthermore, in the case of confusing perspectives, or parts of interview data that was not clear, the researcher followed up with either a secondary interview or double-sourcing of information through a secondary source. However, a few problems emerged did emerge, during this study, because of General Petraeus marital affair and his document release scandal.

¹⁶ Bryman's work is the most explanatory, and descriptive in terms of interviews. For more on this consult his other works: Bryman, A. and C. Cassell (2006). "The researcher interview: a reflexive perspective." Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: an international journal 1(1): 41-55., Bryman, A. (2012). Social research methods, Oxford university press.

This event brought up concerns from one interviewee, Col. Peter Mansoor, General Petraeus former Chief of Staff. As a result, during this interview extreme attention and caution was applied with the data he provided. During the interview, Col Mansoor made a concern that his interview could be, “used similarly as Paula Broadwell used her insider access to narrate people rather than research political science” (Mansoor 2012). In order to navigate this issue with the appropriate delicacy, there is regular double-checking of the responses to ensure there was no confusion. Secondly, there was extensive double-checking of quotations in other outlets. This was done to ensure that the respondent feedback was not something of an anomaly. By double-checking other quotations, there was a parallel logic demonstrated by the respondents.

Lastly, one interviewee, Michael Hastings, was tragically killed in an automobile accident before this thesis could be complete. As a result, great care was given to the data he provided, while still making use of the content he provided in his frank responses.

There is little doubt that bias and reflexivity are a crucial element of any study. The insurance that this study offers against importing such bias into its own analysis lies in the diversity of perspectives sought out as part of the data gathering. Secondly, the methodological rigor ensures that all perspectives were given weight in formulating the final analysis.

Analyzing the Research Data

Once the data is gathered, the next task is analysis. This thesis does not seek to compress the data acquired into a strict, mechanistic account based upon quantitative measures. Rather, it will generate an interpretive analysis of discovery premised on the belief that the key to understanding success and failures during the cases lies in the accounts of the actors themselves.

As previously identified, this thesis used a method of semi-structured interviews to

gather data. These were conducted through face-to-face interviews, telephone calls, and skype interviews. Upon gathering accounts from these key figures, this thesis is able to build a systematic assessment of the factors most relevant to generating the divergent outcomes between the two cases under study. Upon completing the interviews, the research process proceeded to perform data analysis. This begins by analysing the interview data, secondary sources, and original documents and find common themes.

Secondly, after this data analysis was completed, these assessments were juxtaposed to pre-existing interviews from secondary parties. This includes enemy insurgent testimonies from after action reports, journalists, and criminal proceedings. These are available in the public domain.¹⁷ This study also employs the use of secondary source data gathered from archival research through open sources, as well as other materials including military reports, journalist's accounts, academic journals, declassified briefings, and scholarly publications. In this sense, a holistic point of view will observe insurgent testimony, senior policy makers' observations/decisions, and key insiders/experts points of view to complete the analysis.¹⁸

Analysis of Other Data

While conducting this project, the two case studies did not prove equal in terms of availability of information. A much larger amount was available regarding the Iraq insurgency than for Afghanistan. This is coupled with the authors preexisting knowledge of the language that also meant a larger number of sources were ready and accessible directly from the Iraqi perspectives from a variety of sources.¹⁹ That is not to say producing the Iraq

¹⁷ The SIGACTs from MNFI from 2004-2008 were declassified. There are also the extensive interviews from the Marine Corps study of Anbar, as well as detailed as Nir Rosen, Zynep Bulutgil, These are widely cited resources. see: http://www.governmentattic.org/4docs/CENTCOM-FOIA-CaseLogs_2007-2010.pdf

¹⁸ One key difficulty is that personal experiences, conflicting narratives, are a normative measure, the perspectives and diversity of the subjects may vary and are essential to observe in a qualitative study such as this (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:8–10; Patton 2002:13–14).

¹⁹ During my MA program I studied Arabic extensively. Furthermore during my Ph.D. D training, I undertook independent Arabic courses to continue to improve on this training. By no means am I fluent, however my regular travel to Dubai and Lebanon has improved my colloquial conversation and familiarity with general terminology.

case study was easier than the Afghanistan case study. On the contrary both contained their own special challenges. The Afghanistan case contained difficult factors of ethnicity and tribal structures that are much more diverse than of those in Iraq. Therefore, in order to investigate the central question related to the Afghan case study, some initial groundwork was essential to understanding the basic anthropology of Afghanistan. The initial formation of the modern Afghanistan state draws out more questions related to the insurgency than the formation of Iraq. However, these additional questions in fact contribute to a fuller understanding of the potential sources of insurgency that contributes to one of the overall conclusions of the thesis, namely that attention to different levels of analysis is necessary in understanding the nature of the insurgency and the COIN effort.

Original Contribution

This study has four elements of original contribution. In the scholarly research field of the US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, little work compares one Surge to the other. The most notable work stems in military²⁰ literature or journalistic accounts discussing one Surge, yet these are often anecdotal, and often polemical. There exists scholarly work on small portions of each case, such as investigations into Helmand province (Afghanistan) and Anbar (Iraq) yet there is little in existence that compares the two.

The second contribution lies in the background chapters, which provides an account of the process of development of ideas that occurred in the buildup to the Surge in each case. This is an important original contribution because it is constructed from series of firsthand accounts of individuals who were instrumental in the dramatic political and strategic changes occurring in policy within Washington from 2002-2007. In the course of the research, the primary researcher was able to develop relationships with these key individuals because of a

²⁰ Throughout this thesis, the spelling of Defence will be consistent with the Oxford dictionary spelling used commonly in United Kingdom spelling. As in the cases it is spelled Defense, using an “S”, it is used for the proper spelling of an American title, or institution.

social network established through a think tank, the Center for International Policy, in Washington DC.

The third original contribution lies in the explanation for the divergence of outcome in the cases generated by their comparison here. As Andrew Exum states, “I don’t think we have yet been able to learn the political or strategic lessons of COIN (the Surge) in Iraq and Afghanistan (Exum 2010). COIN has become a popular reference for military tactical success; its political and strategic success emerges as the under-researched issue and potentially possesses a major contradiction.

The fourth and final original contribution lies in the theory applied to the thesis. In discovering this topic, and this research question, there had not been a thorough application of conflict theory to either of these cases. As such, when the Galtung theory was applied to this 3-stage model, there were new insights that emerged that had not been previously done. This is important because it has significant implications for the conclusions drawn in the comparative chapter.

Summary

This chapter explains the research methods/methodology used to conduct this study. This chapter maps out how this thesis conducts its argument. In summary, this thesis argues that 3-stages link together as a synergistic mechanism that enabled temporary successes in Iraq that was not experienced in Afghanistan.

In review, the 3-stages are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions

that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.

Following the case studies there will be a comparison chapter that will follow a point-by-point comparison between the two cases to conclude the argument in this thesis. In summary the comparison chapter will perform four comparisons and they are:

- Comparisons in US policy that set the backdrop for the different Surges
- Comparisons in Political Historical considerations in both cases
- Comparisons in US behavior prior and during both Surges
- Comparisons in indigenous reactions to both Surges

The following figure captures this conceptual framework, as it will appear as chapters within the thesis.

Background to Case A Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Important ideas, people, events, & process describing where did Iraq Surge originate• Outcome and Conclusion	Case A Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stage 1• stage 2• stage 3• Outcome and Conclusion
Background to Case B Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Important ideas, people, events, & process describing where did Afghanistan Surge originate• Outcome and Conclusion	Case B Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stage 1• stage 2• stage 3• Outcome and Conclusion

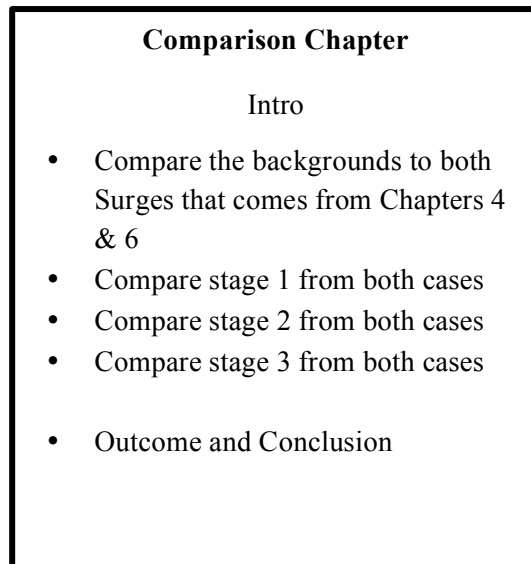


Figure 4 Depiction of Structure of Background, Case Studies, and Comparison Chapter

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the questions related to research strategy alongside the types of data gathering mechanisms employed to ensure a robust and rigorous alternative study. It has set out to demonstrate how this thesis proceeded through four research stages, and address the issues of ethics, bias and reflexivity. Furthermore, it identifies the original contribution to the scholarly literature and debates surrounding the Surge.

The following chapter will explore the theories necessary to evaluate each of the case studies. By doing so, the following chapter clarifies the necessary definitions and units of analysis. Furthermore, the following chapter will argue that there is a gap in the scholarly literature. This existing gap is where this thesis fits within the broad scholarly literature. The existing gap fails to understand the adaptation and evolution of insurgencies from the classical era to the Maoist era, and finally moving to a ‘post-Maoist’ era of insurgency.²¹ The thesis places itself in this gap because it provides a template to observe both future insurgencies and the outcomes of future COIN conflicts. By building on the existing theory

²¹“The cold war is far too influential in our thinking of insurgencies, and the Maoist insurgencies are not what we are facing anymore” Kilcullen, D. (2012). Interview. J. Diliberto. via Skype.

of insurgencies (Maoist), and then adding to it (post-Maoist) this thesis makes headway to an expanded understanding of the insurgencies in both of the cases.

Lastly, the following chapter discusses the theory applied in the 3-stage model. By adopting the 3-staged model, this thesis can act as a potential model to interpret current and future conflicts. However, before doing so, this thesis needs to show that the model has theory that can assist in understanding the outcome of future cases.

The Bloody Gavel:

Reviewing the literature surrounding counterinsurgency, terrorism, and the debates surrounding the Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan

“Counterinsurgency is a competition, it is not a morally uplifting exercise, you don’t have to be perfect, and you just have to do it better than the other guy to win”.

David Kilcullen: 2012

The number of complaints brought before him, continued to increase because people heard of his justice. When this occurred, Deioces said he did not want to carry on acting as a judge. With Deioces stepping down, lawlessness and anarchy broke out.

Herodotus: Book 1

Introduction

In order to explain why the Iraq Surge (2006-2009) and Afghanistan Surge (2009-2013) achieve different outcomes, there needs to be a clarification of key theories, definitions, and concepts. This chapter will review the scholarly literature that discusses the concepts and theories that relate to the 3-stage model used in this thesis. This will prioritize theories as they relate to non-state armed groups that act as an insurgency. It is also important to identify COIN theory as it relates to the case-specific arguments regarding the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges. Lastly, it will identify the necessary theory required to understand how conflicts end.

This chapter will proceed by first observing the theory of violence/conflict used in this thesis. This is important because identifying the underlying issues of any conflict is important to understanding how the conflict will end. The structural/cultural elements of any case inform how and why groups are fighting. Understanding how those contribute to actual visible/direct violence is equally important. The insurgencies of each case exist because of the different political histories, and out of these differences, there are elements that contribute and hinder the lifeline of insurgents in both cases. This portion of the literature review will draw attention to stage 1 of each case study.

An analysis of the scholarly literature surrounding COIN theory will be made, as it is

relevant to the research question. In this portion, the chapter draws focus to the theory of COIN as it is related to stage 2 and some parts of stage 3 of the case studies. This portion will review how to fight insurgencies, and what are the necessary conditions to succeed in a COIN campaign. In the process, this chapter will identify a gap in the existing literature, which the preexisting COIN literature does not fully address as it relates to these specific modern cases of Iraq and Afghanistan. By identifying the gap in the existing literature surrounding insurgency and COIN, this chapter identifies a new and expanded theory to approach the two case studies. This improved theory will be applied in each of the cases.²² This is also one of the original contributions of this thesis.

The final portion of this chapter is to address the preexisting arguments surrounding the outcomes of the Iraq and Afghanistan Surge. By addressing these, this chapter identifies that the argument in this thesis is new and original.

As previously stated, the Surges experienced different outcomes, and the explanation for that is the 3-stage mechanism. In review, the 3-stages are:

1. The political history of each case creates two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government. This is best observed in the social divisions, and local power disputes that preexisted before the Surge occurs.
2. The second stage is US tactical actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
3. The third state is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that contributed in the outcomes of both cases.

Identifying the Theory of the 3-stage Model

Chapter 1 shows the data sets from the Brookings Institute. These demonstrate the

²² In this section, the chapter identifies the existing literature focuses on a binary model of state vs. non-state actors that is useful, yet incomplete, and struggles to address adequately the circumstances of the 'New War Frontier' faced in complex theatres such as Iraq in 2006, and Afghanistan in 2009. This concept of New War Frontier is a theory that I argued for at American Political Science Association APSA annual conference in 2014. It is cited here: Diliberto, Jacob, The New War Frontier: Understanding Modern Insurgency Wars and the Syrian Civil War through the Iraq Insurgencies during 2006-2009 (2014). An APSA 2014 Annual Meeting Paper. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2451333>

visible/direct violence occurring throughout the period under study (see pgs. 13-16). This visible phenomenon justifies the initial inquiry for this thesis, but it does not provide any explanation for how and why the Surges conclude. The following section will describe the theory used in the 3-stage model, and it explains the Surge outcomes.

The 3-stage model claims that the political history of each case impacts the Surges outcomes. By adding this to the argument, there is an assumption here that indicates direct violence cannot be removed from the non-visible triggers of a conflict. Indeed, the 3-stage model does not distinguish an importance of direct violence over these nonvisible components, and this follows Norwegian researcher Johan Galtung's theory of conflict.

According to Galtung, the effects of direct violence are visible and obvious, this includes the numbers of people the killed, property destroyed, the number of attacks, the wounded, etc. However, the invisible components of a conflict are illusive and at times can be more sinister than the more visible direct violence. If Galtung's theory is valid, then one can infer he is arguing that the events taking place before the Surges contribute to the violence during the Surge. Galtung argues that,

“Direct (behavioral) violence occurs because of contributing ‘structural and cultural’ components involved to the particular conflict. Each of these categories represents a corner in the conflict triangle, which Galtung argues has a built-in vicious cycle” (Galtung 2004, T Ziyadov 2006).

Galtung's theory says, cultural and structural violence exists, and these are equal aspects of conflict and they are invisible. Galtung argues that,

“[In the short term direct violence is more pressing] but is also may be the lesser evil, at least in the longer term, than structural and cultural violence. Cultural and structural violence causes direct violence, by using/motivating the violent actors who revolt against the structures and using the culture to legitimize their use of violence as instruments... direct violence reinforces structural and cultural violence” (Galtung 2004, T Ziyadov 2006).

Indeed, structural and cultural violence are invisible because they do not necessarily visibly show the killing of people, or destruction of property. However, this invisible kind of

violence forms a structure of relationships in society, which perpetuates the myths and history of a people that contributes to growing insecurities in a people group.

A depiction of Galtung's model is below.

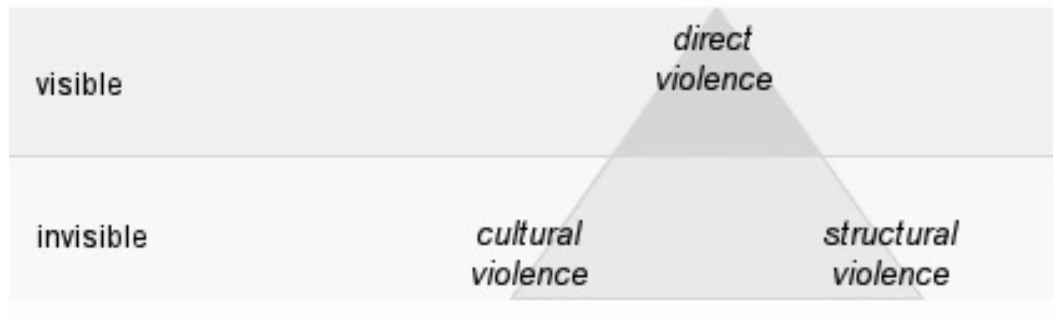


Figure 5: The Galtung Conflict Triangle

Galtung's Conflict Triangle is the theory that forms the 3-stage model of this thesis. Galtung's triangle is a transitive model, meaning each portion of the triangle is equally important. The 3-stage model used in this thesis demonstrates that structural and cultural violence are invisible forms of violence equally contributing to the Surge cases. These structural and cultural portions of violence are found in stage 1 and are equally considered as the case studies proceed into stage 2 and stage 3.

Stage 1 discovers the political history in each case as it relates to the Surge outcome. Stage 1 shows that during the early development of Iraq and Afghanistan, there is societal angst due to cultural revolutions, military coups, and political dysfunction. Galtung argues that the elements of cultural and structural violence set a tone that equally contributes to a conflict that involves direct/visible violence. The cultural and structural violence is captured in the diverse political disputes in each case, and is a factor that contributes to the emergence of violent non-state groups throughout the Surges. Although some of this history is trapped in myths and perceptions formed during the trauma experienced by each society of the conflict, and there are times when these myths and social constructs play an equally important role for the Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is observed later on in stage 3.

Stage 2 of the case studies, discovers the more visible direct violence that contributes to the different Surge outcomes. This visible aspect of violence occurs before the Surge in the invasion of each case, and then during the Surges themselves. As previously said, US actions was one factor in deciding the outcome, and US actions contributed to controlling some of the behavioral and direct violence that assisted both outcomes.

Stage 3 investigates the reactions by indigenous groups to US actions. This is equally important to consider, just as the US actions were important, because the indigenous reactions are one contributor in deciding the Surge outcomes. Indigenous reactions observed in stage 3 consider how the indigenous groups social constructs and group narrative is transformed throughout the duration of US occupation. As the groups' internal narratives begin to change, so also does the groups contribution to direct violence. This portion is captured through the spectrum of different reactions by differentiating insurgent groups and by their structure and their political goals. This is an equally important contribution to the conflict, which is why it is included in the 3-stage model.

In summary, the 3-stage model observes the invisible components of a conflict as well as the direct/behavioral components. Galtung's description of visible and invisible contributors to a conflict, give the foundation for the 3-stage model used in the case studies. The 3-stage model used in the case studies considers factors that contribute to the Surge outcome, but predate the Surges, and also the actions during the Surge. This is an improvement over previous research surrounding either Surge case. This improvement helps provide a more rigorous understanding to the divergent Surge outcomes.

Why Central State Political Authority Matters for each Surge

The issue of governance affects the outcome of the Surges. Francis Fuukyama discusses this issue as well as David Kilcullen and Stathis Kalyvas. Governance is a key component to why the Surges achieve success and do not. In traditional scholarship found by

Francis Fukuyama, governance is gauged by a number of components including, GDP, economic efficiency, strength of the military and a variety of other variables (Fukuyama 2004). However, as Stathis Kalyvas and David Kilcullen have noted, these issues are only important as the state is defined as a construct (Kilcullen 2013). When discussing the issue of a state when confronting an insurgency, the key-defining factor is not the state in its ability to compete against western concepts of a state. Moreover the defining factor in defeating an insurgency is not in a state's ability to compete internationally against western powers, rather it is a matter for how the state can outgovern the insurgency it faces. The state does not have to be a powerful westphalian model of a state, but it must simply outperform the insurgency. As David Kilcullen states, "the state does not have to be a morally uplifting enterprise, it must simply be a better security option than the insurgency in order to succeed in defeating it" (Kilcullen 2013). Kilcullen also states, "to beat an insurgency you don't have to get a lot right, you simply have to get more things right than the insurgency (Kilcullen 2013). Therefore, as this thesis proceeds, understanding why the insurgency wins or loses is not to be judged by the state's great assets as Fukuyama identifies, or in terms of "statehood" as Fukuyama observes, rather this thesis looks at statehood by how well it confronts the insurgency.

Lastly, stage 1 observes that statehood or the at least some portions of statehood make Iraq an easier location to perform COIN in than Afghanistan. This is a central part of the argument in the thesis. As this issue relates to the argument it is important to rely on Fukuyama's point regarding, "scope of a state" (Fukuyama 2004). While both Iraq and Afghanistan were largely dysfunctional states, the scope of Iraq's influence over society was far more extensive during the Baathist reign, described in stage 1. The Afghanistan state does not demonstrate the kind of "scope of control", or as Stathis Kalyvas calls a "standardized system of control" in which the state regulates its people through taxation, and economic regulation. Nor does the Afghan state show any form of security control over its territory. As

stage 1 is considered in this thesis, Afghanistan's inability to create any form of a standardized system of control, or scope of control is why its level of statehood is a larger difficulty than Iraq.

Insurgency Warfare: From Classical to Post-Maoist Insurgencies

The scholarly literature on insurgency warfare is vast. Insurgency warfare has been known by a variety of other names, including guerrilla war, low-intensity conflict, and revolutionary war. All of these terms can be used interchangeably from one conflict to another depending on the nature of the political research. Conflict in which insurgencies exist can be seen as an evolving form of "revolutionary conflict" involving non-state groups taking up arms against the state on the basis of political grievances. A revolutionary conflict, in the sense used here, is a particular campaign where non-state groups use guerrilla tactics, and unconventional techniques to attack and subvert their enemy.²³

Revolutionary conflicts have historically fought using asymmetric tactics. This is where a lesser-equipped force uses smaller sized units to attack larger forces; often performing hit and run techniques or other non-conventional strikes. Historical examples of this include the Jewish revolts against the Roman imperial forces, the American revolutionary rebels, and the Napoleonic-Spanish guerrilla campaigns (Beckett 2001, Boot 2014). In these cases, the desire of indigenous groups is to pursue their own interests through the violent disruption, and possible overthrow or takeover of the governing systems of their society. Often outside parties are also involved, intervening in order to pursue their own interests as well.

²³ There are some modern examples where an insurgency appears to be better equipped than their government; this is the case with ISIS and Boko Haram and the Syrian/Nigerian militaries. As of 2014 the insurgencies continue to take territory and beat their opposition with a mix of asymmetric and conventional tactics, with the asymmetric warfare appearing to be focused on surviving more sophisticated US or coalition-style counter-terror operations (drones, A-Team direct action strikes) rather than avoiding the local military whom they can already beat with semi-conventional actions.

Classical insurgencies differ from modern ones and they can be identified by the organizational structure that they use. Steve Metz contends that modern insurgencies have “more complex and shifting participation” than traditional revolutionary wars (Metz and Millen 2004, Metz 2007). Typically, modern insurgencies are more equipped and technologically more sophisticated than classical ones. Modern and classical insurgencies use similar techniques to fight, however modern insurgencies benefit from the advanced weaponry, and advanced theories of employing them that was previously developed by skilled practitioners of insurgency warfare.

The grounding theoretical work to understand how classical insurgencies changed is found in Mao Tse-tung’s, *On Guerrilla Warfare*. In Mao’s writing, the concept of insurgency became more advanced than classical revolutionary conflicts because Mao’s original work laid out a doctrine that guides a weaker political force to accomplish its goals by employing a strategy of revolutionary guerrilla warfare (Tse-Tung and Griffith 2000). Mao’s work influenced many 20th century insurgency campaigns. However, more recently modern insurgency campaigns have emerged that move beyond these models and do not fit the Maoist model.

David Kilcullen contends that modern insurgencies increasingly demonstrate a far more dynamic component than Maoist, or classical revolutions (Kilcullen 2005, Kilcullen 2012). Meaning, modern insurgencies are more capable of adapting and becoming more capable with greater ease than previous insurgencies (Horowitz 2010: 166-210). Kilcullen argues this is the case because modern insurgencies are more connected to each other and able to recruit from more sources than those of the Maoist era (Kilcullen 2013: 52-169). David Kilcullen described this phenomenon in an interview stating, “this is made possible because of technological advancements such as the internet, cellular phones, and other platforms... now insurgent/terrorist groups have a greater access to others than in the past”

(Kilcullen 2012). Moreover, modern insurgencies are more capable of causing extreme violence with fewer personnel than previous insurgencies because the advancement and availability of modern weapons. This is one of the reasons that John Mackinlay advances the idea of post-Maoist insurgencies (Mackinlay 2009: 246). Mackinlay states, Maoist insurgencies were a modern development that focused on popular uprisings from the countryside that used the population as a force multiplier and used absolute resolve to reduce the state's power to maintain control through the use of subversion (Mackinlay 2009: pp. 1-19).

Indeed, Kilcullen and Mackinlay put a new theory forward that asserts insurgencies are different today than in the 20th century. However, modern insurgent warfare attempts to take hold of political space where a government cannot sufficiently penetrate society to create a standardized system of control. This is the same tactic as performed in the classical era and the Maoist era.²⁴

Though insurgencies have adapted in their capabilities they have not dramatically changed their end goals, and this is seen in the two case studies of this thesis. In Iraq, after the US occupation began, there was no clear governing authority that controlled the countryside. This became most evident in the early years of the occupation, directly after the deBaathification. Because of a lack of standardized systems of political control, armed groups and lawlessness emerged in Iraq. In Afghanistan, the situation is similar. There was no central strong governing authority in Afghanistan. Once under US occupation, the US attempted to create one, yet it encountered many localized challenges.

The survival of the insurgencies depends on whether the government fails to reconcile with the insurgency and whether it fails to (re)establish a standardized system of political control over society. The insurgent's threshold for victory is low: insurgents typically win

²⁴ In Homeland Security parlance, these are termed "National Essential Functions" and the entire apparatus of Homeland Security is designed to protect these functions above all others.

because they continue to survive and exhaust the dominant counter-insurgents working on behalf of the government (Kilcullen 2007). This is one of the central points to understanding of how the US temporarily succeeded in Iraq, and did not reach the same circumstance in Afghanistan. In Iraq, part of Iraqi society was able to establish a standardized system of control that was able to stop the sectarian groups from fighting each other, and in Afghanistan, there was no similar occurrences.

Clarifying the use in Definitions of Terrorism vs. Insurgency

Terrorism, like insurgency, is a contested concept among scholars and relevant to this thesis. There are hundreds of definitions of “terrorism”, especially when the term occurs in the discourse as a descriptive term for military and political organizations. The US Department of Defense defines terrorism as, “the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological” (DoD 2007:297). Insurgencies wage campaigns for political purposes against dominant actors in control of the state apparatus. Since insurgents are typically the lesser-equipped force in an asymmetric conflict, terrorism is often a tactic they employ. Therefore, terrorism used in this thesis is best understood as a tactic sometimes used by insurgent groups, however, rather than an identity of an insurgent organization.

Terrorism is one instrument in the larger symphony of subversive practices used in insurgency warfare. Subversion is the preferred method used by groups who do not have the ability to confront the dominant actor through conventional means. Roger Trinquier defined subversion as, “an interlocking systems of actions, political, economic, psychological and military that aims at the overthrow of established authority in a country” (Kitson 1971:5). The US Department of Defense reinterprets Trinquier, and defines insurgency as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of

subversion and armed conflict” (Petraeus, Amos et al. 2007). In summary, the principal tool of insurgencies is subversion of which terrorism is one component. Terrorism is a tactic, but also has been used to define organization. Throughout this thesis, terrorism will be understood as a tactic, rather than an organization.

Review of Insurgency Warfare: Classical to Maoist Insurgencies

Classical insurgencies had a variety of tools at their disposal such as banditry, rural political uprising, and peasant recruitment, however they were unable to conduct campaigns at the operational capacity as seen in later forms of modern insurgency (Beckett 2001:1-23). As Mao perfected the art of rural uprisings, his followers took on the name and identification of Maoist insurgencies. Indeed, Mao’s followers benefitted from several skilled practitioners and extensive theoretical planning. Mao understood, almost all insurgencies have ended because of political settlement/solutions, not because one group or another suffered a battlefield loss/victory (Long 2006, Jones and Libicki 2008). Thus far, this chapter has reviewed the classical concepts of insurgency, and Mao’s small alterations of insurgency theory. Furthermore, this chapter introduced the concept of terrorism as it can be confused in the discussion of insurgency. The following section will expand on the post-Maoist theory of insurgency, as it pertains to this thesis.

Expanding Mao’s Theory and Building on Mackinlay’s

Though Mao’s theory of insurgency is useful, it does not exhaust every kind of insurgency. John Mackinlay argues, that the Maoist model of insurgency does not fit the versions of insurgency seen in contemporary conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan (Mackinlay 2009:143-162). Further arguing this point in 2011, Deputy Secretary of Defense Michael Vickers highlighted this fact by stating that states may sponsor insurgencies as a tool of their foreign policy, in effect ‘outsourcing’ their desire to subvert a foreign government to local actors. In addition, host governments may sponsor or manipulate domestic groups as a

means of outsourcing aspects of their own internal security policy (Vickers 2010). These can be ongoing indefinitely or used in short intervals as well. Moreover, outsourced insurgencies can be dormant, proactive or anywhere in-between. Vickers gives the most famous example of an active outsourced insurgency, when the US sponsored the Mujahedeen insurgents in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Retired CIA analyst and former White House advisor Bruce Reidel cites an example of outsourced insurgency is in Pakistan. Reidel argues, Pakistan sponsors “several insurgent groups” as a function of their state, as does India (Jones and Fair 2010, Riedel 2012, Tankel 2012). In addition, the former Soviet Union sponsored insurgencies in Africa and South America during the cold war as well (Blaufarb 1977).

As Vickers points out that outsourced insurgency is a distinct different type of insurgency from Mao’s original theory. There also exists another form of insurgent group acts partially as one-part insurgency and in its other dimension, the insurgent groups acts as a partial governmental force.

This hybrid model is seen most effectively in the form of Lebanese Hezbollah. Hezbollah is an interesting case because in one portion of Hezbollah’s activities, it serves as a legitimate political organization that shares political power in the Lebanese government. However, Hezbollah also performs separate activities outside of the state to attempt to continue to grow its influence. This is most evident in its money laundering schemes, its illicit substance sales, its paramilitary operations in Syria, and its aggressions against Israel.

Lastly, the world is more connected than ever, and as a result, “people are more connected, even the most rural farmer of Nigeria has access to being informed by the events occurring in London” (Kilcullen 2012). This has had a significant effect on the way states conceptualize and pursue their political interests and their security, and likewise how insurgent actors conceive of theirs. Insurgencies in the past tended to be primarily conflicts between states and groups within their own population. Modern insurgencies can gain an

extensive network that far exceeds those of previous non-state insurgencies. An example of this is in the support base for contemporary proto-Islamic insurgencies.

Understanding proto-Islamic Insurgencies in the Global Context

Contemporary Islamic insurgencies can be traced to a Salafi Jihadist ideologue Abdullah Azzam. Abdullah Yusuf Azzam led the way for modern day global insurgency as seen in Al-Qaeda. As Osama Bin Laden's mentor, Azzam and Bin Laden established AQ as a group to be a "pioneering" vanguard acting as a new "global proto-Islamic insurgency" (Moghadam 2008). Like the earlier Islamist writer, Sayyid Qutb, Azzam advocated for the creation of pioneering vanguard. This vanguard constitutes the "solid base" in which Azzam claimed, "We shall continue the jihad no matter how long the way, until the last breath and the last beat of the pulse or until we see the Islamic state established" (Berner 2005). The pioneering vanguard envisioned by Azzam was his strategic vision for the organization. In the strategic vision laid out by Azzam, his global martyrs should want to fight Israel, for oppressing fellow Arab Muslims in Palestine. Azzam's supporters agreed with his position, however some of the opposing Jihadist voices, such as Ayman Zawahiri, wanted to first take the jihad against Muslims globally, and label them as *takfirs*, or apostate Muslims. Adopting, Azzam's radical ideas, Bin Laden sought to fight, the "near enemy, and the far enemy". Bin Laden understood, the 'near enemy' as the corrupt, oppressive, apostate regime(s) who opposed the Koran and an extreme version of sharia law inspired by the work of Azzam and Sayyid Qutb (Bergen 2011). Bin Laden effectively became an arbiter for Azzam's position and bridged it with Zawahiri's mindset as well. In order to make both perspectives happy, Bin Laden declared war on the West, and on 23 February 1998 Bin Laden called for attacks on the 'far enemy' (Bergen 2011). Bin Laden requested Muslims across the world to take solidarity with Palestinians against Israel. Lastly, Bin Laden challenged all Muslims to follow his interpretation of the Koran. Bin Laden's ability to make arbitration from the global theory

from Azzam, and the local idea of Zawahiri shows how influential actors have adapted the concept of insurgency since the writings of Mao.

Terrorism and Insurgency expert Rohan Gunaratna indicates, OBL's doctrine and activities transform the traditional idea of insurgency (Gunaratna 2002). The notion of a traditional model of insurgency has never guided OBL. However, OBL sought support from a global network of supporters that already existed (Moghadam 2008). AQ found support in the broader theatre of the Islamic world. In his global political aspirations, OBL focused on anti western ideals harnessed by contemporary local Islamist groups that were looking for partnership, with AQ constantly evolving, constantly finding new bases and new targets worldwide (Reveron and Murer 2006). Bin Laden and Zawahiri disagreed on the best way to strategically employ their campaign (Petraeus 2008, Ricks 2009, Robinson 2009). However, they agreed in unison that not isolating the Muslim Sunni/Shiite communities is essential (Al-Zawahiri 2005). AQ also set up a diverse model of funding that recruited from their global appeal and global support base.

The AQ model of global insurgency includes the traditional banking networks called the *hawala*, as well as charitable trusts and private donors (Looney 2006). Dan Roper argues that, global non-state insurgencies need preexisting conditions for them to survive. In the case of insurgencies taking place in a politically or religiously Islamic setting, insurgent groups can find support organized through Muslim resistance. This is Mao's version of a countryside-organized resistance, yet it exists across the Islamic world randomly²⁵. The broad ideas in anti-American websites, media centres, and longstanding public opinion, serves as the sympathetic support base (Roper 2008). David Kilcullen identifies this concept broadly as

²⁵ The point here is that across the Islamic world, there is sympathy and broad support that is unique. It does not mean that there is one all-encompassing Islamic insurgency, however it does mean there is broad support. Erika Chenoworth write about this nuance in Chenoweth, E. and S. E. Clarke (2009). "All terrorism is local: Resources, nested institutions, and governance for urban homeland security in the American federal system." Political Research Quarterly.

a global insurgency against the west (Kilcullen 2009). Charismatic leaders who have their own political point of view recruit these globalized anti-American sympathizers and convince them to take up arms.

Moreover, AQ did not limit its recruitment to localized ethnic or religious groups such as found in local or regional insurgencies. Likeminded globalized Islamic insurgencies have support from both Sunni and Shiite majority faith followers (Moghadam 2008). In conclusion, with its bizarre origin, the words of its leadership, and the vast evidence from its network of finance, supporters, and operators, AQ demonstrates behavior that does not fit any Maoist definition of insurgency. The post-Maoist framework identifies AQ as proactive non-state insurgency with global aspirations, global appeal, and global influence. The threat of AQ or any other global insurgency may not be existential, nor to be a threat the caliber to that of the Soviet Union in the 20th century. In contrast, some argued that “Al-Qaeda resembles the communist international of the twentieth century— a holding company and clearing house for world revolution” (Kilcullen 2005: 16). Whatever the threat’s difference (distinction), AQ is still an actor that holds the definition of a global insurgency.

In summary, most insurgencies have robust local ambitions, (e.g. Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, National Liberation Front, Tehrik-e-Nefaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad, and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan). However, in the case of Lebanon, the political group/insurgency Hezbollah operates in Lebanon and in the surrounding region. This is similar to groups such as Laskar-e-Taiba, and the TTP (Moghadam 2008, 55-60). The following chart is helpful to configure the different variants of what Metz (2007) calls the “contemporary insurgency,” or what Mackinlay calls the “post-Maoist” insurgency, and also this helps narrow the field of research in what Kilcullen labels local and global insurgencies. The Maoist paradigm and the post-Maoist are constructed below in tables to help visually identify them.

Maoist Insurgency Paradigm

<u>Insurgency Organization</u>	<u>Political Aspirations</u>
Non-State	Local (Contained to one state or surrounding states)

Table 3: Maoist Insurgency Paradigm

Post-Maoist Insurgency Paradigm

<u>Insurgency Organization</u>	<u>Political Aspirations</u>
Non-State	local, regional, global
Hybrid	local, regional
State	local, regional

Table 4: post-Maoist Paradigm

Thus far, this chapter has reviewed what an insurgency is, why it exists, and the differing organizational structures of an insurgency. In review, the post-Maoist framework improves on the classical Maoist reference because allows for traditional non-state groups, a hybrid model that follows a structure similar to Hezbollah, and finally there is a state outsourced model, and global model as seen with Azzam and Al-Qaeda. The totality of the variations of insurgent groups described above poses very different political aspirations. Their interests range from local, regional and in some cases a rather robust and overly ambitious global agenda. Some insurgencies have more than one area of focus; a specific example is Hezbollah, and another is Osama Bin Laden's AQ organization. Hezbollah is regional and local, whereas AQ acts as a global, regional, and local, non-state insurgency.

What is the Operational Capacity of a post-Maoist Insurgency?

Insurgencies have operational capacity. Meaning, they have a life span, a space in which they can operate, and a method with which they conduct their movements. State insurgencies are prime examples. As previously identified, the principal measurement of a state insurgency is that they are outsourced, the moment that the state ceases to resource an

insurgency, they no longer are an outsourced insurgency. The prime example of this is the Afghan mujahedeen during the 1980's. They maintained a powerful status during the war, however, once the US ceased to fund them, they took on a different organizational structure all together. If the armed group continues, it will take on a new life of a non-state organization that is transitive, and is responsible for its own movements, and actions.

Hybrid insurgencies are latent, because they hover over a space and time in which they can conduct operations. The moment this group gets full control of the government, or loses its power, it will shift into a different category, either a state institution, or a non-state group.

Thus far this review of literature has discussed, insurgency, COIN, terrorism, and expanded on the previous sets of definitions by expanding on the existing literature to identify new classifications that can help describe the modern phenomenon as observed in the post-Maoist modern cases. The theory of Maoist insurgency is indeed valid, however it needs expanding, and the post-Maoist framework described above has three differing levels of analysis that are useful in expansive analysis to the kind of threats in existence today. The structure of the post-Maoist paradigm is state, hybrid, and non-state, and these differing types of insurgencies poses differing groups that have a variety of political end goals with differing operational capacities.

Full Model of a post-Maoist Insurgency

<u>Insurgency Organization</u>	<u>Operational Capacity</u>	<u>Political Aspirations</u>
Non-State	Transitive: dormant-active	local, regional, global
Hybrid	Latent: dormant-active	local, regional
State	Outsourced: dormant-active	local, regional

Table 5 post-Maoist Insurgency Model

Countering Insurgencies

In order to understand the outcomes of the Surges, there needs to be new insights as to how the fighting occurs in these contested spaces. Early theorists of insurgency warfare concluded that a government/state that loses to a violent insurgency, and it does so because of reasons unrelated to combat. Bernard Fall an early theorist of insurgency warfare argues the host government does not win or lose because they are or are not killing enough enemies of the state. Moreover, the host government does not lose because it is not protecting itself enough from the violent resistance, nor can it be judged to be losing because too many soldiers are being killed on the counterinsurgent side. Governments rarely lose to an insurgency because they are being out-fought; they lose because they are being out-governed (Fall 1966, Fall 1994: 1-65, 200-230). The key challenge of counterinsurgency warfare lies less in the operational tools of conflict—logistics, weapons, troop density, territorial control, bases to operate from, ideology of nationalism, naval and air capability, etc.— but rather concerns the political issue of basic governance. Fall’s theory of insurgency warfare, based on the conclusions in his fieldwork, posits three reasons insurgencies win against the state:

- 1.) The insurgency makes governing impossible for the state because it creates too much chaos or a separate governing system otherwise known as a shadow government.
- 2.) The insurgency usurps the functions of the state at the local political level, by deteriorating political legitimacy of the state, dominates the monopoly of use of force, establishes secondary courts, enforces rule of law, enforces collection of taxes, and regulates of the economy.
- 3.) The host government fails to preserve the state, by allowing the insurgency to exist (Fall 1994).

COIN theorist David Galula argues, the actual fighting in COIN is a competition for governance between the state and insurgent movement: the government and the insurgency are trying to “mobilize and control the population, and they are fighting for the will of the people” (Galula 1964: 1-100). As stated earlier, the specific local grievances arising inside

the domestic politics of each case is not always transferrable from one case to another. The mobilization of a local population for or against a government occurs by various means i.e., economic motivation, violent intimidation, tribal connections, nationalism, racism, fear, and trust in local courts, general stupidity, and a variety of other coercive means (Kilcullen 2009). In essence, insurgencies exist because of the will to challenge the local political authority structures and challenge for a new ruling power by offering a “competitive source of governance in areas where the state is weak” (Galula 1964:1). Galula’s theory is grounded in what Herodotus described as a general mobilization of population groups against the government. In the time of Herodotus, population groups fought against the government mainly because of the general absence of a standardized system of control or other basic requirements for the basic preservation of livelihoods and ‘normality’ in a society (Lloyd 1988, Kilcullen 2012). In order to understand how the US succeeded and failed during both Surges’, modernized COIN warfare needs to be examined. This will be done by evaluating a concept called 4th generation warfare.

Countering and Eliminating a post-Maoist Insurgency:

Just as previous theories of insurgency needed expanding, so do the theories of how to defeat post-Maoist insurgencies. The ending of an insurgency war always requires a political victory, but the roadmap is sustained through tactical successes that translate into strategic successes as provisions of governance and law increase and locals cease to support the insurgents. This process ultimately leads insurgents to one of three choices. They must chose to either go to the negotiation table, hide in the hills/countryside, or ultimately if they continue to fight they will be destroyed. Differentiating political and strategic victories over more momentary tactical and operational successes is an essential part of understanding how to defeat a post-Maoist insurgency. In order to identify this, there needs to be a survey into a concept of 4th Generation Warfare.

COIN practitioners such as Bernard Fall, Roger Trinquier and David Galula emerged during the mid-20th century to develop techniques to counter revolutionary uprisings through a concept called counterinsurgency. In recent years, experts such as John Mackinlay and David Kilcullen built on the work of these earlier COIN theorists to develop theories for third party interventions and state stabilization in post-war conflict zones, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate some problems in existing COIN theory because, as T.X. Hammes argued in an interview, “the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan are not the same as the ones Fall and Galula fought” (Hammes 2012). David Kilcullen states that the arguments surrounding the outcomes of the Iraq Surge are binary, “most people who discuss what happened either say, ‘we won’, or ‘we lost’, but the reality is we still do not exactly know what happened” (Kilcullen 2012). This either or scenario is most notably written in an article by David Petraeus in Foreign Policy entitled, “How We Won in Iraq” which embodies one continuing narrative that illustrates the simplistic tone of the arguments surrounding the application of COIN theory in one case of Iraq (Petraeus 2013).

However, by 2012, the security situation in Iraq undermined the conclusive-sounding arguments presented by Petraeus.²⁶ Part of the problem lies in the challenges of defining success and failure in counterinsurgency. Conventional victories may be declared based on attaining short-term operational objectives such as taking territory or securing bases, but in a war with an insurgency, victory is about the upward trajectory of security and governance in perpetuity. Gideon Rose calls this trajectory of security and governance, as the “Clausewitzian Challenge” (Rose 2011: pp. 1-15). The Clausewitzian challenge states that, in

²⁶ Two prominent examples from both Sunni and Shiite leaders in 2012, a Sunni Tribe leader was quoted saying, Al-Qaeda is everywhere, they are just in hiding and waiting to come out, if the Sahwa (Sunni protection forces) ever withdrew, Al-Qaeda would rule the streets” Sheik Majid Ali Abbas (Sunni Tribe Leader) 2012. Also in 2013, Shiite Leader Muqtada al-Sadr stated: “The people are now without a government to protect them and are facing terrorism without help from anyone.” Muqtada Al-Sadr (Shiite Cleric in Iraq) 2013 Source Unknown

war, the objective must be to deliver a holistic end to conflict, including the political resolve to sustain society and the state intact.

Former commander of US forces in Afghanistan, General David Barno, argues that post-Maoist insurgencies require a different theoretical approach to achieve these results compared to traditional insurgencies. Barno argues that older models of COIN do not fit with a proper strategy in countering post-Maoist insurgencies. According to Barno:

Beyond the norms of traditional military action once sufficient to win our wars. While protecting against tactical or operational-level defeat on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, our military needs to also guard against the dangers of strategic-level defeat. This is not just someone else's problem. We need to understand the nature of the war we are fighting, and we need to avoid the temptation to define our war as the *tactical* battle we would like to fight rather than the *strategic* fight we are in with a thinking enemy who strikes daily at our national political will here at home. At the strategic level, the risk to the United States is not that insurgents will win in the traditional sense, take over their country, and shift it from a partner to an enemy. It is that complex internal conflicts, especially ones involving insurgency, will generate other adverse effects: the destabilization of regions, resource flows, and markets; the blossoming of transnational crime; humanitarian disasters; transnational terrorism; and so forth. Given this, the US goal should not automatically be the defeat of the insurgents by the regime (which may be impossible and which the regime may not even want), but the most rapid conflict resolution possible. In other words, a quick and sustainable resolution, which integrates insurgents into the national power structure, is less damaging to US national interests than a protracted conflict, which leads to the complete destruction of the insurgents. Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat (Barno 2006).

Within a post-Maoist paradigm, insurgents put their political and strategic objectives at the forefront of their decision-making process (see figure below for a visual explanation). According to Barno, “insurgencies use their lowest dollar investment, unlike [America]” (Barno 2006). A post-Maoist insurgent's smallest ability to influence a fight is at the tactical level and their largest impact is at the political level. In summary, Barno argues that to address modern conflicts is to focus primarily on political and strategic successes, rather than fighting conflicts at the lowest level, which is the operational and tactical side of battle.

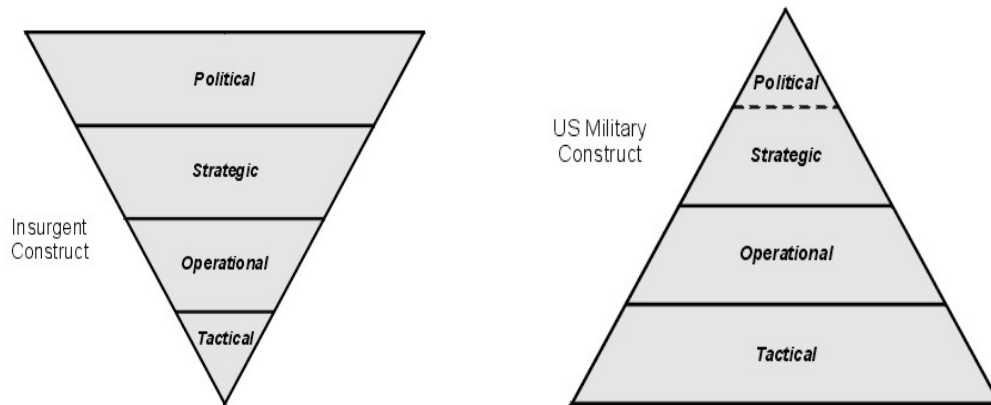


Figure 6 the Barno Structural Theory on fighting post-Maoist Insurgencies

Barno's argument makes logical sense, in theory, if two opposition forces are fighting and one has a superior military, the other must use a different weapon to win. Barno's argument surrounding 4th Generation warfare suggests that 4th generation warfare should be reevaluated to better understand the modern insurgency wars.

In *The Sling and the Stone*, Marine Colonel, T. X. Hammes describes four evolutions of warfare that help understand Barno's theory. Hammes describes changes in warfare, and therefore also a change in how insurgencies and counterinsurgencies are fought (Hammes 2004: 1-207). Hammes proceeds to argue, first generation warfare was an offensively oriented type of warfare in which armies focused on heavy weaponry and limited sized armies. This category includes primarily Victorian armies and Western armies out of the European-style of conflict, with principal theorists such as Clausewitz and Jomini. This era culminated in the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s, and warfare began to change dramatically by the middle of the 19th century (Hammes 2004: pp. 16-22). Second generation warfare was shaped by increased mobility. This occurred in the context of growing speed of daily contact and transportation in relation with the more advanced weaponry of automated artillery, mobile machine Gatling guns, and the eventual phasing out of animal cavalry. "This phase encompassed the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870s, the turn of- the-century Anglo-

Boer War and Russo-Japanese conflicts, and ultimately the huge, million-man armies of World War I. The latter were massive formations linked to devastating direct and indirect firepower, leading inexorably to the strategic and tactical stalemate of trench warfare” (Barno 2006, Hammes 2004:10- 41). Third generation warfare emerged in the 1920s and 30, and continued well into the age of the modern era of warfare (Hammes 2004: 50-150). This era of mounted mechanized war machinery continued to dominate from World War II until Desert Storm in 1991.²⁷ In an interview, Hammes argues, fourth generational warfare, “transcends these traditional battlefields and is the current era which we fight” (Hammes 2012).

As previously identified, the previous theories of insurgency needed to be expanded to fit into the modern cases, and just as the theory of insurgency needs to be expanded, so does the COIN theory. Expanding the theories of countering insurgencies, one concern occurs throughout much of the literature. The nuanced attention to local political grievances must be considered germane to each campaign. The “micro level” concerns of the citizens and the actors involved in the conflict can easily be overlooked in the midst of the concern to stop violence, quell the insurgency, or address the military metrics for success assigned to the commanding officers fighting. Furthermore, in conflict zones where insurgencies are fighting, economic aid, general court systems, and other non-combat tools are just as much of the battle field as “beans, bullets, and band aids” (Kilcullen 2012). Since each insurgency is varied, no single model of COIN is applicable to every insurgency (Petraeus, Amos et al. 2007:3-54, Mackinlay 2009:221, Rid 2009: pp. 255-260). Rather each requires detailed attention to the specific grievances relevant to the local case.

Thus far this chapter has reviewed older concepts in insurgency and COIN. Furthermore, this chapter has analyzed how the scholarly literature surrounding insurgency

²⁷ “Mechanized warfare culminated with the race to Baghdad in March 2003”. Barno, D. W. (2006). "Challenges in fighting a global insurgency." *Parameters* 36 (2): 15.

can be improved upon based on existing scholars work that reviewed cases such as Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Afghanistan (see pages 41-51). Lastly, this chapter has reviewed how militaries have adapted from 1st generation to the current 4th generation warfare to better understand, the logic of adapting to advancements in military war fighting.

How does a Surge work?

The existing literature, and the theoretical expansions argued for in this chapter, indicates that a Surge is an adaptation in 4th generation warfare to counter a case specific post-Maoist insurgency. A Surge comprises three components: a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) to comprise operational innovations (new operation planning through doctrinal procedures, and training commands), an innovation and readdressing opposition insurgent forces, and an integrated approach where both military and diplomatic efforts attempt to stabilize a failing government and gain support from its citizens against a diverse insurgency that is not a classical Maoist insurgency.

The Surges as studied in the following chapters are two cases in which the US military went through an extensive RMA starting in 2001 with the *QDR*, and then later during the 2006 *QDR* which helped the US follow up to readdress the insurgency (Ucko 2009: 60-85). Furthermore, the *QDR* gave the Surges an opportunity to create structures for an improved civilian and military cooperation. The following chapter explains this in more detail and covers the key individuals, the processes that occurred, and the ideas that stirred the RMA.

In an interview, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Sarah Sewell described this process stating, “during the 2006 *QDR*, there was a RMA that adopted a concept of 4th generation warfare in an unprecedented way not previously seen in the modern US military” (Sewell 2012). Starting with the 2006 *QDR*, “a surge in ideas” emerged that changed how the US analyzed its enemies, and it changed how the US conducted operational planning (Nagl

2012). This “surge in ideas” spurred an innovative manual known as FM3-24 the US Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual which was an attempt in readdressing US opposition in Iraq and make new operational plans in theatre. Lastly, both the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges contained a civilian component, which acted in development services, Foreign Service posts, and security services as well.

Reviewing the Arguments Surrounding the Successes of the Surges in Iraq and the Afghanistan

General Petraeus and others recognize the reduction of violence, post 2007 in Iraq, was an indication that the Iraq Surge was a “success”. According to Petraeus the escalating COIN forces stabilized Iraq and produced positive results (Nagl 2010, Petraeus 2013). Petraeus and likeminded experts vary on the ultimate reason for the Surges success along four broad themes.

The first theme of success for COIN in Iraq is the belief that AQ conducted a political overreach and lost public support from the Sunni population, and that assisted the US effort at bridging alliances and brought the Sunni’s to the negotiating table. This portion of the American success story is known as the AQ overreach theory. David Kilcullen, the most prominent of authors in this camp, identified that AQ was conducting brutal tactics amongst Sunni neighbourhoods. AQ would force themselves into marriages amongst tribal leaders. AQ would cut fingers off of people smoking cigarettes in the streets. Moreover, AQ acted without the permission or desires of many local leaders. Kilcullen observed that this in turn allowed the Sunni’s to break from the AQ and side with the American forces as well as the Shiite dominated government.

The second theme is the “Surge argument”, or, as some identifies it, the “military centric” argument. The Surge assumption states that placing of 30,000 additional troops

through the population centres and General Petraeus' strategy of COIN suppressed the violent actors and won over the population.

The third theme, the "civil war theory," is relatively rare amongst scholars, yet is still noteworthy. This is put forward most notably by Doug Ollivant and he argues that the Sunni community recognised they lost the civil war, and that the only option left was to submit to the Shiite government, side with the Americans, and break from AQ (Ollivant 2013).

The fourth theme is that the US was able to break the cycle of violence through its sons of Iraq program, and win over the population; this is the "popular appeal" theory. This argument is relatively similar to the Surge/AQ overreach argument; however, it is still a theme of its own carried through a variety of differing nuances.

These four dominant themes are highlighted in Sean McClure's *The Lost Caravan: The rise and fall of AQ in Iraq 2003-2007*. In the simplest terms, the differing theories in summary state 1.) The AQ was defeated, and 2.) The US achieved success in Iraq and 3.) The insurgency was primarily Sunni, Shiite, and AQ.(McClure 2010) McClure's chart below demonstrates where various scholars fall with regard to the key themes:

Author	U.S.-centric Actions	Indigenous Actions
Dr. Stephen Biddle		– Anbar model of bottoms up
Shawn Brimley	– COIN strategy – Population control measures (i.e. walls)	– Sunni Awakening
Dr. Juan Cole	– COIN TTPs (population control measures i.e. walls)	– Tribal feuding with AQI – Results of ethnic cleansing – SOI initiative to form local militias
Dr. Stephen Hadley	– Surge	
Dr. Kimberly Kagan	– Surge – Leadership changes in US forces	
Colin Kahl & LTG (Ret.) William Odom	– Surge – Decisions to reconcile with marginal insurgents	– Sunni Awakening – Segregation of sects due to ethnic cleansing
LTG John F. Kelly	– MNF-W Command Philosophy	– Sunni tribe cooperation with U.S. forces
David Kilcullen	– COIN strategy – Decisions to reconcile with marginal insurgents	
Lawrence Korb	– Surge	– Sunni Awakening
LTC (Ret.) John Nagl	– COIN Strategy – Long-term development of ISF	– Sunni Awakening
Michael O’Hanlon	– Surge	
GEN Raymond Odiemo	– Change in strategy and employment of Surge forces	
Andrew Phillips		– AQI’s ideological inflexibility and unwillingness to adapt local sensitivities and interests to their ideology – AQI’s use of indiscriminant violence
Linda Robinson	– GEN Petraeus’ leadership – COIN strategy	– Sunni rejection of AQI
Bing West	– COIN strategy – Bottom-up partnerships between CF and Iraqi citizens	
Bob Woodward	– Surge – Counter-leadership targeting of insurgents by SOF	– Anbar Awakening

Figure 6 (McClure 2010)

The arguments put forward by these experts represent a broad summary to the success arguments in Iraq. While these accounts are illustrative, they are flawed in two ways. The first is, the conclusions they argue are on a limited theoretical point of view. David Kilcullen and Doug Ollivant similarly argue, the majority of scholars look at the COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in a “binary way” (Kilcullen 2012). David Kilcullen contends that General David Petraeus influential work, FM3-24 as follows,

“[FM3-24] is binary, it is a really good manual for fighting non state actors in colonial counter-insurgency (also known as a Maoist insurgency), fit for fighting a war of yesteryear like Vietnam, but not necessarily for the wars of this generation, but the problem is we still look at COIN wars like we did before” (Kilcullen 2012).

David Kilcullen argues the US has insufficiently appreciated the fact that, “Our understanding of [modern] insurgency is somewhat still being influenced by the Cold War and we have not learned what happened in Iraq and compared it to Afghanistan” (Kilcullen

2012).²⁸ National Security Council Advisor Doug Ollivant argues that experts and analysts still observe insurgency wars in this binary way because, “it is easier for us to analyze Iraq and Afghanistan because it makes future field planning and campaign assessments much easier” (Ollivant 2013). Nonetheless, the Iraq Surge is popularly argued as a success as seen in McClure’s summaries.

The Afghanistan Surge did not receive such praises. In addition, the Afghanistan Surge has not been researched in such details as the Iraq Surge. This partly occurred because Afghanistan became less fashionable to research once commanding General Stanley McChrystal was fired (see chapter 6), and partly because the outcome of the Iraq Surge was much more obvious (because of the radical reduction of violence). In an interview, State Dept. official Matthew Hoh argued, “there is simply no source that will argue the Afghanistan Surge achieved the same success as Iraq”. One of the longest serving State Department officials in Iraq and Afghanistan John Kael Weston argues, “even the staunchest supporters of COIN [and the Iraq Surge] will not argue the two achieved the same results... not Fred Kagan, not Max Boot, not even John McCain” (Weston 2014). The President of the Center for International Policy Bill Goodfellow argues, “we really need to take another look at how we think about these wars” (Goodfellow 2013). Carter Malkasian argues,

“we need to take a step back from the actions of the military, and think about how policy affected the ground, if we do that we might start to understand the nature of the insurgency, and the nature of how our actions affected the indigenous people. We might then really understand, and have some evidence for how the Surges worked” (Malkasian 2014).

²⁸ Kilcullen’s arguments are authoritative. In order to understand this concept through different approaches to the material also consults: Thomas, T. S. and S. D. Kiser (2002). Lords of the Silk Route: violent non-state actors in Central Asia, DIANE Publishing., Shultz Jr, R. H. (2008). Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement, DTIC Document., Jones, S. G. and P. B. Johnston (2013). "The future of Insurgency." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 36 (1): 1-25.

A New Analytical Framework to Understand the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges

The previous section has identified the debates over the outcomes in the Iraq and Afghanistan Surge. While these previous ideas are interesting to consider, they fail to consider two important components. First, in order to understand the differences in the outcomes of the Iraq Surge and the Afghanistan Surge there must an identification of the political history of each case that predates the Surge. Meaning, what were the groups' narratives, the groups' identities, and the local dynamics that predated the Surge. As previously stated, these kinds of discussions are invisible portions to the conflict, and these silent portions are just as important as the direct violence that occurs. The majority of the commentary about either Surge lacks this consideration. Secondly, there needs to be an assessment of both US actions as well as indigenous actions. By observing the three of these items, both Surges are identifiable through the synergistic mechanism/interaction of three sequenced stages within the cases. They are as follows:

- 1.) The political history of each case creates two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government. This is best understood through the social divisions, and local power disputes the preexisted before the Surge occurs.
- 2.) The second stage is US tactical actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) The third state is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.

By using this analytical framework in explaining how the two cases produced different results draws attention to the natures of the insurgencies themselves, and specifically the history of social divisions in each case, pre-dating the American presence, around which components of the insurgency would later cohere. The diversity of political beliefs and the diversity of the disputes existing within the insurgencies are crucial to

understanding subsequent events that occur in the cases. This has been underplayed in previous analysis of each case.

Finally, the 3-stages allow for an improved understanding of both the makeup of the insurgency and the nature of US actions to counter it. By using the 3-stages this thesis can more fully and accurately interpret the indigenous reactions to the Surge by local actors, and how the political conditions were created in which the US could – or could not – benefit from and claim success.

In addition, by using the post-Maoist paradigm this thesis can assist in nuancing the understanding of the insurgent groups in both cases. This helps towards explaining why the Iraq Surge achieved temporary success, while the Afghanistan Surge did not.

Post-Maoist Insurgency Paradigm

<u>Insurgency Organization</u>	<u>Operational Capacity</u>	<u>Political Aspirations</u>
Non-State	Transitive: dormant-active	local, regional, global
Hybrid	Latent: dormant-active	local, regional
State	Outsourced: dormant active	local, regional

Table 4 restated: post-Maoist Insurgency Paradigm

The Implications of Applying and Analyzing the Surges with New Analytical Framework

The Iraq Surge was instrumental in changing the GWOT. Five years into the GWOT, the misguided concept received a brand revamping and it reinvented itself with a new identity. In an attempt to redirect America’s foreign policy towards an ongoing war with Osama bin Laden’s cadre of globalized martyrs, the US Department of Defense rebranded/re-identified the GWOT. This occurred when COIN expert H.R. McMaster advised Admiral Fallon that the concept of GWOT was inaccurate, and concluded a new concept of the “Long War”, and as a result, the DoD took on this new language (Cassidy 2006, Bacevich 2010,

Nagl 2012). This debate has directed strategic focus away from the concept of an open-ended ambivalent conflict (the GWOT) into a still protracted broader list of counterinsurgency campaigns in various places in the world. Defense intellectuals have constructed a framework for these varied campaigns, as David Kilcullen and John Nagl identified in the “Global Counterinsurgency Campaign” (Kilcullen 2005, Nagl 2012).

Since 2006, the US has been involved in two very large COIN campaigns, and they have emerged in the backdrop of the GWOT/Long War/Long War with AQ. The stated goal of the Long War was to break the grip of terrorism and insurgents in the prospective regions, and to stabilize troubled states.

Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the literature that surrounds the concepts of insurgency, COIN and terrorism. Furthermore, it reviewed the concepts and theories that scholars and practitioners use to understand how the conflicts with insurgent groups end. These ideas were found in the writings, of Mao, Bernard Fall, John Mackinlay, John Nagl, David Galula, David Kilcullen and others.

This literature review identifies that modern insurgencies encompass a wider variety of actors, political ambitions, and political agendas that do not always fit into some of the older constructs. The concepts used to interpret past revolutionary actions remain important, especially in evaluating history, but as Mackinlay and Kilcullen noted, these older understandings are not sufficient for policy making in the current environments. Mackinlay’s theory of post-Maoist insurgency presents itself as a plausible, logical, and a more modern way to perceive the cases of this thesis. It also provides a theoretical platform that is rooted in traditional theory of insurgency and it studies previous COIN campaigns.

Furthermore, having evaluated the concept of insurgency, as the term has developed in the literature; this chapter highlighted the importance of maintaining a distinction between

‘insurgency’ and ‘terrorism’. Terrorism can be identified as a battle space tactic, and in this study identifying it as a battle space tactic is useful to understand how subversion is used by insurgencies in both of these cases. By understanding how modern insurgencies are constructed, and understanding how terrorism and terrorists are related to, but not indistinguishable or inseparable from, those insurgencies, this chapter arrives at a conceptual framework enabling the reader to understand the role and behavior of armed militias in Iraq and Afghanistan and thus the differing outcomes of the Surge in those cases. Central to that explanation, is understanding that the insurgencies in these cases involve a more complex set of actors than the traditional conception of state vs. non-state actors in an insurgency scenario.

Furthermore, just as the post-Maoist theory provides an expanded view of insurgency, 4th generation warfare provides a starting point to evaluate modern military strategies while in a COIN fight. T.X. Hammes and David Barno have constructed their own theory of 4th generation warfare that, in theory, helps to describe how to negotiate post-Maoist insurgencies. Some of concepts that Hammes and Barno discuss also emerged in US policy and planning as well as in the military operational manuals such as FM3-24. The Iraq Surge and the Afghanistan Surge are perhaps two of the most dominant examples of this 4th generation warfare that is put into action.

Lastly, this chapter identified the debates surrounding the success of the Iraq and Afghanistan Surge (see pages 81-84). This helps the reader understand some of the other debates surrounding this research as well as place this thesis and its original argument in context to the existing literature surrounding the Surges. Now that the key theories, definitions, and concepts used in this this have been identified, the thesis following chapter will proceed to discover what occurs in each Surge case.

Washington in Wonderland:

How the GWOT and the Bush Doctrine sowed the seeds of the Iraq Surge

“The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something alien to its nature.”

Carl von Clausewitz

“In a fight between yourself and the world, always side with the world.”

Frank Zappa

Introduction:

The previous chapters have outlined the research methods and the concepts and definitions used to conduct this study. Moreover, the previous chapter disclosed the theory and definitions used to understand the subject of this study. As the previous chapter has identified, the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan are better understood as a post-Maoist insurgency. Also identified, the Surges are attempts in 4th generation warfare, to defeat these post-Maoist insurgencies.

This chapter (chapter 4) and later chapter 6 will serve as necessary primers to understand where and how Iraq and Afghanistan Surge policy originated. This portion of the thesis investigates where the Iraq Surge originated from in the terms of individuals and ideas within US policy and plans. This is necessary to establish because it provides a starting point for the GWOT and the Iraq Surge. Furthermore, this chapter (chapter 4) and chapter 6 will be compared in the comparative chapter. The comparative chapter shows, in more detail, the point-by-point differences in the development of US policy and plans between the two cases. This is important to do because it demonstrates key background factors that assist in understanding why the Iraq Surge achieved temporary success, and why the Afghanistan Surge did not.

This chapter will begin by explaining the tipping process that created a series of policy misguiding that eventually stirred a successful policy innovation that brought the Iraq Surge. After 9/11, there is a linear track from the architecture of the GWOT and the Iraq invasion that accidentally created the Iraq Surge.

This first portion argues that the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, the 2002 National Security Strategy, and the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, were singularly important in the development of the Iraq Surge. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates there were key actors assisting in pushing ideas through these policy innovations that created the Iraq Surge. This is necessary to understand, because it provides a starting point to analyze the Surge. As chapter 4 and 6 will independently demonstrate, it is because of the GWOT that the Iraq Surge was created, and it is out of the Iraq Surge that the Afghanistan Surge was designed and implemented.

This chapter relies on the evidence gathered from 45 elite interviews from senior policy makers, senior military commanders, key insiders, and senior policy analysts that were apart of these processes. This data was gathered in the first period of fieldwork in the summer of 2012.

Making of the Post 9/11 Counterinsurgency Renaissance

On September 11, 2001, the United States succumbed to the largest suicide terrorist attack in history. As a result, there was much “mystification and paranoia on behalf of the American national security state” (Wilkerson 2012). Indeed, mystification bred paranoia, and this paranoia had a dramatic effect on the political and strategic vision for American foreign and defense policy.

In response to the attack, the United States declared a “war on terror, which has become infamously known as the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This well accounted for

misnomer²⁹, was problematic in both theory and practice.

Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, the office of the President issued three policy platforms that guided US policy thereafter. The three important directives were the *Quadrennial Defense Review*, the National Security Strategy of 2002, and the announcement/declaration of the Global War on Terror. Just days after 9/11, on 17 September 2001 President Bush gave his first public address in response to the attack:

"Our 'war on terror' begins with Al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.... (Al-Qaeda's) goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere" (Bush 2001).

In light of the Presidential directive, the Pentagon rapidly completed the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (*QDR* hereafter), and began an equally rapid restructuring of its military forces for a global campaign.

According to the 2001 *QDR*, the goals of the "Global War on Terror" required a "decisive victory" on the battlefield, but also accommodated for the "changing of regimes in an adversarial state". Additionally, the 2001 *QDR* identified particular theatres in the world as primary threats, thus streamlining American strategic attention. The most important directive from the *QDR*, however, broadened the scope of US foreign policy that planned for the "occupying of foreign territory until US strategic objectives [were] met" (SECDEF, PRESIDENT et al. 2001: 13). Administration officials disagreed on the strategic objectives in this document, as State Department chief of staff Laurence Wilkerson indicates, "no one had a clue to what grand strategy was, not even my boss Colin Powell, he was a tactician" (Wilkerson 2012). Nonetheless, the defense policy innovations from the *QDR* demanded an emphasis on new methods of war fighting capabilities. The *QDR* set to, improve "US military pre-eminence in the face of potential disproportionate threats" (DoD 2001). The

²⁹ The misnomer is located in several writings; Hoffman article was more dominant in much of the commentary. Hoffman, B. (2005). Does Our Counter-Terrorism Strategy Match the Threat?, DTIC Document.

disproportional threats identified in the *QDR* are otherwise understood as “asymmetric threats” (Shaffer 2012).

Until the 2001 *QDR*, senior military commanders, had spent the past 30 years preparing for conventional conflict. The 9/11 attacks, and the 2001 *QDR* required the US to adapt a new force structure, reposition forward deployed units, rethink strategy, and adapt for the contemporary conflict environment.

The *QDR* stated,

While the Western Hemisphere remains largely at peace, the danger exists that crises or insurgencies, particularly within the Andean region, might spread across borders, destabilize neighboring states, and place US economic and political interests at risk. Increasing challenges and threats emanating from the territories of weak and failing states. The absence of capable or responsible governments in many countries in wide areas of Asia, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere creates a fertile ground for non-state actors... Conditions in some states, including some with nuclear weapons, demonstrate that potential threats can grow out of the weakness of governments as much as out of their strength. A reorientation of the posture must take account of new challenges, particularly anti-access and area-denial threats... new combinations of immediately employable forward stationed and deployed forces globally (DoD 2001).

The *QDR*, as a matter of doctrine, made two distinct DoD restructures. The first restructure occurred in changing previous strategic thought concerning major threats. In essence, the *QDR* widened the scope of possible operations from previously mandated operations. The *QDR* set in motion a process for the DoD to be engaging in global deployments. The second change was a restructuring the organization of the DoD. The *QDR* prepared the DoD for pre-emptive and “preventive” uses of force against competing states, and it broadened the US mission leaning towards nefarious actors, asymmetric threats such as terrorists, state-sponsors of terror and adversarial states attempting to acquire WMD. Indeed, after 9/11, “the Bush administration’s primary concern, was that WMD would be given to a terrorist organization, or states would succumb to terrorist attacks and fail” (Macgregor 2012). The *QDR* highlighted states such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Syria s potential

threats. These states were identified as irrational, thereby resulting in the US mandate to act pre-emptively against such threats.

The input from the *QDR* placed a new political and strategic model for regime change, and set the military as a tactical component to conduct such operations. In order to prepare itself for such missions, the *QDR* called for a new threat model otherwise known as “a capabilities-based model” (SECDEF, PRESIDENT et al. 2001). This allowed the DoD to focus more on how an adversary might fight rather than on who the adversary might be and where a war might occur. In effect, both the policy platform of the GWOT and the *QDR* broadens the strategic perspective for military commanders and policy makers. It requires “identifying capabilities that US military forces will need to deter and defeat adversaries who will rely on surprise, deception, and asymmetric warfare to achieve their objectives” (DoD 2001: 14). In turn, this provides political directives from the NSC to the military command to force structure changes within the military strategic vision for the GWOT.

In policy terms, the military did not have any directives to avoid Low Intensity Conflict Operations, or Irregular Warfare. Instead, the new *QDR* provided the foundation for the DoD to readily accept LIC, IW, and Military Operations Other than War to be newly established norms.

Many of the policy elite in Washington discouraged the idea of LIC, IW, and MOOTW, but the *QDR* set in motion a trend that pushed them into the background. Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Sarah Sewell indicated,

“This shift in strategy probably pushed for a more balanced military, because, before the US was so focused on heavy equipment, and focused on the conventional kinetic operations, it had very little capacity to perform the new missions of low intensity conflict, or counterinsurgency as the British or Australian armies could” (Sewell 2012).

The *QDR*’s directive began reshaping some military structures, though it did not completely give up on conventional capabilities.

Just weeks after President Bush's famous speech and the *QDR* release, US military forces began deployments in various LIW and MOOTW campaigns across the globe. Lt Col Anthony Shaffer recounted, "We were rushed into action, and the entirety of US special operations command was conducting IW operations all over, in Bahrain, Djibouti Philippines, Afghanistan, and Yemen" (Shaffer 2012). In addition, larger military training exercises and foreign internal defence measures were increased in Egypt, Pakistan, and a variety of other theatres (Davidson 2012, Natonski 2012). Lt Col. Anthony Shaffer observed, by 2002, "global asymmetric combat operations were in full effect" (Shaffer 2012). The US perceived a real and valid threat that AQ was trying to get control of WMDs, and the "US prosecuted a vicious counter terror campaign to kill them" (Shaffer 2012).

Almost a year to the date of the 2001 *QDR*, the National Security Council published a policy platform drafted within the vision of the *QDR*. Nearly one year after 9/11, on September 17, 2002, the National Security Council issued the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, later identified as "the Bush Doctrine" (Porter 2012). The Bush Doctrine was an attempt by the White House and the NSC to obtain a newly reformed military posture developed from the *QDR*, and employ it across the world.

By 2002, the United States found itself in a "global war", one in which US adversaries are recruited, trained, and employed, by pathologies in common with the "hatred of democracy", and the despising of the American way of life. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld identified these individuals as "evil doers" (Karczewski 2006). However, despite the escalating war, inside the White House, there was, "ongoing disputes between Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld on how to proceed" (Wilkerson 2012). Both Rumsfeld and Powell agreed, "America was the world's sole superpower. Rumsfeld and Powell also agreed that, if the US failed to act decisively, there could be a global shift in the balancing of power" (Wilkerson 2012). Nonetheless, they continued to dispute with one

another how to set new orders to confront US enemies across the globe. The NSS was a doctrine, but it did not tell US military commanders how to proceed. Indeed, policy makers in Bush administration set course to make “new world” that “favours freedom”, but how the DoD and US State department could accomplish this, was still largely a mystery (Quinn 2009: pp. 158-169).

The NSS emphasized pre-emptive war by stating:

"America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few," and this requires "defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders" (Bush 2002).

Furthermore, the NSS also stated, “the unparalleled strength of the United States armed forces, and their forward presence, have maintained the peace in some of the world’s most strategically vital regions”, and therefore, “the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of US forces” (Bush 2002).

Summarizing the 2001 *QDR* and 2002 NSS

The values and ideas for America’s new global agenda set from the *QDR* and the NSS made permanent pathways for both political and military responses to 9/11 in major campaigns observed in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The *QDR* focused on global military preeminence because of the September 11th attacks. Many policy advisors suspected the Bush Doctrine empowered through the 2001 *QDR*, and the 2002 NSS possessed more “theology than strategy” (Armitage 2012). However, these two documents, “directly shaped and influenced US national security policy after 9/11” (Korb 2012). While the *QDR* restructured the military, the NSS allowed for official political reorientation, to the extent it had not even already occurred in the *QDR*.

The GWOT and Iraq

As 2001 ended and 2002 began, the Bush administration decided to adopt the Bush doctrine and engage in a global war. The GWOT came with problems because the war was open ended, and without a clear end goal. Though the Bush doctrine was strong in ideology, it failed to tell the DoD, how the enemy was defeated, or when do field commanders know they have completed their mission. Steve Biddle argued, “not possessing an operational plan that produced long term strategic goals, and not possessing a plausible political end game ensured for the administration” (Biddle 2012). Despite the early mismanagement, the first major operation in the GWOT is the initial war in Afghanistan. Just weeks after 9/11, US Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and Special Operations Forces established an early foothold in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In addition to this ongoing conflict, on March 19, 2003, the US conducted a much larger invasion of Iraq.

The early days of the Iraq war showed a strategic misstep. In previous administrations, when policies were made for wartime operations, the National Security Council would make recommendations, and subsequently they would have the approval put forward by the President and Congress (Biddle 2012, Wilkerson 2012). This oversight within the Bush administration was profound.

“In the past, individuals were assigned roles, and held responsible for certain tasks. When the US began the GWOT, there was no solarium type projects to institutionalize individual responsibility for the strategic decisions in the global war, there was no formal option paper put forward by the NSC. Secretary of State Powell and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld could not come to consensus how to conduct the various non-military components for the GWOT, let alone Powell having arguments about the tactical nuances in the primary campaigns inside Iraq or Afghanistan” (Biddle 2012).

Lawrence Wilkerson recounted that CIA director George Tenet and Rumsfeld, “continued daily disputes regarding the role of leadership in particular theatres,” and even more arguments occurred over individual battle spaces (Woodward 2006, Wilkerson 2012). These disputes created dysfunction at the highest level of planning, and fearing mission

creep, Deputy Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage agreed with recommended to President Bush “someone needed to be in charge” (Armitage 2012). Armitage was dismissed as an idealist, but in the end the leadership for the GWOT, was put into the hands of SECDEF Rumsfeld (Armitage 2012, Wilkerson 2012). Indeed, early on in the GWOT, the principals in the cabinet were contentious, dismissive, and disregarding of each other, this amounted to a completely “dysfunctional” organization in the national security state (Bacevich 2010).

Well into the 2005, the Iraq campaign was disintegrating into a violent abyss. Baghdad was “a shit-storm of violence, we got hammered everyday” (Webber 2012). General Petraeus’ senior advisor observed, “there was a 9/11 happening inside Iraq every week, thousands of bodies were found dead in the streets” (Kilcullen 2012). Hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis were killed, or targeted by Jihadist death squads (Macgregor 2012). By the fall of 2005, neighborhoods across Iraq were corroded by violence. There were instances where violence waned, namely in Tal Afar with Col H.R McMaster, but overall the US was seeing mission creep and failures for the Bush Doctrine as a grand strategy (Baer 2012). Revisionist images of the Vietnam War became prophetic writing on the wall (Biddle 2012).

Due to the problems in NSC staffing and disputes in Washington, there was dysfunctional operational planning in Iraq. David Ucko accounts this stating, “[From 2001, and more specifically] in 2004 and 2005, there was a focus on conventional war fighting... but there was resistance as to adopting any COIN or post-conflict stability operations” (Ucko 2009: 79). In effect, US military needed drastic, swift, institutional changes to adapt and change to the war in Iraq.³⁰

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld continued to have faith that his generals would “train the Iraqi army and then US was going to exit” (Wilkerson 2012). Failing to recall General

³⁰ “Many senior military commanders argued with SECDEF Rumsfeld during 2002-2005. An example is Major General Peter Chiarelli argued for a overhaul in *Full Spectrum Operations* (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005). However, they did not gain any momentum. Rumsfeld door was not open to admitting incompetence” (Wilkerson 2012)

Shinseki's argument, stating, "the US would need an additional 350,000 troops to stabilize Iraq," Rumsfeld's decisions were at least in part to blame for Washington's failure to stabilize Iraq (Schmitt 2003). That is to say, the US was the only actor who could address the security in Iraq, but following Rumsfeld's orders, the US did not focus on stabilizing Iraq. Col Andrew Bacevich argued, "historians will puzzle about the amazing level of ineptitude by American military leadership in Iraq" (Bacevich 2008). In Rumsfeld's mind, the mission was to quickly rebuild the Iraqi army, and that would allow the US to exit swiftly. Rumsfeld also assumed the Iraqis would sort out the rest of domestic instabilities. Rumsfeld, still in command, would not enter into the domestic politics of Iraq, and was focused on training the Iraqi army and hoping for an early exit. The historical process and evidence accounted for by insider's observations suggest that the GWOT was failing and needed rethinking and rebranding.

Innovation in Ideas

In Washington, the "defence intellectuals in the Bush Administrations struggled to show legitimate recommendations in both strategy and tactical maneuvers to get out of Iraq" (Byman 2012). By 2006, the Iraq campaign had become a prolonged indeterminate conflict. The Bush Administration and the GWOT lost much of its public appeal, and the US political establishment needed a new nomenclature for the on-going wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Understanding the Bridge from Afghanistan to Iraq

When the Bush administration ordered the GWOT, the US began its initial invasion of Afghanistan. The initial invasion was successful, much of the former Taliban insurgency was quickly destroyed or they simply quit and returned to an agrarian life. However, Islamic extremists worldwide were rejuvenated by the idea of US occupiers in Afghanistan. Dan Byman indicated, "Jihadis hoped that the US would return back and invade Iraq" (Byman 2012). Byman's claim was backed in both classified and unclassified reports. Many credible

reports indicated that franchises of OBL's network, led individuals such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to plan an insurgent network in Iraq and abroad. Zarqawi's goal was to strike at the American forces asymmetrically using insurgency as their technique (Felter and Fishman Burke 2004:254-291, Fishman 2008). In Afghanistan, OBL already had an extensive network, but in Iraq, Zarqawi acted as OBL emissary. Zarqawi was able to penetrate local communities in Iraq, manipulate them using methods of terror and intimidation. Following OBL, Zarqawi formed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

In 2004, AQI, existed as a combination of foreigners and local jihad supporters who penetrated local religious, ethnic, and social groups in order to manipulate them to enfranchise Iraq for AQ's global aspirations. AQI expanded its militant network to include elements of Ansar al-Islam (a domestic group), while also recruiting a growing number of foreign fighters, with predisposition to carry out violent jihad against the occupying American forces. The stated goals of AQI were to force a withdrawal of US-led forces from Iraq, to topple the interim Iraqi government, to assassinate collaborators with the occupation, to marginalize the Shiite population, defeat Shiite militias, and to subsequently establish an Islamic state (Karmon 2006, Baer 2012). AQI used coercive means and found prominent refuge in Sunni communities in Anbar province, while less prominent safe havens were also used in Baghdad, Tikrit, and Kirkuk. With much discomfort, Sunni Sheiks inside Anbar feared that the US overthrow of Saddam Hussein would lead to a Shiite dominated society, and they saw their only hope for survival was through a violent insurgency to protect them against the Shiite militias and the Americans.

As the US campaign in Iraq continued into 2006, the US found itself in an outright civil war, and these consequences had global ramifications. Iraq became a magnet for anti-American Jihadists, and the insurgency was a willing employer. Attacks were common during the transitional period as the Iraqi government tried to establish itself. The attacks

were not just local radicalized Iraqis, AQ had a network that recruited hundreds from Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and a host of other countries.

While Iraq was turning inside out, military/defence advisors identified the cycle of violence occurring in Iraq. COIN experts argued that Al-Qaida's success existed because it had penetrated the Sunni community, and the Shiite communities then in retaliation used violence against Sunnis, and this cycle of violence continued, resulting even in large-scale ethnic cleansing all over Baghdad.

Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Natonski recounted, "there were 28 or so neighborhoods of multi-ethnic/religious groups, by the time we were able to put effective security forces in place, 24 of those neighborhoods had been cleaned out, and AQ controlled the street" (Natonski 2012). In summary, from 2004-2007, AQI rose in power because of a poorly planned American policy. As an antidote to the American bewilderment, key figures provided an innovation in ideas that shifted American strategy out of the GWOT toward a new way forward.

Political Tensions and the Brain Trust of Innovation

The Iraq invasion was prosecuted quickly. The invasion was successful in that it dethroned the Baathist government, and for a short while, Iraq appeared to have a bright future. Australian intelligence analysts observed that "within hours after Baghdad fell, there were regional peace celebrations across the Middle East" (Kilcullen 2012). This was an exact prediction by the Bush administration. Furthermore, several regimes in the Islamic world were in danger of democratic uprising as well. The reason being, thousands if not millions of Muslims across the world were celebrating the defeat of Saddam Hussein. The synchronized, yet short-lived bliss lasted only nine days.

Exactly nine days after regime change in Baghdad, "small pockets of terror networks launched a series of unified attacks that occurred globally" (Kilcullen 2012). Furthermore,

according to the Australian intelligence reports, these “loosely linked networks” coalesced around the “US presence in Iraq” and the foreign presence unified a rallying cry for global Jihadist to unify against the infidel, presumably the US in Iraq (Wilkerson 2012). The Australians released a “classified report” that focused on the new dynamics taking place in the GWOT (Kilcullen 2012). The unnamed manuscript asserted that global jihad networks spread from “Jakarta to Casablanca” (Kilcullen 2012). This report later came out in an unclassified version entitled, “Complex War Fighting” (Kilcullen 2004, Kilcullen 2012).

Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld showed reluctance to listen to the Australians report, as did the US military (Davidson 2012). Disputes amongst policy makers made adaptations increasingly difficult. Moreover, leadership in the Pentagon was scrambling to find solutions to a failing Iraq campaign, and yet, “at the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary levels there were arguments and disputes that prevented any semblance of cooperation” (Wilkerson 2012). A key example is the debates that happened between Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld. Rice, then the chair of the National Security Council had little influence over the military and little cooperation from other staff on the NSC. As the Iraq became underway, “there was almost no serious dialogue between the parties at the head of the US national security state once the war started” (Armitage 2012). In addition, challenging ideas emerging from the State Department were, “dead on arrival” in senior offices of the Pentagon (Armitage 2012). “Officers at the Command Staff and Deputy Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith, had incredible tension” (Wilkerson 2012). Many times, there was outright interpersonal impasse. Recounting his own interaction Wilkerson, Powell’s Chief of Staff, reiterated that Feith was, “the dumbest man, he had ever met” (Wilkerson 2012). These small interpersonal problems cannot be overstated, in the midst of America’s GWOT, the key architects and decision makers had little cooperation and coherence in their plans, and this was complicated by interpersonal disputes.

The disputes in the Bush administration continued, and though the Baathist government was dethroned from power, the US was left with what Kilcullen called the, “underpants plan”. Kilcullen said, “the Bush administration’s idea was to invade, take over the government, backup the democracy trucks, unpack progress, something else would happen, and we declare victory” (Kilcullen 2012). The phase that Kilcullen describes as the most important, “the post conflict reconstruction” was simply absent from the US plans. As a result, insurgent groups and internal conflicts slowly took place in Iraq (see stage 2-3 of the following chapter for specific details).

In late 2004, Iraq was still unfinished, and some of the deputy civilian leaders in the Pentagon started to push for innovation and alteration to the GWOT. This began early in 2004 when Deputy Secretary of Defense for Resources and the Oversight of War Plans, Jim Thomas, put together a conference on Irregular Warfare to study the phenomenon that was taking place in Iraq. Military officers and security analysts such as Randy Gangle, T.X. Hammes, Lt Col John Nagl, and Max Boot were all present. In all there were “hundreds of Washington’s brightest people, including members of the intelligence community and soon to be deployed special operators” (Kilcullen 2012). As the conference was coming together, Australian Army Brig. General Kelsey Kelly sent an academic paper, *Countering a Global Insurgency*, written by Australian Colonel David Kilcullen, to director Randy Gangle of the Centre for New Emerging Threats and Opportunities. When Gangle received the paper, he wanted Kilcullen to come and present his paper to the conference. Kilcullen was not happy about the decision to invade Iraq and was interested in imputing new ideas to solve the problem in Iraq. Congruently, some of the Australian military commanders were committed to getting the Australian point of view to the Americans and Kilcullen’s paper gave them the opportunity. However, the Americans leaders in the Pentagon just wanted capable people to talk about the contemporary war environment to fix the growing crisis in Iraq and abroad

(Kilcullen 2012, Davidson 2013). In effect, the US national security community wanted help in institutional changes rather than allowing foreign governments influencing how the US conducted its vision for the GWOT.

The conference dramatically influenced Thomas, and afterwards he was tasked to spearhead the 2005-2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* a four-year review of the US DoD, which is delivered to congress. As the QDR being written, Thomas emerged not only as the director of the review process, he emerged as the principal author (Davidson 2012, Kilcullen 2012). Jim Thomas urgently pursued Kilcullen to assist the US in writing new operational structures. Even with the reluctance of the Australians, Thomas acquired Kilcullen and, “another Australian Colonel for one year to assist and advise on a new *QDR*, to fix the American military, but also to help reshape American strategy” (Davidson 2012). During the writing of the new *QDR*, reports came to Rumsfeld and like-minded policy makers that there was a new team helping the Pentagon plan for the Iraq campaign. Rumsfeld did not want any change in his vision for Iraq. In addition, “Rumsfeld did not want to conduct any kind of large scale COIN discussion because of fears of another Vietnam” (Biddle 2012). Moreover, “NSA chair Rice did not want the administration to fail as a political force. As a republican, Rice’s political preservation was important” (Armitage 2012). As Rice and Rumsfeld felt internal pressures from the administration, they “rushed forward with planning a new Iraqi army, and quick exodus” (Wilkerson 2012) Rumsfeld wanted to preserve his ideology. Rumsfeld opposed the COIN model, because he was constantly trying to hurry the training of Iraqi forces, for the early evacuation of Iraq. Rumsfeld’s argument was that America was on good grounds for invading Iraq, and that nation building was not necessary. Rice wanted to preserve the legacy of the Bush administration.

As 2005 came, the rising sectarian violence in Iraq reached a new high. Simultaneously, in 2005, then 3-star general Petraeus was writing the new US Army/Marine

Corps COIN manual, or also known as FM3-24, as a doctrine to potentially fix Iraq (Kilcullen 2012). Petraeus hoped to install this organizational change and phase out Rumsfeld's ideology. Petraeus acted as an innovator and internal agent of change (Ucko 2009:85-102). As Thomas was gathering ideas for the DoD, and Petraeus was pushing internal changes in the Pentagon. Dozens of papers were published theorizing on the concept of COIN at the US Army War College. Washington gave increasing attention to classic COIN operations to fix Iraq, while in addition a concept of global counter terrorism and global COIN were being considered as new theories for the US grand strategy (Davidson 2012).

Operationalizing New Strategy with New Tactics

By 2006, the Bush Doctrine proved incoherent, the strategy needed a change. However, prior to this becoming clear, many junior military officers were pushing for change (Kaplan 2013:60-65). Individuals such as David Petraeus, Janine Davidson, Andrew Krepenovich, John Nagl, T.X. Hammes, and H.R. McMaster are most notably identified, however there were several others who did not get the same notoriety (Biddle 2012). These individuals were focusing on concepts/theories in much of the 4th generation warfare literature. This included content such as IW and LIC. Most of higher-ranking commanders were veterans of kinetic operations, and wars that are more conventional; the conventional concepts included "large tank formations, conventional bombing campaigns, as opposed to small footprint special operations forces, and the use of drones" (Macgregor 2012).

Due to internal pressures from Petraeus, as well Jim Thomas, Rumsfeld finally, "allowed the Pentagon (with the assistance of the Australians) to develop a new policy for Iraq, and that included reforming the military for this plan, and this occurred in the 2006 *QDR*" (Davidson 2012, Kilcullen 2012). With Rumsfeld's adaptations, and the development of FM3-24, Washington developed a new plan for Iraq, and it was identified as a Surge.

Beyond the Numbers, what was the Surge, and what did it perform?

Because of these internal policy and personal innovations, an innovation in war fighting was adopted, and this new plan required a new way engage Iraqi's. TX Hammes identifies this new plan as an, "attempt to conduct 4th generation warfare, in the post invasion Iraq" (Hammes 2012). Meaning that conducting a population centric COIN would provided the US a strategic decision to shift from a "top-down state centric security paradigm to a bottom up human" security focus and focus on the politics of local grievances in Iraq (Kilcullen 2012, Nagl 2012). By providing "security for the population", the US would be able to gain stability and security across the country. This new focus on reforming the state in turn gave way for defence intellectuals, a new grammar for the current war, amenable to notions of goodwill and humanitarian efforts.

In effect, the Joint Command Staff in the DoD was finally persuaded that the utility of conventional military force was limited, and American policy makers needed to change from traditional fighting to focusing on political directives in order to wage a new kind of war, one that focused less on guns, and more on political destabilizing and complex insurgent threats.

In late 2006 SECDEF Rumsfeld resigned, and Robert Gates became the new SECDEF. Gates came into office alongside a reformed NSC, Gates assisted in assigning a new strategy, and a new political direction. Indeed, in 2007, President Bush announced the new plan:

"It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq. So, my national security team, military commanders, and diplomats conducted a comprehensive review. We consulted members of Congress from both parties, our allies abroad, and distinguished outside experts. We benefitted from the thoughtful recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan panel led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. In our discussions, we all agreed that there is no magic formula for success in Iraq. And one message came through loud and clear: Failure in Iraq would be a disaster for the United States....Most of Iraq's Sunni and Shia want to live together in peace. And reducing the violence in Baghdad will help make reconciliation possible"...

“A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighbourhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi government to the benchmarks it has announced”...

“To establish its authority, the Iraqi government plans to take responsibility for security in all of Iraq's provinces by November. ...To show that it is committed to delivering a better life, the Iraqi government will spend 10 billion dollars of its own money on reconstruction and infrastructure projects that will create new jobs” (Bush 2007).

Bush also indicated this plan for stabilizing Iraq was also about the GWOT with AQ in Iraq and globally stating:

“As we make these changes, we will continue to pursue Al-Qaeda and foreign fighters. Al-Qaeda is still active in Iraq. Its home base is Anbar Province. Al-Qaeda has helped make Anbar the most violent area of Iraq outside the capital. A captured Al-Qaeda document describes the terrorists' plan to infiltrate and seize control of the province. This would bring Al-Qaeda closer to its goals of taking down Iraq's democracy, building a radical Islamic empire, and launching new attacks on the United States at home and abroad...succeeding in Iraq also requires defending its territorial integrity and stabilizing the region in the face of extremist challenges” (Bush 2007).

In summary, by 2007, the GWOT ideologues including Rumsfeld “were being politically executed” because of continued innovations by Petraeus, Thomas, pressures from internal conflicts within the NSC, and because of the quagmire emerging from the streets of Baghdad (Wilkerson 2012).

The Numbers in the Surge

The Surge was increase in overall number of US brigades in Iraq. The Surge increase brought the US presence from 15 brigades to 20. These 5 additional brigades contributed an additional 20,000 troops (Nagl 2013, Kagan 2009). The 20,000 additional troops for the Iraq Surge came from five US Army brigades and US Marine Corps deployment extensions. They are as follows:

- 1.) 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division 3,447 troops. Deployed to Baghdad, January 2007
- 2.) 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division 3,447 troops. Deployed to Baghdad, February 2007

- 3.) 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division 3,784 troops. Deployed to southern Baghdad Belts, March 2007
- 4.) 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division 3,921 troops. Deployed to Diyala province, April 2007
- 5.) 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division 3,784 troops. Deployed to the southeast of Baghdad, May 2007 (Kagan 2009, Mansoor 2013, Nagl 2013)

The Marine Corps main numerical contribution to the Surge was a 3-6 months extension to the preexisting 12 month long deployments. This was most noticeable by the 4,000 Marines in Anbar province that included the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines, the 1st Battalion 6th Marines and the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (Kagan 2009, Mansoor 2013, Nagl 2013).

Summary and Conclusion

Because of 9/11, and several policy innovations occurred in the national security state. These started with the *QDR* and the NSS, but were adapted later as the war was underway. Furthermore, after 9/11, the US was immediately involved in Afghanistan. Despite being committed to a war in Afghanistan, the US opted to invade Iraq in 2003.

During the US occupation of Iraq, Iraq turned into a violent internal civil war.³¹ Starting at the end of 2005, a few innovative thinkers most notably Deputy Secretary of Defense Jim Thomas began to convene policy debates through conferences that affected how leaders in Washington were thinking about US actions. In 2006, the DoD commenced a *QDR* that again restructured how the military would think and operate in the GWOT. Furthermore this coincided with an innovation in the DoD with General David Petraeus, Sarah Sewell,

³¹ see stage 1-2 in the following chapter for details: In summary, At its embryonic stage, the insurgency began when extremist groups from local Iraqis alongside a competent foreign mob who were forging alliances inside Iraq. One key leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi bridged a transnational support network with wealthy donors, who supported Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Burke 2004, Brisard and Martinez 2005). With the illusive activity of Zarqawi, militants arrived from over twenty countries to fight for a variety of non-state groups including, but not limited to Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Because of the US invasion, and dismantling of the Baathist regime, hundreds of thousands of disaffected Iraqis would join differing armed groups to take up arms to provide for their own security, as well as fight against each other and the Americans. In spite of US attempts to manipulate local politics and direct Iraqi's towards the newly installed government coupled with new government elections in 2005, domestic tensions coalesced into new heights of barbaric violence because of the inadvertent inflammation of pre-existing sectarian tensions in Iraq and the surrounding region.

John Nagl, David Kilcullen, and others who sought to change DoD planning and structures. As a result a new US COIN manual, FM3-24, was authored and institutionalized. Furthermore, through the 2006 QDR, the US military restructured itself to better adapt inside Iraq.

This chapter discussed US policy prior to the Surge. Furthermore, this foregrounds what exactly the US was planning to do with the Surge. This chapter helps to discover US actions, or stage 2, in the next chapter.

Having discussed the background to the Iraq Surge case, this thesis will proceed to analyzing why the Iraq Surge was able to achieve temporary successes in Iraq. In review, this thesis argues that 3-stages link together as a synergistic mechanism that enabled temporary successes in Iraq that was not experienced in Afghanistan:

In review the 3-stages are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.

Surging in the Land of Two Rivers:

A case study to the Iraq Surge and its outcome: Understanding how Iraq's sectarian divisions and civil war helped the US temporarily succeeds with COIN

"Iraq is hard but not hopeless"
General David Petraeus December 2006

He turned their rivers into blood, so that they could not drink of their streams.
Psalm 78:44 ESV

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the process, circumstances, and considerations that started the GWOT. Operation Iraqi Freedom (the Iraq War) came out of the GWOT. By 2005, the Bush administration recognized that the Iraq war was failing. US policymakers designed a strategy to resolve the failing Iraq war, and this fix was called the Surge. Having covered that material, this chapter seeks to understand the outcome of that policy.

This case study relies on the data gathered from forty-five elite interviews. It also relies on field reports, congressional testimony, and captured insurgent testimony that are all available on public record or through open sources (see bibliography for detail). The elite interviews were conducted with senior members of General Petraeus's Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT), other military officers, and forward deployed Foreign Service officers. A full list appears at the end of the thesis (see appendix). Lastly, secondary literature was consulted to round off the basis of the analysis. The resulting case study provides a thorough, rich, and rigorous account of the factors producing the outcome of the Iraq Surge.

The Iraq case study begins with stage 1, the political history of Iraq. This discovers how the modern Iraq state is born, and it discovers the sectarian, social, and political divides in Iraq. The political history of Iraq creates a subtext to the conflict or the invisible sides of the conflict. This includes the political disputes in Iraqi society, and in part, how the

insurgencies organized themselves and informs why groups subsequently reacted to the US during the Surge.

Following stage 1, this chapter moves on to stage 2. Stage 2 is the US actions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge. Stage 2 discovers what actions the US performed to contribute to the direct violence, and what actions the US did to contribute to the decline in violence previously described in the opening chapter.

Lastly, this case study investigates stage 3, which is the Iraqi reaction to the US prior to the Surge and during the Surge. One of the variables in Iraq is the US ability to benefit from an indigenous uprising called the *Sahwah*. This played a key role in the outcome, but also, the central Iraqi government showed the ability to repair/disrupt internal political disputes. This is important because it shows how the diverse indigenous reactions created space for temporary success in Iraq. The reaction of Iraqis is one key component to the temporary success of the Iraq Surge.

In review, 3-stage model demonstrates the variables that created temporary success in the Iraq Surge and they are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.³²

³² There is some debate about the spelling and capitalization of Shia, Shiite, and Shi'ite. According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 'Shiite' is a noun, which refers to one of the main branches of Islam, and the other main branch being Sunni. The specific spelling of Shiite can act a noun a person or persons (adherent of Shiite) or an adjective describing a person or person's practices (relating to Shiite) there is no significant difference in spelling Shiite and Shi'ite. Stevenson, A. and M. Waite (2011). Concise Oxford English Dictionary: Book & CD-ROM Set, Oxford University Press. The linguistic difference is attributed to Arabic transliteration in which the language of origin pronounces a silent 't' at the end of the English transliterated word 'Shiite'. This pronunciation has been somewhat corrupted by popular media figures, but also by non-Arabs who use the term without knowledge of the language. In Arabic, the T is silent. It is only pronounced when the letter *taa* appears as it follows the related word. The etymology of Shiite is primarily directed to Ali meaning the Shiite of Ali.

Methodological Caveat:

As this case study proceeds through stage 2 then moves into stage 3, there will be a slight overlapping of themes. This is done to show how US actions and Iraqi actions interacted from 2004-2006. This neatly identifies how the Iraqis are responding to the US in the days prior to the Surge. Understanding this makes the Surge policy even more clear, and by taking a detour in this section, the outcome of the Iraq Surge, and the synergy between stages 1, 2, and 3 becomes more coherent.

Stage 1: The Historical Background to the Iraq Insurgency

Iraq's history is older than most of the modern world. In addition to its cultural age, Iraq rests upon several major fault lines in a broader complex set of regional political divisions. The extensive cultural history, and the regional political divisions play a major part in the depth and complexity of the nation's fragmentation during 21st century as it came under control of the US.

As the US occupied Iraq, Iraq continued to go through extensive fragmentation across its society. Gareth Stansfield and Liam Anderson have documented the political crisis and the security decline that occurred in Iraq after 2003, placed in the context of its history, is less of an "aberration and more of the logical culmination of the pathologies embedded in the state of Iraq since its creation in 1921" (Anderson and Stansfield 2005: 13). In order to understanding the outcome of the Surge, it is necessary to understand the nature of these national, regional, cultural, social, and political divisions that emerged prior the Surge, and how they affected the Surge outcome.

Throughout Iraq's history, the political allegiances of the people changed because of theological differences in the Islamic faith, as well as domestic political disputes, shifting tribal allegiances, military revolutions, foreign invasions, and wars with bordering states. The domestic disputes in Iraq's population exist because of the disparate social bases and

different religious groups. As Gareth Stansfield articulates, “the difference caused by religious dogma in today’s Iraq is deep and extensive” (Stansfield 2013: 5). The deep and extensive differences provide some explanation for the precise make-up of the insurgency as it develops. The insurgency that emerges (starting in 2002) is unique to each province across Iraq. The insurgency is not a representation of Iraq’s history, but the nation’s history influenced the nature of the insurgencies as they emerged under US occupation, and continued to do so during the period 2006-09. This fact is central to the overall argument of this thesis. Iraq and Afghanistan’s religious and political histories differ greatly, and this difference is one of the factors that help explain the different Surge outcomes.

According to Anderson and Stansfield, Iraq’s modern political structures can be best classified into four distinct periods during the 20th century: the Hashemite Monarchy (1920-1958), Revolutions, Republic, and Renaissance (1958-1968), the Baathist reign (1968-1988) and the Pariah State (1989-2003) (Anderson and Stansfield 2005, Stansfield 2013). By examining these four important periods, stage 1 can trace the evolution of social divisions that would manifest themselves later on during the insurgencies. Furthermore, by discovering these periods, this case study can identify the nonvisible elements of the conflict. This is done to further discover how Galtung’s conflict triangle explains the Surge ending. The invisible sides of the conflict are best observed in the preexisting history and through the political disputes that the Surge had to negotiate.

The Hashemite Monarchy (1920-1958)

Between 1914 and 1932, in the post-World War I period, the British government created the modern state of Iraq (Dodge 2003). This was formalized through the process of a League of Nations mandate that came in 1920. On 7 March 1920, King Faisal was appointed as the leader of a unified, Iraq/Syrian Arab state. However, before the British mandate, Iraq was a geographic area in which its population struggled for control and autonomy between

differing ethnicities, including the Kurdish people (split across what is now modern Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey), Arabs, and smaller numbers of Turkomen, Assyrian, and other minority groups. These concealed tensions existed largely because of the previous control from the Ottoman Empire, which was dissolved following WWI.

The religious differences across Iraq were strong and noticeable in founding years. In the complexity of Iraqi society, there existed competing interests from the regional Shiite influences in Persia (to the East), and Arab Sunni practices (in the West). These different religious identities expressed themselves across society as the contest for political power emerged. The Shiite grew in political strength across southern Iraq (specifically in Najaf, Sadr City, Kirkuk, Nasiriya, and Basra), and Arab Sunni leaders forged political ties in the rural tribes farther North and West (specifically in Tikrit, Ramadi, Mosul, Fallujah, and Baghdad). Emerging charismatic leaders sought to gain popularity in their religious community. Also, they sought to develop the security of their people over the other.

As an early leader, King Faisal made paltry attempts to unify Iraqis with a nationalistic identity, but ultimately he failed to do so (Anderson and Stansfield 2005: 17). Further dividing Iraq, during the Hashemite dynasty, Faisal's reign allowed large components of the Iraqi government to be, "almost exclusively controlled" by the Sunnis (Anderson and Stansfield 2005: 20). The unequal distribution of political power under the Hashemite dynasty explains some of the invisible dimensions of the future conflict. As Faisal favoured the Sunni, the Shiite, Kurdish, and minority population groups experienced political marginalization that would later be channeled into deeper societal alienation during the occupation of Iraq.

In the 1920's, Iraq experienced a "growing nationalist movement in the urban population of Iraq", and this growing nationalism indicated there would be an additional problem to the religious divisions in Iraqi society (Dodge 2003: 9). The urban nationalist

movement conflicted with rural tribal groups desire for independent political power. The rural independent tribes wanted autonomy, and they wanted to have the freedom to practice their own way of life.

During Faisal's rule, the British colonial authority backed his political power. Though the British backed Faisal rule, in some ways it also undermined Faisal's attempts to unify the new state. The British recognized that the political power in the rural tribes and the urban political movements were at odds. However, the British favoured working with some tribes over others. Moreover, they favoured parts of the urban political movements over others. This included favouring segments from rural Shiite tribes over others. This British favouritism toward "some Shiite groups at the expense of others, combined with the over representation of Sunnis in government prompted the emergence of Shiite uprisings" (Anderson and Stansfield 2005: 9). The groups that Faisal favoured, maintained some degree of political unity, however there was seldom if ever when the Iraqi population enthusiastically cohered around a unifying, universal national identity, where sectarian communities thought of themselves as Iraqis over being Sunni or Shiite. The political uprisings in Iraq demonstrate that early on, Iraq had political and social disunities. These disputes create an invisible conflict that sets the tone for the future years of Iraq and will lead to direct/visible violence.

Revolutions, Republic, and Renaissance (1958-1968)

By 1958, Iraq had been a modern state for only 25 years. The new state was politically immature, and its immaturity made the government very vulnerable. In 1958, a military coup transferred control of the country to a new leader General Qassim. Qassim attempted to consolidate control of the country through a constitutional reform that sought to make Iraq more aristocratic. Qassim initiated local power reforms, most notably through a series of land reforms that were implemented in 1958. These new land laws restructured Iraqi society and made non-land owning Iraqis into a peasant class (Jabar 2003: 70-91). Though

these complications were legion, Qassim's land reform initiatives were an attempt to strengthen the central government. By generating revenues for the state, promoting agriculture, and maintaining power for his loyal supporters, Qassim was able to increase the central government's power, but these attempts failed to achieve public favourability, and ultimately made his regime less stable.

Qassim's centralizing of political power, developed into a larger political challenge. An adversarial group called, the Baath Party, emerged in dispute of Qassim. The Baathists were a growing group that combined a favourable relationship with rural Sunni tribes and with the Arab nationalists. Shrewdly, the Baathists attempted to use Arab nationalism to unite the differing sectarian/ethnic/religious communities of Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds (Marr 1985: 90-95). While the Baathists were uniting some parts of Iraq, Qassim steadily lost his control of the state, and his political power began to dwindle. Though Qassim was losing power, the Baathists' aspirations for national unity was not successful in undermining Qassim because their brand of pan-Arabism did not take political roots outside of the Sunni community. Furthermore, the large ethnic group, the Kurds, were isolated from much of the Arab considerations, and the Shiite were still absent from any meaningful political power. This component would prove to be a problem later as Iraq came under US occupation prior to the Surge, and then provides even more problems during the Surge.

The Baathist reign (1968-1988)

In July 1968, the Baathists staged a coup and took control of Iraq. By 1970, a charismatic young Saddam Hussein also gained control of the Baath party's security forces and turned it into a domestic police force with a ruthless intelligence brigade that also acted as a domestic spy agency.

The Baath party reversed the land reform of 1958, winning political support amongst many Iraqis in the process. The Baathists also nationalized the oil of Iraq, thus increasing

economic power for the state. Acquiring this substantial flow of wealth also helped Saddam Hussein to gradually accumulate more power, before officially assuming the presidency in 1979. Sadaaam seduced followers to the Iraqi government by making special education programs available to those who supported the government and these people likely ended up in government positions. As a result political favouritism, and the internal corruption, the government had little interest in growth of refinement capabilities, and renewing its oil drilling technology. Despite elements of political success, by 1979, the Baathists political popularity and governing power was incomplete. Although the party remained in control of the state, it struggled to suppress the preexisting social and political divisions within the country.

The Kurdish and Shiite did not support the Baathists. Moreover, these groups increasingly became further divided amongst themselves. In the Shiite case, the domestic disputes were chiefly over the appropriate level of influence of the clerical establishment in Iraq and their allegiance to neighboring Iran.

As the Baathists were faced with these domestic tensions, as well as leadership ego, and overly ambitious political agendas, the Baathist government carelessly decided to invade Iran in 1980 (Anderson and Stansfield 2005: pp. 51-61). This resulted in a protracted war, ending in a stalemate, which left Iraq in dire financial conditions. The Iran-Iraq war brought outrage from many Iraqi Muslims who believed that the war against fellow Muslims was a moral disgrace. Islamist political organizations, including the Muslim brotherhood, secretly worked against the Baath regime. However, by 1987, hundreds of anti-Baathist Islamists were taken to Abu Ghraib prison and executed (Rayburn 2014: 1-65).

The Pariah State and the Destruction of the Baathists (1989-2003)

After the Iran/Iraq war, Iraq suffered extreme financial difficulties. In order to solve these concerns, Iraq chose to annex Kuwait in 1991 through a military takeover. This was

done to alleviate its debt from the Iran/Iraq War. The annexation of Kuwait provided abundant oil resources, mainly in terms of refinery infrastructure. Unlike Iraq, Kuwait had quite an extensive refinery infrastructure compared to many other Gulf States during this time (Ollivant 2014). Though Iraq was developed, it spent little time on reinvestments in the national infrastructure compared to Kuwait.

In 1991, Iraq possessed the fourth largest army in the world (Baer 2012, Korb 2012). Fearing for their own security, bordering Arab states allowed an international response that swiftly evicted Iraq from Kuwait. This set in motion a spiral of events essential to understanding the insurgency war during the Surge. In the aftermath of the 1991 invasion of Kuwait, some elements of society revolted against the Baathist regime.³³ The blowback from the Kuwait war created more divisions within Iraq society than even before the war. This would further complicate US efforts during its initial invasion, and then during the Surge.

In March 1991, large revolts occurred across Iraq. The Baathist government lost most control in the provinces and cities outside of Baghdad. In the south, anti-regime groups emerge from the Shiite population centres. In addition, militias staged riots and clashed with Sunnis who were Baath loyalists. These clashes displaced over two million Iraqis and an estimated 230,000 people may have been killed (Daponte 1993). Following the Iraq/Kuwait war, Saddam's regime increasingly became brittle, though it maintained power

After the Iraq war, the Baathists had very little influence outside of Baghdad. As a result, Saddam attempted to co-opt previous hostile Sunni and Shiite parties in Iraq, especially the religious elements. In 1993, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri was commissioned to spearhead a "faith campaign" (Ollivant 2014). While in this campaign, the Iraqi government could extend a favourable image to society by buying off imams and religious leaders.

³³ Many factors that led Iraqi into invading Iran is well documented by Anderson and Stansfield, for more on this see the source. In addition, Andrew Bacevich's *The New American Militarism* offers more commentary on the political dynamics of US decision-making.

Al-Douri organized imams, tribal leaders, and political groups by giving cars, money, and property for the building of mosques. This allowed local leaders to send favourable messages out to the average citizens. Saddam and al-Douri focused on Salafi regime loyalists, opposed to the Sufis and the Muslim Brotherhood. This partnership, dating from 1993, explains the major divisions within the Sunni population during the insurgency in 2004. The results of state sponsored Salafism accounts, in part, for the extreme sectarianism apparent during 2006-2009. Saddam's ability to balance Arab nationalists and the Salafis while also structuring Iraqi governance in such an authoritative way explains why Saddam was such a dominant leader and explains the extreme chaos when he was dethroned from power.

After the Iraq/Kuwait war, the ethnic Kurds organized themselves as an ethnically based federation, eventually forming the Kurdish Regional Government in 1992. The Kurds also benefitted from US assistance as the UN created a no-fly zone to prevent any predatory actions by the Baathists. In the following years, the Kurds drafted a constitution, adopted by Iraq's two Kurdish parties in 2002, which proclaimed their regional autonomy as a

“Kurdish self-governing area within a loose Iraq federal framework, that Kirkuk should be the Kurdish capital, that the Kurds would retain control over their own armed forces (the Peshmerga)” (Park 2004).

This separated the Kurds from the rest of the country and kept them in their own governed space.

Saddam further entrenched his regime through brutal measures. Saddam isolated those who were faithful to his regime, and he co-opted them by providing weapons, vehicles, and money. Saddam also rewarded some of his loyalists with political autonomy. A specific example is in the rural Sunni tribes from Anbar province.

The Sunni tribes who voluntarily put down the revolts became independent through the ministry of tribal affairs, and thus granted complete autonomy over their territory. Large parts of the Iraq countryside, especially in Anbar province, went unchecked and unregulated

by Baghdad. Roadside extortion, shakedowns, and hijackings were common. This particular phenomenon in some ways explains how the US Surge forces achieved the *Sahwah* described later in the chapter.

In summary, the Iraq/Kuwait war and its aftermath were key precursors to the events of 2003. Furthermore, the Iraq/Kuwait war undermined the national cohesion of Iraq. The after-effects of the war further stimulated anti-government sentiments on the part of Kurds, Shiites, and even some Sunnis became further distanced themselves from Saddam Hussein and the Baathists. Nonetheless, both the national government and loyalist militias went unchallenged, and across Iraq, Hussein was able to send militias to kill innocent Shiite, disloyal Sunnis, and also many Kurds. However, the Baathists maintained control of the state, but Saddam Hussein exacerbated civil divides amongst these religious and ethnic communities. When the US invaded, in 2003, these divides were well established and ripe for reopening.

Summary of Stage 1: The historical context

Thus far, this case study has set out to identify the important parts of Iraq's political history as it contributes to deep social and political divisions. The chart below identifies the major fault lines of political and social division that existed in Iraq prior to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. It is along these divisions that political grievances would emerge after 2003. The next step is to uncover US actions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.

Category A	Category B	Nature of Social Division	Scope and Size of Primary Dispute
Arab Nationalist Identity vs.	Iraq Tribal Identity	Division over Local/National Political Leadership and Identity	Local/Regional
Arab Secular vs.	Arab Religious	Preferences over Social Norms and Religious Freedoms	Local/Regional/Global
Sunni vs.	Shiite	Theological and Political Divisions	Local/Regional/Global
Kurdish vs.	Arab	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Persian vs.	Arab	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional

Minority Religious Group vs.	Islamic Majority	Religious/Theological Division	Local/Regional/Global
Minority Ethnic Group	Arab/Kurdish Majority	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Internal Shiite Power vs.	External Regional Shiite Allegiance	Political Party Divisions	Local/Regional
Internal Sunni groups vs.	External Salfi/Wahabism	Political Party Divisions	Local/Regional

Table 7: Iraq's Social Divisions

Stage 2: US Actions Prior to the Surge, and During the Surge:
Identifying how US actions prior to the Surge, and during the Surge eventually contributed to its temporary success.

Stage 1 discovers the historical context-giving rise to modern Iraq's social divisions prior to US occupation in 2003. These political realities help to identify the existing political dynamics of Iraq, as well as to understand how these divisions spurn into specific armed groups that emerge in the second and third stage of this case study. The pre-existing political tensions, described in stage 1, are the invisible portions of the conflict that are equally important to the outcome of the Surge. The following section is stage 2 of the model. It will identify US actions prior to the Surge and during the Surge. This looks at the more visible sides of the conflict as described in Galtung's theory. It discovers what the US did to assist the Surge outcome prior to the Surge, and during the Surge as the issues of direct violence are addressed by US forces, and how the US navigated the invisible sides of the conflict as described in stage 1.

On March 19, 2003, the US invaded Iraq again. This comes nearly a decade after the Baathists invaded Kuwait, and then subsequently left because of the US. The 2003 US led intervention was described through the journalistic term "Shock and Awe" (Bacevich 2012). After the invasion, the US pursued the development of an independent state of Iraq that would be free from its historical political tensions. (Pirnie 2008: 1-10). Describing the invasion, in an interview Lt. General Natonski, Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps,

“the invasion was swift and decisive victory, and it was successful in reaching its tactical goals” (Natonski 2012). On April 9, 2003, Baghdad officially fell to the control of the Coalition. This marked the opening of a new phase of civil disorder for the country. Gareth Stansfield summarized the Iraq social situation as follows:

“On the eve of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Saddam’s regime was the force that held together a complex system that managed and manipulated what had been turned into a fractious and unstable political structure. When the regime was removed, Iraq society was shattered into pieces” (Stansfield 2013: 58).

The rapid takeover of Iraq’s political structures created strategic and political problems for the US. The absence of any Iraqi government, and the inability by the Coalition to enforce nationwide control encouraged many Iraqis to entrench themselves according to local political and social cleavages in pursuit of security. Colin Powell’s chief of staff indicated in an interview that despite the presence of US military, “there were not enough security forces in the country to control the cities, and even if there were across the country, I am not convinced that any number of troops could have been effective enough to fundamentally transform the internal cleavages within Iraq society” (Wilkerson 2012). After the fall of Baghdad, Iraq saw a few outbreaks of celebration in some neighbourhoods, but throughout most of the country, lawlessness and anarchy took control of the cities.

In April 2003, the US created a post-Baathist, neo-colonial governing body in Iraq called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The CPA’s purpose was to serve as the interim governing body until the US could establish elections and hand over leadership to a new Iraqi government. Planning democratic elections was the primary task, but the CPA’s secondary task was to rebuild Iraq in the absence of an elected government. The rebuilding phase was difficult because the US did not establish complete security over the country, which also meant the US did not achieve complete political control of Iraq.

As the lack of political control continued, Iraqis suffered amid the escalating disorder. US forces sometimes chose to intervene and sometimes received orders that prevented them from intervening.

Ali Allawi recounts:

“US Central Command ignored the call for the Coalition to have a strong military police presence in all areas falling under the Coalitions control. The looters saw that the new authority was unwilling or incapable of projecting its power, all inhibitions previously constraining the looters disappeared, nearly every ministerial building was systematically stripped of its contents, and fires were ignited in the buildings. Thousands of vehicles and construction equipment were stolen and spirited off, mainly through the Kurdish north, and sold on to smugglers and dealers in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Jordan. The Baghdad police force of 40,000 fundamentally disappeared, and every single other element of civil service was absent. Garbage disposal, water treatment, fire fighters, emergency hospital service, all were absent in the post war Iraq” (Allawi 2007: 94).

Despite the limitations in size and scope of US actions and overall control, the CPA made its first major declaration on May 16, 2003. The very first order of the CPA was to completely disband the Baathist government and arrest its former leadership. This subjected those occupying senior positions to criminal investigation. The declaration stated:

“Individuals holding positions in the top three layers of management in every national government ministry, affiliated corporations and other government institutions (e.g., universities and hospitals) shall be interviewed for possible affiliation with the Ba'ath Party, and subject to investigation for criminal conduct and risk to security” (Bremer 2003, Bremer 2006).

De-Baathification exacerbated the declining security of Iraq, and damaged the prospects for a cohesive national political process. The de-Baathification program “worsened security”, and “ignited civil unrest”, according to State Department Chief of Staff Lawrence Wilkerson (Wilkerson 2012). Overnight thousands of the most talented individuals in Iraq became enemies of the state. The de-Baathification act created many enemies for the US, but it also completely “paralyzed the authority of any future Iraqi government” (O'brien 2013). Because of deBaathification, the massive numbers of people put out of work, “was in the hundreds of

thousands, but these developments did not bother US special envoy and head of the CPA, Paul Bremmer” (O'brien 2013). After de-Baathification, Bremmer insisted that deBaathification was “the most important thing we’ve done here, and it’s the most popular thing too” (Chandrasekaran 2010: 83). Despite Bremmer’s optimism, many Iraqis were already ambivalent about the US invasion and were outraged by de-Baathification. Ali Allawi indicates US actions made this even worse with their behaviour,

The searching of homes without the presence of a male head of a household, body searches of women, the use of sniffer dogs, degrading treatment of prisoners, public humiliation of the elderly and notables, all contributed to the view that Americans had only disdain and contempt for Iraq’s traditions (Allawi 2007: 186).

If de-Baathification was intended to increase the prospects for a cooperative relationship between Iraqis and the CPA, it proved counterproductive. Recounting his experience as a special advisor for the DoD, during de-Baathification, Michael O’Brien stated,

“I think de-Baathification was one of the worst things we did throughout the entire war. It destroyed the national infrastructure, it made the most talented people in Iraq our enemies, and it broke the state, and paralyzed society” (Obrien, 2013).

The head of Central Command, General John Abizaid, also acknowledged Obrien’s experiences. On 14 November 2003, Abizaid stated that due to deBaathification an insurgency was growing.

In contrast to Obrien, Abizaid, and many others, President Bush, Condoleezza Rice, and US Forces Commander General Tommy Franks, ironically ignored the threat of the insurgency and instead identified the insurgency as an “inadvertent result of the success of the American invasion” (Wing 2008). Furthermore, “the SECDEF wanted the insurgency talk kept quiet, it was necessary to fit within his plans of easy victory maintained by Iraqi support” (Wilkerson 2012). In summary, by July 2003 the disorder and increasing violence, generated by insufficient troops and de-Baathification, Iraq’s sectarian groups had grown into a diverse set of insurgencies.

In July 2003, the insurgencies were small. General Abizaid stated, “the estimated number of fighters operating against US was no more than 5,000 but they are growing, and there is some level of cooperation that’s taking place at very high levels” [Between former regime loyalists and AQ affiliates] (GlobalSecurity.org 2010). Abizaid also commented on the insurgency as “the most dangerous enemy to the US at the present time are the former regime loyalists” operating in central Iraq (GlobalSecurity.org 2010). The insurgency was growing because Baathists were left out of the new Iraq. While analyzing US actions, former CIA field agent Bob Baer stated,

“When you are constructing a new country, you have to bring all the major parties to the table, or they will fight against you. They might fight against you anyways, despite any good efforts. But if you do not bring them in, they will definitely fight you. So you have to plan for all contingencies, you have to keep up the dialogue, because someone will probably turn on you. You have to be ready for that (Baer 2012).

Despite these challenges, policy makers did not change their approach.

Later in 2003, the CPA created a provisional governing council containing, “13 Shiite leaders, and with little Sunni or other minority influence” (Harvey 2014). The goal was to begin the process of establishing a democratic government led by Iraqis. In addition, the CPA and the (majority Shiite) governing council agreed to create a new post-Baathist army and police force.

These two acts incentivized both Sunni tribal leaders, and Sunni Baathists to abandon hopes of exercising influence within the new political order in Baghdad. The Sunnis were isolated and alienated, and this gave them a motive to seek partnership with anyone who could help them survive when facing the prospect of a Shiite led government in Baghdad. In effect, the lack of opportunity forced the Sunni’s to, “let Al-Qaeda in” (Rayburn 2014: 105). One AQ actor who proved capable of taking advantage of this situation was Abu Musab al Zarqawi— a former Jordanian criminal turned jihadist. He was an important figure because he succeeded in developing an expansive network of patrons as he entered Iraq from an Al-

Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan.³⁴ His expansive network bridged foreign followers and local support from Iraq's Sunni zealots.

By the end of 2003, the US shifted its priorities to invest in the new Iraqi army and police. As the US began its training mission, many of the political groups outside of the dominant Shiite faction were anxious about the new Iraqi army, the CPA, and the new governing council. Few in Iraq believed that a new army would have adequate training and the willingness to successfully confront the variety of growing armed groups stemming from Sunni political group factions. As a result, many in Iraq armed themselves in case of a civil war. Staff assistant to General Abizaid, Doug Tudor recounts, "some people who joined the new governing councils were playing two sides of the government, and they acted like they were apart of it, but never trusted it completely" (Tudor 2013).

By mid-2004, the new Iraqi security forces proved ineffective, and vulnerable to subversion or corruption. Estimates indicate that over 3,000 police quit in the week of April 17th, 2004. During the same week over "12,000 soldiers deserted the new Iraqi army". Furthermore, parts of the national security infrastructure was looted by militias as well, in one instance "190,000 AK47's went missing" (Kessler 2007). In the southern city al-Kut the entire police force joined one of the Shiite militias (Cordesman and Sullivan 2006). Furthermore, in Nasiriya, a Shiite city in southern Iraq, "the city fell under the tutelage of local tribesmen" (Allawi 2007: 93).

In summary, the immediate aftermath of deBaathification created political incoherence in Iraq and a power vacuum fell onto the sectarian divisions in Iraq. The new

³⁴ Following the nomenclature of other scholars, this thesis adopts stylistically the terminology used by many scholars and western observers that "distinguish between Al-Qaeda—meaning the original core organization of Osama bin Laden—and Al-Qaeda in Iraq or, as the New York Times has anachronistically termed it, a mixture of Arabic and Greek terms, Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia. Iraqis and others in the region have made no such neat distinction, referring to this terrorist organization as simply 'Al-Qaeda' and considering it a direct outgrowth of the extremist movement founded by bin Laden. The author therefore will use 'Al-Qaeda' and 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq' interchangeably. Cited from Rayburn, J. (2013). "The Coming War in the Middle East." Retrieved December 1, 2014.

Iraq governing council was ineffective and unrepresentative, and the new Iraq security forces proved to be inept.

How deBaathification affected Sunni and Shiite Political Dynamics Iraq from 2004-2006

The previous section reviewed political dynamics within the immediate post-Baathist government. This section identified how US actions affected the initial security situation in Iraq. The next portion will cover from January 2005 up to December 2006.

After 2004, due to the US political decisions, the Sunnis largely rejected the rebuilding of the political process that took place in the post-invasion Iraq. This was most evident in January 2005. The CPA attempted to conduct a democratic election, however due to the Shiite control of the governing councils, the Sunni parties felt underrepresented and abandoned the Iraq elections (Allawi 2007: 388-402). As a result, Shiites gained most of the political control in Iraq, though the Shiite community experienced its own splintering as well (Pirnie 2008: 10-20). Following the Sunni boycott of the elections, sectarian divisions intensified and violence began erupting at a higher rate in mixed Sunni/Shiite communities around Baghdad and in Shiite/Sunni bordering villages.

As the Sunnis boycotted the elections, the transitional Iraqi government and its security forces began to, “execute a campaign of ethnic cleansing in Baghdad” (Kagan 2009:6). “Any Shiite group who wanted to terrorize Sunni’s could, and each of the militias took their turn” (Weston 2014). Jaysh al Mahdi was one of the Shiite groups, however, there were other important groups such as the Badr Brigade, and the Wolf Brigade.³⁵ As these Shiite death squads terrorized Baghdad, AQI and other Sunni insurgencies responded across Baghdad with, suicide bombers, roadside bombs, and vehicle born explosive devices also called VBIED’s. The Sunnis targeted Shiite communities and Shiite leaders across Baghdad.

³⁵ For full list see appendix

The year of 2005 can be categorized as the year the Sunni citizens of Baghdad were terrorized by the Shiite, the Coalition, and by AQI. It was also the year where the Shiite grew in stature and political power.

Outside of Baghdad, there was a growing complexity of political relationships. The Sunni and Shiite communities each split between three dominant parties (though even these were not always cohesive, because splinter groups also emerged from each).

The Shiite primarily fall under three primary political groups in the immediate post Baathist era: the Dawa, the SCIRI, and the Sadrists (Rayburn 2014: 9-73). All of these groups were guided by Shiite theology, but differed over leadership, the role of allegiances to neighboring Iran, and the relationship they hold in society with the Americans and the Sunni. This dilemma still lingered from the years of Saddam's control (see page 101-102). The Sunni also split into three groups: Former Regime Loyalists, the Iraq Arab Sunni Tribes, and Sunni Nationalists. However, Zarqawi's network was also vying for power amongst the Sunni groups and was achieving success in manipulating their divisions to expand his own influence.

The chart below is useful in identifying the major differences in play in 2003-2006.

Dominant Political Groups that affect the Surge	Guiding Political Ideologies in each group
Sunni Nationalists	Sunni Theology
Sunni Former Baath Regime Loyalists	Secular Nationalists with Sunni Theological Influence
Sunni Tribes	Arab Tribal Identity with Sunni Theology
Shiite Dawa	Shiite Theology
Shiite SCIRI	Shiite Theology
Shiite Sadrists	Shiite Theology
Zarqawi's Network	Sunni Extremism

Table 8 Iraq's Political Divisions within the major political parties

Understanding the US and Sunni Dynamics Pre-Surge

In 2005, the Coalition did not understand the situation that they faced. Packer states, "American soldiers were rarely able to distinguish between nationalist Sunnis and the foreign extremists, they were simply fighting bad guys" (Packer 2006). This is largely due to the

divisions within Iraq society being so complicated. Cael Weston stated, “sometimes even Iraqis did not always know the difference from one armed man defending his street, and an AQ death squad” (Weston 2014).

A Sunni tribal Sheikh named Jabbar al-Fahdawi highlighted the fragmentation in Iraq stating, “twenty percent of his tribe had, over the years, been recruited by Al-Qaeda, while an equal amount joined other insurgent groups” (Dagher 2007). State Department official, Matthew Hoh indicated, “no one could categorically describe one insurgent group from another” (Hoh 2013). The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade is a prime example. Well known by many Iraqis, the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade was a large insurgent organization. During the early years of the war, the brigade proclaimed itself a “nationalist element of the Sunni insurgency, largely made up of members of Saddam's disbanded army and tribesmen” (Roggio 2007). The 1920 Revolutionary Brigades believed in the concept of defensive Jihad and national self-determination. However, field commanders in Iraq noted, “many groups called themselves the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade, but may have nothing to do with the larger organization of nationalists” (Natonski 2012). They were all Sunni, but their “ambitions may differ from one group to another” (Ollivant 2013). “Sometimes the 1920s revolutionary groups³⁶ were not fighting, and sometimes they were, without any explanation, they simply had no predictable behaviour” (Hoh 2013). Lt. Col Doug Ollivant, Special Council for Policy in Iraq for Vice President Cheney commented, “the insurgency we faced was not like anything before, we knew there was something different going on, we just could not put our finger on it” (Ollivant 2013).

Iraqis struggled between nationalist or religious identity from 2004-2006, both Sunni groups and Shiite shifted in priority at times while balancing both religious and national identity. Ahmed Hashim states, “these organizations [range in perspective] from those that

³⁶ This term was clarified in the interview to identify that, “the 1920’s groups” were being identified as the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades”.

believe that they have a right to resist occupation and do not feel it is necessary to develop a more complex ideological formation for their resistance, to actors who have articulated solid nationalist and Islamist principals to justify their resistance activities” (Hashim 2009: 19). The lack of complex ideological formations or “changing” perspectives explain why Sunni groups often “changed their names, reassigned themselves as insurgents or later as allies with each other depending on the year of the campaign, and at times different groups went from a political group to criminal enterprise” (Ollivant 2013). Their levels of activity of individual groups also varied wildly over time.

External forces added complexities to Iraq. Sunni communities experienced an influx of foreign fighters entering Iraq (Baer 2012). Some Sunnis who were former regime loyalists’ saw this as an opportunity for collaboration because these foreign fighters espoused a jihadist ideology that was prevalent within much of Sunni Iraq as well (Hashim 2009: 59-121). Indeed, the ideological sympathizers within Sunni society saw the foreign fighters as allies coming to aid the Sunni community.³⁷

US/Sunni/Al-Qaeda Relations Pre-Surge

Influential figures within the global Islamist movements, such as Osama Bin Laden, were influential in breeding an anti-American ideology across the Islamic world. Bin Laden inspired a diverse set of Islamic extremists that flooded into Iraq from every part of the world (Moghadam 2009: 38-98). The diverse Sunni groups were overshadowed by Zarqawi’s network by the end of 2004. Zarqawi’s support rose to a much higher level in 2004 when he pledged his public support to Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden then appointed Zarqawi to become the Emir of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The pledge gave Zarqawi a temporary edge over other Sunni militant groups. Washington Post columnist Douglas Farah indicated, “Al-Qaeda and

³⁷ In summary of this point “Iraq” only existed as a meaningful entity to the Sunni extremists when it was a political unit defined and dictated by a Sunni strongman in Sunni interests. Iraqi/Arab nationalism appeals more when there is a meaningful political unit to “gain popular nationalistic identify, but the majority of Iraqis gradually traded dictator and insurgent allegiances constantly and in Iraq, we call that politics” (Ollivant 2013).

its allies were newly flush with cash, able to buy new weapons, and possessed more sophisticated communications equipment and more deadly complex explosives techniques” (Farah 2005). Zarqawi’s pledge to Bin Laden provided him the financial support of Bin Laden’s network, and it gave him the celebrity status of an international jihadist figure that inspired many recruits already headed to Iraq to kill American soldiers. “Zarqawi had come to symbolize the link between the core Al-Qaeda movement under Osama Bin Laden and the anti-government insurgent in Iraq” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 143). Zarqawi’s fighters became some of the most brutal in all of Iraq (Kilcullen 2012, Ollivant 2013). When they patrolled the streets they were capable and equipped with weapons and sustained munitions to conduct a ruthless campaign of violence and intimidation to manipulate the population.

Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corp Lt. General Natonski argued that AQI was such a formidable enemy because it shared extensive crossover with former Iraqi/Baathist military, and foreign radicals with training or experience from previous service through conscripted militaries and also through cross over in conflicts such as Afghanistan (Natonski 2012). Furthermore, there was a, “large amount of weapons and ordnance floating around disappearing from every stockpile across the country, in the Sunni triangle” (and elsewhere) (Weston 2014). Former Marine and Iraq war veteran Corey Webber describes his experiences,

“We got hammered by the weapons, explosives... they were everywhere. We would drive up MSR Tampa (the main road from Kuwait to Baghdad), and virtually every bridge had a small cache under it. Some were larger than others, but weapons were easy to find. Insurgents would hide under bridges, and in the cities and attack us. After fighting them, and killing them we would, turn up on the bridge and find everything from RPG’s, mortars, Cell phones, surface to air missiles. We even found scud technology attached to a propane powered forklift truck” (Webber 2012).

In summary, weapons were easy to find, and AQI possessed them, but also AQI possessed the skill and organizational capabilities to employ them. That is not to say that Zarqawi was the equivalence of Osama Bin Laden, quite the contrary. OBL was a far more

organized and capable leader than Zarqawi (Baer 2012), However, because the new Iraq was in infant stages, and the state capacities were absent during the immediate years of the occupation, Zarqawi's limitations were masked by the government's sheer inabilities and lack of physical presence in large parts of Iraq.

Zarqawi and his militants came from countries including Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Sudan. Many of the foreign fighters who came had no idea who gave them support they simply knew which side they were supporting.³⁸ An insurgent named Sale Kalef Saleh Nofan Al-Jubouri accounts, "that some Saudi cleric, whom he never knew, named Safar Al-Hawali, was funding his operations. Hawalis is a famous Salafi-Jihadist supporter residing in Mecca, Saudi Arabia" (TV 2005).

This influx of fighters and money empowered Sunnis because AQI offered social mobility and an overarching ideological framework to live in the absence of any national infrastructure. AQI offered an opportunity for a diverse and varied Sunni group to temporarily move beyond Iraq's social cleavages and focus on wider priorities. The problem was that the "Sunni community was divided by foreign Jihadi's, tribal affiliations, former regime loyalists, and anti-Shiite xenophobia" (Hoh 2013). Moreover, the breakdown of Sunni society was causing a diverse set of civil conflicts. The Sunni society was in a battle for control of itself. While under US occupation Sunni society split over Nationalist Sunni identity politics, tribal identify politics, and in what kind of theology governs their society. The longest serving US Foreign Service officer Cael Weston stated,

"Anbar, Baghdad, and Northern Iraq were in state of complete turmoil. The Sunni's were fighting for their survival, their identity, and their legacy, but instead of uniting, they were divided by the political lines that split the country over the past 100 years. So they fought against each other, while they also fought the Americans, and the Shiite. They were in complete disarray" (Weston 2014).

³⁸ For more on this, consult David Mallet: Malet, D. (2013). Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts, Oxford University Press.

In 2004, the on-going presence of AQI displayed that it shared a common enemy with many Sunnis across Iraq, and as a default many Sunnis became available for recruitment in large number, at least temporarily, by AQI. “Foreign nationals accounted for less than five to ten percent of the insurgency”, but many local Iraqis assisted their role in creating chaos and also participated in terrorism as well (Hoh 2013). This position affected AQI’s strategy, because though they were temporarily the main antagonist to the Coalition and the Shiite, they still did not control all of Iraq.

In 2005, the Coalition made plans for the temporary governing councils to shift to a democratically elected government. In 2005, Iraq was set for political elections, “the hope was that these elections would stabilize a deteriorating countryside” (Weston 2014). However, “the 2005 elections were a failure because the Sunnis boycotted the elections” (Ricks 2012). As a result, the new Iraq government was imbalanced and not representative of the entirety of Iraq people. In the absence of any real justice system, the isolated Sunni’s asserted control over their own territories by retrenching along pre-existing political and sectarian lines using armed militias of their own against the Iraq government and the US. These splits went down the three major lines the Tribal, Former Regime Loyalists, and Sunni Nationalists.³⁹

Thus far, this section has identified the Sunni political dynamics in play in the immediate aftermath of US occupation, before the Surge. The next portion of this section will analyze the dominant Shiite political dynamics that were in play prior to the Surge.

³⁹ The boycott of the 2005 elections by the Sunni’s further pushed the sectarian communities against each other, furthermore the constitutional agenda that was redesigned in 2009-10 allowed the Sunnis to come back into the political structures by offering some degree of meaningful participation without full-blown peace negotiations. However, this fact is not necessary to go into at length because this is more about post conflict reconstruction, rather than how and why the Surge achieved temporary success. A note on comparison, this is more or less absent in the Afghan case where the Taliban are unwilling to engage under the terms of the BONN constitution.

After the 2005 elections, the new Dawa/Shiite government took over most of the Iraqi state institutions and national infrastructure. Even before the invasion and occupation of Iraq, anti-American sentiment was strong amongst the Iraqi Shiite population. Large parts of the Shiite did not trust the Coalition for several reasons. However, most importantly, they did not believe the political objectives avowed by US policy and by the US military. Elements within the Shiite community supported the overthrowing of the Baathists, but they also feared for their own survival.

Ayatollah Hakim stated, “They [Shiite], did not believe that the US was overthrowing Saddam to bring democracy. They remember how the Americans had betrayed them before when they [Shiite] rose against the Baathist regime in 1991, and the US sat by and watched. The Americans and their allies betrayed the Shiites of Iraq once before and they might do it again. This time we know better than to trust the Americans” (Hashim 2009: 286). The three major factions of the Shiite community were the Islamic Supreme Council, Muqtada al-Sadr’s groups, and the Islamic Dawa party. These three main groups possessed armed militias that at times followed a political vision and “at times looked after their own well-being” (Baer 2012). The single unifying element was a general feeling of anxiety regarding the Shiite political status and security.

One of the more important movements was inspired by radical Shiite cleric named Moqtada al-Sadr. Sadr feared for the survival of traditional Shiite community and their right to self-govern. As a result, his Sadrist movement sought to establish a power base amongst the Shiites based upon a commitment to defending these issues. The Shiite political power structures were mainly based inside the halls of the large Kufa mosque near Najaf, Iraq. Najaf is a key city in southern Iraq, and the Middle East more broadly because Najaf gets more

travellers than any other cities besides Mecca and Medina. Najaf is central for Shiite political and religious propaganda.

As far back as August of 2003, Sadr created a shadow government, “modeled after Lebanese Hezbollah” (Ollivant 2013). Sadr learned from the Lebanese that an insurgent group with strong leadership could organize a political party and train the Mahdi Army (Ollivant 2013). By August of 2003, Sadr’s brigades pushed into communities from Nasiriya all the way to Sadr City-Baghdad. Sadr possessed a large audience and easily recruited militants that joined his Mahdi Army (Cockburn 2008:18-30). This was in part due to Sadr’s sheer ambition, but he also had theological reasons to be so aggressive. Sadr claimed to act under the authority of a *fatwa*, issued by an Iraqi cleric named Ayatollah Kazem (Dawoody 2005, Kagan 2009). Using the *fatwa* as a rallying cry, the Mahdi Army penetrated large parts of Shiite society and assembled a power base by taking over major institutions such as schools and hospitals.

Sadr’s ambitious nature appeared in other rare cases where Sunnis and Shiites collaborated, Ahmed Hashim notes that, “Sadr’s revolt won support and admiration among Sunni insurgents” (Hashim 2009: 259). Sadr gained support because he showed power to his people by rejecting the US, and killing many from AQI. The Mahdi Army also affected the daily life of Iraqis living in Shiite areas. The Mahdi patrolled the streets, and “forced women to change the hijabs⁴⁰ and issued death sentences to insurgent groups who did not support Sadr” (Ricks 2012). The Mahdi Army firebombed stores, destroyed an entire village of gypsies, held daily protests against the US, and generally created terror, intimidation, and fear in anyone who did not support them (Stewart and Film-Club 2005). In addition, the Mahdi Army launched attacks all over southern Iraq targeting the US and its Coalition from Baghdad, al-Kut, al-Amara, al-Najaf, and far south to Nasiriya (Allawi 2007).

⁴⁰ The *Hijab* is the tradition veil worn by the woman who practices Islam.

Sadr was supplied with money and weapons by Iranian special Quds forces (Cockburn 2008). Sadr's militias desired maximum autonomy to decide the destiny of Shiite population and Iraq: (Dawoody 2005, Crain 2008). Sadr and his supporters were committed to Shiite independence. The American military was not going to decide it, the Sunni's were not going to decide it, nor would AQI/ISI.

Sadr may have been a unifying voice, yet a variety of Shiite leaders who wanted their say as well. "There is a clear class and social basis to Moqtada al-Sadr's insurgency" that was unique to it, but it did not represent the whole of Shi'ism in Iraq (Hashim 2009: 252). Accounting a conversation he had during the Iraq war with a Sadrist, the Washington Post's Tom Ricks stated, "they just wanted to never to go back to Saddam days, and avoid American manipulation" (Ricks 2012). The Shiite groups were a political force independent from the rest of Iraq. Inside this Shiite society there were just as many opinions surrounding Shiite political life and political directives as there were in Sunni society (Ollivant 2013). Though Sadr's militia was influential, its actions forced the Coalition to exclude the Sadrists from the early political processes in favour of other Shiite political groups.

By 2005, the new Dawa led Shiite government took over most of the Iraqi state institutions and national infrastructure. The two other dominant groups had different experiences. In 2005, the Kurdish representation had semi-autonomous governing rights, and semi-participation in the government. They also had semi-autonomous security forces, but there were some other related components as well.⁴¹ As for the Sunni, the past governing

⁴¹ The Kurdish situation in 2005 is important to identify for future study not directly in connection to this research question. Stefan Wolff summarizes the Kurdish status in 2005 as follows: "In summary, the Kurds in Iraq are a large, non-state people in a large, heterogeneous region; they are settled in a compact area but they straddle state boundaries and there are exclaves. As a minority, they have suffered high levels of discrimination and persecution throughout the existence of Iraq as an independent state, and they were practically asked to reintegrate into post-Saddam Iraq after enjoying over a decade of quasi-independence and relative political stability. In order for the Kurds to contribute to peace and stability at the local, state and regional levels, there need to be in place arrangements for territorial and non-territorial self-governance (in relation to Kurds and to groups in their region), for power sharing at the central and local level, and for cross-border institutions and pseudo-diplomatic competences. Sadly, the only well-developed arrangement is that for the territorial self-governance of the Kurdistan region in Iraq". Wolff, S. (2011). The relationships between states and non-state

regimes in Iraq had been Sunni, and this new Shiite dominated government was unique in Iraq's modern history. As a result, life for the Sunni was very hard. The Shiite government took great strides in avenging the past years of exclusion. Beginning with daily services, the Shiite government outlawed certain businesses in neighbourhoods that were historically Sunni. This forced Sunni citizens to enter Shiite neighbourhoods to conduct basic needs such as banking, commerce, vehicle maintenance, and enter civil government buildings such as civil courts, national political offices, and police stations. Furthermore, this gave Shiite more upward mobility, and increases the chances for developing wealth in post-occupation Iraq. In addition, Shiite leaders maintained independent armed militia groups that targeted Sunni population centres as well. These independent armed groups were communal, tribal, or paternal which had nothing to do with nationalism, or religious zeal, it was about revenge.

The Shiite government also created a security crisis that complicated matters and at least contributed to amount of growing insurgencies. The Shiite government allowed for the recruitment of an exclusively Shiite security force and Iraq police. Former Shiite militia squads eagerly joined the police because it gave them opportunities to target the Sunni's with impunity (Kilcullen 2009:115-187). The new police force gave the Shiite almost free reign to dominate the Sunni and minority groups in the government controlled space. This was most evident in Baghdad.

As the Shiite continued to control the government, the interior ministry "deliberately executed Sunni residents" (Kagan 2009:6). Cael Weston described the situation, "the Shiite led a series of barbaric killings, murdering Sunni civilians" (Weston 2014). Another witness

peoples: a comparative view of the Kurds in Iraq. *The Kurdish Policy Imperative*, ed. Robert Lowe and Gareth Stansfield (London: Chatham House, 2010), Accessed March 17 2015. As it relates to the post-Surge era after 2009, Wolff, Stansfield, and Lowe offer interesting perspectives into the Kurdish dilemma. In order to understand a more thorough constitutional situation for the Kurds more in detail during the Surge, consult Stefan Wolff, and Gareth Stansfield. see: Lowe, R. and G. R. Stansfield (2010). *The Kurdish policy imperative*, Chatham House., Wolff, S. (2010). "Governing (in) Kirkuk: resolving the status of a disputed territory in post-American Iraq." *International Affairs* 86 (6): 1361-1379., Stansfield, G. (2014). "The Islamic State, the Kurdistan Region and the future of Iraq: assessing UK policy options." *Ibid.* 90: 1329-1350.

to this activity, David Kilcullen identified it as, “a 9/11 happening every week, and there were hundreds of bodies in the streets” (Kilcullen 2012). While reporting for the Washington Post, Tom Ricks described the situation as, “dire, bleak, and uncontrollable... There were more bodies in the streets than there were people to dispose of them” (Ricks 2012). The visible violence was evident. The central Iraqi government did not make significant effort to stop the violence, the Shiite had a window to take revenge against the Sunni’s and they did with zeal.

In summary, the security priorities amongst the majority of Shiite and Sunni can be characterized in a list of priority that descends. Among most of the Shiite 1) Expand or defend their sphere against Sunni Militias/AQI, 2) maintain independence from the US/coalition and fight the US and 3) settle internal disputes between Shiite groups. On the Sunni sides, they were primarily concerned with surviving and defending against Shiite reprisal. Secondly, they wanted to gain their independence from the American occupying forces, and lastly, from 2004-2006, the Sunni were navigating how to negotiate the extremists from Zarqawi’s network who were corrupting traditional Iraqi life.

The flow chart below identifies the security priorities for the major power groups from 2004-2006.

Summary of Iraq’s Security Threat Priorities for Sunni and Shiite groups from 2004-2006

<u>Shiite Priorities</u>		<u>Sunni Priorities</u>	
1.)	Sunni/AQI	1.)	Shiite
2.)	Americans	2.)	Americans
3.)	Internal Shiite Rivalries	3.)	AQI/Foreign Fighters

The pre-Surge AQI and Sunni Division

At the outset of 2005, AQI's primary concern was that it would not be able to fill the political vacuum created when the US left Iraq. As a result, Zarqawi developed a brazen strategy. Zarqawi made a calculation hoping that the Sunnis would unify against the Shiites and force the US to abandon the government and leave. Senior AQI leaders in Pakistan pleaded with Zarqawi to take a different approach. They did not want to anger the Shiite.⁴² Nonetheless it did not stop Zarqawi, "AQI sent death squads into the Shiite neighbourhoods, the Shiite retaliated against the Sunni, and the Sunni continued to hide behind AQI" (Kilcullen 2012).

AQI continued to grow in power across the countryside and areas of Sunni controlled territory where the government was weak. "AQI took over hospitals, schools, and regulated large parts Iraq life" (Kilcullen 2012). AQI targeted Baghdad and multi-sectarian neighbourhoods (Ricks 2012). However, AQI found their most safe refuge in Fallujah and Ramadi (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 143-155). As January 2005 came, General Mohamed Abdullah Shahwani, head of Iraq intelligence, said that Iraq's insurgency possessed over, "200,000 fighters and volunteers who provide intelligence, logistics and shelter" (GlobalSecurity.org 2010). The Sunni's core fighting was split into three factions. The main one, still owing allegiance to jailed dictator Saddam Hussein, they operated out of Syria. The two leaders of the former regime loyalists were Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri and he was still in Iraq in 2005. Saddam's half-brother, Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan was the other main leader in the

⁴² The reason Zawahiri's did not want to alienate the Shiite existed for two reasons. First, based on Zawahiri's experiences in the post Russian occupied Afghanistan, Zawahiri believed once the American's left there needed to be a plan to unite the country and keep it together. In Afghanistan in 1989 when the Soviets left, there was no possibility to unite the country, and the civil war emerged. Zawahiri knew this, and wanted to keep as many allies as possible. The second reason Zawahiri cautioned against killing the Shiite, is that Zawahiri did not want to anger some of the Iranian supporters of AQI and advised against it Al-Zawahiri, A. (2005). "Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi." *source unknown*: 07-09.

This material is available in Zawahiri's memos, but also it is worth consulting Brian Fishman's reports: Fishman, B. (2008). "Using the mistakes of Al-Qaeda's franchises to undermine its strategies." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618(1): 46-54.

former regime groups. He provided funding to their connections in Mosul, Samarra, Baqiuba, Kirkuk and Tikrit.

The second most important group was the independent Anbari movements. The Anbari movements were the rural Sunni tribes in Anbar province who had been politically independent since 1993 (see stage 1).

In addition to the former regime loyalists and the Anbari movements, there was the Islamist factions ranged from, “Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al-Qaeda affiliate to Ansar al-Sunna and Ansar al-Islam” (GlobalSecurity.org 2010). By the end of 2005, AQI grew in power as its success in recruitment fed its influence. A captured member of an AQI franchise group named Ansar al Sunna highlighted this exact kind of terror, testifying,

“We kidnapped woman who were university students, if they helped the Americans, we raped them, and then we killed them. We were paid to do this by Zarqawi, Mullah Al-Raikan would give the names to our commander, and we would bring them to the house, interrogate them, then rape and kill them. I only raped one, the one who was a part of the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), I did it for revenge because of the help the Americans gave the Kurds before the war” (TV 2005).

Indeed, 2004-2005 was the watershed recruitment years for AQI in Iraq. AQI operated as a moneymaking provider for deprived estranged Iraqis. This resulted in AQI experiencing its first set of problems. Their “recruitment methods were driven by money, while other groups were driven by politics or providing security for their tribes” (Weston 2014). In 2004 and continuing to 2007, the “easiest way to get money in Iraq was from Zarqawi’s militias” (Baer 2012). Zarqawi’s network received their funds through a variety of sources. Bob Baer described AQI stating, “Zarqawi received his money from a host of sources, its impossible to quantify it, but most networks like his receive about 25% from shakedowns, hijackings, and robbery, 25% from selling illicit materials, and about 50% from wealthy gulf donors” (Baer 2012). One Iraq named Mahmoud Ahmad Muhammad Hassan, an Egyptian living in Iraq since 1989, described this process,

[Before the Americans came], “I worked in the market”. Once they [Americans] came, “I kidnapped, robbed, and looted for money”, We killed six people and got two hundred dollars for each person” (TV 2005).

AQI adopted another method of recruitment, and it was to become an Emir for AQI. If an Iraqi killed 60 people they could become an emir for AQI. AQI wanted US soldiers to be targeted, but many Sunni insurgents observed that it was easier to kill 60 unarmed woman, children, and ordinary men than armed US soldiers. Because of this questionable incentive, the actions of many members of AQI served not attract wider support but to earn its members a reputation as murderers (Harvey 2014). By mid-2005 many local leaders rejected AQI’s demands. The unpopularity bred by its more brutal actions, its diverse pool of recruits, and the divisions within the Sunni community presented problems for any aspirations AQI might have had to establish control over territory. Ultimately, an increasing number of Sunni Iraqis unified against it.

By the end of 2005, AQI leadership lost control over their constituents. As a result, many Sunni tribal leaders grew increasingly annoyed with AQI, but political power was weakened because AQI had “hired all the young men away” (Rayburn 2014: 116). Furthermore, in 2005, Zarqawi and AQI announced a Mujahedeen Shura Council (MSC hereafter). The MSC was an attempt at unifying smaller Salafi insurgent groups and AQI. However the MSC was a, “thinly disguised tool for asserting control over other Sunni Jihadist groups” (Rayburn 2014: 121). Despite AQI’s grip over young unemployed Sunni men, AQI leadership had become strategically inflexible. It had taken over control of many of the other armed groups, yet it did not have the ability to protect the Iraq people or deliver a national plan for Iraq. By the end of 2005, an increasing number of Sunni groups were turning against AQI. The diverse set of insurgent groups created great tension in Iraq that Sunni communities were broken. In 2005, a Marine Corps intelligence assesment said,

“Anbar Province was untenable for Coalition forces and for the Iraqi Government” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 159) AQI had manipulated much of Anbar, and the Sunni community.

Though AQI had strength, Col Peter Mansoor, General Petraeus Chief of Staff recounted, “AQI was overreaching, and was losing their footing. But we could not get the Sunni’s on our side just yet” (Mansoor 2012). Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Janabi recounted that to avert conflict with them AQI he attempted negotiations with AQI chieftains, but AQI attacked with 800 men against al-Janabi, killing 10 of his family, and AQI destroyed their homes and vehicles (McWilliams and Awakening 2009: 67). Al-Janabi also accounted that while AQI was putting fear in his people, “all the other (Sunni and Shiite) militias were as well, they issued fatwas against us and they sent out leaflets, we tried uprisings against AQI in 2004, and 2005” (McWilliams and Awakening 2009: 71).

2006 marked the year that AQI lost control and self-destructed. AQI redesigned its subversive criminal militia to an outright competition for political authority over Sunni areas in 2006. In early 2006, AQI assassinated many Sunni leaders who showed any resistance to AQI. Also, in February 2006, AQI dealt itself a final political blow that fundamentally changed the political allegiances inside Iraq society. On February 22, 2006 AQI bombed a holy Shiite mosque called the Golden Dome (Ollivant 2013). Though only small injuries occurred in the attack, the event stirred a series of reprisal attacks that brought the country’s political differences to the forefront. Over the next week, estimates of over 2000 Iraqis were killed.

Many political parties knew that Iraq was imploding. “As 2006 progressed Sunnis all over central Iraq suffered under more and more attacks, until they realized they could not defeat the Shiite, the Coalition, and disaffected opposing Sunni groups, if they stayed aligned with AQI” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 156). One rebelling tribal leader Sheik Abdul Sittar Eftikhan al-Rishawi ad-Dulami said, “We began to see what they were actually doing in al-

Anbar province. They were not respecting us in any way. Their tactics are not acceptable” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 345) Abdul Sittar Eftikhan al-Rishawi ad-Dulami remarks indicate Iraqis experienced shifting allegiances and political differences that were emerging across Iraq.

Col Peter Mansoor (General Petraeus Chief of Staff) summarizes the Sunni experience stating:

“The Sunni tribal sheiks attempted in late 2005 to form a united front against AQI, that was called the Al ‘Anbar’s People’s Council. The effort quickly collapsed due to political infighting... [in the end] AQI murdered three quarters of the sheiks who made up the leadership of this tribal rebellion (Mansoor 2012).

The death of all the Sunni leaders was tragic for Iraqis, however, it created a sentiment best captured in a quote from Dr. Thamer al-Assafi of the Muslim Ulema Council for Anbar: “Life became intolerable. So we started looking for Salvation, no matter who it was.” (Mansoor 2013: 125)

While AQI was self-destructing, AQI also received a catastrophic leadership setback in 2006. In a direct action strike, the US special operations forces killed Zarqawi. This loss was difficult for AQI, because AQIs diverse set of recruits were already complicated and difficult to control. In the absence of Zarqawi, AQI lost its command and control. By mid-2006, AQI/MSC made one final push to unite Sunnis across Anbar with a radical and new political vision for Iraq. In an attempt to reach out to the more nationalist groups, Zarqawi’s chieftains elevated Abu Ayyub al-Masri to succeed Zarqawi. Osama Bin Laden put his signature of approval on this move. OBL released a tape on July 1 recognizing Al-Masri as the new leader of AQI.⁴³ In this tape, OBL urged Al-Masri to make Iraq into the centre of the Islamic caliphate (Kagan 2009:9).

⁴³ Al-Masri’s field name was identified as Sheik Abu Hamza al Mujajer for more on this detail consult: Cruickshank, P., & Ali, M. H. (2007). Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al-Qaeda. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30(1), 1-14.

Al-Masri did not possess the leadership traits of Zarqawi; though he was no less ideologically repugnant. In September 2006, al-Masri made a gamble to entrench AQI's power.

- The first decree was that every Sunni must kill a Shiite
- The second decree was that every one of AQI's supporters must kill an American.

This was al-Masri's attempt to demonstrate authority, yet not force the totality of Sunnis to surrender to an ideological perspective that may be foreign to them. In 2006, the Sunnis had a variety of enemies, but their priorities were wavering.

Following these decrees, AQI published a book entitled, *Informing the People on the Islamic State of Iraq*. In this document, al-Masri's supporters showed their vision for the future of Iraq, a vision of a Taliban style theocracy with limited appeal.

On October 15, 2006, AQI officially declared that Anbar and parts of western Iraq, now comprised the Islamic State of Iraq, and AQI called Ramadi, "the capital of the Islamic State of Iraq" (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012). By declaring Anbar was now a part of ISI, AQI demonstrated it was shifting its political, strategic, and operational approach. AQI/ISI was attempting to bring nationalism and zealous religiosity together amongst the Sunni communities. The main goal of AQI/ISI was to have a social base of control amongst the Sunnis, and then target Shiite groups so that they would "create nationwide reprisals for Sunnis" (Harvey 2014). This was the first time AQI or any other organization changed the nature of their orientation from an Emirate to a State (*Emira* to a *Dola*). This distinction is important, because al-Masri's shift to focus on the *Dola* as opposed to the *Emira* designates the strategic shift in focus from the old AQ mission set from Osama Bin Laden, into a new paradigm.

AQI's shift to ISI gave it a new political paradigm. It offered Arab jihadis two new identities. First the Islamic state in Iraq offered a new home to international jihadis. Making

AQI into a pseudo-Islamic state meant that Arabs could pursue a jihad in the Arab world, and make a home in an Arab Islamist state. The closest alternative to this was in Palestine. The other Jihadist causes were in distant lands or were kept in check by brutal measures as seen in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, being in Iraq meant jihadis were close to Mecca/Medina, which Chechnya, Pakistan, North Africa, and Indonesia was not the case. The second significant change was the new concept of a *Dola* challenged how western countries and the Arab world could discuss AQI. *Dola* translates to a “state”, and by making AQI into a “state”, and it gave them more legitimacy, because it took on the identity of a state. This becomes more evident after the Surge years as seen in the cases of ISIS in Syria.

As AQI/ISI took more control, they became more corrosive than any other insurgent group. “Some members were forcing their way into marriages of Iraq families, and this angered many locals. AQI also publicly beat and murdered people just to show their authority. AQI cut the fingers off of people who smoked in public” (Kilcullen 2012). Further complicating the AQI/ISI efforts, many street thugs who “murdered, stole, and created trouble, did so while waving the AQI flag, using the AQI name but possessing no affiliation whatsoever” (Ollivant 2013). “There was no coherence amongst the groups killing, and murdering, the only thing that made sense was that killings were occurring and people were getting paid to do it” (Weston 2014). An Iraq named Ibrahim recounted,

“In the early days of the war, the terrorists came to my door step with weapons and knives wearing black masks, they were not just evil individuals, they were an army of evil, they took my oldest son and told me to have 2,000 USD for him by morning or he would be killed, I sold everything I owned, and took the last amount of money I had, and waited till morning, my family was terrorized and in tears all night. We did not sleep. They came back and I gave them the money, and then they slit my son’s throat in front of me and my family, they were Iraqis, I could tell by their speech, but they did not think like Iraqis, they acted like evil Satan’s from another place. We left as soon as we could and came to Beirut” (Baghdadi 2010).

In one case, Osama Bin Laden was asked to intervene. Sheikh Hareth al-Dhari, one of Anbar's prestigious tribes and head of the anti-government Association of Muslim Scholars

of Iraq, called on Osama bin Laden to stop the rift between Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the local Sunni insurgency. "I call on Sheikh Osama bin Laden in the name of the Islam for which he fights to intervene and to instruct Al-Qaeda to adhere to the rules of proper jihad and to respect the people who had previously opened their arms to Al-Qaeda", Dhari's remarks indicated that the US and Iraqis still have much work ahead to fully dislodge Al-Qaeda from all the Anbar tribes." If he [bin Laden] has no influence over Al-Qaeda in Iraq, then he must say it so that we can decide how to deal with those who have hurt our main cause, which is liberating Iraq" (Dagher 2007).

Thus far, this section has demonstrated that by early 2006, AQI's path of social destruction spoiled any long-term hope of sustaining a presence amongst the wider Iraqi population. Indeed, their political and social measures were inconsistent with the desires of many important figures within Sunni society. A variety of Sunni groups were attacking AQI, American, and Shiite. Specifically, in Anbar province, many of the tribal sheiks were exhausted by the extreme puritanical requirement of the Salafist/AQI ideologues.

Summary of Iraq's political dynamics from 2003-2006 (pre-Surge) and how it splits into insurgencies

In 2006, Iraq was in a state of civil war verging on chaos. There was no political cohesion at the national level, and any attempts of the Coalition to remedy the problem seemed to make things worse. The reality was there was a splintering of the major political groups into diverse insurgencies. Upon the interviews and archival data gathered for this case study, there was a splintering of political groups into at least 47 different insurgent organizations.

The data constructed from the interviews, archival data, and declassified/open source reports is compiled in the abbreviated table below for a full list see appendix.

Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations
1.) Al-Qaeda Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
2.) Mujahidin Shura Council	Proactive Non-State/Hybrid	Local/Regional/Global
3.) Islamic State of Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global

4.) Al Rashideen Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
5.) The Front for Jihad and Change	Proactive Non-State	Local
6.) Unorganized Nationalist Sunni	Proactive Non-State	Local
7.) Jaish al-Muslimeen	Proactive Non-State	Local
8.) Islamic Movement of Iraq's Mujahideen	Proactive Non-State	Local
9.) Muslim Fighters of the Victorious Sect	Proactive Non-State	Local
10.) Black Banner Organization	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
11.) Hasad al-Muqawamah al-'Iraqyah	Proactive Non-State	Local
11.1) Al-Faruq Brigades	Proactive Non-State	

Table 9: see appendix for full list

This chapter has thus far identified, that the history of Iraq created a host of political disputes. These disputes created the invisible conflict that later erupted in the 20th century. Furthermore, the historical disputes and the invisible sides to the conflict increased political tensions in domestic Iraq. Indeed, the tensions led many actors to play a part in the insurgencies as they emerge from 2003-2007. This diverse set of insurgent groups played an equal role in complicating the security situation in Iraq.

The Surge

By the end of 2006, “the American people wanted out of Iraq” (Porter 2012). President Bush was forced to either change strategy in Iraq, or exit in shame. The Bush administration saw “exiting a failure thus was not a viable option. In order to exit Iraq and save the Bush administration’s legacy, the US revisited a half century old concept called counterinsurgency” (Nagl 2012). In an attempt to salvage an abysmal campaign, President Bush gained the resignation of SECDEF Rumsfeld and installed a new SECDEF, Robert Gates. Furthermore, a series of domestic policy initiatives were conducted including policy overhaul in the Pentagon accounted in the previous chapter.

In 2006, President Bush unveiled a new strategy (the Surge) and sent an additional five brigades to Iraq (Bush 2010: 355-395). AEI military analyst Thomas Donnelly recognized, "part of the purpose of the Surge was to redefine the Washington narrative" (Bacevich 2008). The set goal was to stop the insurgency, estimated at that time to be well over 250,000 fighters. Andrew Krepinevich remarked, “it is also unclear whether employing

COIN best practices will work in the context of not only a raging insurgency (in Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala), but also a sectarian civil war (in Baghdad, Diyala, and increasingly Kirkuk), diffuse criminal anarchy and militia rivalry (in the South), and endemic separatist tendencies (in Kurdistan)” (Malkasian 2011). In 2007, a new strategy and new leadership came to Iraq. The strategy was to operationalize FM3-24, the US COIN manual. This occurred because of a series of “disparate events rather than a deliberate shift in strategy”, but still the decision was timely (Ucko 2009: 112). In June 2007, at the beginning of the Surge, Multinational Force Commander General David Petraeus Command had six strategic goals for Iraq.

- 1.) Let the Iraqis Lead
- 2.) Assist in protecting the population
- 3.) Kill or Capture Foreign Extremists
- 4.) Allow for Political Process
- 5.) Diversify political and economic efforts
- 6.) Find a regional strategy

The purpose for the Surge was to “enforce population security, primarily in Baghdad” (Macgregor 2012). However, there were battalions sent off to the “rural population centres” as well (Weston 2014).

Petraeus and the Battle for Baghdad

In 2007, more US troops entered Iraq under the guidance of General Petraeus and his new field manual FM3-24. As the Surge forces entered Iraq, they began to enforced robust measures to control the population. This included curfews, concrete barricades, innovative decision-making by field commanders, increased intelligence, and the collaborating with indigenous uprisings. Linda Robinson recounts her experiences, “the concrete walls surrounding communities provided check points for entrances and exits into population centres. This puts enormous strains on daily movement” (Exum 2010).

Special advisor to Petraeus, David Kilcullen stated,

“In each of these neighbourhoods we put an American soldier next to an Iraq soldier, and we partnered with them. We could screen for AQI around, we could stop the roadside bombs before they entered cities, and we built trust in from the locals towards the US and the Iraq Government” (Kilcullen 2012).

Other COIN measures included curfews and pedestrian freezones in some places. “Cities like Fallujah were shut down” (Exum 2010). Furthermore, innovative decision-making occurred from the likes of “Jeffrey Banister and Mike Kershaw, show how military leaders adapted and learned how to work with Iraqis” (Exum 2010). The final extraordinary component of the Surge was the “US precision strikes against AQI with Special Operations forces, led by Stanley McChrystal” (Ricks 2012). The totality of these efforts assisted in winning Baghdad, and by 2008, over 250,000 former vigilantes were now working on behalf of the US, and Iraq.

Iraq’s Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said, “AQI has been driven from Baghdad” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 179) President Bush claimed the success of the Surge stating:

“The Surge did more than turn around the situation in Iraq. It made possible a major strategic victory in the broader war on terror. For Terrorists Iraq was supposed to be the place where AQI rallied Iraqis to drive American out. Instead, Iraq has become the place where the Iraqis joined forces with America to drive AQI out. As a result AQI suffered a military defeat in Iraq; it also suffered an ideological defeat” (Bush 2009).

Kim Kagan writes:

By mid-July of 2007 US forces had pushed Al-Qaeda out of its urban sanctuaries and broken up its operations in the belts [of Baghdad], driving the enemy further from the capitol. By August, the enemy occupies small-dispersed pockets (Kagan 2009:115)

While the insurgency was weakening in Baghdad, and Diyala, the Anbari’s were executing AQI/ISI members in the west.

Other events occurred in parallel that affected the movement of society. The US began tapping into the motivations of its enemies, and US commanders knew the Iraq Surge required a tactic called “co-option and accommodation”. By design, the US began finding the

different local power brokers and paying them to be loyal to the US, “no matter how big or how small, we put them on the payroll” (Natonski 2012). By paying off the Sunni groups, the US was able to take thousands of former enemies and make them allies. This occurred primarily in Anbar, but did go further north as well (Weston 2014). This movement was labelled as the *Sahwa*. The indigenous tribal uprising against Zarqawi were paid a rate, of 300-350 dollars a day. In total this billed from, “30-100 million a month depending how the accounting is done” (Biddle 2012). Furthermore, this new money was freely available and there was no real competition for it. Though AQI had resources, it could not compete with this buying off method from Petraeus. In effect, Petraeus plan of co-option took away the buying power of AQI/ISI.⁴⁴ The “undeniable truth is that Al-Qaeda caused the political revolt against itself, and Americans enabled the rebellion against it with the co-option plan, but the Americans did not cause the revolt against AQI” (McWilliams and Awakening 2009: 244). Conservative estimates indicate in the early months of 2007, “something like 70,000 were brought into the US initiatives, but we did not kick out Al-Qaeda, the Sunnis did” (Natonski 2012). The paying off the Sunni’s made the task of security for the Baghdad government easier.

Lastly, the US military was able to find common ground for promoting a form of reconciliation and reintegration of former insurgents” (Ucko 2009: 129). Meaning any former insurgents who were put in prison could now be reconciled and reintegrated in Iraqi society. This revelation went a long way in repairing some relationships amongst local Iraqis and the Iraqi government and the US presence.

⁴⁴ This is another example to the drawbacks of AQI/ISI's money-focused recruitment strategy in the modern state will almost always have more money than they do, with the exception of a state in the middle of a civil war.

In summary, the implementation of FM3-24 and the additional Surge forces created space so that the US could isolate the cancerous individuals who were disrupting society. By bringing security, trust and confidence in the government increased.

Sunni dynamics during the Surge, 2007-2008

In an interview Colonel Derek Harvey special advisor to General Petraeus and Joint Staff Directorate for Intelligence recounted that,

“The majority of Sunni’s across Iraq were opposed to AQI but there needed to be a viable alternative to the Americans, or the Shiite government to get them to work with us” (Harvey 2014).

Not only were AQI actions belligerent, repugnant, and liable to alienate the population, but AQI was also suffering from poor resource management. The death of Zarqawi created organizational struggles for AQI, and al-Masri did not possess the skills to appropriate more support. In addition, Sunni movements across Anbar and other provinces rose up in opposition to AQI, the Anbari Sheiks awakening councils already were growing in strength, and former Baathists rejected the foreign Salafi interpretations of AQI. Moreover, the Islamic Army of Iraq (*Jaish al Islam*) publicly accused AQI/ISI of violating Islamic law (Rayburn 2014:123). In 2007, AQI was targeted by a variety of groups including the Islamic Army of Iraq (a Baathist movement), Anbari tribes (*the Sahwa*), Shiite Militias (Sadr Brigades, the Mahdi Army, Dawa Militants), and the new Surge forces. Describing this dramatic change, a policeman in Habbaniyah recounted,

“On Christmas eve, he was astonished young men in his neighborhood were in the streets, setting off fireworks, drinking alcohol, and dancing with their girlfriends. (These are all distinctly Christian activities in Iraq, that were previously banned by AQI militias) The bemused policeman teased the youths, ‘you’re celebrating like Christians, but last year you were Al-Qaeda’. The young men laughed back and said, ‘Al-Qaeda, that was last year!’.” (Rayburn 2014:124)

Shiite Political Dynamics during the Surge

As of mid-2008, with the threat of AQI dramatically decreased, the Coalition could then devote most of their operations against the armed Shiite groups who were still fighting in the south and some parts of Baghdad.

The Shiite political organizations and their unique makeup were complicated from the beginning of the war. The Shiites were opposed to the differing Sunni groups. However during the Surge, the Shiite community was not itself entirely unified. Sadr's militias were the most dominant in terms of military capability amongst non-governmental forces, and by 2007 an open political power struggle had begun between Sadr and other elements of the Shiite political groups, called the United Iraq Alliance (UIA) (Allawi 2007: 200-400). Sadr's rivals (now led by Prime Minister Maliki and the Supreme Islamic Iraq Council (SIIC) Sayyid Abdul Aziz al-Hakim) controlled most centres of political power in the government.

The main opposition to the Dawa was the Sadrists. The Sadrists maintained their capacity by succumbing to foreign sponsors. This was most evident in the US Dept. of Treasury investigation that found the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, "supporting [militant] groups as well as its central role in perpetrating human rights abuses against the citizens of Iran" (Joscelyn 2012). Commentating on this matter, Admiral Mike Mullen claimed that Iranians were supporting insurgent groups with weapons and shaped explosives that were effective at penetrating armor. "Iran is very directly supporting extremist Shiite groups which are killing our troops", furthermore, Mullen said, "there's no reason for me to believe that they're going to stop" (Joscelyn 2012). In addition, the Quds Force, the special operations branch of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, has "gone to a more

sophisticated program with a smaller set of extremists" by narrowing down the number of Shiite [militant] groups it supports (Joscelyn 2012).⁴⁵

Moreover, Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Mahdi Army and its militant Promise Day Brigade, lived in Qom, Iran for a period of time. By Sadr's direction, the League of the Righteous, the Promise Day Brigades, and the Hezbollah Brigades carried out attacks against US and Iraq forces as well as against Iraq leaders who threaten Shiite authority as well as challenge Iran's agenda in Iraq.⁴⁶

At the end of 2008, after the Battle of Baghdad, Ambassador Ryan Crocker best captures the sentiment of Iraqi's, he stated:

"The Sunnis are afraid of the future of Iraq, in which they are no longer ascendant, the Shiite are afraid of the past-that the Sunni's will reassert themselves, and the Kurds, with their history of suffering, are afraid of the past and the future (Crocker 2010)

The Surge did play a role in lessening violence, especially between warring Sunni and Shiite groups. It facilitated their turning inward to their intra-group conflicts. One of the important things that occurred was "walling off large parts of Iraq" (Natonski 2012). "By putting up six meter concrete walls between sectarian neighborhoods, we were physically able to stop combatants going into a neighborhood" (Nagl 2012). Furthermore, by sending US advisors with Iraqi police forces, and Iraqi security forces, we could have a hands on approach and prevent the Iraqi army from taking any hostile actions against the Iraqi people,

⁴⁵ There were other examples of outside support. In a case of a capture insurgent, Abdallah claimed to be paid to enter into Iraq, and unite with Baathists in Iraq and Syria, for unifying the two states. Another illustration is Dania Sam'an Alin, a Christian dressed as a Muslim female Syrian Intelligence Operative. Formerly a political prisoner, sentenced in Damascus, serving in Adra Prison she was recruited for an outsourced insurgency and subversive operations in Iraq. In her testimony before the Iraqi/Coalition authorities she said, "I was paid 450 USD to come to Iraq, and gather intelligence. Brigadier General Alaa Al-Saleh held my daughter captive, he is holding my daughter Nara, until I give them information. I was trained in computers, and know how to access the Syrian intelligence web site Al-Zahra AlBidhaa" TV, M. T. P. A. I. (2005). Syrian Terrorist Explains Why She Did It.

⁴⁶ Field commander General Odierno acknowledged the debate over whether Iranian support for the three main Shiite terror groups in Iraq includes backing Iran's government, "It's very difficult to say if the extremist groups are directly connected to the Iranian government," Odierno said. "But we do know that many of them live in Iran, many of them get trained in Iran, and many of them get weapons from Iran". Roggio, B. (2010) Iran backs three Shia terror groups in Iraq: General Odierno. [The Long War Journal](#)

this was a fundamental change from before the Surge” (Kilcullen 2012). General Natonski argued, “because the insurgency was urban, we could manipulate it much more than in Afghanistan, our ability to control and manipulate society was powerful, because it limited the movements of the enemy” (Natonski 2012). Observing the situation in Iraq, Linda Robinson stated, “by the end of the Surge, the cities were shut down” (Exum 2012).

The following section will discuss, the stage 3 of the case study. In review, the stage 3 is the reaction to US interventions that previously occurred during the Surge.

Stage 3: Reactions to the Surge: the Sahwa, a Shiite Civil War from 2007-2009, and Kurdish Complications

In 2008, Iraq’s central government increasingly showed a growing strength. This change indicated that a dynamic shift occurred during the Surge. This is equally important to discovering the Surge outcome as the other stages. The following section will identify this in stage 3. This will entail how the indigenous reactions to the Surge also assisted in creating temporary success during the Iraq Surge.

Sunni and Shiite Reactions to the Surge

The Surge achieved some success in the Sunni regions because of the unification of former regime loyalists and tribal leaders revolting against AQI. As the Sunni groups progressively cooperated, the visible/direct violence decreased throughout 2006, and 2007, and by “October 2007, the Mahdi Army replaced AQI as the most dangerous in Iraq” (Weston 2014). As the Sunni situation was solving itself, the Shiite problem was still unsettled.

The Shiite political situation was more complicated than the situation in Anbar, and in Baghdad. Linda Robinson accounts that, “Shiite politics were the most complicated amongst any Iraqi group’s” (Robinson 2009: 145). Despite the complications to the Shiite politics, in 2008, the majority Shiite leaders made strategic decisions to focus on internal corruption, and

a leadership consolidation of power between the ruling factions. In January 2007 to mid-2008, Iraqi units launched offensives not only targeting Sadr's military units in Baghdad and southern Iraq, but also empowered political rivals to isolate the Sadrist movement. As militia leaders were captured or killed, Sadr's remaining command and control eroded.

As Sadr was losing influence, the Mahdi army militiamen turned to Iran for support. By late 2007, it was clear that Iranian-backed groups were the primary driver of violence in southern Iraq and in Baghdad. Petraeus attempted secret negotiations with senior Sadr officials, but met with very little success. Due to Sadr's leadership, and Iran's assistance, by 2008, "the Mahdi Army had become a powerful mafia that intimidated many of Shiite communities that it was supposed to be protecting" (Ricks 2012). In response, Prime Minister Maliki secretly recruited Sadr's rivals to work inside the government of Iraq. Maliki acted in shrewd way, placing Sadr's enemies in key security positions. Placing Sadr's enemies in key government positions gave the government more assets to target Sadr.

At the beginning of 2008, the majority Shiite political groups SCRI, the Dawa, and the Sadrists collided into a political battle. An internal "Shiite political and military civil war emerged as the AQI/ISI was losing ground". (Harvey 2014). The course of this civil war left the two largest parties, SCRI and the Sadrists, into an awkward and weakened position. By the end of 2007, Sadr had lost control over the identify of his armed units, and at the end of 2008, the biggest concern amongst the Shiite was avoiding self-combustion as the way AQI had done starting in 2006.

As the Maliki government continued to expand itself, the Sadrists became weakened. By the end of 2008, the Dawa was on the rise, and Maliki appeared to be a viable stable leader as he focused on internal Shiite corruption. By 2008, the Iraqi government appeared stronger and gained support from Sunni and Kurdish leaders because Maliki appeared to be bringing order to the chaos in Iraq.

Difficulties for the Kurds during the Surge

In opposition to the Arab Sunni groups and the Iranian Shiite influences, Kurdish political authority developed into their own social/political power bases that sought independent security as well. As previously identified, the 2005 elections proved to be problematic for the Sunni, however, the new Iraqi state demonstrated corruption and many of the Kurds found it just as problematic as the Sunni.

In the north, confrontations between armed Sunni militia groups and the large Kurdish Peshmerga forces began by 2005 (TV 2005, Allawi 2007:87-97). The Kurdish militias saw the fall of Baghdad, as an opportunity to expand their influence from Mosul into mixed areas of Diyala, Nineveh, and Wasit. Hashim identified that the Kurds acted this way because they were seeking their own interests. Hashim stated, “the Kurds do not care about Iraq, the Kurds care about Kurdistan” (Hashim 2009: 269).⁴⁷ As the Kurds pursued their own interests, they acted in some ways that were more of a distraction than any help to the US or Iraq. This was most evident in October 2007 when the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) executed several attacks in Iraq’s neighboring Turkey. This was an attempt to get Kurds in Iraq and in Turkey to unify efforts for the PKK’s long-term goal of an independent Kurdistan.

In response, Turkey did attack the PKK, though some of these artillery and mortar strikes occurred in both Iraq and Turkey. This was because the PKK moved across borders (Baer 2012). Under the advice of General Petraeus, the US did not move ahead and share

⁴⁷ In addition to the Kurdish pressures in the north; the Shiite militias in the south, and the Sunni communities also possessed militant groups gaining a powerful presence in their own neighbourhoods. The shifting insurgency suffered from the contending nationalities of bordering non-state foreign insurgents found in AQI, but also the ethnic Kurds of the north, and religious majority in the Shiite, and Sunni establishments. The insurgency also contained actors from the competing states of Syria and Iran. At the outset of the war, Syrian Intelligence and Iranian military units funded operations in Iraq. In the case of Syria, agents were attempting to unite Baathists between Syria and Iraq. In the testimony from First Lieutenant Ahmad Fadi Abdallah, of the Syrian intelligence, he articulated how Syrian intelligence was ordered to fund terrorist activities in order to reunify Syria and Iraq TV, M. T. P. A. I. (2005). Syrian Officer Says Orders for Slaughter Came From Syria MEMRI TV.

intelligence, or further get involved in this issue. Instead, the US Congress reaffirmed House Resolution 106, which condemned the genocide of 1915.

This mini-crisis became large enough of a problem, so that in October of 2007, General Petraeus had to personally get involved in a prisoner exchange to conclude the situation. However, during the remainder of the Surge, Turkey would continue to strike the PKK across its borders; this standoff continued until the end of the Surge.

Additionally, the Kurds also were victims to the Iraqi government during the Surge. As the *Sahwa* united Sunni's against AQI, Sunni Arabs became increasingly connected to the government and took over more political control of Sunni areas. This was evident in the 2009 elections. In Baghdad, Anbar, and in Sunni controlled areas in the south, the *Sahwa* morphed into some pseudo-political organizations. In the case of Ninewa, Sunni Arabs unified their support base against the Kurds. In a different case, Kirkuk, from 2007-2009, suicide bombers regularly visited Kurdish neighborhoods in Kirkuk, and from 2007-2009 over 1000 Kurds were killed in Kirkuk alone (Rayburn 2013:160-173).⁴⁸ During the Surge, the Kurdish political headquarters buildings, and many of their local political leaders were in constant state of risk. By the end of the Surge, the Arabs and the Kurds achieved little long-term political resolve. Joel Rayburn best captures the Kurdish position in Iraq. Summarizing the situation Rayburn states:

“Iraqis fought a brutal 6-year war over many components, one of which was Kurdish and Arab interests. Over 6 years, Kirkuk, Ninewa, were warzones that in the end delivered no political results. The Kurds failed to secure a permanent area of control from 2003-2006; as a result ethnic conflict resulted from this state of paralysis with rival local parties frozen in place until national level politics could tip the balance. But at the national level too, the opposing sides made little headway in settling internal disputes in terms of governance, and control of territory. At the end of the Surge, the fundamental disputes that had led to violence had been temporarily settled, but the warring parties – destroyed Iraq—all while radicalizing and polarizing communities

⁴⁸ Article 140 of the constitution decreed a two-step process for settling the disputed territories and internal boundaries of the country. This process dramatically favoured the Kurds. As a result, Sunni Arab's were vigilant in some areas asserting their own control.

that had coexisted for centuries, making it highly probable that future losers in the political struggle would return to violence” (Rayburn 2013: pp. 166-167)

Summary of Stages 1-3

The Coalition in Iraq faced a war torn and a politically divided society. During the US occupation, Iraq evolved into a diverse array of parallel insurgent movements. Solving the insurgency and bringing a reduction in direct violence was not the political goal for the US, but bringing the violence down allowed the US to salvage what was left of Iraq. The US had originally wanted Iraq to be a model democracy in the Middle East. Once the occupation started, however, it became apparent that Iraqis saw their desired future differently, and the differing armed groups clashed throughout the US occupation.

The domestic clashes turned to a violent insurgency that followed through with ethnic cleansing, civil war, and terrorism throughout Iraq neighborhoods. The process via which the insurgency coalesced indicates that the insurgency was never a single stable entity. Indeed, the sectarian groups experienced a changing political playground in which AQI in Iraq surfaced. AQI did not get its start in Iraq because Iraqis were not outright supporters of AQI. However the absence of a government and the fear of rival domestic actors insinuated AQI’s prowess. AQI was one nefarious actor that had ambitions of being a global vanguard at motivating the larger Islamic society in Iraq (Kilcullen 2005). At the expense of unifying Sunni/Shiite relations and against the advice of senior AQI leaders, Zarqawi chose brutal measures to win in Iraq by inciting a civil war amongst local parties. The main confrontation came between AQI was with Sunni tribes, former regime loyalists, and Shiite militias. Sunni leaders saw the United States and the Iraq government as useful partners to eradicate both local and foreign members of AQI. These local/nationalist community leaders took on global minded jihadists and began to take out foreign criminals ruling the streets of Anbar.

AQI’s prowess and power base pushed an imbalance in Iraq’s political power.

Politically, AQI changed the power control structures. This change in power, created space in which Sunnis were ready to stop fighting each other as well as stop fighting the Shiite.

In addition, FM3-24 assisted American military commanders and by forcing the soldiers to get out of their bases, and get more involved with the Iraq society. This was an important thing for the American military.

Finally the forces had a new command structure that was less convinced about winning and losing and more focused on stabilizing the political structures of Iraq that included tribal leaders, local political forces, and less focused on Baghdad. Washington Post writer Tom Ricks commented about this change of focus during the Iraq war. Ricks claimed, “the American military began to realize that the COIN fight they were in, needed to focus on the political parts of society, and this is winning (Ricks 2012).

In summary, the US began the original invasion with a plan to dethrone Saddam and conduct deBaathification, and when it failed, the US purchased a tribal uprising in Anbar, and paid them to push their subordinates and manipulate dissidents to garner an eventual ceasefire with the US and the Shiite. This was only possible, however, because historical conditions were already in place and those channels already existed into which energy and grievances could flow, at least temporarily.

Moreover, the *Sahwa* movements began independently of the US as early as 2005, and they continued to gain momentum throughout 2006. Therefore, the COIN strategy cannot unilaterally explain the birth or the effects of the Awakening movements in al Anbar. Furthermore, General Petraeus’s new COIN strategy was not actually implemented on the ground until mid-2007. Moreover, the additional troop strength required for the Surge did not finish arriving until the end of May 2007. Frederick Kagan was one of the key advisors to the Bush administration over the Surge, and even Kagan admits that full-scale Surge operations had not yet even occurred by June 30, 2007 (Kagan 2009) Many US policy makers argued

the Surge allowed the US to “win the war in Iraq”. Statements as late as late 2012 came from Sen. John McCain maintaining, the Surge was the reason for America’s success in Iraq. In a challenging interview he said,

“I can tell you what worked in Iraq, I can get you to General Petraeus and he will tell you what worked. It was the Surge. The Surge worked. We won Iraq because of American COIN, and that’s what we need in Afghanistan as well.” (McCain 2012)

In June 2008 and continuing until December 2009, intermittent outbreaks of violence occurred, but the overall chaos was reduced to “something like 10% of the outbreaks that occurred from 2006-mid to 2008 (Nagl 2012). In January, newly elected President Obama assumed command. On February 27 2009, Obama indicated how the US was going to proceed. Obama stated,

“We cannot rid Iraq of all who oppose America or sympathize with our adversaries. We cannot police Iraq’s streets until they are completely safe, nor stay until Iraq’s union is perfected. We cannot sustain indefinitely a commitment that has put a strain on our military, and will cost the American people nearly a trillion dollars. America’s men and women in uniform have fought block by block, province by province, year after year, to give the Iraqis this chance to choose a better future. Now, we must ask the Iraq people to seize control... The drawdown of our military should send a clear signal that Iraq’s future is now its own responsibility” (Obama 2011).

While Obama focused on withdrawal, he highlighted America’s next concern:

“We have also taken into account the simple reality that America can no longer afford to see Iraq in isolation from other priorities: we face the challenge of refocusing on Afghanistan and Pakistan; of relieving the burden on our military; and of rebuilding our struggling economy – and these are challenges that we will meet” (Obama 2011).

By July, all Coalition forces, with the exception of the US, had withdrawn from Iraq. Commenting on this change, a local religious leader indicated, “some people are afraid because the Americans have left [our neighborhood]. Some think it will be better because then the enemies of the Americans will leave Iraq” and the country will be safer (Rubin 2009). Though 2009 was a year of downsizing of foreign military footprint, the beginning of downsizing US efforts, and “pushing Iraqis in the lead”, Iraq was far from politically stable.

“Overall, violence has dropped dramatically in Iraq compared to a year ago, but sporadic attacks still continue in several parts of the country” (Nagl 2012).

Conclusion

This case study has demonstrated that Iraq’s history created a diverse set of social divisions, political beliefs and disputes that were reflected in the diversity of the insurgency from 2006-2009. The diverse insurgent groups expressed this from 2004-2009. In addition, these disputes became central to the sectarian violence throughout the country. Further complicating these domestic disputes were misguided actions performed by the US such as de-Baathification, and failing to capitalize on AQI/ISI misguided prowess. As a result, US actions prior to the Surge, from 2003-2006, gave a window for hostilities to escalate. Iraqi reactions to US intervention changed throughout the conflict. Part of this was because of US actions, and part of it was because of the behavior of the Iraqi government and AQI.

The presence of AQI allowed for a shift in focus on the part of armed groups towards conflict within the Sunni and Shiite communities. By the end of the Surge the focus of these armed groups had aligned with the interests of the United States. Because of the interaction of these 3-stages, the Surge was able to make a temporary breakthrough, reduce the barbaric violence, and strengthen the central government.

This case identifies the key stages that allowed success in Iraq. The Afghanistan case study demonstrates that these key stages possess some similarities, but the totality of variables was far different and as a result the Afghanistan Surge did not produce the same results.

The next chapter will provide background to the Afghanistan case study. This will show how the temporary successes of Iraq were able to influence how American policy was made from 2008-2009 and demonstrate that American policy in Afghanistan set out to apply

the same approach as had been –it appeared- successful in Iraq in order to solve the ongoing security problems in Afghanistan.

Pride and Prejudice on the Potomac:

How the Iraq Surge directed US policy towards choosing a Surge strategy in Afghanistan

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that the Iraq Surge was able to achieve temporary successes because of 3-stages that equally contributed in creating a temporary political breakthrough. As chapter 4 discussed, the Bush administration chose the Surge in order to salvage Iraq from the initial failures that occurred during the Iraq war. The Iraq war divided Iraqis and set the country into a violent downward spiral. The Surge was able to suppress the violence. These political successes occurred because of a temporary realignment of political interests, and as a result a reduction in violence occurred. As a result, many leaders in Washington including Republican presidential nominee John McCain, attributed that the Surge worked, because of Petraeus. McCain's main argument was based on the reduction of violence that occurred from 2006-2009 (McCain 2012).

When the Obama administration enters office in 2009, he made a campaign promise to fix the "forgotten war of Afghanistan" (Goodfellow 2014). Just as the Iraq Surge was ending, Afghanistan was falling into an untenable situation. The conflict with the insurgency was escalating. The Obama administration had to resolve this inherited problem with the same urgency as Bush needed to fix Iraq.

This chapter will explore how the Obama administration chose to Surge in Afghanistan. This chapter will show how leaders in Washington interpreted the Iraq Surge as a success, and this "Washington Consensus", helped create the Afghanistan Surge (Bacevich 2010). This chapter demonstrates there was a series of key actors assisting in pushing ideas through policy innovations that created the Afghanistan Surge. This process occurred because of the Iraq Surge, and because of the immense confidence that the DoD gained during its

operations in the Iraq Surge. This chapter relies on the evidence gathered from 45 elite interviews from senior policy makers, senior military commanders, key insiders, and elite policy analysts extremely close to the White House and the DoD. This data is rounded off using secondary source materials. This data was gathered in the first period of fieldwork in the summer of 2012.

Furthermore, this chapter will identify some of the problems that President Obama encountered that lead him to finally approve the Afghanistan Surge. This chapter identifies how these difficulties are noticeably different than in the background to the Iraq case. By identifying these, the two background chapters provide noticeable comparisons though they are not necessarily causal variables in the diverging outcomes.

This chapter will identify that because the DoD maintained the consensus that the Iraq Surge worked, it created high demands in its policy and planning for the Obama administration. This is most notable by General McChrystal's pressure for additional troops, and the support he gained from members of Obama's cabinet. Lastly, this chapter identifies problems with interagency cooperation in the US government. This is important to understand, because while operating in Iraq, the US did not experience these kinds of difficulties. The comparison chapter will draw out these differences in a more direct point-by-point comparison.

Washington in the Backdrop of the Iraq Surge

In 2009, the Iraq Surge was nearly complete, and the United States was in the process of withdrawing the totality of its troops in Iraq. The Iraq Surge had been successful in assisting the reduction of sectarian violence around Iraq. However, it had performed more than a military function for the Coalition. The Iraq Surge delivered temporary results, and it provided the basis for a new strategic consensus within influential groups in the United States' military leadership. This reality would be a key part in how the Afghanistan Surge

was birthed.

Executive Reorganizing in 2009

After Barack Obama won the 2008 presidential election, newly elected President Obama entered office in January 2009. As Obama took command, his national security priority was ending the Afghanistan conflict. Indeed, President Obama accounted that Afghanistan was the central front in GWOT. However, due to the Iraq war in 2003, the Afghanistan campaign became a secondary priority, and due to the coming withdrawal from Iraq, President Obama now focused his attention on Afghanistan.

In 2009, the security situation in both Afghanistan and Pakistan was failing and needed significant attention. The daily experience for Afghan villagers posed increasing challenges because the average civilians continued to endure violence on a daily basis. By 2009, “armed conflict spread to almost one-third of the country, including previously unaffected areas in the north and northeast” (Hoh 2013). As the violence was increasing in Afghanistan, Obama and his cabinet received a series of national security briefings. The briefings came from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (America’s most senior military officers) as well as a number of outside analysts including retired CIA analyst Bruce Reidel.

Reidel’s contribution was unique to the group, because he was not an administration official. Reidel was commissioned during the presidential election to serve as an advisor for the Obama team. When Obama was elected, Reidel was recruited to carry out an independent survey of the Afghanistan and Pakistan situation. Reidel assembled a group to assist in reviewing policy and formulating recommendations. This group included Richard Holbrooke (State Dept. Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan), Michele Flournoy (Undersecretary of Defense for Policy), and series of third-tier officials from Departments of Justice and Treasury. The Reidel review argued there was a clear warning that the Afghan state was on the brink of total collapse. The Reidel review argued this occurred because the Iraq war, and

the Iraq Surge, had diverted most attention away from Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the Iraq Surge, the logistical diversion added to the constraints on resources for the Afghan theatre.

In March 2009, the Reidel review went to Obama's National Security Council (Clemmons 2012, Porter 2012). The consensus gained in this meeting was that Afghanistan was in dire straits. The Taliban was regaining control of territories of which the US had previously won control, and territory across the border with Pakistan provided safe haven for the Taliban insurgency.

In Obama's cabinet meetings, three major ideas were proposed and debated. The sum of the arguments and discussions made here, was a broad desire for general stabilization of Afghanistan (Woodward 2006: pp. 224-255). The first and most prominent came from Michelle Flournoy. Flournoy was sympathetic to the phenomenon that occurred in Washington during 2005-2007, when there was shift in US policy (Sewell 2012). Specifically when the 2006 *QDR* transpired, Flournoy was at the centre of stirring many of the debates inside pushing for increased COIN capabilities (Sewell 2012). During the cabinet meeting Flournoy pushed for a comprehensive COIN campaign that employed all components of national power, US AID, the military, CIA, and economic assistance. In effect, she argued for a full COIN campaign on the part of the United States.

An alternative to Flournoy's preference was the idea of using JSOC's (Joint Special Forces Command) against the Taliban in a similar manner to how it had been deployed against Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Vice President Biden was the foremost proponent of this idea. This concept was labeled CT (counter terrorism) for the purposes of contrasting the policy debates between CT and COIN. In practice, the differing ideas would involve either a large military increase as seen during the Iraq Surge, or a much smaller COIN/CT footprint that meant forces would work with local militias while simultaneously using drones to strike mobile

Taliban units.

Reidel and SECDEF Gates pushed a third idea, and this focused on training Afghan soldiers and police, while simultaneously performing direct action against the Taliban. The main difference between Gates and the others was the emphasis on training a new Afghan Army. SECDEF Gates stated, “in Afghanistan, I sought an Afghan government and an army strong enough to prevent the Taliban from returning to power and prevent Al-Qaeda from returning to use the country again as a launch pad for terror” (Baker 2009). The Reidel and Gates plan encompassed elements of both Flournoy’s and Biden’s positions.

After the Reidel review, the President had three other problems to address before he could make final decisions. The first problem the president needed to resolve was the interagency debate on planning for Afghanistan. Previously, the DoD and the State Department had trouble in managing who/whom was in the lead. In Iraq, General Petraeus and Ryan Crocker managed to split responsibilities and work together. However, this kind of relationship was rare (Ricks 2012). Obama needed to shore up relationships between the State Dept. and DoD because, “much of the entire administration was new to each other” (Hoh 2013) Secondly, Obama needed Secretary Gates to gain the consensus of his senior military officers. The new administration could not afford any split opinions amongst his senior generals. If the DoD did not back Obama, there could be protests, and he could lose the trust of the American people, as well as the lower ranking commanders in the field. The third problem for Obama was gaining international support, especially from America’s NATO allies. The international support was the pressing issue, because unlike Iraq, Afghanistan was a NATO effort.

This was going to be addressed soon because Obama was set to give a policy speech in Strasburg, France in April 2009. This event was just months away, and it was one his first major appearances on the international stage. It was also a forum for the NATO heads of

government, which made this official meeting a high level of importance.

The problem of interagency disputes, would take time, as a result, the President tabled this issue for the immediate period.⁴⁹ Obama then focused his time on gaining consensus from his military commanders. Defense Secretary Robert Gates observed that this was the principal challenge for the President because of the legacy of Iraq. Due to the Iraq Surge,

“Obama walked into his Presidency with a Pentagon that encircled an opinion that COIN works, and by the time Obama came into office many field commanders believed they knew how to win in Afghanistan, and other similar conflicts involving around the world, this is partly because of the 2006 *QDR*, and this is partly because of the Surge” (Shaffer 2012).

As chapter 4 identified, after the 2006 *QDR*, there was a refocusing inside the US military that took special notice irregular warfare, low intensity conflict, and counterinsurgency (Ucko 2009: 81-103). The shift in 2006 led to tumultuous, “debate within the officer corps, and the pro-COIN people for at least a small period of time won the debate” (Gentile 2012). The debate in the officer corps placed a large burden on the new Commander in Chief.

Though the President maintained legal authority over the Pentagon, he did not control the thinking of all military commanders. Many senior officers in the military wanted a Surge, in order to complete Afghanistan, the way General Petraeus was able to finish Iraq (Macgregor 2012). US military commanders argued that a long, costly COIN campaign in Afghanistan was necessary to decisively defeat Al-Qaeda in the Central and South Asian region.⁵⁰ In effect, the military was telling Obama, they wanted a military solution to Afghanistan, and the solution was to Surge (Nasr 2013: 33). Before the NATO meeting,

⁴⁹ Further complicating the situation for Obama, was the fact that the NSC wanted to do the State Departments, job Nasr, V. (2013). *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*, Random House LLC. There was no coherence from the cabinet advisors to policy makers to upper echelon military commanders, and this ongoing problem created structural difficulties in US efforts for Afghanistan.

⁵⁰ Gates reserved his opinions for private meetings with the President, but ultimately sided with Reidel. Gates served in the CIA during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was wary regarding the exit strategy of a full-blown COIN campaign in Afghanistan and skeptical regarding a resource-intensive nation-building campaign in Afghanistan. In the end, Gates and Reidel persuaded the President, a lighter version of COIN was preferred as official policy.

Obama gained the confidence from many of his chief military officers. Starting in 2009, the military, “had the ear of President Obama” (Korb 2012). However, Obama only could address these issues, if he had international support for increased military efforts in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Obama and International Support

Postponing a response to the interagency disputes, President Obama went before the NATO heads of government. Obama identified two major themes that would guide how the US would proceed. The first thing Obama took from the Reidel report was identifying Afghanistan as a regional problem, and Afghanistan was now identified as Af-Pak (Kaplan 2013: 290-302). Devising the Af-Pak phrase enabled the Reidel review amongst Obama’s cabinet, and it was popularized even more by Richard Holbrooke (Khan, Khan et al.). Obama argued to the NATO leaders, that the a lack of central government in Afghanistan, and the risk of AQ and Taliban taking back control was a problem that needed increased attention. This meant the US needed to involve NATO, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to its policy considerations. Obama’s two important themes are summed up in his quote: America’s goal was to, “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQ in its safe havens in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to power” (Obama 2009).

As Obama was seeking international consensus, SECDEF Gates needed to gain organizational consensus within the US military over the exact procedures for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Robert Gates performed a series of field reviews, which resulted in the conclusion on his part that the US commanding General David McKiernan, was not fit to carry out the role in the way the new President wanted. Moreover, McKiernan did not have a significant amount of support from those military leaders who had been converted to pro-COIN thinking before and during the 2006 *QDR* process (Kaplan 2013: 302). As a result, on May 11, McKiernan was relieved of command in Afghanistan.

In his press conference, Gates stated:

“After consulting with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander of Central Command, and with the approval of the President I have asked for the resignation of General David McKiernan” (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 239, Brattebo 2012)

It was the first time a commanding general had been removed from power since the Korean war (Kaplan 2013: 302). When McKiernan was fired, General Stanley McChrystal was selected to replace him. Previously, McChrystal was the senior most commanding officer in charge of JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) in Iraq, the command that eventually killed Abu Musab Zarqawi.

From Baghdad to Kabul: Planning the Afghan Surge

As Obama concluded his NATO briefings, he gained an adequate amount of international support. He could then focus on the second phase, which was addressing Gates and his senior military commanders. President Obama appointed McChrystal to lead the Afghanistan campaign and on June 10, the US Senate confirmed McChrystal's new position. Following his appointment, SECDEF Gates ordered McChrystal to carry out a campaign assessment within 60 days. Similarly, NATO's Secretary General requested a similar report from McChrystal (Ballard, Lamm et al. 2012: 238-242). McChrystal showed abilities to deliver on his duties. Following the example from David Petraeus's experiences in the Iraq Surge, McChrystal gathered a series of outside experts to conduct a joint strategic assessment of the Afghanistan war. These included a series of experts who were influential in Washington DC, and who were friendly with the American press (Ricks 2012). These experts served in either the military or acted as prior consultants to the US Government. According to Steve Biddle, who participated in the review: “the team was a intellectual group who asked questions to help McChrystal make the best decision, and the key question we needed to answer was, “is this war winnable”? (Biddle 2012). However, McChrystal's question needed to be answered while considering at what cost would it be won, in terms of the amount of

troop commitment and financial assistance required of the United States. Also, the questions required educated guesses to what specific level of a troop increase, and financial assistance would the NATO forces be required to commit.

The JSAT included Fred and Kim Kagan, David Kilcullen, Anthony Cordesman, Jeremy Shapiro from Brookings, Kathryn Dale, and Andrew Exum from Center for New American Security, Derek Harvey from the Defense Intelligence Agency, and a number of other policy advocates from Spain, UK, and the US. Upon the JSAT arrival in Afghanistan a diverse set of opinions and analysis came up. Some were skeptical to the outcomes and others were not. Biddle noted, “the Kagan’s were most enthusiastic about the possibility and options for success; however their optimism was not shared by the entire JSAT” (Biddle 2012). Though McChrystal assembled his team, there was still had much ground to cover. One of McChrystal’s early tasks was taking his an assessment just as General Petraeus did in Iraq.

When McChrystal was finished with his assessment, he gave Obama three options for solving the problems with Afghanistan and the Taliban (Woodward 2011: 233). In his assessment, McChrystal accounted, “this is a different kind of fight, and we must conduct a classic counterinsurgency... Three regional insurgencies have intersected with a dynamic blend of local power struggles” (McChrystal 2012,: pp 1-2). The options available were a troop increase of 85,000 for a macro COIN campaign, an increase of 30-40,000 troops for a lighter COIN approach, mimicking the Iraq Surge. The third option was a slightly altered COIN approach, but mostly looking at direct action against senior AQ and Taliban leaders, similar to the Biden plan.

The troop considerations were a step forward, but Obama had to make a plan for how the Taliban would end. Was the campaign going to fight in perpetuity, would there be reconciliation between the government and insurgency? This constant debate over how much the insurgency could be negotiated with was described as “vacillation over reconciliation”,

and it overshadowed the entire decision making process (Nasr 2013: 58). Col Doug Macgregor argued that Obama knew the “US could not buy off the Taliban as they did the Anbari’s because there is no trust in what kind of results any Taliban leader could deliver” (Macgregor 2012). Nonetheless, the strategy upon which McChrystal settled for in Afghanistan was population-centric COIN using the COIN manual FM3-24 (Cassidy 2006, Baker 2009). The COIN plan McChrystal put forward had two main objectives. First, ISAF needed to enter the villages and protect people. By doing so, ISAF could force the Taliban out of the villages. McChrystal knew this would take time. COIN wars are "protracted by nature" and that they require "firm political will and extreme patience," as well as "considerable expenditure of time and resources.... killing and capturing the enemy (Petraeus, Amos et al. 2007). The second key goal was to build an Afghan National Army for the US to partner with, and ultimately for them to take over once the US left. The COIN manual defines this process stating, “US and [host-nation] military commanders and the [host-nation] government together must devise the plan for attacking the insurgents and strategically focus the collective effort to bolster or restore government legitimacy” (Petraeus, Amos et al. 2007).

Obama’s Plan: Defining the US Mission in Afghanistan

With the notion of COIN intensely debated, the Obama administration embarked on an increase of forces in 2009, raising the troop levels by 33,000 as part of a COIN effort. Obama adopted a language of killing AQ, and stopping the Taliban. The new policy for Afghanistan was centered on first defeating AQ, secondly focusing on reducing civilian casualties, and thirdly to build an Afghan military to take over security to allow the US an exit strategy.

In Obama’s speech he articulated:

“Our overarching goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our

allies in the future.... We must deny Al-Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future”

Obama’s plan would occur over the following 18 months:

“We will meet these objectives in three ways. First, we will pursue a military strategy that will break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity over the next 18 months” (Obama 2009).

Obama’s partnership with Afghan government was articulated:

“We will support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas -- such as agriculture -- that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people” (Obama 2009).

Again the exit strategy was to pass over leadership:

“But taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011” (Obama 2009).

Obama’s plan was straightforward, but there were significant doubts as to the extent that Obama committed an adequate number of troops. FM3-24 doctrine required a much larger amount of troops than Afghan Surge provided, but there was hope that the Afghan’s would take a larger role over time (Nagl 2013). The late Michael Hastings, reporter from Rolling Stone, indicated in an interview that, “President Obama ordered this increase in 2009, and allowed ISAF to launch counter-offensive operations around the countryside but received most attention in the south and east, especially in Kandahar in 2010” (Hastings 2011). Though Obama had a plan, the disputes inside the NSC were still unresolved. The DoD did not like the Presidents benchmarks, which required rapid success. Moreover, the CIA was more focused on safe havens in Pakistan, and AQ, while the military was focused on COIN, and stabilizing Afghanistan (Chandrasekaran 2012: 55).

The State Department was concerned about over prioritizing the military, and not focusing on Afghan state institutions.

Despite the on-going interagency tensions, Obama needed to keep international support from wavering as well. This is a key difference from Iraq. Petraeus and Bush did not need the same level of international support as Obama and McChrystal needed in Afghanistan. The international support was necessary because the regional politics related to Afghanistan are, “far more important than in the Iraq case” (Malkasian 2014). This is because of two reasons: Firstly,

“The Afghanistan insurgency uses neighbouring Pakistan as a safe haven, and partners with a host of armed groups in the tribal regions of Pakistan, this is a major difference from Iraq. The insurgency in Iraq was primarily domestic, and urban, in Afghanistan it the opposite, the insurgency was rural, and had all types of foreign influence that was far more influential” (Malkasian 2014).

Secondly, “the exit strategy was an Afghan army, its impossible to keep Pakistan’s support if they feel threatened by an Afghan army” (Hoh 2013).

Afghanistan’s future, American strategy, and Pakistani sovereignty were all factors at play throughout the Afghanistan Surge. Afghanistan’s President Hamid Karzai consistently held that the so-called insurgency was mostly a “made in Pakistan” as product that Islamabad was forcefully exporting across the border. As a result, the Afghan-Pakistan tensions continued to be a problem because the US needed to train the Afghan army in order to pass over security leadership.

Building an Afghan army and keeping Pakistan relations positive was a difficult task, in fact, Pakistan’s Army Chief, General Kayani begged the Americans, “please don’t try to build the Afghan army, you will fail” (Nasr 2013: 11). Obama sought to balance these tensions but it would take time (Sewell 2012). In addition to all of this, Obama’s plan had strict benchmarks for success that needed to occur in the 18 months. The difficulty that arises, “if these benchmarks are not met, the Afghanistan Surge would be called a failure” (Cohen 2013).

How Civilian and Military Infighting Prevented a Unified Surge

In 2009, when the Surge was engineered, Obama's inability to stop the interagency fighting created a troubling task that clouded General McChrystal and his COIN plans. In 2009, McChrystal experienced a lack of control over all the military branches in theatre. This was opposite of General Petraeus in Iraq. In Iraq, Petraeus had complete trust and control over all the branches, Air force, Marines, Army, and Navy (Exum 2010). In Afghanistan, McChrystal did not. This was most obvious during a particular dispute with McChrystal and the Commandant of the Marine Corps James Conway. At a Joint Chiefs meeting Conway argued the Marines were a global force "focused on fighting, not policing like the Army" (Natonski 2012). Conway wanted the Marine Corps to have "operational control over their forces in on-going fights in Helmand" (Chandrasekaran 2012: 63). Conway saw the Marines less of a police force, but more as traditional fighting unit. Moreover, Conway wanted the Marines to demonstrate success in their particular mission. In the end, Conway stipulated his support of the COIN mission only on the Marine Corps independent control of their sources. This particular argument was absent in planning and execution of the Iraq Surge.

In addition to the interbranch/interagency disputes, the policy agenda that beseeched McChrystal were no small matter. Sending US soldiers to patrol a local villager's home turf, and then support the Afghan government would not be an easy task. McChrystal knew, and noted that if ISAF does not adequately understand the political, social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the villages and valleys across Afghanistan, the Surge would fail. However, even if the US could perform a successful COIN campaign, when COIN is done right, "it still creates domestic tensions", and those can perpetuate conflict (Kilcullen 2012). Understanding the political, social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the villages and valleys across Afghanistan was a large problem that emerged for McChrystal's Surge.

As the Surge became underway, the civil-military power structure in the field was over militarized. The major problem with this is that the over militarized planning, created an imbalanced effort. David Galula, famous COIN theorist stated COIN is 80% civilian/political, and 20% military (Galula 1964). The US was limited in 2008/9 to a military centric approach because, despite an “incredibly supportive Department of Defense for civilian/political efforts”, the “major way to fund US foreign policy is with the defence budget”, and civilian/political reforms are a State Department/Justice Department occupation (Kilcullen 2012). Despite the interagency disputes, the regional difficulties, and the insurmountable task of protecting the villages and valleys across Afghanistan, in 2010, US forces began to escalate.

In summary, the higher echelons within the NSC and the senior military ranks developed unique arguments surrounding Afghanistan. This was most evident in the disputes in the NSC, as well as the arguments of authority between the Marines and the Army. This made for a challenging task for the Surge to succeed. This confusion forced a secondary complication that prevented the US from fully interconnecting the COIN campaign across all of Afghanistan. This was most evident in the disunity between the Marines and the Army, but also the dysfunction of the Afghan Kandaks. In summary, from 2009-2012 US COIN forces rarely experienced a fully functioning appropriated civilian and military integration. This problem inevitably led to contradictions between the daily tactical plans to the political end goals. This dysfunction prevented the COIN forces to be holistically successful at every echelon of the campaign.

Conclusion

The Afghanistan Surge did not occur in a vacuum. It occurred against the backdrop of Iraq. At its core, the Afghanistan Surge represents an attempt to replicate the gains achieved in Iraq by duplicating key elements of the Iraq Surge, driven in part by the ascendancy within

the military of those who had supported the Iraq Surge. In the chapter that follows, the Afghanistan Surge will be analyzed following the 3-stage model used in the Iraq case.

The following case study will show that combination of the history of Afghanistan, US actions prior and during the Surge from 2001-2012, and the reaction by a variety of insurgent groups prevented the same successes as seen in Iraq.

Surging onto the Moon with Gravity:

A case study to understanding how COIN in Afghanistan did not emulate the Results of the Iraq Surge

*Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan is tough, we can do it, but its really hard. Afghanistan is like the Moon with Gravity.
(Kilcullen 2012)*

The Campaign in Afghanistan is much different from Iraq, but I believe we can win this war. We can win with the “playoff of the Pashtun Insurgency against AQ, just as we did with the Sunni Sheiks in Iraq”, and “the single most important part of this fight is roads, with more roads we can win this fight”(Nagl 2012)

*“COIN in Afghanistan is a little like Leo DiCaprio in inception, we (US) must go into people’s dreams and make them do things that we want them to... that can be pretty hard”
Major Luljan Center for New American Security (Luljan 2012)*

Introduction:

Thus far this thesis has discussed what insurgencies are and how to defeat them. In addition, this thesis has discussed how US policy was made for Iraq, it showed the Surge in Iraq, and its results. Finally, the previous chapter discussed how the Obama administration was presented with this dilemma, and the debates that it went through before deciding to Surge in Afghanistan.

As previously shown, until 2009, Iraq was marred in a vicious cycle of violence. The Surge (along with other variables) assisted bring a reduction to the violence. As the violence in Iraq was subsiding, and the central government was also increasing in its capabilities. Simultaneously, in 2009, the security situation in Afghanistan was in steep decline. This was most evident in a the report released in September 2009 by the International Council on Security and Development. It showed that the Taliban had a "permanent presence in 80% of the country” (Rogio 2009). This chapter will show that the interaction of 3-stages prevented the Surge in Afghanistan from acheiving the same results as Iraq.

In review the 3-stages are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.

In order to demonstrate how this sequence plays out, first, this case study will discuss the historical background, which includes a brief introduction to the modern Afghan state at the outset. This is stage 1 of the transitive model described in chapter 2.

Stage 1 shows the development of the Afghan political architecture during the 20th century. This portion of the case study mirrors the Iraq case study. Stage 1 in this case discovers the political history of the central government and the political divisions in Afghan society. This important comparison is necessary. The comparative chapter will show clearly, that in stage 1, Iraq's history presents far less challenges than the Afghanistan case. In addition, stage 1 will identify the complex history of US involvement in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion of 1979, and its consequences for domestic political structures within Afghanistan from 1979 to the present. This case study will then proceed by investigating stage 2 of the case study.

Stage 2 will show US actions prior to the Surge, and then proceed to discuss American actions during the Surge from 2009-2012. It begins with the US military in Afghanistan directly after 9/11. This portion of the case study will read slightly different than Iraq's because there are more issues at play to the Afghanistan case. This is because there is 7-8 years of conflict that predates the Surge in the Afghanistan case. The Afghanistan war started in 2001, and the Surge does not occur until late 2009 (or early 2010). In the Iraq case,

the initial war started in 2003, and the Surge started in 2006, which is only 3 years as opposed to the 8 years in the Afghanistan case. This is an important point of comparison that will be discussed further in the following chapter. In addition, stage 2 will reflect on the BONN process of 2001.

Stage 2 discovers how the BONN process failed to coherently rebuild Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. These efforts are evident by the negative returns that are manifested through localized political grievances amongst Afghans in the years prior to the Surge. These problems continued once the Surge began and acted as barriers to success for the Coalition. The failures in BONN contributed to the need for Obama to Surge in 2009/2010. The Surge was an effort to stabilize the failing government after the BONN process, to stop the growing insurgency, and finally build up the Afghanistan Army.

After stage 2, this case study will proceed to discuss stage 3. Stage 3 discusses the Afghan reaction to the US intervention, prior and during the Surge. In this case study, the reactions from Afghans show a specific resiliency from the Taliban that can be divided into three broad periods. The first occurred from 2001 to 2004, when the group was involved in restructuring its leadership, and reorganizing itself for the second period of fighting between 2004 and 2006 (Farrell and Giustozzi 2013). The third period occurred during the Afghanistan Surge.

In conclusion, this case study will show that the Afghanistan Surge did not deliver similar results in Iraq because the 3-stages did not link in a synergistic way that occurred in Iraq. First the political history between the cases is dramatically different. This affected US capabilities to operate during stage 2. The difference in the historical backgrounds also foregrounds a very different indigenous reaction to US behavior during the stage 3. Moreover, due to the political history of Afghanistan (stage 1), the US was never able to promote a government that was even remotely capable of any political control outside of

Kabul. In contrast, the Maliki government in Iraq was able to control at least large portions of the Shiite population (though this occurred with tribulations). In Afghanistan, the Karzai government was not able to control the same sizeable portion of society.

During stage 3, Afghans across the country, did not respond to the US with resounding support of the government. Furthermore, they never effectively rallied against the insurgency as seen in Iraq. In Iraq, at least for period of time, large parts of Sunni tribes, and the Shiite government shared a series of mutual interests, which were to stabilize Iraqi from AQI/Shiite extremists which gave a semblance of government support in the short term.

As a result, the political history made Iraq an easier case for the Surge to succeed. In addition, and US actions prior and during Surge were less destructive to the US mission, this was most evident by the reactions of Iraqis and Afghans in stage 3.

Methodological Caveat:

This case study, as in the first case study will follow a chronological pattern. However, one caveat to this case study, stage 3 (or the reactions to US intervention by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions assisted in the outcomes of both cases) is best observed in the social phenomenon that occurs from 2002-2009, which was prior to the Afghan Surge. This is an essential component to understanding why Iraq achieved temporary successes and Afghanistan did not. That is not to say that insurgent actions during the Surge had no impact on the outcome, but the phenomenon from 2002-2009 impacted the outcome in such a way that it's necessary to focus on their actions more than the rest. As a result, the third stage will backtrack somewhat chronologically as did in the Iraq case.

Understanding the Comparisons of Iraq and Afghan Political and Governing Structures

The major historical difference in Afghanistan and Iraq is the political governing

structures. As stage 1 will show, there is a large difference in Iraq and Afghanistan's political history. In Afghanistan, there has not been a single unifying governing force for the last 150 years. This is a central difference to the Iraq case. As discussed in the Iraq case, Iraq has a history of central governance, albeit corrupt. In Afghanistan, the only central governing component to Afghanistan has been the coalescing of Afghan tribes when confronted by outsiders, and then turning against a fellow Afghan once outsiders leave (Barfield 2012).⁵¹ This historical factor exists because Afghanistan sits at the fault line of major social, political, and ethnic divisions. In both Surge cases, these sectarian fault lines affect the outcomes. The sectarian social divisions were key to the temporary success of the Iraq Surge because the sectarian communities aligned their interests cooperated to stop the violence across Iraq. In Afghanistan, the societal fractures are in part the reason for failure. Afghan's are mostly divided by what Matthew Hoh calls, "valleyism". Meaning, the largest division in Afghanistan is the separation from urban elites to the rural Afghan villager.

Afghans prides themselves on the valley he lives in, and the history of his valley.

Former field officer Matthew Hoh recounts,

"As you walk through the valleys in the South and the East of Afghanistan, older farmers can retell the history of that valley for 600 years, as if they lived there every second of it, that is how an Afghan is defined, by the history of his valley, and how he identifies himself to it" (Hoh 2014).

Furthering Hoh's idea of "valleyism", Carter Malkasian argues that Afghan tribal structures are necessary to understanding what occurred during the Surges. Malkasian says,

"The Afghan tribal structures were so important to understanding how and why Afghan's responded to the Americans, the Government, the Taliban, and anyone else who played a part in the Surge. A principal reason why the Afghanistan Surge did not work-- we could not bring any national unity to Afghanistan, and the extent to which there was a subnational unity in the villages and valleys across the country, there was little unity from village to village, and valley to valley. One of the major reasons is

⁵¹ During my fieldwork an Afghan proverb from an unknown original author was used repeatedly to illustrate this point: "Me against my brother. my brother and I against my cousins and my brother, my cousins and I against the world".

because of the Afghan's tribal identities were fractured, and the political climate during the Surge did not have the time or patience to rebuild them. An ordinary Afghan is connected to his tribe, but the tribal system was fractured. There are just no real categories to understand how Afghanistan works, there is no description to an average westerner. During the Surge, we tried to make the political unity between a rural tribesman to the government in Kabul, but in the end, we just could not, we tried to bridge a valley to another valley, sometimes it worked, but most of the time it failed" (Malkasian 2014).

In Afghanistan, these societal elements are important to understand just as they were in Iraq. In Iraq, the societal fractures were a key reason to the development of the insurgencies once the US occupation began.

Understanding Afghanistan's Diverse Tribal and Ethnic Makeup

The ethnic divisions in Afghanistan are vast, and they create many difficulties to understanding the case itself. Afghanistan possesses four major ethnic divisions and they are namely, Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek (Dellawar 2014). The diverse ethnic communities split into sub national population groups as well. This is because some Afghan's share two or more ethnicities, however, Afghan's tend to identify with one over the other. This usually depends on their living location, and their local political authority (Dellawar 2014).

Most political authority occurs at the local level. The sectarian ethnic groups act like political parties and garner social cohesion across the countryside as they fall into local tribes. Though this is true, Afghan tribes are not as unified as other tribal societies in the world. This is partly because of their sheer size.

The ethnic Pashtun population is the "the largest tribal society in the world" (Barfield 2012). The Pashtuns, as well as the other ethnic communities subdivide into sub tribes, clans, and other non-identified sections that constantly change due to a variety of measures, including, marriages, land reforms, deaths of leadership, and other random acts of conflict. These kinship systems exist as members of the tribe traditionally position themselves to shift allegiances and rebalancing for authority (Giustozzi 2012: 56). The tribal differences affect

how Afghans align themselves. 90% of Afghans identify themselves as followers of Islam (Dellawar 2014). However, the way in which Islam is practiced by Afghans is very different across the country. In the south of Afghanistan, a Deobandi version of Sunni Islam is most commonly practiced (Rashid 2001: pp.1-128). In the west and north more diverse Sufi and Shiite expressions are common (Rashid and Hoover 2002: pp.95-135). Beliefs among Afghans would not signal any single definition of a monolithic or “official” version of Islam (Barfield 2010: pp.2-30). As Louis Dupree, a famous anthropologist argues, “Islam practiced in the villages and nomad camps would be almost unrecognizable to a Muslim scholar, and most of Afghan’s beliefs are related to a localized pre-Islamic tribal customs” (Elst 2010: 56). Afghanistan also possesses a small Shiite community, and they practice Islam differently from ethnic group to ethnic group, and tribe-to-tribe. In conclusion, Islam in Afghanistan comprises diverse practices that blend ethnic, religious, and tribal identity that is unique to Afghanistan.

Understanding Afghanistan’s Centre of Political Power

Though modern the state of Afghanistan exists with borders, state-like qualities have never been strong for the country. At differing times there were movements of independence from the differing ethnic groups. However due to the constant feuding between the 60 major tribes and 400 sub clans the southern region of Afghanistan has historically been “all-but-lawless region” (Atwan 2013:131). The northern areas have been ruled by “Warlordism”, the South was ruled by nepotism, inter-tribal disputes, and *Loya Jirga’s* (or meetings) amongst the elders (Delawar 2013). This long-standing division between local political and ethnic tribal power in Afghanistan was reinforced in 1893, when the British Empire divided the Pashtun tribes by creating the Durand line, separating British India and Afghanistan (Barfield 2012). These existing societal structures meant that from Afghanistan’s origination, no central political authority possessed the full ability to effectively collect funds/tax the

population, provide basic government services, protect the borders, and regulate basic societal activity. Ria Dellawar explains, “early Afghanistan, like today, was a place in which there existed very little national cohesion. Dellawar further explains this is important because, “warly Afghanistan shares a lot of same surrounding social and political phenomenon that we see today” (Dellawar 2014).

This is an important distinction between the Iraq and the Afghanistan case. As previously stated in Chapter 3, Stathis Kalyvas makes clear that if there is no effective standardized system of control, then the government is weak, and as a result, the government does not have legitimacy amongst its people (see page chapt 3). In fact, Barfield states, a central Afghanistan government has always had difficulties. “Throughout most of the Afghanistan’s history, the security forces have been weak, or when they were stronger have been paid for by an outside power” (Barfield 2012). Despite the challenges of Afghanistan’s political history, and lack of centralized power, the ethnic divisions, and tribal structures also posed additional problems. The table below identifies the major political and societal fault lines.

Category A	Category B	Nature of Social Division	Scope and Size of Primary Dispute
Afghan National Identify	Afghan Tribal Identity	Division over Local/National Political Leadership and Identity	Local/Regional
Afghan Urban Elite vs.	Afghan Rural	Preferences over Social Norms and Religious Freedoms	Local/Regional/
Sunni vs.	Shiite minorities	Theological and Political Divisions	Local/Regional/Global
Hazara vs.	Pashtun	Ethnic and Theological Division	Local/Regional
Pashtun vs.	Tajik	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Uzbek vs.	Tajik	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional/
Hazara vs.	Tajik	Ethnic and Theological Division	Local/Regional
Regional Pashtun	Regional Uzbek/Tajik	Political Ethnic Party Divisions	Local/Regional

Internal Deobandi groups vs.	External Salfi/Wahabism	Theological Divisions	Local/Regional
Sufi vs.	Deobandi	Theological Divisions	Local/Regional

Table 10 Afghan Societal Divisions

The above chart is useful in understanding the political and societal makeup of modern Afghanistan. As the US begins its occupation of Afghanistan in 2001, the differing political divisions emerge through the diverse insurgent groups. By understanding the diverse political divisions in Afghanistan, the case becomes easier to understand as several divisions in Afghan society independently react to the Surge.

The following section will discover stage 1. This portion investigates the history that creates a context for diversity in social divisions, political beliefs, and disputes that were reflected during the insurgencies in the stage 2 and stage 3.

Stage 1: Historical Background to the Afghanistan Insurgency:

Understanding how Afghanistans political history presents a challenge to building a central government before the Surge ever occurs

The early 20th century of Afghanistan is comprised of political disunity, internal strife, and general rejection of the government in Kabul. This early trend is something that would continue as the US entered Afghanistan in 2001. According to Thomas Barfield, during the 20th century and the early 21st century, Afghanistan went through four distinct periods that define Afghanistan. The first period is the construction of the modern Afghanistan from 1880-1930, this is called *the Period of Early Monarchy*. Barfield identifies the second period as *the Era of Peace*, and this occurs from roughly 1929-1970. Barfield identifies the third period from 1970 until 1992. Barfield identifies this as the *Marxist/Islamic Revolution Period*. Lastly, Barfield identifies *the Civil War period*, from 1992-2001. Just as Afghanistan's Civil war period was coming to a close, the 9/11 attacks were executed by a terrorist group taking refuge in Afghanistan, and as a result Afghanistan abruptly came under

US occupation.

Developing the Monarchy: 1880-1930

Afghan's long-standing inability to centralize both military and political power in Afghanistan was really solidified in 1893, when the British Empire divided the Pashtun tribes by creating the Durand line, separating British India and Afghanistan (Barfield 2012). However, the modern Afghanistan state, with a recognized territory, and general political independence came under Amir Abdul Rahman Khan (1880–1901) (Barfield 2010, pp. 166-167). Khan achieved forming the modern Afghan state by ending the third Anglo-Afghan war with the treaty of Rawalpindi in 1921 (Barfield 2010: 181). After the treaty (and World War I), Khan attempted to establish Afghanistan's diplomatic relations with an international audience.

In 1927, Khan ventured on a tour of Turkey and Europe. Khan's mission was to gain international support for an Afghan national army, and he wanted to gain a perspective of European politics. On his adventure, Khan was allegedly introduced to democracy, and socialism. When Khan returned to Afghanistan, he introduced several reforms intended to modernize his nation. They included, mandatory education, economic regulations and taxation. At the outset the reforms encountered problems because taxation was highly opposed by the rural villagers. Secondly, no finances entered the central treasury without some being skimmed from the initial take. This traditional problem would later haunt the Afghan government after US presence in 2001.

Secondly, Khan introduced more liberal standards on Islamic traditions such as the public wearing of the hijab. This began with Khan's wife. Khan's wife publicly removed her veil and encouraged others to do the same. This public display of social liberalism did not get the kind of public support Khan needed. As a result of Khan's brash approach, Khan was later dethroned.

The Era of Peace: 1929-1970

Afghanistan's political history from 1929 is more complicated than the previous period. Following Khan's liberal moves, civil unrest broke out across the country from 1927-1929. Tribes across the countryside split along tribal lines. This started in Khost province, but also moved across the Durand line into Pakistan. These outbreaks, "gave Afghanistan a civil war at the Pakistani border, with over 180 different tribes, militias and armies" (Dellawar 2013). By the end 1929 peace slowly returned, not because anyone became the victor, rather this is because of a new monarch, Nadir Shah came into power.

Nadir Shah's reign was short, he was assassinated, and on November 8th 1933, and then Muhammad Shah took over political power. Since Nadir Shah, the government in Kabul struggled to enforce political power across the countryside. The early founding of Afghanistan showed some monarchs, the reality is, "modern politics never existed until the late 1970's" (Elst 2010: 54). As Muhammad Shad took control, a diverse set of local leaders managed to employ a "nobel dominated-system of governance" (Dellawar 2013). This form of Afghan feudalism, succeeded because there was no other version of governance available. Native Afghan and special advisor to US Central Command Ria Delawar explains this phenomenon stating, "Afghans felt more strongly bound to their "traditional solidarity networks more than to the modern state" (Delawar 2013). Like most tribal societies, the early Afghan tribes followed ethnic sectarian lines but they also possessed internal cleavages that prevented nationwide political unity (Delawar 2013)

The Marxist/Islamic Revolution Period (1970 until 1992)

After Muhammad Shah, Prince Daoud ascended into power. Daoud's first task was abolishing the monarchy. In 1964, Daoud amended the constitution, and announced himself as its first President and Prime Minister of a new and democratic republic. Daoud's new constitution which was ratified in 1966 and it instituted a democratic legislature. Daoud's

initial presidential move, was to establish a rather extreme financial reform which reshaped the general makeup of society (Delawar 2013). This was a major economic redistribution of wealth, primarily through taxation. This new form of wealth and economic regulation taxed two-thirds of any income across the country. This reform also implemented an animal tax on poor villagers. Afghan's rejected this appraisal, and slowly, Afghans drifted away from recognizing the government thus rejecting the new constitution. Prince Daoud's reign was marked by a phrase, "during 1960's there were jobs for everyone, but in the 1970's there were no jobs to be found" (Barfield 2012). In summary, Daoud's brash social reforms and the new constitution failed to fix the Afghanistan's political instabilities. Instead, Afghans tolerated the feudal-like system. Wealthy landowners were able expand their power by establishing increasing domestic control over the local citizenry.

Simultaneously, communist political influence began to take further control of political groups in Kabul. In 1978, the (PDPA) or People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan made a significant effort to overhaul the institutions of landowning with another land reform that included, a redistribution that allowed poor working class agrarian communities to have more access to land ownership (Coll 2004). As a result, there was a political backlash against the land reform efforts in Kabul.

The political rulers (landowners, wealthy rural elites, powerful religious figures) used their wealth to expand self-interested control and some local leaders launched armed militias against the PDPA leaders in Kabul.

In late 1979, the social dysfunction created a conflict in Afghanistan. Afghan communists were too weak to suppress the rural uprisings. As a result, the Soviet Union launched an invasion to Afghanistan in 1979. This aggression ignited new global tensions. The Soviets came into Afghanistan, and a proxy war began with the US and the Soviets. The US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel funded non-state groups to fight the Soviet Union. Over the next

10 years, the US was able to funnel an estimated \$300 billion US dollars to anti-communist groups, and these were largely extremist groups such as Jamiat-i Islami and Hezb-i Islami (Rashid 2008: 1-100).⁵² Further complicating the environment, young Jihadi entrepreneurs flooded in from all over the world to fight against the Soviets. Motivated young men came to Afghanistan with extreme dedication.⁵³ They possessed incredible courage, religious zeal, and a feeling of political alienation.

During the 10 years of war (1979-1989), the Afghan ethnic groups frequently cooperated together with foreigners to fight against the Soviets. "Money, weapons, and political relationships from external states and wealthy independent donors from the gulf made the different militant groups develop limited and timely agreements to fight the Soviets" (Hammes 2012). The cooperation to fight the Soviets also created internal problems for Afghanistan. Armed groups competed against each other to find favour amongst these rich foreign donors. This is a trend that would continue later as the Surge was employed.

The amount of trained fighters was extraordinary. Atwan accounts that, "the CIA and the Pakistan intelligence services estimated to train over 1.6 million fighters" (Atwan 2013: 79). Though these claims are questioned, the important issue is that, "the numbers of the mujahidin in the 1980's was enough to topple the Soviets, and establish a new government" (Atawneh 2014).⁵⁴ Indeed, after 10 years of conflict, and the killing of over a 1,000,000 Afghans, the Soviets were still unable to stabilize the long lasting political disputes with Afghans and the government in Kabul. In 1989, the Soviets completed their strategic

⁵² Another note: the Pakistani government also worked to ensure that one group could not be persuaded to join opposition groups to Pakistan (Coll 2004).

⁵³ While the Cold War raged in Afghanistan, another social phenomenon was occurring in the Middle East and it affected many of these young Jihadi's. In 1979, Young Arabs observed the Kabba take over, as well as the Iranian revolution and the ongoing Palestinian conflict. Ironically, 1979 was the watershed year for Jihadi entrepreneurs who were motivated young radicals and they arrived across Pakistan's border cities, and most prominently in Peshawar Pakistan to join Afghans against the Soviets.

⁵⁴ The disputes in size of the Taliban are important to note, but not necessary in discovering how they took control from the Soviet occupying forces. For other numbers on the Taliban size consult: Giustozzi, A. (2012). "The Taliban's Adaptation 2002-11: a Case of Evolution?" *Clodynamics: The Journal of Theoretical and Mathematical History* 3(1).

withdrawal leaving the political instability of Afghanistan to worsen.

The Civil War period (1992-2001): The Rise of Taliban and Further Dividing Afghan Society

The Soviet withdrawal in 1989, created a security vacuum in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan state possessed little to no governmental abilities. Furthermore, with the absence of the Soviet military, rural Afghan tribes reestablished control of their local valley. As a result, a new era of civil conflict emerged following the Soviet campaign.

By 1991, the localized conflicts grew, and by 1991 Afghanistan was in an all-out civil war. Afghans were fighting for control of the country (Dorransoro 2013). Afghan tribal commanders, who previously fought against the Soviets, turned against each other attempting to take control of Kabul. The conflict turned extremely violent as thousands of Afghan civilians fled the country or they were massacred by the conflict. Former “freedom-fighting” commanders turned into warlords and thieves (Delawar 2013).

The civil war spurred a rural uprising in the south, known as students of Islam, or the Taliban. This movement was led by a Pashtun man named, Muhammad Omar. Largely, this uprising was comprised of young men who were from the Pashtun ethnic community, however some were recruits from other ethnicities as well. Uzbeks and Turkmen generally despised the Taliban during their emergence yet rogue individuals observed their religious zeal with honor and joined the cause (Barfield 2012). These young Pashtun men generally followed their “tribal identity as they entered the Taliban movement” (Delawar 2013). Mullah Omar, used his tribal identity as one way to build a recruitment pool for his Taliban cause. This was most evident as the Taliban gained ground in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, such as Paktia and Paktika.

The Taliban were initially welcomed by many Afghans as they were an alternative to barbarism from civil conflict and other warlords across the countryside (Rashid 2001, Rashid

and Hoover 2002, Rashid 2008). However, the Taliban was not fully supported across the country. The Taliban faced difficulty gaining ground outside of their rural uprising. Dorronsoro states, “support for the Taliban among the educated urban Afghans was very limited, and is nonexistent among the Shi’a” (Dorronsoro 2009: 6) In its infancy,

“the core territory for the Taliban movement was Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, and from Ghazni to the southern parts of Wardak as well as anywhere in the tribal areas of Pakistan. In this area, the Taliban gained the support of the local population and were able to influence local leadership (mostly mullahs, landlords and tribal leaders)” (Dorronsoro 2009: 6).

During the Taliban’s rise, their success was trademarked by a rural court system that demonstrated strength and quick resolve. This was absent from any government services in Kabul, and certainly the Taliban’s system was more favourable to Afghans than any forced system from outside states.

During the civil war the Taliban moved with rapid advancement toward Kabul. The rapid advancement demonstrated that the Taliban showed extensive tactical and political strength. Mullah Abdul Salaam Zaef, a 1990s-era Taliban official explains his experience, stating, “fighting alongside the Taliban meant more than just being a mujahidin. The Taliban followed a strict routine in which everyone who fought alongside us had to participate, without exception” (Zaef 2010: 26-27). Though the Taliban’s political strength showed some promise, it was challenged by many preexisting Afghan political structures. Some in Afghanistan did not like the extreme religious practices that Mullah Omar brought forth.

The complexity of the Pashtun tribes is something that the Taliban movement sought to eradicate so their ascendancy to power would come with more ease (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 12). Mullah Omar’s Taliban was a religious movement that culturally resembles some elements of the Afghan tribal society, yet disembodies many of the “tribal loyalties”, that Barfield described, in the name transforming Afghan society with some extreme form of religiosity and a sanctimonious hierarchy. The Taliban’s methods of

practicing religion, and enforcing daily conservative religious life was just as brazen as their political objectives. This is because both elements were significantly “alien to the country”, but the Taliban had some appeal because their political actions including their roaming courts, religious policing, and the security their armed militias provided were often consistent and swift, this kind of consistency and immediacy was lacking across the countryside before the Taliban (Elst 2010: 56).

Tom Barfield further explains some of the challenges for the Taliban stating that, the tribal systems of Afghanistan are complex and constantly changing... Pashtun tribes will “dispute with themselves and others members from another Pashtun tribe... just because someone is a Pashtun does not mean they are political allies” (Barfield 2012). An example of this is in Helmand Province where a Pashtun man named Gul Azra Sharzai, “from the Barakai tribe who often disputed with a neighboring Pashtun local Mullah Nakib leader of the Alikoizais” (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012:10). Despite the challenges, following Mullah Omar’s leadership, the Taliban gained ground.

While growing the Taliban, Omar and his subordinates reestablished a relationship with transnational foreigners... that came to Afghanistan to help him (Dellawar 2013). One particular relationship paid off more than others. A Taliban leader named Abu Sayyaf⁵⁵, invited the Saudi born, Osama Bin Laden to come to Afghanistan. OBL was invited to bring his extensive wealth, and his Arab militia, from a base in Sudan. Sayyaf and the Taliban offered Afghanistan as a place of protection to train, and also to fight alongside the Taliban (Kean 2011). OBL accepted the offer and any of his foreign fighters also came to assist the Taliban.

These Arabs brought independent wealth, or acquired it from billionaire jihadist Bin Laden (Coll 2004). Allowing Bin Laden to enter Afghanistan gave the Taliban an increasing

⁵⁵ The mentor of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

ability to gain more military control of their countryside because Bin Laden and his followers brought with them wealth, weapons, and training (Coll 2005). The new Arab guests penetrated Afghan society and began to manipulate many local power structures as well. The wealthy Arabs began to marry into Pashtun families, and by doing so they permanently forged themselves into Afghan society. This form of societal manipulation created an ongoing disfiguring of tribal Afghan life.

OBL's assistance allowed the Taliban to cavalier across Afghanistan. The Taliban's power peaked with the help of OBL, and the Taliban cornered the Taliban enemies to a point where the Taliban controlled 90% of the country in 2001. The Taliban's growth in power alarmed some neighbouring states, because they favoured different ethnic groups over the Taliban. An example is Turkey, "which exclusively supported the Uzbeks and Turkmen and has provided armed security to the leader of the Jumbesh party, Rashid Dostum" (Dorransoro 2009:14). Furthermore, Pakistan continued to be weary of the civil unrest on its borders.

Summary of Stage 1

Stage 1 shows Afghanistan's political history prior to the Surge. Stage 1 demonstrates that, in Afghanistan there is no single unifying political force or governing structure during the 20th century. Also, stage 1 shows that Afghanistan's rural and tribal society possesses inherent difficulties for any government (foreign or domestic) to regulate and govern. This is most evident in the political fallout after the departure of the Soviet Union in 1989. The societal infighting and civil war from 1991-2001 destroyed any hope for a central Afghanistan government. Furthermore, after the Soviet departure, the mid-evil behavior from the Taliban did not unite the entire country. It deepened the societal fractures and longstanding social divisions. The Taliban were effective because of their brutal measures, but still they could not control the entire country. The political history of Afghanistan

identified above shows a set of difficulties that affect Afghanistan once the US arrives in 2001.

The following section is stage 2. It will show that the early efforts to rebuild Afghanistan were largely unproductive. It starts the BONN agreement. The BONN agreement delivered a state centric solution for Afghanistan. Meaning, BONN focused a political structuring of Afghanistan by using, a centralized state with political power in Kabul, and building this power from Kabul outwards (Girardet 2012: 330). Furthermore, after BONN, the US failed to partner with the right individuals in Kabul. Newly appointed officials took hostile actions against former Taliban members, and incidentally were semi-responsible for the rebirth of the Taliban. Secondly, as the Taliban regrouped, the US did not have the proper forces to counter them, thus the Taliban continued to regain strength.

In 2009/2010 as the Surge begins, the US failed to mount an effective political and tactical campaign. The plan that Afghanistan agreed to, ended up falling short. This is because of a variety of items. The following section will show these, but to summarize them, the US encountered too many obstacles to negotiate. As a result, the US ended up fulfilling its commitment to Afghanistan, but achieved a limited amount of said goals.

Stage 2: US Actions in Afghanistan, Prior to the Surge, and then During the Surge

US Actions prior to the Surge

Stage 1 has identified that Afghanistan was a place of political turmoil for most of the 20th century. Indeed, its political dysfunction created an ungoverned space, and as a result the Taliban flourished. When Taliban gained support from OBL and his terrorist network, they continued to expand their power. While the Taliban were attempting to control Afghanistan, OBL independently launched a terrorist attack on the US, and it was the 9/11 attacks.

In response to the 9/11 attacks, President Bush announced the US would engage in a war on terror (see Chapter 3). In response, by late 2001, a small group of Special Forces US operated together with mostly northern tribal militia groups, and the US quickly routed the Taliban (Shaffer 2012). Constructing a post-Taliban Afghanistan required international support and regional agreements from Afghanistan's neighbours.

In December 2001, western powers came together to plan the post-Taliban Afghanistan. The original plan emanated at the BONN I conference. The result from the conference was the BONN Agreement. The BONN agreement provided a legal blueprint and constitutional framework for a new Afghanistan state. The new infrastructure set up an international support base. The aim of international support was to "promote, build, and support a new centralized government" (Dellawar 2014). Conceptually, the new Afghanistan would be, "controlled from the centre, Kabul, and political power would then be extended from the capitol" (Harvey 2014). This political structure was supposed to empower Afghans to break from its past decades of conflict.

The BONN process assisted in developing a new Afghan constitution, with a newly appointed interim president and cabinet members. At the outset, this particular part of the BONN process was primed with challenges. One particular challenge was that many of the experts in the west misunderstood Afghanistan. This was in part because of the dysfunctional political history as described in stage 1. There was not government data that was accurate, and because of this the US could not proceed to rebuild the country that united Afghans. One example was in the census data available about Afghanistan. The most recent data available was from pre-Soviet years, and those previous censuses was simply unclear (Barfield 2012). Because of this lack of data, there was some inevitable problems, misrepresentations, and misunderstandings of who the new government represented. Though the challenges presented

were sizeable, the US continued to bring international support to follow through with establishing a central government in Kabul.

In 2001, the centralized government in Kabul and the new Afghan state existed in name only, with no state institutions or ability to control the countryside (Delawar 2013, Hoh 2013, Atawneh 2014). The state's capabilities were so benign and the development of the people was so low, the United Nations HDI (Human Development Index) ranked Afghanistan at 174th out of 178 in the world (Commission 2007). Furthermore, the average Afghan was dismayed with the Afghan government because many former warlords were allowed in the government. Afghans viewed them as “mostly illegitimate” (Hoh 2013). Indeed, government officials were corrupt. The corruption was so widespread that two thirds of the new government officials were former “militants, warlords, and strongmen” who played a part in destroying the country during the 1990's (Laub 2014). New leaders in Kabul were focused on self preservation, and not repairing the newly formed Afghan state. This was most evident with Afghanistan's new President Hamid Karzai. Special command staff to Generals Tommy Franks and General Abizaid, Doug Tudor describes Karzai's behaviour as “erratic” and “convoluted”. As ISAF surged to assist Karzai he acted with so much duplicity. “Karzai brownnosed for American support, and in the same moment he was upset because we did too much to build Afghanistan” (Tudor 2013). None of this assisted the growth and development of Afghan political figures, nor did it bolster the Karzai administration's legitimacy. Instead of calling on his own government to reform, and demanding more resolve from his people, Karzai often criticized the Afghan National Army, and criticised the US. Karzai saw his people and his army as a form of American mercenaries, at the will of American generals, more than Afghan freedom fighters, “Karzai is more interested in his legacy, his families political self-preservation and whatever dealings he has to do with the warlords in his government to maintain power” (Hoh 2013).

In contrast, the previous Taliban ruled exclusively by an interpretation of religious law. The Taliban provided swift security and justice. Barnett Rubin identified, “in some areas, there is parallel Taliban state, and locals are increasingly turning to Taliban courts, which are seen as more effective and fair than the corrupt official system” (Rubin 2007). Moreover, the Taliban accepted the Afghan tradition of independence and many Afghans believed the new government was destructive to these native traditions (Kilcullen 2012, Shaffer 2012, Hoh 2013, Malkasian 2014, Weston 2014). Carter Malkasian recalled, “in the south/southeast of the country the government in Kabul presented challenge to their tradition of self-rule” (Malkasian 2014). The former regime of the Taliban was not perfect, but some of the impoverished people in the southern regions preferred the Taliban to Kabul

Furthermore, “the failure to grant amnesty to Taliban figures who had abandoned the movement and accepted the new Afghan government had repercussions far beyond any expectations” (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 13). Starting in the summer of 2002, the Taliban slowly began to make slow progress reforming itself, slowly making an appearance back into Afghanistan (Chandrasekaran 2012: 44) The leftover Taliban who desired to fight were able to build support amongst some disaffected communities in the post-Taliban ruled Afghanistan. This began to occur in the south near Helmand the, “spiritual heartland of the Taliban” (Malkasian 2014). The Taliban played on Afghans old rivalries, and they tried to unite all differing clans together to make a macro tribe for an all-encompassing anti government offensive (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 20).

One reason for this is because the US backed Pashtuns who were members from the Sherzai tribe, and this action accidentally isolated the other tribes within the larger Pashtun ethnic group in Helmand (Dellawar 2013). After the collapse of the Taliban, in 2001, the Sherzai tribe emerged as the powerful ruling group that consolidated power with the new US appointed governor. Amongst this new political leadership were former tribesman who

previously disputed with Taliban, and were eager for revenge (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 11). Moreover, the new President Hamid Karzai was a Durrani Pashtun, of the Popalzai tribe, and this upset much of the opposing Pashtun tribes as well as the other ethnic groups.

The Taliban were isolated and alienated, then abused and targeted. As a result, a recruitment drive was underway in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Extensive training bases were being established in Pakistani territory, and information pamphlets began to spread throughout the countryside (Giustozzi 2008: 2-3). Due to the inefficiencies of the new Afghan government, and the growing strength of the Taliban, the US took a small COIN approach during the early to mid-2000's.

Building an Afghan Army, and Attempting a Lighter COIN

The Taliban reemergence was problem for the new Afghanistan. Solving this issue would prove to be difficult. A new commanding officer was selected to address this issue, and he was General Barno.

When General Barno came to Afghanistan, he had two major dilemmas. The first was to build and train an Afghan army and police force. The second was to build relationships with rural villages. First, Barno commanded his forces to focus on different villages to prevent Taliban resurgences (Rashid 2008: 252). Barno developed a concept known as provincial reconstruction teams, or PRT's, to work with Afghan leaders to redevelop their territory and build trust with the Afghan government. However, this was extraordinarily "under resourced" because of modest availability of funds due to the ongoing war in Iraq (Cassidy 2012). Moreover, there was not a national plan which could enable one district to coincide with the actions of another (Cassidy 2006: 52).⁵⁶ The PRTs looked very different from one district to another, and as a result, they never made headway delivering "a fundamental challenge" to the Taliban (Cassidy 2012). Moreover, the US was attempting to

⁵⁶ Also see Sewall in the US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (University of Chicago Press, 2007), pages xxvi to xxxii.

fight at the village level in southern Afghanistan, but in places like Khost province, the Taliban massed large force structures and targeted population centres. Though Barno's plan was making some progress, US forces had a mismatch between the tactics and strategy that they employed. In the immediate years after BONN, the US did not unify the country against the Taliban because the US was isolating itself against populations where the Taliban was centered, and because the overall campaign went largely underresourced.

Future US commander of ISAF, Stanley McChrystal noted, "American soldiers were an irritant, [in some areas of the south], there was probably much more fighting going on than [if the US had never come] (West 2009: 47). An example of this came in 2004, when US rangers were operating in Khost Province. One ranger accounts:

"We had been on patrol for a week on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border, and we had just got back to the firebase. We found out second platoon had been ambushed. We found out one of our rangers was dead. [After being ordered to go] We went out to relieve second platoon, and started a manhunt for the people who did this. We started going into the local villages. We kicked in a lot of doors over those couple of days, and arrested a lot of men. I just remember we got a lot of bad addresses. We went to a lot of places and pissed off a lot of people. We were so angry, we mistreated a lot of people even before we brought them back to base. The tough part about this, the Ranger who was killed was Pat Tillman, and his death turned out to be friendly fire. Everything about that mission was a cluster fuck, just like it always is" (Borass 2009).

The Tillman tragedy is just one highlight to a broader misaligned tactical and political vision from the base of ground operations upwards to the centre of US policy. One senior US commander, Major General Eric Olson indicated the political vision for Afghanistan was dysfunctional and because of it, "his troops were not even close to defeating the militants" (Elst 2010: 72). Olson's remarks were indicative of the larger problem in Afghanistan.

Barno's second mission was to train the Afghan army and police force. Again this was a very challenging task. This is because of two reasons. The military needed to be representative of the multi cultural/ethnic elements in Afghan society. It was decided that "40% needed to be Pashtun, and 25% needed to be Tajik" (Hoh 2014). This is the first problem that Barno came across. The new government was not able to effectively recruit the

number of soldiers required. If Afghan's did not want to join the military, the US had no foreseeable option to but leave Afghanistan. The second problem that Barno faced, is that the Afghan recruits were reluctant to tolerate the rugged training methods from US soldiers. Cael Weston described this phenomenon, "Afghans are tough people, but they are tough in their way, in their abilities to tolerate things that they chose to, but if an Afghan soldier doesn't want to work with you, he will simply quit without explanation, he will walk away, he will do anything to make you forget about him" (Weston 2014). Despite these challenges, Barno proceeded to work with what was available, but this problem would resurface in 2010 as the Surge was employed.

The early phases of US involvement in Afghanistan demonstrate that the US failed to plan an acceptable path forward to the rural Afghan. Secondly, the Afghan government failed to be a worthy governing body to the rural Afghan. Thirdly, the Afghan government and the actions of the US military further divided Afghan society. In response to the Taliban's regrouping, massive assaults and shifting asymmetric warfare, the US adopted some changes but the lack of resources prevented the US from achieving any long term benefit. After General Barno transitioned his command, Afghanistan was largely absent as a primary concern for US foreign military operations. This occurred largely because the Iraq war took over every element of national power the US possessed (Wilkerson 2012).

The next two commanders suffered from being under resourced in both tactical equipment as well as coherent policy. There were several attempts made by generals, Eikenberry and McKiernan, for more resourcing, but they were rebuffed with stubbornness from the Bush administration. As a result, from 2001-2009, US efforts were largely unproductive. The US needed a different strategy to navigate Afghanistan, and it needed to overhaul its approach. The sums of these eight years of effort were summed up by Steve Biddle, "after eight years of engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Bush

administration never convened an interagency assessment to develop a regional strategy for pacifying Afghanistan” (Biddle 2012). By the end of 2009, across Afghanistan different insurgent fought the US, and they also manipulated their way into villages and valleys. At times they cooperated with the Taliban, and at other times acted on their own. A list of insurgent groups is below.

Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations
1.) Quetta Shura Taliban	Non State/State	Local/ Regional
2.) Haqqani	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global
3.) TTP	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional
4.) TNSM	Non State	Local
5.) Laskar-e-Jungevi	Non State	Local
6.) Laskar-e-Taiba	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global
7.) Al-Qaeda	Non-State	Local/ Regional/ Global
8.) Pashtun Insurgent Coalition	Non State	Local

Table 11: For full list see appendix

US Actions during the Surge

By 2009, Afghanistan was in dire straights. The Iraq war had diverted most of US resources away. As a result, the insurgent groups in Afghanistan accumulated extensive territory and maintained localised political power. In response, the Obama administration approved the Afghanistan Surge in late 2009. In early 2010, Afghan president Karzai conceded to the Surge, though he reluctantly accepted it. Karzai conceded to the Surge because Karzai’s political self-interest (Cohen 2014). An increase of US effort guaranteed Karzai and the greater Kabul protection in the future because it guarantees a further influx of foreign investment for economic stimulus. Furthermore, western experts provided Afghanistan expanded human capital. Thirdly, Karzai counted on the US to do the heavy lifting in terms of security operations.

The Surge brought western experts, foreign financial investment, and increased security for Kabul. The Americans thought this was incredibly important to the Afghan state

because in 2009, it still remained “one of the weakest countries in the world” (Shaffer 2012). In the mind of Karzai, as well as many Afghan officials, they saw the Surge as a bargaining chip to preserve them.

The Surge increased to 33,000 troops of which only 30% were combat forces. The other components were logistic components such as mechanics, engineers, and medical support (Natonski 2012). McChrystal’s plan was to comprehensively increase US troops across the territories of the country. The theory here was, by entering the villages, and connecting them to each other with roads, bridges, and supplies, Afghan’s would gain confidence in President Karzai and the Afghan government. John Nagl argued the vital importance of this infrastructure and village-to-village diplomacy stating:

“The campaign in Afghanistan is much different from Iraq, but I believe we can win this war. We can win with the playoff of the Pashtun Insurgency against AQ, just as we did with the Sunni Sheiks in Iraq”, and the single most important part of this fight is roads, with more roads we can win this fight” (Nagl 2012).

Nagl’s argument for the importance of roads has merit, yet with increased infrastructure, other problems are created. Meresh Kumari was the Country Director in Afghanistan for the State Department in the Office of Transitional Initiatives. Kumari argued that,

“The difficulty with large infrastructure such as roads, cellular telephone towers, and concrete barriers, they are primarily for the US to transport their equipment. The average villager doesn’t use them, or if they do use them, they won’t want to out of fear of being highjacked, or bombed by the Taliban” (Kumari 2015).

Political Problems during the Surge

In the early days of the Surge, McChrystal’s biggest challenge was with Karzai and other Afghan officials. Karzai and other Afghan officials became more animated and dictated how and where US troops and money should be sent. Karzai publicly made statements such as, “Al-Qaeda was driven out of Afghanistan in 2001. They have no base in Afghanistan. The war against terrorism is not in Afghan villages and is not in the Afghan countryside” (Cohen 2013). The common view amongst Afghans is that the Taliban are a problem from Pakistan,

and the US should “attack the Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan” (Askram 2012). McChrystal wanted his troops in the countryside, and training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Most Afghan leaders desired the deployment of advisors to accelerate the training of the ANSF to be prepared to fight against Pakistani insurgents (Dellawar 2014). This is a major point of difference to the Afghanistan case, and the Iraq case. In Iraq, the Baathists had a very capable army for decades. Afghanistan did not benefit from this element of an existing state institution. US partnership with Afghanistan was predicated on the ANSF taking over control in 18 months. Building up an Afghan army would later prove to be too large of a task, along with several other variables.

Over the next two years, “the number of American troops and American civilian advisors essentially doubled, from 46,000 to 103,000” (Hoh 2013). The added forces performed two things. First, the US performed, “direct action raids and brought many Afghans to detention centres” (Hoh 2013). Secondly, the increased troops performed village stability operations. In this program, commanders spent money on a variety of tasks, hoping to win over the population. The funds were used as paying families off for innocent deaths at a rate of 2,500 dollars a person. Also commanders used funds to perform random acts such as “buying cattle to give to farmers in the hope of bribing them for information on the Taliban (Hoh 2013). Other cases of this emergency funds were to buy and build “generator factories, wells, mosques, schools, and anything that would break off the population from the grip of the Taliban” (Kilcullen 2012). Afghans wanted this foreign money, but they wanted “US troops to go to Pakistan as well” (Askram 2012). When this did not happen, Karzai increasingly lost support with Afghan’s and the US.

McChrystal could not provide Karzai with increased military forces in Pakistan for two reasons. First, US COIN efforts relied on Pakistani cooperation to target Taliban sponsors working inside of the Pakistani military (Shaffer 2012). This particular cooperation

created the largest difficulty for US/Pakistani relations (Cohen 2013). Secondly, US ground troops in Pakistan could ignite an unprecedented amount of violence in Pakistan, and that could roll over into Afghanistan thus making the security situation even more difficult. Therefore, the US depended on Pakistan to work with the US against the Taliban, and work with Afghanistan as well. This two-pronged dependency created a final strategic conundrum. The Surge forces necessitated an increase of supplies. The NATO/ISAF logistical supply lines that were required came through Pakistan.

Cadre Challenges during the Surge

As McChrystal began to implement the Surge, he faced political problems that were previously mentioned. The increase of US forces angered the average Afghan, just as Afghans were outraged by the presence of any uninvited foreigner in the past. The influx of foreigners exacerbated pre-existing tribal tensions because the “average villager was pulled between the vulnerabilities of immediate help from the Americans”, and yet feeling “uncomfortable with the future of Afghanistan as US presence declines” (Malkasian 2014). During the early weeks of the Surge, in a NATO briefing, even McChrystal recognized some of these problems. Summarizing this, Michael Cohen stated, “the consensus from McChrystal’s brain trust was there would not be any progress in the next six months” (Cohen 2013). As the Surge continued, the new Afghan army and US forces experienced tensions on the battlefield. This is most prevalent in the training centres for the Afghan security forces. Confronted with inadequate resourcing, at times, the Afghan police used archaic structures to do modern day policing.

Two key examples are accounted in the 2009 State Department report on human rights, it states:

Authorities detained 16 boys and two girls in a prison at a rented property of cave-type structures that lacked adequate ventilation, running water, or sanitation. They were reportedly adequately fed, and the boys received some education. On August 18,

on the 90th anniversary of the country's independence, President Karzai released 700 prisoners, including 23 women, and reduced the sentences of 239 prisoners. Their violations ranged from drug and alcohol abuse to adultery, rape, theft, robbery, fraud, forgery, manslaughter, and murder; sentences ranged from six months' to 10 years' imprisonment (Bureau of Democracy and Practices, 2010).

One NCO accounted his experience in training the Afghan Army on how to use vehicles:

“Sir, they just do not work like us. You can't understand it unless you're here. [Afghans].... They.... They... just don't function how we want them too. In the time it takes to train one Afghan, I could teach a hundred high school [American] kids” (Huffington Post 2010).⁵⁷

Further examples an unnamed Senior Colonel from the public engagement/communications department at ISAF headquarters. He made his opinion clear about exiting Afghanistan and COIN:

“In 22 years of military service, I have never seen the current level of large-scale stupidity, this is a world-class clusterf—k. [The Afghan army] goes through an 8 week training course, they are issued M16's during their training and when they complete the course, ISAF sends them to the combat field with AK-47's without previous training. The US is providing the Afghan Army with pickup trucks, yet most Afghans cannot drive.... they have never driven a day in their lives. Think for second, how many accidents do American PFC's get into??? LOTS!!!! DOZENS!!!! I know two NCO's that got into wrecks this morning!!! Young American PFCs join the army, and they already have years of driving experience. Afghans have donkeys and motorcycles. In some cases, an American 18-year-old boy scout is more capable than the Afghans, and 30 percent of the Afghan recruits do not pass or quit once they reach their unit in the combat zone” (Huffington Post 2010).

Another senior colonel in charge of the Afghan Army Training curriculum admitted,

“There is an obscene amount of problems with the training operations, and there is no way the Afghans will be able to take over combat operations in July 2011. We are here building the psychology of the Afghanistan Nation a few hundred thousand troops cannot do that task. Even though our own troops have a plethora of stresses, they are performing reasonably well considering all the issues, but again, we are building National capacity for Afghanistan” (Huffington Post 2010).

⁵⁷ There are similar characterization in Ahmed's *Thistle and Drone*: see Ahmed, A. S. (2013). *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*, Brookings Institution Press.

Other senior NCO's and officers explained the complex reality:

“Afghans get 8 weeks of training, and then they are sent to the front lines of some really nasty conflict. A US soldier gets an entire year of training, and then the 20-year-old boy finds placement in a unit of many seasoned warriors. The young 20-year-old Marine is conditioned for an entire year and then joins his unit for battle. Afghans have no one to look up to, they are in the Afghan Army for money, and they are looking to American soldiers as parents. If we leave, the Afghan confidence flies out the window” (Huffington Post 2010)

These accounts are vivid depictions of the difficulties posed in training the new Afghan army recruits. However, an investigative report by the DoD indicated the experiences of those individuals are not isolated. The report states, “while the ANA show positive signs, overall it lacks the ability to function without US assistance” (Defense 2012). There are a variety of reasons for this dysfunction. Matthew Hoh argued, “the US was partly to blame because the US was rushing Afghan’s through training”, and “partly because Afghans were not used to the technical skills required, using advanced trucks, advanced weapons, and more technical equipment” (Hoh 2014). However, the major difficulty ISAF faces was its inability to train and keep medics, mechanics, and other logistic service providers for ANSF. This is because they were, “they were making more money in their villages doing the same logistical support roles as they did in the army, and if they are not in the ANSF, they are allowed to go home at night, in the province of their choice” (Luljan 2012). Summarizing the challenges of working with Afghans, Major Luljan (a special forces officer working in Afghanistan) described the experience stating, “Afghanistan is a little like Leonardo DiCaprio in the movie Inception, we (US) must go into people’s dreams and make them do things that we want them to... that can be pretty hard” (Luljan 2012).

Surging to Save Narco Traffickers

Another issue in Afghanistan was the difficulties that emerged from the extensive narcotics traffickers. Large parts of the rural Afghan population produce agriculture to sustain

themselves. However, poppy, the plant that produces heroin, is the most profitable crop and it sustains an incredible network of illicit money, and corruption.⁵⁸ The money from the “narcotics trade was the main source of revenue for the insurgency” (Kilcullen 2012). It buys weapons and pays fighters salaries. Poppy is the capitol that brings the weapons and fighters that kill soldiers and Afghan citizens alike. “It is a cancer, fuelling the insurgency, contributing to corruption, impeding legitimate commerce, and undermining governance” (Baumann 2008: 34). Indeed, stopping poppy growth appeared to be a quick way to break the insurgency. However, despite some successes in stopping the growth of poppy, the US chose to do very little to confront it. The main reason is if the US takes away the poppy, it affects the livelihood of Afghan farmers. Furthermore, because the US did not provide another reasonable cash crop alternative, there was no favourability to stop growing poppy amongst the Afghan villagers (Dorransoro 2009).

Surging and Attempting Government in a Box

Despite the increase in US forces, the proposition of securing Afghanistan was a daunting task. Helmand province is a prime example. Cael Weston put it in simple terms, “Helmand has about 2 million Afghans, depending on the time of year, and half of these people live in over 6,000 settlements. Can you imagine what kind of manpower you would need to secure these areas, hundreds of thousands of troops?” (Weston 2014). Indeed, the task appeared insurmountable, nonetheless, Obama gave McChrystal a mission, and the mission forged a path in Marjah.

McChrystal’s major tactical initiatives was focused on the Marjah offensive in early 2010. McChrystal’s plan was to deliver what he described to Dexter Filkins as a government in a box. The plan was that the US would move into the battle space, and begin to clear out

⁵⁸ Also consult the New Yorker for extensive comments on this type of phenomenon found here: Anderson, Jon Lee. “The Taliban’s opium war: the difficulties and dangers of the eradication program.” *New Yorker* (New York, NY: 1925) (2007): 60.

the enemy. The fighting was supposed to last only a week or so. The mission began with members from the Afghan Army joined by US Marines. The goal was to make Marjah an Afghanistan version of Anbar, Iraq. With the two forces working together, the US could do the heavy lifting while passing on leadership to the ANA. McChrystal's "government in a box" would then be ready to roll out as soon as the fighting was done (Filkins 2009, Filkins 2010). During the campaign, the results were mixed. On occasion, Afghans showed promise using their weapons. However, mostly they hid behind the US troops doing the actual fighting. In addition, "while US soldiers worked along side the Afghan army, many Afghans showed a reluctance to act independently, because they were afraid US advisors would then disappear" (Hoh 2013). They rarely sighted in their weapons on the enemy, and rarely used the most basic materials such as maps, radios, and showed little cooperation. This was a pattern by the ANA. Brock Macintosh accounts his time with the ANA, "repeatedly, the ANA failed to live up to our expectations" (Macintosh 2013). The cooperation between the Afghan army and the Marines is summed in the statement by a Marine Captain, WOA, meaning, "waiting on the Afghan Army" (Chivers 2010).

McChrystal's closest aids indicated that COIN was struggling to succeed. According to Michael Hastings, McChrystal's staff maintained a negative opinion of the ANA stating, "we're fucking losing this thing". McChrystal's chief operation's, Major General Bill Mayville stated, "it's not going to look, smell, or taste like a win" (Hastings 2010, Hastings 2012). A US Soldier operating in southern Afghanistan saw his role supporting and training the Afghan army as, "just moronicwhile we train them to fight the enemy, we also have to train them how to clean, and eat properly. It's difficult" (Mackintosh 2013). Describing his experiences while performing COIN operations, Mackintosh explains, "we drove around in humvees with the Afghan Army, we ate with them, we acted as their parents waiting to catch bullets from some farmers on motorcycles, we were the catcher's mitt for the Taliban's

attacks” (Mackintosh 2013). These accounts indicated the mission might not be accomplished, or at a minimum it might take three, four, or more times longer than McChrystal envisioned.

During the summer of 2010, US special forces were “making 100-150 strikes per month” (Shaffer 2012). These strikes tormented the Taliban’s ability to control territory, but the “constant strikes also alienated Afghans” (Malkasian 2013). Other accounts were more nostalgic such as Special Forces Major Luljan, who had “high hopes for contested provinces such as Zabul” (Luljan 2012). Also in Marjah, just two weeks of fighting, the Afghan forces raised the Afghan national flag in varying districts and provinces across the south and east. It was displayed across the cities, hoping to demonstrate confidence and ownership. However, that was the beginning of a long road to the end for government services in the region.

McChrystal’s “government in a box” were supposed to be tested and prove COIN works in Marjah, and thus can apply across the countryside. However, historian Andrew Bacevich accounts, “the box came up empty” (Bacevich 2010). Indeed, the box was empty, after the Marjah offensive, there was no sign of local support, “in a survey of residents, 99% said US military presence was bad” (Malkasian 2013). Furthermore, observing the performances by many differing Afghan units, the US was struggling to instill positive attitude and trust by locals in the government.

In mid-2009, the Taliban’s prowess continued. This was mainly because the trust between the US and southern Pashtuns was absent. After the push in Marjah, “Marines tried to win trust from the people in the Government but struggled because of the ANA” (Hoh 2013). During the reporting period after the Marjah offensive, the Afghan Government made only limited progress in building the human and institutional capacity. The existing corruption within Karzai’s government, also allowed the insurgency to spread to differing districts and provinces (Hastings 2012). Foreign Service Officer Mathew Hoh, indicated, “US

tax payers spent 206 billion in civil projects that 360 million was going to that Taliban” [Citing a CBS news report] (Hoh 2013). In 2008, the US Government Accounting Office decried this, “appalling lack of strategy toward Afghanistan as well as Pakistan in light of severe degradation of security conditions in both countries” (Fair 2010).

In addition, a NATO report accounted,

The current legal system is one which the power of the executive is not balanced either by a national legislature or by local elected officials. Afghanistan’s parliament has extremely limited powers to resist presidential desires even when it is in session, and the constitution allows the president to rule effectively by decree when it is not in session. The parliament does not have effective power of the purse because of the way Afghan budgets are made and voted on—and because the overwhelming proportion of the Afghan state budget comes from the international community and goes directly into executive institutions without requiring or permitting legislative [action]. The president appoints provincial and district governors at his discretion and without even the requirement for any legislature to “advise and consent” to the appointment; and no legislative body has the authority to remove a presidential appointee. Provincial and district councils are directly elected, but, like the national parliament, have virtually no ability to check the actions of the presidential appointees who control the flow of money, the armed forces, and the police down to the local level. The current government structure, in other words, is fundamentally antithetical to traditional Pashtun expectations about the relationship between local communities and the central government because it excludes the communities from having a meaningful voice in almost any decision at any level. Corruption and abuse of power fuel the insurgency in this context. Afghanistan’s previous rulers were by no means pure and without flaw, although they never demonstrated corruption on anything like the scale of the current government, if only because they never had access to resources on this scale (Bureau of Democracy and Practices, 2010).

Afghan corruption was so vast, that unless the national government radically changed its laws, legislation, and attitude and the population recognized it, there was little hope for long-term success. As a result, pushing the Taliban out of contested regions mattered little. The Taliban, though absent from fighting in certain areas, prosecuted a potent alternative to the Karzai government. Despite the “government in a box”, the Taliban’s mobile courts served rural Afghans enough. Moreover, the Taliban could always direct disgruntled farmers to governmental abuse and the occupying ISAF forces to maintain enough public support to survive.

General Petraeus to Save the Day

Despite any tactical progress against militants, the security apparatus and Karzai's ability to establish the rule of law at the province and village level was extremely weak. When Petraeus took over, "the US controlled 122 districts, but the Taliban controlled over 130, and if the US was going to succeed, this had to change" (Harvey 2014). Karzai seemed apathetic to what the US was doing. "Karzai could care less about complex COIN metrics invented by foreign military staff and think tanks" (Hoh 2013). "Karzai wanted to strengthen political legitimacy and control for his favoured allies" (Tudor 2013). Bringing, "peace and stability to his country was a second concern" (Goodfellow 2013). By Jan 2010, the Taliban had doubled their attacks from 2009. They had killed 1,000 more soldiers than the previous year.

In 2010, Washington was completely aware of the difficulties emerging in Afghanistan. SECDEF Gates claimed, "the President doesn't believe in his own strategy, and doesn't consider the war to be his own. For Karzai, it's all about getting out" (Ray 2014). The president was, "sceptical if not outright convinced it would fail," and US military commanders still found themselves in theatre for 12 months at a time (Goodfellow 2013).

Feeling this pressure, General McChrystal pushed Washington to start the political track as soon as possible. McChrystal was more focused on, "reconciliation than he was on killing the Taliban" (Cohen 2013). By summer 2012, McChrystal failed to meet President Obama's agenda. Moreover, McChrystal made a series of insubordinate remarks about the White House in a controversial interview with Rollingstone Magazine journalist, Michael Hastings (Hastings 2013). As a result, McChrystal was fired from his position. When General McChrystal was removed from command, General Petraeus came to replace him.

As Petraeus took command he announced, "to our Afghan partners: We will do all that we can to help you build a country free of the fear of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, a

country in which all citizens can live in peace with one another and provide for themselves and their families” (Office 2010). While urging Washington to be patient Petraeus stated,

"We are doing everything we can to achieve progress as rapidly as we can without rushing to failure, we're keenly aware that this has been ongoing for approaching nine years. We fully appreciate the impatience in some quarters. In the end, the Petraeus plan in Afghanistan was very similar to Iraq". Indeed, "General Petraeus, pushed Washington towards gaining more ground militarily" (Hoh 2013). Petraeus noted, "we need to get the upper hand militarily and regain the military initiative, and then negotiate from a position of strength" (Brady 2010).

Petraeus's plan mirrored his Iraq plan.

The plan had six points.

1. Let the Afghans Lead
2. Assist in protecting the population
3. Kill or Capture Foreign Extremists
4. Allow for Political Process
5. Diversify political and economic efforts
6. Find a regional strategy

Petraeus's plan was able to make some tactical advancement. State Dept. official Mathew Hoh stated, "US forces were far superior to the Taliban, in their tactical operations" (Hoh 2013). Defense Intelligence Agent Antony Shaffer stated, "if the conflict were limited to the amount of precision and firepower we could apply to the Taliban and other insurgent groups, the fight would have been over a long time ago" (Shaffer 2012). Carter Malkasian indicated, despite the tactical advantages the US maintained, the "reason the Surge struggles in 2010-2011 is because it fails to capture the imagination of the average Afghan, many of them simply won't cooperate because they don't believe in the US being in their country" (Malkasian 2014). Indeed, by 2011 there was not one single component of the Afghan Ministry of Defence, or Ministry of Interior, that by NATO Capability Milestone definitions could perform autonomous operations (Rasmussen 2012 : 15) A DoD report indicated, by 2011, ISAF's hearts and minds approach appeared to be failing and in April 2011, over "300 detainees escaped from the Sarposa prison in Kandahar Province". This was significant

because, immediately following the escape, at least “14 Afghan guards were found involved in abetting the escape” (DoD pub: October 2011). The Sarposa prison break was symbolic incident of the US lack of control over the new Afghan army, and it also showed that the US was not gaining the support from Afghan’s.

Petraeus attempted a final push to gain support for a political agreement from Kabul and Taliban leaders. Previously, the primary blocker to the US gaining a political settlement with Kabul and the Taliban is that the US wanted the Taliban to denounce OBL and AQI. The Taliban did not agree to this demand. Petraeus saw this as a problem, and persuaded US political leaders to distinguish the two groups. Almost 10 years after the BONN agreement, “in June 2011, the Security Council adopted Resolutions 1988 and 1989, effectively separating Al-Qaeda and Taliban members into two separate lists. The resolutions also created separate committees to oversee each list, which allowed the Security Council to respond to the unique nature of each group” (Nasr 2013: 92). The resolution meant the US could finally negotiate with the Taliban and force their hand.

Petraeus assumed that increasing the attacks on the Taliban would force them to the negotiating table. Petraeus stated he wanted to, “bleed out the insurgents, and force them to negotiate” (Weston 2014). Petraeus believed this could work, based on his experiences in Iraq from 2006-2009. Indeed, following McChrystal’s firing, Petraeus pushed American units into villages and valleys across the south and east of Afghanistan. Furthermore, he increased air strikes and direct action hits on Taliban leaders. Michael Cohen indicates, “Petraeus wanted a larger direct action campaign to punish the Taliban, hoping they would feel the pressure and make a deal” (Cohen 2014). Also, Cael Weston stated, after McChrystal,

“You could feel desperation on the ground. Senior military commanders were sending units out to new locations, and night raids increased by 50%. The mission changed. Before, we (State Dept officials) worked alongside the military units trying to build Afghan partnerships. When he (McChrystal) left, the plans changed. State took a backseat, and the DoD controlled everything” (Weston 2014).

The increased actions by Petraeus were noticeable, not only to the Taliban, but in the Afghan countryside. Increasingly, from 2011-2012, more civilians were killed. This angered Afghans and Karzai. In response, Karzai forced new political pressures onto Washington. Regardless of the successes made from killing the Taliban, the US needed Karzai on its side. Obama wanted Kabul to be able to survive once the Surge ended. Killing innocent civilians ensured this could not happen. As a result, by the end of 2012, Petraeus reduced the number of attacks, and focused on training the Afghan army.

By the time the Surge ended, the attempts to negotiate the difficulties in Afghanistan proved to be too difficult. Afghan political leaders maintained an unacceptable level of corruption. As a result, the Afghan countryside did not unanimously join to support Kabul, nor did they effectively reject the Taliban. Moreover, the US failed to recruit, train, and employ an effective Afghan army. Just as the US failed to recruit, train, and employ an effective Afghan army, so did it fail to suppress or stop the financial driver of the insurgency. The US never found an effective program to counter poppy trade in any meaningful way. Failing to do so allowed the Taliban to maintain its principal resourcing mechanism.

In addition, McChrystal's government in a box failed to extend outside of Marjah. The effect was frustration and brought about his eventual firing. As McChrystal left, America's final hope, General David Petraeus came to Afghanistan. Though Petraeus was previously successful in Iraq, and he managed a campaign that was significantly easier than Afghanistan. Afghanistan's dysfunctional political history set a backdrop in which he could not effectively navigate in the time constraints left from the Obama administration. As a result, Petraeus targeted the Taliban with impunity, hoping to press them into submission. Petraeus plan failed because of the rising civilian casualties. Kabul and Washington pushed Petraeus into reducing his offensive. This eventually allowed the Taliban to survive, and not negotiate with Kabul

Summary of Stage 2

Stage 2 discovered US actions prior to the Surge, and then US actions during the Surge. This section identified how US actions failed to act in way that would mirror the successes in Iraq. The problems began early on immediately after the Taliban was dethroned from power. The broader theme from 2002-2009, is that the US did not have a national strategy which Afghans supported.

The BONN agreement was an attempt to rebuild the Afghan state. The problem with this proposal was it was overly focused on building Kabul's strength, and it failed to unite Afghans. The BONN agreement allowed former warlords and criminals to enter into political life. Furthermore, as the US supported these individuals, the government increasingly proved to be corrupt, failing to assist the campaign. This created problems for the US as the Surge occurred.

Secondly, prior to the Surge, US military actions were counterproductive in many situations. This was most evident from 2004-2009. The US failed to have the proper resources in both materials and in terms of coherent policy. Meaning senior commanders, aimlessly occupied Afghanistan, without a plan to conclude the campaign. As the Taliban regrouped, the US did not have the adequate number of troops to train the Afghan army, fight the Taliban and secure the Afghan countryside. This was most obvious in the US ability to navigate the Taliban just before the Surge began. The US did not effectively target the resurgent Taliban. While the US was able to take the tactical edge, it failed to make killing insurgents amount to any increase in political will in Kabul. However, US actions prior to the Surge is not the only variable that eventually led to a failed Surge. US actions during the Surge also failed to assist a positive outcome.

Stage 2 has shown, the US had many challenges from the previous years of occupation. However, US actions during the Surge also failed to capitalize on the insurgents

failure, and the US failed to capitalize on its superior military capability. In the end, the positive outcome from Iraq could not be mirrored in Afghanistan.

During the Surge, there were five things the US failed to accomplish. First, the US failed to solve the political problems in the Afghan government. Perhaps this is understandable, because the US could not force Karzai to do things he did not want to do, but the difference between Afghanistan and Iraq, is the US was able to force Maliki's hand to the point he was more cooperative. This is largely due to the extensive and mindless violence occurring in Iraq. The violence in Afghanistan was not at the levels of Iraq, and it was not concentrated in one location. Subsequently, the Afghan government continued to function with flagrant corruption.

In addition, the plan for the Surge was to repel the insurgency long enough for the US to train the Afghan military, and then pass over leadership. Training the Afghan military was a far more difficult task than expected. The Afghan recruits were dysfunctional, and failed to meet the assigned goals from the US.

US also faced challenges in stopping the insurgencies' funding. The US was caught in a difficult situation where they could either destroy the poppy crop, thus alienating the Afghan farmer, or they could tolerate the situation and pass on this challenge to the new Afghan Army. Indeed, as the Surge entered Afghanistan, it in part protected the narco traffickers, and assisted the Taliban. Failing to find a solution to this also prevented the US from succeeding.

When McChrystal started the Surge, he was pushed into a situation where he needed to show signs/benchmarks of success. This was because President Obama put him on a timetable. In an attempt to show success, the US attempted a plan in Marjah, which was called a government in a box. This simplistic jingoism is symbolic to the overall campaign. The US was rushing to bring about substantive changes to Afghanistan's political landscape.

It did so by securing an area, kicking out the insurgents, and unpacking democracy. While the Marjah offensive was successful in killing insurgents, rebuilding a direct relationship from southern Afghanistan to Kabul was a political failure. Here again, US plans failed to take into account Afghans long history of rejecting foreign occupiers, and rejecting a central government from Kabul. In order to change Afghan's cultural narrative, the US needed a longer commitment with more policy cohesion across the countryside.

As the Marjah offensive delivered some success and some failures, General McChrystal grew increasingly subordinate to Washington. Indeed, the tensions were so deep McChrystal was eventually fired. This had a dramatic effect on the campaign. McChrystal's firing was indicative of the policy failures directed from Washington, and also a statement to the difficulties of negotiating Afghanistan's history.

When McChrystal was fired, General Petraeus was appointed to resurrect the success from the Iraq Surge. The changing in leadership did make some improvements in theatre. Petraeus changed the directives away from achieving political resolutions with insurgents, and he focused more on killing them. Though Petraeus succeeded in increasing hostilities, the problem still remained, killing insurgents did not bring a political solution. The US needed Karzai to be more proactive, but Karzai forced the US hand. Karzai convinced the US to back off of its attacks, and thus the Taliban continued to survive.

Stage 3: The Taliban Resurgent

Stage 1 demonstrated how Afghanistan political history created problems for the Surge to succeed. A strong central government was antithetical to most of Afghanistan's political history. However, Afghanistan's political history combined with US actions in stage 2 creates a much larger problem for the potential success of the Surge. However, these alone do not necessarily provide coherence to why the Afghanistan Surge ultimately failed. Stage 3 is the reactions prior to the Surge and during the Surge. This section concludes the 3-stage

model. In review, it is the combination of stages 1-3 that identifies why the US failed to succeed in Afghanistan.

Stage 3 discovers the indigenous reaction that allowed the Taliban survive. The Taliban, and other insurgent groups, first regrouped from 2001 to 2004. During this time the Taliban was involved in restructuring its leadership, and reorganizing itself after the US dethroned them from power. Following this, the Taliban reemerged in a second period of time when the Taliban gained ground by fighting against the US and the government between 2004 and 2009. This tactically failed, but the Taliban's shared identity with Afghans kept them alive. Secondly, during this time the US experienced several difficulties partnering with Afghans. As a result, from 2004-2009, Afghanistan's political power was undetermined.

The insurgency went through a final phase during the Surge. During 2009-2012, the Taliban's initiatives failed to tactically defeat the US, but it was enough to keep the Taliban surviving. This is the final element of stage 3. Despite any of the difficulties identified in stage 1 and stage 2, the Taliban's resiliency proved to be far stronger than the Iraq insurgency. This is key to their survival, and the eventual failure of the Surge.

Insurgency Pre-Surge

In 2003 and further until 2009, the consecutive years leading up to their confrontation with the Surge, the enemy-initiated attacks increased each year, going up 94 percent from the previous years (Chesser 2012). The Taliban's strategy was simple but proved to work. Local commanders exploited familiar cultural resources and insulated the Taliban organization from any possible social pressures to fall to a similar fate of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. AQI had to act rapidly in order to gain control of the territory and control of the Iraqi people. The Taliban mounted an armed insurgency based on an effective organization that was in place from the early 1990's. The Taliban's strategy did not choose between tribal appeal and religious appeal, rather they combined them from village to village, and valley to valley (Semple

2009). The Taliban did not have to rely on the brutal measures performed by Zarqawi in Iraq, because the Taliban's authority was already entrenched in some parts of the Afghan countryside. This was obviously not the case for the American effort. The US needed to deliver results to continue to justify its efforts.

Because of the history of Afghanistan's lack of central political authority, the Taliban acted as a local government and the Taliban "showed no signs of decline" (Woodward 2011: 348).⁵⁹ This is largely due to the Taliban's tenacity and brazen tactics. The once active movement was focused on consolidating itself for a comeback.

While regrouping the Taliban fought in "the south of the rural countryside, while performing random attacks on urban areas" (Hoh 2013). During their reemergence, "from 2002 through most of 2004, the Taliban operated in small groups in remote areas. However, in 2006, "the Taliban massed large company or battalion sized movements" (Cassidy 2012). They were able to do this because the Taliban was "uniting its rank and file", and operated with much more brazen efforts than in previous years (Cassidy 2012). As the Taliban went on the offensive from 2005 through 2006, the Taliban experienced successes in recruitment and their recruitment occurred in highly contested regions of the country, meaning, in 2006, they maintained support amongst locals across the south and east.

The Taliban's political successes were not always matched with operational or tactical successes. This was evident with their setback while fighting in Kandahar and Helmand from 2006-2009. During these years the Taliban massed in large numbers near population centres and launched frontal assaults on heavily fortified positions" (Kagan, Kagan et al. 2011). In September 2006, Coalition forces launched operation Medusa, which was an anti-Taliban

⁵⁹ Farrell's RUSI paper and the International Affairs article present a picture of the Taliban that is not being able to breakthrough and is also not being able to win. Their intention is to play for a draw until the US and allies leave. see Farrell, T. (2010). "Improving in war: military adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33(4): 567-594., Farrell, T. and A. Giustozzi (2013). "The Taliban at war: inside the Helmand insurgency, 2004–2012." *International Affairs* 89(4): 845-871.

initiative. During this seventeen-day operation, the Coalition was able to kill or capture dozens of active militants. While the Taliban insurgents were brave in fighting, “they are outmatched, outgunned, or otherwise tactically unable to compete” (Cassidy 2012, Giustozzi 2012: 105-109). Because of ISAF’s overwhelming tactical power, hundreds of Taliban left to move across borders into neighboring districts, as well as find safe haven in Pakistan. This was most evident by September 2006, when the Taliban were able to chase Afghan police from their stations and establish new governing authority in neighboring districts.

The Taliban’s ability to move and change their strategy indicated that ISAF was still unable to completely defeat a moving enemy, and ISAF’s inability to anticipate the insurgencies movements put everyday Afghans at risk. While the Taliban insurgency was moving from one district to another, and found safe havens in Pakistan, the US was unable to establish control over territory long enough to push the pockets of the Taliban. Despite the US military superiority, a former Taliban leader describes the political and strategic difficulties the US faced while the Taliban remains its mobility amongst the population stating, “it's impossible for the Taliban to lose while we can roam freely across the countryside” (Trofimov 2011).

Despite the Taliban’s political and strategic prowess, starting in 2006 they made a shift in tactical advances they moved to a third phase/period of operation. In this third period, they shifted to asymmetric warfare, this started at the end 2006 to and maintaining this to the end of the Surge (Cassidy 2012, Farrell and Giustozzi 2013). Due to the US overwhelming military advantages, the Taliban were taking heavy casualties (Shaffer 2012). Failing to control territory, the Taliban began to shift their tactics. “The Taliban moved to a sophistication of IEDs and suicide attacks that challenged the US in new ways” (Malkasian 2014). In 2006, there was an increase in attacks from, “suicide bombings and roadside attacks” (Malkasian 2014). This became even more evident on October 13, 2007. Al-Qaeda

in Iraq showed a video from their media wing, al-Sahab, and casted an interview with Mullah Mansoor Dadullah, the military commander in Helmand Province for the Taliban. The video was significant because it showed an increase in, “AQ presence in Afghanistan/Pakistan region (Shaffer 2012) In addition, more bomb makers and experienced fighters from Iraq were entering Pakistan and Afghanistan. By the end of 2009, Iraq showed signs of success with its Surge. However, Atwan argues that this success is partly due because some of the AQI fighters who received IED and bomb making training in Iraq were sent back to “Afghanistan and Pakistan to train anti-Kabul government forces” (Atwan 2013: 14). As AQI went to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Surge in Afghanistan was just getting started.

With the assistance from AQ, the Taliban began attacking convoys that came through Pakistan. David Kilcullen estimated that anti-government forces were 33,000 however, Al-Quds al Arabi estimates they were up to 100,000 (Kilcullen 2009). “Given that the Taliban were once 1,000,000, this seems reasonable” (Atwan 2013: 142). It is disputable whether the Taliban were ever as strong as Atwan claims, nonetheless, the resurgent Taliban insurgency required action.

The years of 2003-2009 were comprised of misconceived strategy, dysfunctional tactics, and no long-term political vision for success. When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, it diverted an incredible amount of its resources away from Afghanistan, and fighting the Taliban. The US spent the following six years trying to stabilize Iraq before strategically withdrawing. The diverted resources was not limited to armed units on the ground, Iraq pulled “every component of the national security state”, from intelligence analysts, satellite surveillance, diplomatic support, and overall manpower in the Pentagon (Shaffer 2012).

By 2005, much of the Taliban’s previous leaders and their hardened militants reappeared to form strong opposition to the Karzai regime. During those years, a “contemporaneous process of categorical political alienation and tribal isolation occurred

with the people from southern Afghanistan to the urban Kabul society” (Hoh 2013). This led to widespread disillusionment with the government and gave the Taliban leadership a broad recruitment base. Newly formed state institutions were predatory. They played on old revenges and did not unite the countryside. Indeed this divisive behavior made the Karzai regime ineffective in meeting basic needs (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 14) From 2004-2009, “US forces would go into a village, clear out the Taliban, then leave. A few weeks later, the Taliban would return and the status quo would return” (Kilcullen 2012). In addition, prior to the Surge, in 2008, the Taliban adopted perfected their art of roadside bombs (Baer 2012). These were used to disrupt logistical supply lines in and out of Afghanistan. Because Afghanistan was a landlocked country, all supplies came via the highway from Pakistan, or via air delivery. The Taliban attacked NATO supply lines with success, and as a result, for a short period of time, Pakistan closed its highways entering Afghanistan (Hoh 2013).

Insurgency During Surge

In 2009, the US escalated its military footprint. This escalation was anticipated by the Taliban. “As the US escalated its footprint in Iraq, the Taliban knew the US would follow suit in Afghanistan” (Hoh 2013). The Taliban anticipated the escalation but did not make significant changes in their approach to Afghanistan. “The Taliban knew that the US was on limited time, and they knew all they had to do was survive a few years during the escalation” (Shaffer 2012). The Taliban had learned from the changes they made from 2004-2006, and the plan was to maintain their transient positions, never giving the US an opportunity to target large insurgent positions. As a result, they mounted small scale attacks on US outposts. Furthermore, the insurgency maintained their roving court system, thus keeping political control over rural Afghans.

Throughout US occupation of Afghanistan, there were several insurgents captured and imprisoned. The US adopted a plan of Taliban reconciliation and reintegration. Through

this agenda, many former insurgents left the cause of the Taliban. Describing this program, Matthew Hoh stated

“The US spent 6 weeks working with these people, to reintegrate them back into Afghan society. These former insurgents went to classes, they learned what it meant to be a loyal Afghan, and a faithful muslim. As we released them back into the field, the Afghans only partially accepted these people back. In a Taliban reconciliation and reintegration program, some parts of Afghan society accepted the Taliban reconciliation, and others rejected them” (Hoh 2013).

Despite any attempt to suppress the Taliban, they were largely successful in achieving their political goals from 2009-2012. During 2009-2012, the Taliban used their courts to maintain political control, and they also used fear and intimidation forcing rural Afghans to work with them. This is most evident in the fighting season 2011. In this period, the Taliban adopted a method of systematic assassinations of police chiefs, government ministers, military officers, and Afghan soldiers. Their efforts were effective and brazen. On July 12, the Taliban was able to manipulate Ahmed Wali Karzai's security to abandon him, and they successfully executed President Karzai's brother. Between 2009 and 2012, the Taliban successfully executed 320 political leaders, 2,800 police, and over 1000 Afghan soldiers.

The Taliban also penetrated NATO assistance efforts closer to Kabul. According to the New York Times, from 2009-2011, the Taliban penetrated the Afghan army and placed imposters in the force. They did so to disrupt training, and intimidate new recruits. During 2009-2011 these imposters conducted 58 killings inside of Afghan military bases. As 2012 started the trend did not stop, there was 16 killings in the first part of the year. This problem became such a large threat, French President Sarkozy prepared the French training assistance to depart.

The Taliban was successful in avoiding the US, and they were successful in killing important figures who worked in the Afghan government. These actions continued throughout the Surge, and this meant that the Taliban could survive despite the Surge. The increased pressure on the Taliban and the changing leaders was too many difficulties for the

Surge to succeed. However, the Surge failed to unite Afghans against the Taliban. In November 2011, a poll found that 82% of the Afghan population, wanted political accomodation with the Taliban. Despite all the goodwill, bloodshed, and years of dedication, the US simply did not have the amount of resources, or the time to effectively prosecute the Taliban.

Summary of Stages 1 -3 and the Outcome of the Afghan Surge

This chapter discovers the variables that led to an unsuccessful Surge in Afghanistan. The case is made through the 3-stage model. Stage 1, the political history of Afghanistan, clearly identifies a historical tradition of complications to building a strong Afghanistan central political authority. This history is key to understanding why the Surge failed. This is because it plays an equal and contributing role as the other variables. Stage 1 sets the foundation to understand what the US did to further create difficulties in rebuilding Afghanistan. In summary, stage 1 identifies Afghanistan is a country rich with tribal ethnic complications, dysfunctional central political authority, and a tradition of expelling outside influences.

Stage 2 discovers what the US actions were prior to the Surge and during the Surge to produce the eventual outcome. Stage 2 starts with the BONN accords in 2001. BONN had an intial failure initial failure in rebuilding Afghanistan. This was largely because of the state centric approach that alienated the rural villages from the new Afghanistan government. BONN was a compounded problem because of the preexising historical issues found in stage 1. The decades of localized political rule, and these traditions were a stark contradiction to the goals of the BONN process. This is in part what prevented a strong new Afghan state from materializing.

Stage 2 proceeds, after BONN, to show the actions conducted by the US and NATO forces. This portion shows that prior to the Surge, the US experienced many complications

and thus took different approaches over the duration of its decade long involvement in Afghanistan. Prior to the Surge, the US failed to effectively resource the Afghanistan campaign, and also it failed to provide a coherent policy. This is because the Iraq war diverted most of US attention. As the Iraq war was winding down, the US could actually resource Afghanistan, negotiate with Kabul, and fight the insurgency.

The Afghanistan Surge did not necessarily involve separating warring parties against each other as occurred in Iraq. COIN envisioned by General McChrystal posed a far more taxing vision of peace building and state building involving incredible amounts of anthropological work and expertise trying to rebuild Afghanistan from Kabul and at the tribal level. McChrystal's plan attempted to get the tribal differences within the Pashtun people aligned so they would side with the Karzai regime. McChrystal's plan was engineered to bridge the rural Pashtun's toward Kabul, and then address the remaining disputes across Afghanistan. In comparison, US strategy in Iraq worked within the major social divisions to encourage Iraqis to police themselves. This option was made possible by the presence of AQI, and also by Sadr's civil war with other Shiite in the new Iraqi government.

In Afghanistan, the US was working against locals by attempting to create a national identity that was loyal to the central state. This is a key point of contrast to Iraq. Tribal conflict is one of the factors that fuelled the insurgency, but the tribal conflict was a component that prevented Kabul from winning the political support and general trust in the rural south and east of Afghanistan. Though tribal structures have eroded since the 1970's, they remain sufficiently resilient to prevent efforts to centralize power in Kabul.

In addition, stage 2 shows that while in theatre, US forces were on a sprint attempting to do as much as possible while deployed. This rapid approach was aimed to, "show results for their individual commanders and pass it up the chain of command when things were working" (Hoh 2013). The most immediate results the Afghanistan Surge shows is the

amount of enemy killed, and the territory the US controlled. Despite these tactical advances, the Surge failed to show an ability to suppress most of the anti-governmental forces.

Furthermore, stage 2 shows that the US succeeded in the tactical realm, but the real problem was the US's inability to unite the ISAF mission with Kabul to form legitimate governance, prevented the breakage of the long-standing tribal disputes in the Afghan countryside. This was most obvious in the early years of US occupation, from 2001-2005. In these years the rural population was prevented from uniting with the Afghan state because of predatory behaviour from Afghan government officials. This trend continued later on, as COIN was implemented. During the Surge, the US could defeat the Taliban militarily, but it could not force the trust from rural Pashtuns to the Kabul government.

In summary, stage 2 shows that US actions in Afghanistan assisted in preventing a favourable outcome, though it was not the only reason. First, the pre-existing conditions in Afghanistan created a state with extraordinary difficulties for establishing a central government. The pre-existing history set Afghan countryside as an independent society. In the end, this made it difficult for the BONN agreement to succeed. Once BONN was established the US proved unable to align the interests of local power brokers and the inability to align the interests of locals and the government.

Stage 2 also showed that in 2009, the COIN policy envisioned and planned by General McChrystal was composed of challenges that were also hidden. First, COIN was envisioned to enforce security by escalating troops into Taliban controlled areas. This required US troops, but it also required the increasing the ANSF to take over at the proposed deadlines of the US withdrawal. The Afghan army never became a reliable asset to assist the Surge.

During the Surge years (2009-2012), it was extraordinarily difficult for the US to train the Afghan Army and also to keep their logistics hub available. Specifically with the

manpower shortages and the unreliability of the ANA, the US never had a viable ally as in the *Sahwah* partner of Iraq. In analysing this situation, Cael Weston asked, “how can the overall functions of the government work, if the basic services cannot be provided to focal point of the US plan, protecting the people?” (Weston 2014). The fact is, the US military found it much easier to train infantry and police than the people needed to sustain that army and police force.

The US attempted to build trust between the rural Afghan villagers to the government in Kabul. However, the extent to which this occurred was not nearly as noticeable as the Iraq Surge. The Afghan government possessed an insufficient ability to align interests amongst differing armed groups, the government, and rural independent farming communities. Karzai’s inability to fully support US efforts created even more complications.

Karzai’s inability to fully support the US showed there was no reason to trust the Afghan government. As a result, the rural Afghan villager never rejected the Taliban in any meaningful way. The conclusion of this is that the US never captured a T.E. Lawrence type of domestic insurgent ally. Furthermore, the predatory governing practices from Kabul posed an insurmountable problem for the Afghan state. Ambassador Eikenberry identified this challenge stating,

“Karzai disagreed intellectually, politically, and viscerally with the key pillars of the COIN campaign. He also increasingly used the United States as a convenient scapegoat for his administration’s massive shortcomings in accountability and performance. Ultimately, however, a COIN approach is predicated on the general alignment of the foreign and host nations’ overarching political and military strategies, and this was simply not the case in Afghanistan” (Eikenberry 2013).

Stage 3 discovers what contribution occurred from the Taliban insurgency. This section showed that despite the military advantage by the US, the Taliban were brazen and maintained the ability to fight. Throughout the occupation of Afghanistan, the insurgency

adopted and changed from 2001-2004. During this time the Taliban was involved in restructuring its leadership, and reorganizing itself after the US dethroned them from power.

The Taliban gained ground by fighting against the US and the government between 2004 and 2009. This attempt tactically failed, but the Taliban's shared identity with Afghans kept them alive. Secondly, during this time the US experienced several difficulties partnering with Afghans. As a result, from 2004-2009 the Taliban re-emerged as a capable and reinvigorated force. In this period, the Taliban suffered several casualties, but it was not enough to prevent them from regaining their political legitimacy across the countryside. Finally, stage 3 discovers the period of the Surge, 2009-2012. During this time, the insurgency maintained political legitimacy across Afghanistan. Despite the increased US presence, the Taliban maintained their mobile courts. Furthermore, they conducted hidden attacks against the Surge forces. Additionally, the Taliban maintained the ability to intimidate the Afghan army by penetrating the recruitment process and perform surprise killings. Lastly, the Taliban maintained its political favourability by killing corrupt Afghan leaders, and acting independent from the government in Kabul.

Conclusions:

This case study discovered why the Afghan Surge ultimately did not achieve the same results as the Iraq Surge. Indeed, one large takeaway from this case study is that the insurgency is only one element that the COIN forces can confront, and if a COIN forces alienate people from the government, or the government does not cooperate with the COIN forces, the insurgency can remain a viable alternative for the average citizen. In the case of Afghanistan, this proved to be true. The Karzai government never fully gained the trust of rural Afghans.

In order for the Surge to be fully effective in Afghanistan, it required a government with popular legitimacy in Kabul. During the Surge, the US actions, coupled with the

massive corruption in Kabul, prevented political breakthroughs. Moreover, the willingness of the Afghan villagers to side with the Taliban insurgency made large parts of Afghanistan untenable for political control for the Afghan government.

Comparing Two Broken Bailouts and Understanding the Different Outcomes:

Comparing how the Surge temporarily succeeded, in Iraq from 2006-2009, and ultimately failed to do the same in Afghanistan from 2009-2012

*“Lord, what fools these mortals be!”
Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

The data presented in the background chapters and the case studies provides a series of crossing themes and points of comparisons that need to be examined to conclude the argument in this thesis. This chapter will proceed analyzing the comparative components previously outlined in chapter 2. In review, this thesis compares, the background in US policy and plans and the 3-stages within the two cases studies.

Research Question

Why did the Surge strategies in Iraq (2006-2009), and Afghanistan (2009-2013) achieve different outcomes?

Solving the Puzzle

In order to answer this question, this thesis argues that 3-stages link together and performs a synergistic mechanism that enabled temporary successes in Iraq that was not experienced in Afghanistan and the 3-stages are:

- 1.) The political history of each case creates two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government. This is best understood through the social divisions, and local power disputes the preexisted before the Surge occurs.
- 2.) The second stage is US actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and during the Surge.
- 3.) The third state is the reaction to US intervention by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ The research focuses on these three main mechanisms because the data gathered during fieldwork directed the research focus to these components. This is for many reasons, but more thoroughly explained in the literature review and methodology portions.

In review, this thesis argues that the Surges achieved different outcomes because of the divergences from the variables placed inside a 3-staged transitive model. This chapter will proceed by first looking at the background chapters for each of the case studies. The background to the case studies compares portions in US policy that led to both of the Surges. It also identifies some failures in US policy leading up to both Surges. The continuities and discontinuities within these provide this thesis contextual element in analyzing the differing outcomes in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Following the background comparisons, this chapter will follow through the 3-stage model of the case studies. These sections will cover a point-by-point comparison between the case studies.

In review, stage 1 is the historical background of each case. In this portion, the comparison will proceed in a point-by-point comparison of the necessary similarities and differences between the two cases that make this portion of the argument. By performing the comparisons of stage 1, the preexisting historical factors are identified that make difference in the outcomes of the Surges.

Following the comparisons of stage 1, this chapter will proceed to analyze stage 2. Stage 2, is US actions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge. This is important to compare because US actions illustrate US policy as it is performed in theatre. Furthermore, this is important because the US actions both helped and hurt the outcomes of the Surges.

Lastly, this chapter will analyze and compare stage 3. Stage 3 illustrates how Afghans and Iraqis responded to US actions prior, and during the Surge. How Iraqis and Afghans responded to US actions also affects the outcome of either Surge.

The intersection of these 3-stages provides an overall conclusion to the research question. This thesis argues that the Surges achieved different outcomes because these 3-stages linked together as a synergistic mechanism. The 3-stages link together and enabled

temporary success in Iraq and lack of similar interaction accounts for the failure of success in the Afghanistan Surge.

Background Comparisons

The developments of the Surges illustrate an adaptation in US policy while in the midst of the GWOT. In both cases, a series of events were instrumental in leading the charge to change US policy. As Chapter 4 identified, the 9/11 attacks required a swift and speedy response. The immediate response to the 9/11 attacks was the GWOT.

Starting in 2001, US policy directly affected the outcomes in the early parts of the GWOT in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The 2001 *QDR* and the 2002 NSS were the initial strategic and policy adaptations. As chapter 4 highlights, the restructuring of the military occurred with the 2001 *QDR*. Following the *QDR*, the US rapidly changed its strategy as it followed the very aggressive NSS of 2002. Both of these set the US forward with interventions, first to Afghanistan, and then later in 2003 into Iraq. As both wars were well underway some significant problems and failures emerged in both theatres. The problems began as the US pushed for rapid military success without a plan to stabilize the country in the post invasion years.

The lack of planning created disputes within the NSC. This was most evident by the lack of cooperation by SECDEF Donald Rumsfeld, as well as the depleted influence of the State Department in the decision-making at the NSC. Throughout their time at the NSC, Lawrence Wilkerson and Richard Armitage experienced a diminutive status as being apart of the State Department. The State Dept. was not directed to plan or conduct post conflict reconstruction plans, or phase 4 civil-military operations.

The Bush administration mismanagement of the NSC was not isolated to the State Dept. There was extensive infighting within the DoD. This affected Iraq and Afghanistan negatively. One key example in Iraq is the process of deBaathification. This occurred

because the NSC did not have oversight over Paul Bremmer’s decision making. A different example in the Afghanistan case is the appointment of former warlords as political leaders.

Another example where the Bush administration did not leverage proper oversight is in the case of SECDEF Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld was put in charge of the GWOT, and he avoided the discussion of insurgencies and non-state groups across the Joint Chiefs and at lower levels of the DoD. This prevented his subordinates in developing a coherent long-term plan to stop Iraq from hemorrhaging with violence from insurgent groups. In addition, Rumsfeld’s control allowed the appointment of warlords in Afghanistan and it prevented many Afghans from supporting the new government. Moreover, in Washington, after the invasions, there were policy recommendation to change course in Iraq and Afghanistan. With proper oversight any one of the suggestions could have altered the course of both cases, but Rumsfeld chose ignore these recommendations. In review, chapter 4 and 6 identifies the problems in detail, however the table below identifies the problems that emerged in US policy for both cases.

Dates	Policy Prior to Surge	Iraq	Afghanistan
2001-2006	Balanced NSC Oversight for Post-Conflict reconstructions	No	No
2001-2006	Rumsfeld SECDEF	Yes	Yes
2001-2006	Focus on rapid success	Yes	Yes
2001-2006	Long term strategy identified and effectively implemented after the Invasion	No	No

Chapter 4 indicated that the GWOT failed as a strategy and this was most evident by early 2006. In 2006, Iraq was peaking in violence; the violence was so brutal that the US required a change in policy, or make an exit. The 2006 *QDR* assisted in overhauling the DoD, and indirectly guided US policy to redirect its plans in Iraq. The much-needed strategic change occurred just in time, because the mismanagement of both conflicts.

Indeed, the US needed a new overhauled approach to its tactical and operational plans in stabilizing the ongoing violence. Due to the preexisting conditions in each case (stage 1), and the top-level mismanagement of both cases from the DoD there was growing insurgencies in both theatres.

Chapter 4 discusses how a series of political changes occurred in Washington. Furthermore, chapter 4 has identified that the 2006 *QDR* dramatically changed the focus of military commanders to focusing on less conventional means of battle and made it more prepared to engage the insurgencies. This affected both campaigns as the Surges were designed because of *QDR*. Furthermore, the *QDR* was shadowed by the writing and implementation of the US Army and Marine Corps manual, FM3-24. This was also coupled with leadership changes in Iraq, and at the head of the DoD.

In 2006, Rumsfeld was fired and replaced by SECDEF Gates, and General Casey was fired and replaced by General Petraeus and Petraeus implemented the Surge in theatre by using FM3-24.

Chapter 4 identifies that the US was focused on Iraq from 2006-2009, and Afghanistan was put into a “strategic black hole” as a result Afghanistan needed readdressing (Ricks 2012). Following the Iraq Surge, newly elected President Obama planned a Surge for Afghanistan during 2009.

Chapter 6 is the other background chapter that shows what occurred in Washington once Barack Obama took over the office of the President. Chapter 6 picks up just as the Iraq Surge was ending and looks at the new challenges occurring for the Obama administration. As Obama enters office, Afghanistan was on the edge of collapse. The Iraq campaign pulled the majority of US resources and as a result Afghanistan was left aside. The US could not manage both conflicts effectively, and in 2009, while Iraq stabilized, Afghanistan

increasingly destabilized. Newly elected President Obama needed to fix Afghanistan, and in 2009 he opted for an Afghanistan Surge as Bush adopted a Surge in Iraq.

In Washington, the newly elected Obama administration was put into a difficult decision making position about the Afghanistan Surge. This was because there was so much confidence in the DoD about the success of the Iraq Surge, but also because Afghanistan had turned into a horrendous debacle since 2002. Decidedly, the Obama administration opted for an Iraq style Surge with his new general. “McChrystal implemented the Surge that he learned in Iraq, and also was guided by FM3-24” (Nagl 2012). Secondly, “the DoD gained some political momentum, and consensus of trust amongst policy makers because of the Iraq Surge” (Shaffer 2012). As Obama came into office, Secretary Gates fired the commanding General in Afghanistan, McKiernan. General McChrystal then replaced McKiernan.

The table below displays the set of circumstances that are important in the development of both Surges.

Key Similar and Dissimilar Components Prior to Surge in Iraq and Afghanistan			
Year	Historical Development	Iraq	Afghanistan
2001	Attack	9/11	9/11
2001-2002	First Responsive Policy Initiatives	2001 QDR, 2002 NSS	2001 QDR, 2002 NSS
2002-2006 (Iraq) 2002-2009 (Afghanistan)	No Coherent Strategy	Sunni/Shiite Civil War <i>2002-2006 (Iraq)</i>	Taliban Making Gains 2002-2009 (Afghanistan)
2006	Strategy Change and Readjusting of Military Organization	2006 QDR	2006 QDR
2006	Following up with Adapted Military Doctrine	FM3-24	FM3-24
2006	Argument for implementation of a Surge	Shock and Awe Failures, Rising Violence in Iraq	COIN Success in Iraq, and the Reduction of Violence
2006	Leadership Changes to Bring in the Surge	Firing of SECDEF Rumsfeld and General Casey	--
2009	Leadership Changes to Bring in the Surge	--	Firing of General Mckiernan

Lessons and Conclusions from Background Comparisons (Chapt 4 & 6)

The background chapter for Iraq and Afghanistan Surges demonstrate a series of political mistakes and lessons to be learned. The background comparison also informs some background considerations for the diverging outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The first lesson comes in the planning and implementation of an incoherent original strategy, in the GWOT. The GWOT led to a variety of problems in both theatres. If the US had thoroughly thought through its strategy after 9/11, the entire debate surrounding the Surges may never have occurred. First thing to identify, the Afghanistan war might have been successful at the outset if the US had not been distracted by the Iraq war. However, because of the Iraq war, the US was split between two extensive conflicts and it failed to meet the goals of the GWOT.

Because of the failures of the GWOT, a large overhaul in leadership and organizational structures was employed in Washington to solve this dilemma. This started to take place in 2005, as Jim Thomas and other influential figures in Washington grew to understand the GWOT was not working. This was then succeeded by the 2006 *QDR*, and the overhaul of the DoD, beginning with the firing of SECDEF Donald Rumsfeld. Following the changes in Washington, there was a strategic change with US actions on the field in late 2006 starting with the Iraq Surge. The Iraq Surge occurred just three years after the invasion compared to the Afghanistan Surge, which occurred seven years after the initial invasion. This gap in time allowed Afghanistan's domestic political and security problems to become far more complicated.

Secondly, as the Bush administration terminated Rumsfeld's tenure as the head of the DoD, some social and professional unity reemerged between the DoD, Department of State, and other principals within NSC. Wilkerson recalls this stating, "because of Rumsfeld's firing, the infighting and dissention between DoD and the State Department subsided"

(Wilkerson 2012). The unity amongst policy makers, and overhaul of US tactics allowed the Bush administration to slowly regain control in Iraq, and ultimately it provided the Bush administration enough stability in Iraq to increasingly downgrade US operations.

In comparison to chapter 4, the background chapter for Afghanistan (chapter 6) shows a breakdown inside the NSC from the outset. This was mostly seen in the early disputes at the NSC. This was obvious between Vice President Biden, the DoD, senior military officers, and President Obama's desire to avoid another Vietnam type situation. Furthermore, the infighting between Obama and General McChrystal, in the middle of the Afghan Surge also complicated the Surge. The departure/firing of General McChrystal is something that never occurred during the Iraq Surge. As a political lesson, Tom Ricks stated,

“Consistency, and unity amongst the senior commanders in Iraq helped the Surge succeed. Starting at the top of the NSC, and then stemming across to the field with Petraeus to Ryan Crocker, and all the way down to the 1st Lieutenants, the US leadership demonstrated unity in policy and actions. When the decision to Surge in Afghanistan was made, there was far too much disunity at the top, and it eventually will affect the ground” (Ricks 2012).

Chapters 4 and 6, provide a final comparison/lesson. In every interview conducted for this study, the respondents overwhelmingly reflected on the history of the Vietnam war, and they referenced it to the Iraq and Afghanistan cases. This referencing of Vietnam, indicates what Andrew Bacevich noted as “the Vietnam Syndrome” was still in the minds of many. Some American leaders argued that the Surge worked, and it could work again. If the Surge worked and fixed the initial failures from Iraq war, then many could forget about the foolish decision to invade, and many governmental leaders could forget the dysfunction within the NSC prior to Rumsfelds firing. Moreover, as David Ucko demonstrates, the revolution in military affairs, that occurred starting in 2006, was an institutional attempt to avoid the same kind of Vietnam syndrome that affected the Department of Defense after Vietnam (Ucko 2009).

The lessons from chapter 4 contrast with chapter 6. During the Obama administrations tenure, in 2009 the American military leadership was also focused on preserving their legacy and the success of the Iraq Surge. The elements of American success during the Surge were hyperbolized by political figures such as John McCain. Though the Iraq Surge achieved some success, failing to consider the policies before it and the individuals involved, the history can be adulterated and future political decision making can conveniently forget the problems that predate the temporary successes in Iraq. Secondly, failing to consider the impact of the Iraq War can equally lead to an adulterated reading of the outcome of the Afghan Surge. The Afghan Surge may have never been necessary, if the Iraq war never occurred.

Comparing the Stages and Understanding the 3-stage Model

Stage 1: Key Comparisons between the similar and different historical circumstances surrounding the Iraq and Afghanistan cases

The political history of each case does not in itself exclusively describe the outcome of each Surge, but as explained in the methodology chapter, stage 1 along with stages 2 and 3, equally contributes to the Surge outcomes. The development of the modern Iraq and Afghanistan creates an interesting historical comparison. Both cases are filled with a societal makeup that is rich in ethnic, religious, political, and sectarian divisions. In both cases, these different societal divisions inform how political life is experienced, and how the preexisting factors from the two cases equally contribute to the diverging Surge outcomes.

Stage 1 of each chapter identifies, the size and scope of these differences. The divisions found in the political history between Iraq and Afghanistan assist in explaining how the Iraqis and Afghans historically respond to the central political authorities. Afghanistan's history with troubled centralized political power helps inform some of the rejection from Afghans during the Surge. Equally, Iraqis relationship with Baghdad is similarly explained this way. Understanding the divergences in ethnic, social, and political history, allows stage 1

to set the stage to understand what the US was negotiating during stage 2, and it helps inform some of the indigenous reactions during stage 3.

Below are the tables of sectarian divisions that are in stage 1 of both case studies.

Iraq's social divisions are the first table, and Afghanistan is in the second.

Category A	Category B	Nature of Social Division	Scope and Size of Primary Dispute
Arab Secular vs.	Arab Religious	Preferences over Social Norms	Local/Regional Global
Sunni vs.	Shiite	Theological and Political Divisions	Local/Regional /Global
Kurdish vs.	Arab	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Persian vs.	Arab	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Minority Religious Group vs.	Islamic Majority	Religious/Theological Division	Local/Regional /Global
Minority Ethnic Group	Arab/Kurdish Majority	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Internal Shiite Power vs.	External Regional Shiite Allegiance	Political Party Divisions	Local/Regional
Internal Sunni groups vs.	External Salafi/Wahabism	Political Party Divisions	Local/Regional

Category A	Category B	Nature of Social Division	Scope and Size of Primary Dispute
Afghan National Identity	Afghan Tribal Identity	Division over Local/National Political Leadership and Identity	Local/Regional
Afghan Urban Elite vs.	Afghan Rural	Preferences over Social Norms and Religious Freedoms	Local/Regional/
Sunni vs.	Shiite minorities	Theological and Political Divisions	Local/Regional /Global
Hazara vs.	Pashtun	Ethnic	Local/Regional
Pashtun	Tajik	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional
Uzbek vs.	Tajik	Ethnic Division	Local/Regional/
Hazara vs.	Tajik	Ethnic	Local/Regional
Regional Pashtun	Regional Uzbek/Tajik	Political Ethnic Party Divisions	Local/Regional
Deobandi vs.	External Salfi/Wahabism	Theological Divisions	Local/Regional

Afghanistan's history shows an agrarian society with strong tribal and ethnic divisions that cause a variety of rural uprisings. In addition, throughout Afghanistan's history, the Afghan state demonstrates a more limited capacity than many other modern states. The legacy of dysfunctional political authority, and the legacy of armed rural uprisings make it a challenging case for the US to legitimize a new central government in the aftermath of the Taliban rule. Secondly, the lack of any national source of revenue such as oil further signifies a stark difference between the cases. Iraq had a legacy of oil exports that provide it a significant resource to build from, and this is absent in the Afghanistan case.

Complicating matters, the porous border with neighboring Pakistan makes Afghanistan an even more challenging case. Pakistan's inability to govern its tribal areas emboldens the likelihood of non-state groups to use as safe havens. This was most obvious during the 1990's civil war that destabilized the country even more. This splintering brought forth the Deobandi movement known as the Taliban that controlled the country until the US occupation in early 2001.

In opposition to Afghanistan's lack of development, Iraq was much more modern state that had an extensive urban population, with a strong central political governing authority. As Gareth Stansfield documented, Iraq's history through the Hashemite Monarchy (1920-1958), the Revolutions, Republic, and Renaissance (1958-1968), the Baathist reign (1968-1988) and the Pariah State era (1989-2003), indicate that Iraq's central government, though corrupt, was strong enough to survive. This is partly because of its oil resources, and partly because of the history of political power in the state. In opposition, as Thomas Barfield identified, that though segments of Afghanistan's political leaders attempted to gain central governing power, most of these attempts was unsuccessful. These preexisting factors found in stage 1 at least set up Iraq to be more manageable during the Surge. The goals of the Afghanistan Surge are going against the history of the state, and the Iraq Surge was helping to reestablish semblances of Iraq's political history.

Stage 1 Comparison and Conclusions:

The different political legacies of each case create a completely different context for both of the Surges. This different context plays a part in the outcomes of both Surges. Principally, the dichotomies of centralized political authority in Iraq and the decentralized nature of political power in Afghanistan provide the most evident difficulties that presented itself to the US. While both Surges were underway, the US needed to solidify the central governments within both cases.

The previous central government in Iraq found a way to balance the sectarian groups and keep control of society. When this central power disappeared in 2003, armed sectarian groups formed and waged war on each other. Later, as the Surge forces entered in 2006, the Surge was able to regain some of this preexisting political power by dividing warring parties, and partner with some of Iraq's sectarian groups to route out destructive insurgent groups such as AQI.

Stage 1 has a second comparison/conclusion, which in part contributes to the success of the Iraq Surge. Iraq was much more modernized country than Afghanistan. Iraq had oil as a resource, and as a result it maintained some developed roadways, and a general system of education for elite groups of its citizens. Though this infrastructure would not be considered sophisticated by western standards, compared to the extreme rural elements of Afghanistan, Iraq is far more developed. The rural nature of Afghanistan, and the diverse population created a complex system of rural based villages that the state was never able to universally access, regulate, or educate.

A third comparison/conclusion from stage 1 is from the observation of Iraq's independent cross border wars, and its ability suppressed rural uprisings in the 1990s. Though this detail is often acknowledged, rarely are these details considered as a component for the success in the Surge. In the 20th century, Iraq waged two independent cross border wars, one in Iran and another in Kuwait. Despite stalemating or losing both wars, Iraq never lost complete control of itself. This is a further indication of Iraq's ability to be a strong independent state. In the case of Afghanistan, it spent much of the 20th century dealing with a lack of central political authority as well as being under constant pressure from insurgent groups, and foreign interventions. In 1979, it came under the political authority of the Soviet Union. These two dichotomies demonstrate that Iraq shows a history of statehood, and the opposite is the case in Afghanistan.

A fourth comparison/conclusion from stage 1 is that both countries had diverse population bases that shared ethnic or religious ties with neighboring states. In Iraq, the Shiite in Iraq shared Iranian religious ties. Furthermore, the Sunni in Iraq shared family, ethnic, and religious ties with neighboring Syria and Saudi Arabian. In addition, politically, the Baathists shared political ties with Syrian Baathists.

In Afghanistan, the Pashtuns were split, between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtun tribal division proved to be far more extensive problem than the social cleavages in Iraq. As the Pashtuns were split between the two countries, the US could never unite them behind a government in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the split in ethnic communities further prevented Pakistan from fully cooperating with the US.

The social cleavages in Iraq, plus the structure and political history provided the new Iraqi government enough variables to be effective while partnered with the US. In contrast, Afghanistan's social cleavages, its political history, and the dysfunctional national system created a context for the US to encounter far more extensive challenges that help explain the Afghanistan Surge complications.

Stage 2: Comparisons from US Actions Prior and During the Surges

During 2001/2002, the US invaded Afghanistan, and then in 2003 it did the same in Iraq. Both wars achieved immediate results. Both invasions succeeded in dethroning the reigning political power.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban's power fell rapidly, and they mostly fled to the countryside, Pakistan's tribal areas, and many simply went back to their countryside homes and quit the Taliban political movement. In Iraq, the loyalists of the Baath party resisted for a short time and then waited to regain momentum against the US. Most of the Baathists politically retrenched into Al-Anbar province, or other Sunni strongholds in Baghdad.

Following the initial tactical successes, the US failed to extend those successes into achieving longer-term state stabilization. This was because of failures in US policy and how that policy was enacted on the ground. The US made a series of mistakes following their immediate dethroning of the Taliban and the Baathists. Firstly, in Afghanistan, after the 2001 BONN accord, the US began a second war in Iraq. The mistakes in the immediate years were

legion, and had the US not invaded Iraq, its possible that Afghanistan might have been able to avoid its descent into chaos.

After BONN, the warlords who were appointed to new government positions, continued to push Afghans away from supporting the government. This largely occurred because they did not allow former Taliban leaders to simply quit and return to their homes. The new government took revenge against the former Taliban leaders and forced them to regroup and retaliate.

In Iraq, deBaathification proved to be a tragic failure in providing long-term stability. Bremmer's decision to deBaathify Iraq made thousands of young Iraqis unemployed. The move made many of these people enemies of state. Afterwards, as the US attempted to rebuild Iraqi governing bodies, but it failed to create a balanced equal democracy. This was most obvious when the Sunnis abandoned the elections in 2005. When this occurred, it gave the imbalanced Shiite government full reign to torment and target Sunnis, which provided them the opportunity for revenge from the years of brutal dictatorships. DeBaathification also created political space for external actors such as AQI to enter Iraq. Although AQI later turned out to be a nefarious actor who nearly destroyed the country, they found a home in Iraq because of the US invasion, and dethroning of the Baathists.

In both cases, the immediate successes of the invasions were short lived, and due to political and strategic mistakes/miscalculations both cases quickly deteriorated. In Iraq, the growing civil war was brewing from 2004-2007, and in Afghanistan from 2003-2008 the Taliban was regaining momentum. As a result, in 2007 Iraq, and 2009 Afghanistan, a Surge strategy was engineered to solve the political, strategic, and tactical failures from the invasions.

By the time of the Iraq Surge in 2007, COIN emerges as the main point of continuity throughout the DoD, Department of State, and the NSC that was so pervasive, it dominated

every element of national power operating in Iraq in 2007. Then again following suit in Afghanistan from 2009. Indeed, these pervasive policy initiatives impacted the outcomes of both Surges. In each case, six agendas dominated US policy. The Surge policy was an effort to get the local forces into the lead, as well as getting locals to take over civilian law enforcement, judicial systems, banking, and basic services. This was evident in both cases as US troops pulled back from many leading roles for example, assisting and mentoring attempts by the Military Transition Teams, and through the civilian led roles in the Provincial Reconstructions Teams. The US had an additional agenda to kill the hostile actors operating within each space. This is most effectively seen through the general direct actions taken by SOF within each command. The final components of continuity between each case are the attempt to make political breakthrough between the governing bodies and the insurgencies. The final Surge strategies from both cases are listed below:

US policy agendas for Iraq in 2007

- 1.) Let the Iraqis into the lead
- 2.) Assist in protecting the population
- 3.) Kill or capture foreign extremists
- 4.) Allow for political process
- 5.) Diversify political and economic efforts
- 6.) Find a regional strategy

US policy agendas for Afghanistan in 2011

- 1.) Let the Afghans into the lead
- 2.) Assist in protecting the population
- 3.) Kill or capture foreign extremists
- 4.) Allow for political process
- 5.) Diversify political and economic efforts
- 6.) Find a regional strategy

Stage 2 Comparison and Conclusions:

Once the Surges began, the US applied some different and similar techniques. This in part explains the diverging outcomes of both Surges. First the similarities between the two started with the placement of US troops. As the case studies demonstrated, in both Surge cases the majority of Surge troops were sent to Baghdad, and then in Afghanistan they were sent to Marjah. This had a profound impact on the flexibilities of the COIN efforts. In Iraq,

the Shiite dominated government needed a ceasefire between its militias and the Sunnis in order to remove the political tensions. However, coalescing the diversity of insurgent groups was beyond the capabilities of the government because of sectarian divisions that plagued the country. By first focusing in Baghdad the US acted as an immobilizer to sectarian violence. As Steve Biddle pointed out, this proved to be immensely effective because the majority of the fighting occurred in the cities (Biddle 2012). However, when this same technique was applied in Marjah, the insurgencies were able to thrive in villages in other parts of Afghanistan, which is where they gained political momentum.

Secondly, the US made an effort to rapidly train the indigenous army and police forces in both cases. This was done so that the security leadership could be passed on to the local Iraqi and Afghan forces. However, in Afghanistan neither the police, nor the Afghan army proved to be equally effective. They were more difficult to train, and they did not want to be solely responsible for servicing the security of Afghanistan. The quality, and quantity of Afghan forces was not able to effectively negotiate the Taliban insurgency. In the case of Iraq, the new Iraqi forces cooperated with the new Iraqi government. Iraq also benefited from the *Sahwa*, a rural Sunni movement that independently protected its people.

The *Sahwa*, and other the Sunni insurgents in Iraq had the same goal as the US, and it was rejecting AQI/ISI and take control of their own security. The rural Sunni tribes, specifically in Anbar, benefitted from a history of political independence starting in 1993 because the Baghdad government wanted to keep control during its own political crisis. In contrast, the rural Afghan tribal leaders always acted independent from many government actions, and they never fully supported government in Kabul, nor did they universally support the Taliban insurgency. However, in order for the US to achieve such mutual interests the US needed to somehow capitalize on a partnership with Afghans.

In Iraq, one of the reasons the US was able to manipulate the Sunni Sheiks in Anbar was because of CERP. When General Petraeus paid off the Sheiks at a rate of 30 million dollars a month, it made a prodigious impact. In Afghanistan, no single US commander could pay off any tribal leaders and develop the same kind of unified regional force that joined against the Taliban.

Thirdly, the Iraq Surge benefitted from leadership that was generally static without major changes. Some battalions and regiments may have changed leaders, but at the principle level in Washington down to the highest military command in Baghdad, the overall structure was constant. General Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker were able to cooperate and build on small successes together. In Afghanistan, a major shift occurred with the controversial firing of ISAF commander Stanley McChrystal. This also affected the behaviour of troops on the ground. As the case study demonstrated the shift in leadership caused an institutional decision to principally focus on killing the enemy rather than protecting the citizens, and focus more on the insurgency.

The fourth and final point, is that the Surge in Iraq benefitted from General Petraeus ability to monopolize and manage his forces. As Andrew Exum argued, “in Iraq, General Petraeus was able to manage his forces by using his deputy, General Odierno. Odierno forced Petraeus mission down the chain of command into the one star Generals, and the Battalion commanders, and so on, all the way to the line companys” (Exum 2010). In Afghanistan, as McChrystal came in, the disputes between his leadership and the Marine Corp made it difficult to manage the war at the national level. When he was fired, Petraeus entered, and still there was not the same unity amongst the senior military commanders as in Iraq. The combination of these points made US efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan disjointed. These differences prevented the Surge forces in both cases from acting in a similar way. Stages 1

and 2 demonstrate that the preexisting historical circumstances in each case created their own sorts of challenges. In the both cases, these components helped and hurt US efforts.

The chart below demonstrates stages one and two in a point-by-point comparison.

Points of Positive Impact on the Surge Case Studies

Time/Setting	Data Point	Iraq	Afghanistan	Positive Impact on Success of Surge
Prior to Surge	Developed state before US intervention	Yes	No	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge	Urban Social Base	Yes	No	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge	Rural Social Base	Smaller	Large	Iraq No Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Regional factionalism	Yes but was more constant compared to that of Afghanistan	Dynamically changing from 1979-2012	Iraq No Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge	Rapid insurgency development	Yes	No	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge	Slow insurgency development	No	Yes	Iraq No Afghanistan No
Throughout Surge	Negotiating with opposition groups	No	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Major effort early on for reconstruction	No	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan Yes
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Focus on training local partners	Yes	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
During Surge	Changing military leaders throughout the surge	No	Yes	Iraq No Afghanistan Yes
Prior to Surge	Local Indigenous elected leaders	Yes	No	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Appointed leaders	Limited	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Continue Throughout Surge	US policy decisions top down	Yes	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Continue Throughout Surge	Bottom up policy influence	Weak but stronger than in Afghanistan	Weak	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
	US approach	COIN	COIN	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Throughout Surge	Maoist Insurgency	No	No	Iraq No Afghanistan No
Throughout Surge	Post-Maoist insurgency	Yes	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Throughout Surge	Irregular and Conventional Warfare	Yes	Yes	Iraq Yes Afghanistan No
Throughout the Surge, and after the Surge	Host Government Dependent on US for Survival	No	Yes	Iraq No Afghanistan Yes

Table 12: Comparative points from stage 1 and stage 2 between the case studies

Stage 3: Iraqi and Afghan reactions to US prior to the Surge and then during the Surge

Stage 3 of the case studies shows the Iraqi and Afghan reactions prior and during the Surges. The reactions prior and during the Surge make an equal contribution to the Surges outcomes, as does stage 1 and stage 2.

The case studies indicate that the dynamics inside the Iraq and Afghanistan cases constantly changed. This meant that the political dynamics of the fighting also changed. In Iraq, this was most evident prior to the Surge, after the 2005 elections, when the Sunnis and AQI became strongly linked. Also this was evident in Iraq during 2008, as the Sadrists turned against the government and other Shiite groups. Similarly Afghanistan experienced the changing tactics of the Taliban from 2002-2009. The following portions will compare these.

Iraqi Reactions Prior to the Surge:

The Iraq case study demonstrates that indigenous reactions to the US were constantly changing. These changes are represented through the varying insurgent groups alliances and disputes. What most of the literature describes as the monolithic “Iraq insurgency”, is better understood as, the “Iraq insurgencies”.⁶¹ Prior to the Iraq Surge, the Sunni insurgency grew in strength because the Baathists were dethroned from power. This aligned portions of the former regime loyalists, the Anbari Tribes, and the other Sunni groups.

As a result, the Sunni struck back against the US through the best means they were able, which meant fighting asymmetrically. Furthermore, once the Baathists were dethroned, the American occupation did not establish good governance and it did not control Iraqi society. The lack of governance across most of Iraq created space for these local uprisings to establish their own political power. This became a larger problem once the Sunnis boycotted the 2005 elections. In addition, the Shiite factions also developed into a set of insurgent groups. This occurred because of internal political fighting between the major Shiite political factions.

The insurgencies in Iraq contained elements of local actors who went from highly active to rather latent depending on the security challenges in their area of concerns. In

⁶¹ This thesis argues that the diversity of groups, and vast amount of actors are more analytically understood through the “post-Maoist” insurgency description identifying the groups in their political orientation, as well as their size or reach and their level of activity.

addition to the domestic Iraqi insurgencies, Iran and Syria also influenced some portions of Iraqi reactions. Both Iran and Syria sent intelligence agents, militants, and covert military forces into Iraq (see footnote page 134). These individuals had military and civilian influence in the battle as they entered through Iraq's porous border. Both Iran and Syria attempted to manipulate some armed groups, but they did not play a vital role in the outcome.

Furthermore, global insurgents (AQI/ISI) were able to recruit from multiple constituents across the world, which contributed to its prowess. The global attributes and recruitment base indicated AQI's broad appeal was powerful. Financing, resources, and well-trained fighters were easy to obtain for AQI because of the porous border, and the lack of political control across Iraq. The comprehensive set of actors shows that the Iraq insurgency was a diverse, and potent insurgency.

Prior to the Surge, the exact size of the Iraq insurgency is unknown, conservative estimates indicated the pure size was magnificent. Starting in 2004, over 250,000 former Sunni government employees became insurgents overnight. However, as the case study argues, the insurgencies were not limited to Sunnis. The Shiite factions amounted to well over 100,000 insurgents as well, split between three of the more dominant groups such as the DAWA and the Sadrists. As the case demonstrated each one of these dominant groups had their own social splits and divisions for a variety of reasons.

In addition, the insurgencies increased and decreased, in size and stature, due to a variety of variables that continued to change throughout the US occupation. In 2005, Shiite political groups gained the majority of political power. As a result, some portions of Shiite factions took predatory actions in Sunni dominated areas. In response, the Sunnis were forced to merge with AQI out of fear that came from different Shiite groups.

The indigenous actions prior to the Surge demonstrate, that it is impossible to show that the entirety of a certain region in Iraq universally rose up and joined the Americans, yet it

is clear that at certain times within the case, large portions of Iraqis rejected the US. Moreover, the actions of indigenous groups prior to the Surge shows that smaller portions of Iraqis joined in a series of independent uprisings for a variety of reasons including the fear and intimidation from AQI/ISI, as well as taking advantage of actions of the US payoff of political leaders.

Afghan Reactions Prior to the Surge:

When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, it diverted an incredible amount of its resources away from Afghanistan, and fighting the Taliban. The US spent the following six years trying to stabilize Iraq before strategically withdrawing because of the Surge. The diverted resources was not limited to armed units on the ground, Iraq pulled, “every component of the national security state”, from intelligence analysts, satellite surveillance, diplomatic support, and overall manpower in the Pentagon (Shaffer 2012).

The case study demonstrated, that prior to the Afghan Surge, the insurgency grew while Afghanistan was under US occupation. This occurred because of three major components. Firstly, hostile actions taken by new Afghan governmental officials against former Taliban leaders made the new Afghan government increasingly compromised. This compares very similarly to the experiences in Iraq. As Shiite dominated the government, the Iraq Sunni’s became increasingly marginalized. This was equally the case in Afghanistan as certain Pashtuns were favoured over others, and minority groups were overlooked.

By 2005, much of the Taliban’s old leadership and their hardened militants had resurfaced to form strong opposition to the Karzai regime. During these early years, a contemporaneous process occurred in which any potential reconciliation with the Taliban was hard-pressed to succeed. The older Taliban regime suffered political alienation and this led to isolation from the people from rural southern Afghans from urban Kabul (Hoh 2013). The alienation of rural Afghans led to their widespread disillusionment with the government while

the foreign forces were trying to stabilize rural Afghanistan. By not building trust in Afghans, the US and its allies gave the Taliban leadership a broad recruitment base. Newly formed state institutions were predatory. They played on old revenges and did not unite the countryside. Indeed this divisive behavior made the Karzai regime ineffective in meeting basic needs (Bergen and Tiedemann 2012: 14). During 2004-2009, the US campaign was comprised of a general theme, “US forces would go into a village, clear out the Taliban, then leave. A few weeks later, the Taliban would return and the status quo would return” (Kilcullen 2012).

Below is a new dataset that identifies insurgent groups that operated prior to the Surge and then carried on during the Surge. The data sets categorize the insurgent groups through a post-Maoist framework. However, the insurgency is not limited nor should it be restricted to this data set, but using this data set helps reanalyzing/re-evaluating how to judge the insurgencies in both cases.

Afghanistan Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations	Iraq Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations
1.) Quetta Shura Taliban	Non State/State	Local/ Regional	Al-Qaeda Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
2.) Haqqani	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global	Mujahidin Shura Council	Proactive Non-State/Hybrid	Local/Regional/Global
3.) TTP	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional	Islamic State of Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
4.) TNSM	Non State	Local	Al Rawhides Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
5.) Laskar-e-Jungevi	Non State	Local	The Front for Jihad and Change	Proactive Non-State	Local
6.) Laskar-e-Taiba	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global	Unorganized Nationalist Sunni	Proactive Non-State	Local
7.) Al-Qaeda	Non-State	Local/ Regional/ Global	Jaish al-Muslimeen	Proactive Non-State	Local
8.) Pashtun Insurgent Coalition	Non State	Local	Islamic Movement of Iraq's Mujahideen	Proactive Non-State	Local
9.) Taliban Fulltime	Non State	Local	Muslim Fighters of the Victorious Sect	Proactive Non-State	Local
10.) Taliban Local Guerilla	Non State	Local	Black Banner Organization	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
11.) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Non State	Local/ Regional/ Global	Hasad al-Muqawamah al-'Iraqiyah	Proactive Non-State	Local
12.) Tajik anti-Pashtun Insurgents	Non State	Local	Al-Faruq Brigades	Proactive Non-State	N/NA
13.) Hizbi-i-Islami	Non State	Local/ Regional	Islamic Armed Group of Al-Qaida, Fallujah branch	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
14.) Tajik Taliban	Non State	Local/ Regional	Sons of Islam	Proactive Non-State	Local
15.) Uzbek Taliban	Non State	Local/ Regional	National Iraqi Commandos Front	Proactive Non-State	Local
16.) SSP	Non State	Local/ Regional	White Flag Brigade	Proactive Non-State	Local
17.) HUM	Non State	Local	Snake Party	Proactive Non-State	Local
18.) HUI	Non State	Local	The Mujahadeen Advisory Council	Proactive Non-State	Local
19.) Jaish-e-Muhammad	Non State	Local	Jund al-Rahman	Proactive Non-State	Local
20.) The Mansoor Group	Non State	Local	Saraya al-Dawa wa'l Ribaati	Proactive Non-State	Local
21.) HUIV	Non State	Local	Empowerment Brigades	Proactive Non-State	Local
22.) 313 Brigade	Non State	Local	Battalions of Muhammad al-Fatih	Proactive Non-State	Local
23.) Mujahidin of Martyr Akbari	Non State	Local	Islamic Resistance Front	Proactive Non-State	Local
24.) Iranian Sponsored Shia Afghan Insurgents	Non State/State	Local/Regional	1920 Revolutionary Brigade	Proactive Hybrid	Local/State
25.) Shura--ye--Nazar	Non State	Local	Hamas Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local
26.) Non aligned Pashtun Taliban	Non-State	Local	Mujahadeen Army	Proactive Non State	Local
27.) Communist Self Interested Groups	Non State	Local	Army of Muhammad/Jaish Muhammad	Proactive Hybrid	Local
28.) Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami	Non-State	Local	Islamic Army Iraq	Proactive Hybrid	Local
29.) Sipah-e-Sahaba	Non State	Local	Iraqi Vengeance Brigades	Proactive Non-State	Local
30.) JUI	Non State	Local	Swords of the Righteous	Proactive Non-State	Local
31.) Jundullah	Non-State	Local	Jaysh Al-Mansoor	Proactive Non-State	Local
32.) Non aligned Chechens	Non State	Local	Conquering Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
33.) HIK	Non-State	Local	31. Ansar al Sunna/Sharia	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
34.) Tehrik Islami Britain	Non State	Local	Ansar al-Islam	Proactive Non-State	Local/Global
35.) al-Furqan	Non State	Local	Jayshal-Tariq al-Naqshbandia	Proactive Non State	Local
36.) Abdullah Mehsud Group (Pro-government)	Non-State	Local	Fatah al-Islam	Proactive Non State/Hybrid	Local/Regional
37.) Sheryar Mehsud Group	Non State	Local	Kataib Hezbollah	Proactive Non State	Local/Regional
38.) Mullah Nazir, Wana Taliban	Non-State	Local	Asaib Ahl al-Haq	Proactive Non State	Local
39.) Haji Sharif group	Non State	Local	The Promised Day Brigades	Proactive Non State	Local/Regional
40.) Islamic Jihad Union	Non State	Local	The Mahdi Army	Proactive Non State	Local/Regional
41.) Haji Omar Group	Non-State	Local	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq	Proactive Non State/Hybrid	Local

42.) Abbas Group (Antigovernment)	Non State	Local	The Badr Reconstruction	Proactive Non State	Local
43.) Noor Islam Group	Non-State	Local	Syrian Unification Baathists	State Outsourced	Regional
44.) Turkistan Bhattani Group	Non State	Local	Kurdish Peshmerga	Proactive Hybrid	Local/Regional
45.) Asmatullah Shaheen Group	Non State	Local	Random Criminal Gangs	Proactive Non State	Local
46.) Awal Khan Bhattani Group	Non-State	Local	Corrupt Governmental Authorities Backed by US	Proactive Hybrid/State	Local
47.) Punjabi Taliban Group of Wana	Non State	Local	New Baath Party	Proactive Non State	Local
48.) Jamiat ul-Ansar,	Non-State	Local	Fida'iyin Saddam	Proactive Non State	Local
49.) Ittihad-i-Islami	Non State	Local	Al –Awdah	Proactive Non State	Local

Table 13: Insurgency Data Set

Iraqi Reactions During the Surge

Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Reactions During the Surge

Iraqi reactions during the Surge changed similarly to how they changed prior to the Surge. As AQI/ISI increasingly took control of Sunni territory, the Sunni became increasingly paralyzed. As a result, some tribal leaders pushed back to take over political control. The Surge gained some initial success in the Sunni regions as some former regime loyalists and tribal leaders cooperated against AQI. As the Sunni groups progressively cooperated, the violence decreased throughout 2006, and 2007, and by “March 2007, the Mahdi Army replaced AQI as the most dangerous in Iraq” (Weston 2014). The Shiite political situation was more complicated than the situation in Anbar, and in Baghdad. Linda Robinson accounts that, “Shiite politics were the most complicated amongst any Iraq groups” (Robinson 2009: 145).

During 2007-2009, the *Sahwa* and the remaining Sunni groups redirected their attention and focused on AQI as their principal security concern in Iraq. The *Sahwa* focused their attention on AQI and securing their own neighborhoods. The remaining Sunni who were anti-government dissidents, and the outlier Saddam/Baathists became a relative non-factor by 2008. In early 2008, the majority Shiite leaders made strategic decisions to focus on internal corruption, and to consolidate the power between the leadership of the different ruling factions. During January 2007 to the middle of 2008, Iraqi military units launched offensives

not only targeting Sadr's military units in Baghdad and southern Iraq, but also empowered political rivals to isolate the Sadrist movement. As militia leaders were captured or killed, Sadr's remaining command and control eroded.

As Sadr was losing influence, the Mahdi army militiamen turned to Iran for support. By late 2007, it was clear that Iranian-backed groups were the primary driver of violence in the capital. In order to persuade them to stop, Petraeus attempted secret negotiations with senior Sadr officials but met with very little success. In response the Sadrists used their forces against the government, and tried to reassert control over parts of Baghdad. Working along with the US, Prime Minister Maliki secretly recruited Sadr's rivals to work inside the government of Iraq. Maliki acted in a shrewd way by placing Sadr's enemies in government and making them government loyalists in key security positions. As the Maliki government continued to expand itself, the ISCI and the Sadrists became weakened, the government appeared stronger and gained support from Sunni and Kurdish leaders because Maliki appeared to be bringing order to the chaos in Iraq.

Due to these factors at the beginning of 2008, the majority Shiite political groups ISCI, Dawa, and the Sadrists collided into a political battle. An internal, "Shiite political and military civil war emerged as the AQI/ISI was losing ground" (Harvey 2014). This civil war left the two largest parties, ISCI and the Sadrists, in an awkward and weakened state. By the end of 2007, Sadr lost control over the identity of his armed units, and at the end of 2008, the biggest concern amongst the Shiites was avoiding self-destruction in the way AQI had done in 2006.

In terms of Sadr acting as a military or political leader, by 2008, the Mahdi Army had become a self-serving mafia that intimidated the Shiite communities that it was supposed to be protecting. The DAWA was on the rise, and Maliki appeared to be a viable stable leader as he focused on internal Shiite corruption.

Kurdish Reactions During the Surge

During the Surge, the Kurdish political authority developed into their own social/political power bases that sought independent security. As previously identified, the 2005 elections proved to be problematic for the Sunni, however, the new Iraqi state's corruption was found problematic by the Kurds and Sunni demonstrated corruption and many of the Kurds found it just as problematic as the Sunni.

In the north, confrontations occurred between armed Sunni militia groups and the large Kurdish Peshmerga forces (TV 2005, Allawi 2007:87-97). The Kurdish militias saw the fall of Baghdad, as an opportunity to expand their influence from Mosul into mixed areas of Diyala, Nineva, and Wasit. Hashim identified that the Kurds acted this way because they were seeking their own interests. Hashim stated, "the Kurds do not care about Iraq, the Kurds care about Kurdistan" (Hashim 2009: 269).⁶² As the Kurds pursued their own interests, they acted in some ways that were more of a distraction than any help to the US or Iraq. This was most evident in October 2007 when the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) executed several attacks in Iraq's neighboring country, Turkey. This was an attempt to get Kurds in Iraq and in Turkey to unify efforts for the PKK's long-term goal of an independent Kurdistan. In response, Turkey did attack the PKK, though some of the artillery and mortar strikes occurred in both Iraq and Turkey. This was because the PKK moved across borders (Baer 2012). Under the advise of General Petraeus, the US did not move ahead and share intelligence, or

⁶² In addition to the Kurdish pressures in the north; the Shiite militias in the south, and the Sunni communities also possessed militant groups gaining a powerful presence in their own neighbourhoods. The shifting insurgency suffered from the contending nationalities of bordering non-state foreign insurgents found in AQI, but also the ethnic Kurds of the north, and religious majority in the Shiite, and Sunni establishments. The insurgency also contained actors from the competing states of Syria and Iran. At the outset of the war, Syrian Intelligence and Iranian military units funded operations in Iraq. In the case of Syria, agents were attempting to unite Baathists between Syria and Iraq. In the testimony from First Lieutenant Ahmad Fadi Abdullah, of the Syrian intelligence, he articulated how Syrian intelligence was ordered to fund terrorist activities in order to reunify Syria and Iraq TV, M. T. P. A. I. (2005). Syrian Officer Says Orders for Slaughter Came From Syria MEMRI TV.

further get involved in this issue. Instead, the US Congress reaffirmed House Resolution 106, which condemned the genocide of 1915.

This mini-crisis became a larger problem, and in October of 2007, General Petraeus had to personally get involved in a prisoner exchange to calm the situation. However, during the remainder of the Surge, Turkey would continue to strike the PKK across borders, this was a standoff that continued until the end of the Surge.

Additionally, the Kurds were victims to the Iraqi government during the Surge. As the *Sahwa* united Sunni's against AQI, Sunni Arabs became increasingly connected to the government and took over more political control of Sunni areas. This was evident in the 2009 elections. In Baghdad, Anbar, and in Sunni controlled areas in the south, the *Sahwa* morphed into some pseudo-political organizations. In the case of Ninewa, Sunni Arabs unified their support base against the Kurds.⁶³ In a different case, Kirkuk, from 2007-2009, suicide bombers regularly visited Kurdish neighborhoods in Kirkuk, and from 2007-2009 over 1000 Kurds were killed in Kirkuk alone (Rayburn 2013:160-173). During the Surge, the Kurdish political headquarters buildings, and many of their local political leaders were in constant state of fear. By the end of the Surge, the Arabs and the Kurds achieved a longer-term political solution that gave the Kurd some independence, but kept the state of Iraq in tact.

Afghan Reactions During the Surge

As 2009 came, President Bush was out of office, and newly elected President Obama's attention went from Iraq to Afghanistan. Obama shifted his military command forcing out General McKiernan. Defense Secretary Gates justified the move stating, Afghanistan needed, "fresh thinking" and "fresh eyes" (Gates 2010). With the removal of McKiernan, Gates and his senior military commanders diagnosed Afghanistan's problem as

⁶³ Article 140 of the constitution decreed a two-step process for settling the disputed territories and internal boundaries of the country. This process dramatically favoured the Kurds. As a result, Sunni Arab's were vigilant in some areas asserting their own control.

an “indigenous insurgency”, notwithstanding the complications of the insurgent safe haven in Pakistan. In addition, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and many Afghan parliamentarians diagnosed the security problem as militant extremism coming from Pakistan and failed to take personal responsibility for their own ineptitude. Nonetheless, the Taliban proved to be problematic for the Surge. Indeed, the Taliban’s roving court system continued to be successful even as McChrystal, and later Petraeus, focused on eradicating the insurgency. The rural countryside provided an effective safe haven where the Taliban could move and hide from Surge forces.

The Taliban benefitted from their longstanding relationship amongst the rural Pashtun people. Though they were nothing close to a perfect match, the Taliban acted in a way that was not as foreign as the American Surge forces.

The Taliban’s actions only in part provided their survival. Mathew Hoh stated, “the Taliban did not need much to survive because, we (the Surge forces), did so many things wrong. The Taliban were a fly in a house, and we were using a sledgehammer to kill it, in the end, we destroyed the house” (Hoh 2012). Hoh’s argument summarizes the Taliban’s survival. Due to the size and vastness of Afghanistan, the Taliban were able to move and hide very easily. They were able to make small and deadly strikes against the US. In response, “the US carpet bombed, and put concrete walls up around small villages in rural Afghanistan” (Porter 2012). This did not help the US, but by doing so the roaming Taliban simply moved to a different village or valley in Afghanistan. Indeed, the Taliban were a challenging force, but they were not the same size and scope of the Iraq insurgency. In the end they survived because of preexisting historical conditions, and because of the counterproductive actions by the Surge forces.

Grand lessons/conclusions from the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges

The 3-staged transitive model discussing the two diverging Surge outcomes provides three key lessons/conclusions. The 3-stages combine to explain why the Surges achieved different results. By applying the transitive model described in chapter 2, this thesis makes the following conclusion. Each stage equally contributes to the overall outcome of both cases. It is because of the 3-stages that the Iraq Surge temporarily achieved success, and the Afghanistan Surge ultimately failed.

Firstly, from stage 1, the vast differences in the political history of Afghanistan and Iraq created a backdrop in which the two cases interacted with the Surges differently. The backdrop of each case creates an invisible portion of the conflict. This invisible side of the conflict is drawn from Galtung's conflict theory. In each case the invisible sides of the conflict offer challenges, and this is a contribution to the Surge outcomes.

The invisible side of the conflict in Afghanistan is the clearest between the two cases. The preexisting ethnic and social divisions were never identified in US policy, nor were they addressed in throughout US occupation. After the invasion in 2001 the Taliban were dethroned, but there was corrupt leaders appointed to govern Afghanistan. This gave momentum to rural Afghans to reject the new government. As the new government leaders gained power, they played on old rivalries, and took revenge from the previous years of conflict. In addition, the new leaders alienated former members of the Taliban who ordinarily would have simply quit and supported new peace in the country. The relationships between an ordinary Afghan and the government were also increasingly fractured because the new government made no effort to unite the country. The history of decentralized political authority, identified in stage 1, was the normal form for governing Afghanistan, and there was no strategy to address this. As a result, when the US took over control of the country in 2001/2002, Afghanistan's political history possessed an invisible/hidden challenge that went

unaddressed. The invisible side of the conflict made Afghanistan more difficult to negotiate than Iraq.

Iraq's history sets a framework where a government has existed, and gaining political power was a more plausible endeavor. However, the failure to build an effective government after the invasion allowed insurgencies to evolve in the absence of central political authority. As the US made mistakes during the early days of the occupation, both state and society were alienated/severed, and many of the political problems that beseeched Iraq during the 20th century were reopened. The US failed to manage the early occupation and then exacerbated these domestic problems. The Surge was a strategy to fix the insurgency, and the political problems in Baghdad. The Surge benefitted from the Iraq's political history because it was able to slowly recentralize political authority and it was able to captivate the pre-existing traditions of the independent Sunni tribes. Without this sequence of events, it is unlikely the Surge would have been able to 1.) reduce the direct domestic violence, and 2.) deliver such convincing temporary successes.

The second lesson/conclusion comes from stage 2. Stage 2 shows that winning against the insurgencies is not dependent on the size of the insurgency, but winning occurs because of the local dynamics occurring in the country. The local dynamics of the country are hidden in the history of the country. Addressing the invisible sides of the conflict helped the Iraq Surge reduce the direct violence.

Prior to the Surge, the insurgencies had an extensively different set of political priorities that were based on the political history of their ethnic ties, political allegiances, and religious ties. This is why AQI/ISI relationship with the domestic insurgencies could not have longevity. AQI/ISI was on a fast track for success. Meaning they needed to push their way into society, and maintain that control in order to achieve their immediate goals. The domestic insurgent groups had a different agenda, which sometimes coincided with AQI/ISI

and sometimes did not. As the violence in Iraq steadily increased, Iraqis increasingly became exasperated by these problems. When the Surge entered Iraq, many of the insurgent groups changed sides because of the domestic relationships at the given time of the Surge. This was evident with the former Baathists, the Anbari's and AQI. AQI's brutal measures proved to be problematic for the rest of Iraq. The US then made a strategic decision of buying off many political leaders. Also, the US cooperated with the local insurgent groups eradicating the cancerous elements such as AQI/ISI by using US military assets to kill or capture them.

Furthermore the Shiite Dawa controlled government was in the process of changing. As the Dawa government abilities increased, it could negotiate Sadr's militias.

In addition, after the 2005 elections, which the Sunnis boycotted, the Maliki government slowly became a more reliable partner and increasingly focused on internal corruption. This culminated in 2008 as the Dawa made settlements with al-Sadr. This coincided with the US's increasing its military efforts, and the Sunni Awakening. The combination of these events led the US to align interests with the insurgent groups.

The Surge in Afghanistan could not possibly benefit from this sequence of events. In Afghanistan, US military could not identify immediate successes because there were no partnerships available as in Iraq. There was also no Sunni awakening type payoff that occurred. This is partly because the Afghan Insurgency was operated in a more rural space than in Iraq. As previously stated, the Afghan insurgency contained approximately 25,000-33,000 full time fighters, and another 25,000 part time fighters, as well as an extensive rural support base. The US could not concentrate any successful campaign, because the Afghan insurgency was centered in rural Afghanistan across villages and valleys that were far more difficult to engage than an analogous Baghdad, and Anbar province of Iraq.

As the case study identified, unintentionally, US actions prior to the Surge, exacerbated the local domestic tensions in Afghanistan. The US waited too long before

confronting the problems of the growing insurgency. As a result, the conditions needed for success against the insurgency were increasingly difficult from the Iraq case. The Afghanistan Surge occurred seven years into the occupation, as opposed to Iraq, which was only three. This made an impact in the outcome because the post invasion complications were allowed to magnify.

The third lesson/conclusion comes from the way stages 1-3 cooperate. The two cases are similar in that the US failed to manage its initial occupation efficiently, and then the US exasperated domestic disputes, in each case. However, the mistakes of the early years of occupation led to problems. The Surge was a strategy to fix the ensuing insurgency, and the political problems in Baghdad and Kabul. However, the Afghanistan Surge failed because the political history of Afghanistan set conditions that required a much longer commitment and a slower process to recentralize political authority. The Taliban and other insurgent groups benefitted from the US rushing for immediate results. Throughout the Surge, the Taliban maintained their political will to fight. Matthew Hoh recounted a reoccurring phrase from Taliban officials that captures this very well, “the US has all the tanks and money, but we (the Taliban) have the clock” (Hoh 2013) Because the US was on a fast track for success, the Afghanistan Surge did not take the time that it needed to change the culture and captivate rural Afghan society. The US needed a different strategy to deal with the insurgencies, moreover the US needed to spend more time partnering with the Afghan government. The previous eight years that the US occupied Afghanistan were spent not fully engaged in rebuilding it, and during those years the US failed to adequately resource the Afghan war. This complicated an already challenging proposition. Moreover, failing to find a regional strategy for Pakistan/Afghanistan did not help the situation.

In conclusion, the political history of Afghanistan and its social cleavages created a situation where insurgencies were already in existence before US presence, and then they continued during the US occupation. This is very different from the Iraq case.

The Iraq case benefited from stage 1. Despite the US mistakes during the early phases of the war in stage 2, the US managed to succeed despite the complications that emerged. The most obvious complications were the development of the Iraq insurgency while Iraq was under US occupation. The original occupation was not what led to the insurgency, rather the origin of the insurgency occurred with deBaathification as well as internal political and social cleavages that predated the US arrival. The mere presence of US forces gave other insurgent groups such as AQI grounds for recruitment, however AQI was rather insignificant until deBaathification was in place. Moreover, the completely unbalanced elections in 2005, exasperated the political tensions that predated US intervention. The complexity of these historical components led to the breakdown of the Iraqi state, security, and general governance.

As 2005 came, the security within Iraq was in rapid decline. The new government showed the inability to manage its own affairs, and the US showed an inability to manage the security for Iraqis. As a result, lawlessness, anarchy, and civil war broke out. The brutal circumstances in Iraq pushed the US to follow up the occupation with the Surge that formally occurred in US policy during 2006, however did not insert its full strength until 2007.

The Surge was able to succeed because the US gained the momentum of the independent Sunni movements against AQI, the principal aggressor from Sunni society. This was possible because of the independent nature of the Anbaris that predated US arrival, and this was an unforeseen benevolence. Secondly, the Shiite government increased its power and gained the momentum against internal Shiite corruption/aggressors. This was possible because the US partnered against AQI, and it was able to separate warring Sunni/Shiite

communities for reasons described in stage 2 of the case study. The combination of these two things affected the direct violence occurring in the case. These particular actions worked in ending the political tensions because of the historical ground laid out in stage 1, and then the actions of the US in stage 2. As the Surge maintained its momentum, the violence from sectarian groups subsided.

Stage 3 showed how the US and the Iraqis partnered to solve the invisible sides of the conflict and directly confront the visible sides of the conflict. This is most clearly demonstrated by routing out political dissidents or anti-government insurgent groups. This is an obvious divergence from the Afghanistan case. These sequenced of events prevented the Afghanistan Surge from achieving any semblance of success.

Summary Comparisons and Conclusions

The background chapters for the case studies demonstrated that the two Surge cases were contrived or developed through a distinct sequence of events. There were people, government processes, and key events taking place in each case that forced a strategic change to initiate the Surges.

Alternatively, Afghanistan is a very different historical setting. The tenuous history of the social and tribal movement gave Afghanistan an almost perfect situation and political structure for insurgency movements to develop. Afghan's society was strongly split along sectarian lines, with shifting allegiances. Afghanistan, as a Westphalian style nation-state, posed difficult characteristics for the rural tribal identity of Afghan nationals. Indeed, the historical challenges of Afghanistan are far greater than that of Iraq.

As the Afghanistan insurgencies developed through a different historical setting, the case proved to be much harder to negotiate once under US control. The case was already more difficult because of the Soviet occupation in the 1980's when were competing groups vying for power, while fighting a common enemy, the Soviets. Furthermore, Pakistan's

ungoverned spaces carried a complex political social base that affected the Afghan state after the Soviets left. This was evident amongst the Arab fighters, the Uzbek movements led by Rashid Dolstum, and the Hezb-i-islami movements. Moreover, this history of conflict set the national infrastructure of Afghanistan as virtually non-existent when the US invaded in 2002, and by the time the Surge occurred in 2009, it was not “significantly different” (Hoh 2014). As David Kilcullen describes Afghanistan’s landscape, “Afghanistan is essentially the moon with gravity, and the President is more like the Mayor of Kabul than national figure of political power” (Kilcullen 2012). This lack of infrastructure created a broken, weak, or dysfunctional state. Afghanistan political power maintained its historical legacy as largely decentralized, and political power grew out of the villages/valleys upwards, not from the top of Kabul down to the rural village. This is a major difference to Iraq. Iraq’s historically strong central political authority came from its prosperous oil reserves, as well as a strong national military that had a firm grip over state and society.

Despite the case differences, political will for the Afghan insurgency to survive, never died. Despite the Surge, the insurgency continued to thrive, and never received a domestic rejection/alteration of relationships as in the Iraq case. This was partly due to the history of decentralized power, but it was also due to the US not being able to repair the invisible sides of the conflict.

Secondly, the Surge failed in Afghanistan because the US was not able to unify its efforts across the country and fight against the insurgency as in Iraq. Despite the, “government in a box” approach, or the shifting military leadership from McKiernan, McChrystal, to Petraeus, the military never was able to benefit from a shifting of political relationships between the insurgent groups and the government, as seen in the Iraq case.

Third and finally, the Surge failed in Afghanistan because the sequenced stages that allowed for success in Iraq never occurred in unison as in the Afghanistan case. If the

political history was different for Afghanistan, and US actions had not made significant mistakes, the insurgent groups might have responded differently, the sequence of events might create a context for success. Ultimately, the Iraq and Afghanistan cases demonstrate that the Surges delivered different results because these 3-stages did not link together to create a synergistic mechanism equally.

Conclusion

This thesis investigated the question, “Why the Iraq Surge (2006-2009), and Afghanistan Surge (2009-2013) achieve different outcomes”? This thesis argues that the Iraq and Afghanistan Surges achieved different outcomes because of 3-stages that equally contribute to the temporary success in Iraq and lack of similar events accounts for the failure of success in the Afghanistan Surge. The 3-stages are:

- 1.) Stage 1 is the political history of each case. This stage shows that each case has two different contexts for the state infrastructure, state institutions, and public support for central government.
- 2.) Stage 2 is US tactical and political actions during its interventions prior to the Surge, and then during the Surge.
- 3.) Stage 3 is the reaction to US intervention (before the Surge and during the Surge) by indigenous people and insurgent groups that created political conditions that assisted in the outcomes of both cases.

By using 3-stages, this thesis looks into each of the cases, using Galtung’s theory of conflict. The theory observes both the visible portions of a conflict, and the invisible parts of the conflict. The 3-stage model looks at issues prior to the Surge occurring and looks at what factors assist the Surges outcomes that occur during the Surge. The conclusion occurs when comparing the Surge cases in both investigating the policy and the 3-stage model. As a result, this thesis casts insight into the study the COIN in theory and practice, and it inquires about the lessons to be learned in future policy making for other potential Surge cases.

This original contribution in this thesis is in the conducting of a cross-case study comparison between the outcomes of the Surges in both the Iraq and Afghanistan. The case studies provide a new account of how US policy interacted in theatre. Also, the research in this thesis improves on previous research by investigating how preexisting the political history (stage 1) equally contributes as does US actions (stage 2) and stage indigenous

reactions (stage 3). By observing the outcome of the Surges through the 3-stage model, this thesis provides a new framework to investigate future insurgency wars. The final original contribution is in found in expanding theories of insurgency developed in the literature review. This is important because it gives a fresh framework to investigate future insurgency wars.

Summary and Conclusion

The different Surge outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan are because of the interaction of the 3-stages previously identified. Iraq's history of colonial powers is an important starting point that brings Iraq into the 20th century. The four important periods identified by Anderson and Stansfield, the Hashemite Monarchy (1920-1958), Revolutions, Republic, and Renaissance (1958-1968), the Baathist reign (1968-1988) and the Pariah State (1989-2003), show how many social divisions would manifest themselves during the insurgencies. The insurgency is not a representation of Iraq's history, but the nation's history influenced the nature of the insurgencies as they emerged under US occupation, and continued to do so during the period 2006-09.

In comparison, Tom Barfield identifies that in Afghanistan there is no single unifying political force or governing structure in the last century. The rural and tribal nature of Afghans demonstrates why the political history in Afghanistan sets a context for diversity in social divisions, political beliefs and societal structures that creates a case with much more challenges for the Surge to succeed.

This is most evident in the political fallout after the departure of the Soviet Union in 1989 that is demonstrated in the societal infighting and civil war from 1992-2001. Furthermore, after the Soviet departure, the midevil behavior from the Taliban during the 1990's, did not unite the entire country, and it deepened the societal fractures and longstanding social divisions. Once the Surge began in Afghanistan, the government in Kabul

was predatory, and the Surge ultimately failed because the US Surge forces could not change those realities. Furthermore, tactically, the Surge forces pursued the Taliban with extreme aggression, yet without defeating them politically, the Taliban were able to survive.

US actions in the Iraq Surge were far more decisive than in Afghanistan. This is partially because of the consistency in US command, but also this was because of the political relationships between the Sunni's in Anbar, the former regime loyalists, and AQI. These relationships were formed at the local level before the Surge occurred, and they assisted in creating the positive temporary outcome. Lastly, the Surge benefitted from the alignment of interests amongst the dominant groups in Iraq. The powerful Sunni groups, the US, and the Shiite government cooperated in focusing on the violent actors who were breaking Iraq apart, this included AQI, and Sadr's militias.

US attempted using the same operational manuals, but it was not able to produce the same set of results as in Iraq. This was because US forces did not act the same as they did in Iraq. Furthermore the military was required to perform too many tasks including training the ANA, as well as building up Afghanistan's national infrastructure. The combination of these taxing of duties created some infighting between senior commanders and the civilian agencies that needed to cooperate. Lastly, the Karzai regime continued to be corrupt, and failed to unite Afghans across the countryside. As a result the Afghan Surge was not able to unite Afghans to their government as seen in Iraq.

Limitations of this Thesis

The research in this thesis answers an important question to why the outcomes of the Surges experienced different outcomes. This particular question investigates what events occurred leading up to the Surges, and then also the particular actions by the US during the Surges. Furthermore it inquires what specific reactions to US efforts affected the outcomes. The specifics in this research is unique because it investigates comparisons between the two cases that has not yet been completed. However it does posses limitations.

First, the argument in this thesis is structured in a way that answers the questions through the use of stages. Indeed, these stages are useful in describing the complexity of issues at play. However, a focus on one of these issues could potentially make the argument on its own. This is done most notably by Kim Kagan, and other researchers who focus on US military actions. However, even Kagan's research has limitations, and as a result this thesis chose to focus on the totality of factors at play.

Secondly, structurally this thesis compares US policy, and then US actions, alongside historical factors in the case studies. It is plausible that this thesis could focus exclusively on one of these issues in one chapter at a time. However, even then, that structure has limitations because it does not focus on one case at a time.

Thirdly, the data this thesis uses does not cover the exclusive unit-to-unit behavior such as US special forces in theatre as opposed to ordinary line units as disclosed in Kagan, Nagl, and other COIN researcher. Moreover it does not exhaust the impact of how one particular unit in the field as opposed to another unit. These specifics are useful, and they could have assited in answering the research question. However, given the preexisting literature, and the structure of the argument in this thesis, the principal researcher chose to focus on elements that were absent from preexisting arguments surrounding either Surge case.

Important Observations and Considerations for Future Research

The Surge cases provide differing characteristics between the two cases. However, there are some interesting comparisons between the two cases that are worth noting, though they do not necessarily help in understanding the research question, but are interesting highlights that emerge throughout the course of this study. These could be useful points in future research.

An interesting comparison between the two is the impact of negative circumstances unrelated to the COIN effort. Anyone researching US foreign policy since 9/11 can recall the negative effects in the international community over the Abu Ghraib prison crisis, where pictures emerged, internationally, that showed barbaric treatment of Iraqis. Indeed, first-rate scandal ignited anti-American hatred amongst the mildest of anti-American sympathizers. However this moment in time was an international crisis that was picked up by most media outlets across the world and hurt US image. Just as Abu Ghraib was a first rate scandal, the Koran burning fiasco by Rev Terry Jones, ignited hate amongst Afghans against Americans as well. Because of social media, Rev Jones, a low level religious figure, ignited revolts in Afghanistan that resulted in the death of at least three Americans.

A second interesting comparison between the two cases is a broader passivity towards the ethnic/sectarian minorities in each case. In Iraq, the Kurds, Assyrians, Christian minorities were almost voiceless in most of the important components of US policy considerations. In Afghanistan, the Hazara and other Shiite minority were also voiceless. Since the mid-20th century the Hazara minority group suffered brutal treatment, and this is the case with the Kurds in Iraq. No matter the level or brutality that they experienced, US policy was focused on the building an Iraq and Afghan state, and the state building effort trumped any focus of an integrated and diverse representation within the design of each state.

A third comparison is the effects of these campaigns and international partnerships. Generally, Iraq was a US centered military effort, although, a few partners deployed troops to assist in the invasion, and the post-war reconstruction. In contrast, the Afghanistan campaign was a NATO directed project. However, Iraq took most of US attention, and difficulties arose in Afghanistan as a result. This fact is well accounted by Mark Webber stating, “by the end of the Bush period, then, NATO faced a further existential crisis, this time over Afghanistan” (Webber 2009). After Bush the Bush administration departed, the NATO project in Afghanistan needed more attention, and as result, the Obama administration decided on the Afghan Surge.

In the years after the Surge, the international partnerships developed in Iraq and Afghanistan created some cooperation and trust yet that has not been demonstrated in emerging conflicts such as Ukraine and Syria. The impact of these campaigns and US international partnerships is not in dire straits, yet the inability to mirror these grand collaborations poses emerging challenges.

A fourth comparison from these cases is the extent to which American, Iraqi, and Afghan leaders were equally interested in their legacy. Part of the American, Iraqi, and Afghan agendas was to preserve their family name or political parties legacy. In the case of Iraq, Maliki wanted to keep the status quo up within the Shiite dominated government. By appealing to the Americans that he could be trusted, he gained trust. However this was short lived as his government began taking predatory actions against the Sunni’s as soon as the US was withdrawing from Iraq in 2011. Equally, Hamid Karzai proved to be most ruthless in preserving his legacy. Karzai’s constant attempts to build trust with the US and accept the money and troops, and on the other hand criticizing the US military operating in theatre showed his prowess. Karzai proved to be a duplicitous actor accepting US help, criticizing it, and then gaining national support from Afghans.

In contrast to Maliki and Karzai, as chapter 4 and 6 discuss, both Bush and Obama had strong desires to preserve their own political legacies. Bush wanted to preserve the legacy of the Iraq war, and Obama needed to establish the legacy of his Presidency by not failing in Afghanistan. In the end all of these leaders desired a strong personal interest in their legacies.

A fifth and final comparative observation is the inevitability of the GWOT and Vietnam. The GWOT has overtaken Vietnam as the longest war in US history. The challenge after Vietnam was getting over the Vietnam syndrome, and preparing the US military for future conflicts. The question emerging from the years of COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan, is the US military going to have another version of the Vietnam syndrome in which it decides to ignore small wars like in the cases of Syria, Somalia, and destructive insurgencies emerging across North Africa?

Appendix

List of Interview Participants:

+ Bio provided by participants, their websites, and their organizations. Group is listed alphabetically descending from A-Z using their last name.

Richard Armitage was the 13th Deputy Secretary of State. He served during the Bush administration from 2000-2005.

Mariam Atawneh is an Afghan American and special advisor to US Dept. of Treasury, Dept. of State, and DoD for US-Afghanistan diplomatic efforts throughout the duration of the Surge.

Bob Baer a retired CIA officer operating in the Middle East, and Time Magazine/CNN contributor. He is widely known as US's best man in the Middle East while he was in service. George Clooney plays a Hollywood depiction of Baer in the movie Syriana.

General David Barno was ISAF commander in 2004 in Afghanistan.

Dr Steve Biddle served on the JSAT for both Iraq and Afghanistan Surges and was an advisor while serving at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Peter Borass was a former Army Ranger operating in Pat Tillman's unit in Afghanistan in 2005.

Dr Daniel Byman professor at Georgetown is a senior national security fellow at Brookings Institute, and former NSA staffer.

Col Robert Cassidy (Ph.D.) is a COIN expert, former field commander in Iraq and Afghanistan during the Surges, and serves as faculty at the US Army War College.

Steve Clemons is an Obama White House insider who serves as editor in chief for the Atlantic, while formerly the director of national security studies at the New America Foundation.

Michael Cohen is Senior Fellow for the Century Foundation and contributing writer to the Guardian.

Lt Col Janine Davidson (Ph.D.) is a retired US Air force officer, professor at George Mason, and served as a deputy secretary of defense, also Davidson is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Ria Delawar is an Afghan American who served as lead advisor for intelligence on the Afghan/Pakistan insurgency for US Central Command in Tampa Florida.

Col Gian Gentile (Ph.D.) is senior historian at the RAND Corporation. He is retired US Army colonel, who served for many years as a history professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Gentile has also been a visiting fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He is a leading critic of US military counter-insurgency doctrine. He served two tours in Iraq, first as the executive officer of a combat brigade in Tikrit in 2003 and then as a squadron commander in western Baghdad in 2006.

Bill Goodfellow is Washington insider having spent over 30 years fund raising, politicking, and advising of international policy. Bill is also the founder and acting President of the Center for International Policy.

Col T.X. Hammes (Ph.D.) was an advisor, and member of the JSAT while serving as a professor at the National Defense University. Formerly was in the field aiding the mujahidin in Afghanistan during the 1980's.

Col Derrick Harvey (Ph.D.) who worked with General Keane on the Council of Colonels and General Odierno at Corps in Ft Hood, meeting with VP, and others. Also, Harvey worked on the JSAT while serving as P4's special advisor until fall 2008 when he went to work the Afghan Surge and supported it as the AFPAK Director.

Michael Hastings is an investigative journalist for the Rollingstone Magazine who wrote an article that led to Stanley McChrystals firing.

Col James Hickey, Joint staff member under General Petraeus.

Matthew Hoh was a Marine Capt. who worked in the Pentagon, and later a US State Dept Foreign Service Officer in Iraq and Afghanistan.

David Kilcullen (Ph.D.), US Under Secretary of State for Counter Terrorism and General Petraeus JSAT advisor in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was also an independent advisor to Generals McChrystal and Petraeus.

Lawrence Korb (Ph.D.) is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and advisor to the Center for Defense Information. He is a former assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations and Logistics

Meresh Kumari was the Country Director in Afghanistan for the State Department in the Office of Transitional Initiatives.

Col Doug Macgregor (Ph.D.) Is a retired US Army Colonel, 1991 gulf war veteran, and formerly Newt Gingrich's National Security Advisor. He is the author of many books including Warriors Rage.

Brock Macintosh was an enlisted US soldier operating in Afghanistan during the Surge in 2009.

Dr Carter Malkasian was a cultural specialist for the State Department in Iraq and Afghanistan who was identified by Senator John McCain as the "best man in Afghanistan".

Col Peter Mansoor, acted as General Petraeus executive officer during the Surge, and Ohio State University Professor of Military History.

Senator John McCain is a former Republican Presidential nominee, and five-term US senator. He is a former Vietnam veteran longtime supporter of the surges in both Iraq and Afghanistan and is the most verbose antagonist against both Bush and Obama administrations during both Surges.

Dr John Nagl, a retired Lt. Col who assisted in writing the US COIN manual and acted as a COIN advisor in Iraq during the Surge.

Lt General Natonski, served as Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corp, and also as commander of II MAR DIV Commander in 2004 in Iraq. Natonski also served as chief investigator in a variety of investigations during the Afghanistan Surge under McChrystal.

Michael O'brien was a political appointee from the Bush Administration in Iraq and a former US Army Ranger who also served as part of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, or MNSTC-I. This was the Coalition command element responsible for 'standing up' the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior after they had been disbanded by Paul Bremer, the former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the CPA.

Lt Col Doug Ollivant (Ph.D.) was an advisor to Vice President Cheney on the National Security Council when the Surge was employed; furthermore he was a COIN advisor in Afghanistan in RC east, and a senior fellow at The New America Foundation.

Michael Ostrolenk is a conservative lobbying operative in National Security and Defense issues in Washington DC.

Gareth Porter (Ph.D.) an investigative journalist for Inter Press Service, and associate professor at American University in Washington DC.

Devon Read is a former US marine serving in Iraq.

Rick Reyes is the founder of Veterans for Rethinking Afghanistan and former US Marine, OEF, OIF veteran.

Tom Ricks a senior fellow at the Center for New American Security and senior war correspondent for the Washington Post.

Dr Chris Seiple is a former US Marine, and President of the Institute for Global Engagement, and publisher of the Journal Faith and International Affairs.

Doug Tudor was a senior enlisted service member who worked under General Tommy Franks and General Abizaid. During his service he met President Karzai over 24 times. Tudor is a rare individual who possesses in-depth knowledge of the interrelations of Karzai and American leaders.

Lt Col Tony Shaffer was lead on Operation Dark Heart, and is a fellow at the London Center for Policy Research.

Dr. Michael Shank was the legislative assistant for Congressman Mike Honda.

Dr Sarah Sewall is Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights at the US State Department under President Obama. Sewall served on President Obama's national security and foreign policy transition team. She is the former Deputy Secretary Defense, co-author of the US COIN manual, and director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard University

Corey Webber is a US Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010.

Cael Weston was the longest serving Foreign Service officer in Iraq and Afghanistan. Spending most of his time in the middle of the Insurgencies in Ramadi, Fallujah, Helmand, and Nuristan.

Lt Col Lawrence Wilkerson (USA ret), served as Colin Powell's Chief of Staff at the State Dept., and is a Professor of National Security Studies at George Washington University.

Tables and Figures Used in Thesis

Data Points gathered from comparative case study research

Time/Setting	Data Point	Iraq	Afghanistan
Prior to Surge	Developed state before US intervention	Yes	No
Prior to Surge	Urban Social Base	Yes	No
Prior to Surge	Rural Social Base	Smaller	Large
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Regional factionalism	Yes but was more constant compared to that of Afghanistan	Dynamically changing from 1979-2012
Prior to Surge	Rapid insurgency development	Yes	No
Prior to Surge	Slow insurgency development	No	Yes
Throughout Surge	Negotiating with opposition groups	No	Yes
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Major effort early on for reconstruction	No	Yes
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Focus on training local partners	Yes	No
	Changing military leaders throughout the Surge	No	Yes
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Local regionally elected leaders	Yes	No
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Appointed leaders	Limited	Yes
Prior to Surge /Continue Throughout Surge	Competent political leaders	Yes	Yes
Continue Throughout Surge	US policy decisions top down	Yes	Yes
Continue Throughout Surge	Bottom up policy influence	Weak	Weak
	US approach	COIN	COIN
Throughout Surge	Maoist Insurgency	No	No
Throughout Surge	Post-Maoist insurgency	Yes	Yes
Throughout Surge	Irregular and Conventional Warfare	Yes	Yes
Throughout Surge	Host Government Dependent on US for Survival	Yes	Yes

Afghanistan Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations	Iraq Insurgent Organization	Typology of Insurgency	Political Aspirations
1.) Quetta Shura Taliban	Non State/State	Local/ Regional	1.) Al-Qaeda Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
2.) Haqqani	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global	2.) Mujahidin Shura Council	Proactive Non-State/Hybrid	Local/Regional/Global
3.) TTP	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional	3.) Islamic State of Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
4.) TNSM	Non State	Local	4.) Al Rawhides Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
5.) Laskar-e-Jungevi	Non State	Local	5.) The Front for Jihad and Change	Proactive Non-State	Local
6.) Laskar-e-Taiba	Non-State/State Outsourced	Local/ Regional/ Global	6.) Unorganized Nationalist Sunni	Proactive Non-State	Local
7.) Al-Qaeda	Non-State	Local/ Regional/ Global	7.) Jaish al-Muslimeen	Proactive Non-State	Local
8.) Pashtun Insurgent Coalition	Non State	Local	8.) Islamic Movement of Iraq's Mujahideen	Proactive Non-State	Local
9.) Taliban Fulltime	Non State	Local	9.) Muslim Fighters of the Victorious Sect	Proactive Non-State	Local
10.) Taliban Local Guerilla	Non State	Local	10.) Black Banner Organization	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
11.) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Non State	Local/ Regional/ Global	11.) Hasad al-Muqawamah al-'Iraqiyah	Proactive Non-State	Local
12.) Tajik anti-Pashtun Insurgents	Non State	Local	12.) Al-Faruq Brigades	Proactive Non-State	N/NA
13.) Hizbi-i-Islami	Non State	Local/ Regional	13.) Islamic Armed Group of Al-Qaida, Fallujah branch	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
14.) Tajik Taliban	Non State	Local/ Regional	14.) Sons of Islam	Proactive Non-State	Local
15.) Uzbek Taliban	Non State	Local/ Regional	15.) National Iraqi Commandos Front	Proactive Non-State	Local
16.) SSP	Non State	Local/ Regional	16.) White Flags	Proactive Non-State	Local
17.) HUM	Non State	Local	17.) Snake Party	Proactive Non-State	Local
18.) HUI	Non State	Local	18.) The Mujahadeen Advisory Council	Proactive Non-State	Local
19.) Jaish-e-Muhammad	Non State	Local	19.) Jund al-Rahman	Proactive Non-State	Local
20.) The Mansoor Group	Non State	Local	20.) Saraya al-Dawa wa'l Ribaati	Proactive Non-State	Local
21.) HUIV	Non State	Local	21.) Empowerment Brigades	Proactive Non-State	Local
22.) 313 Brigade	Non State	Local	22.) Battalions of Muhammad al-Fatih	Proactive Non-State	Local
23.) Mujahidin of Martyr Akbari	Non State	Local	23.) Islamic Resistance Front	Proactive Non-State	Local
24.) Iranian Sponsored Shia Afghan Insurgents	Non State/State	Local/Regional	24.) 1920 Revolutionary Brigade	Proactive Hybrid	Local/State
25.) Shura--ye--Nazar	Non State	Local	25.) Hamas Iraq	Proactive Non-State	Local
26.) Non aligned Pashtun Taliban	Non-State	Local	26.) Mujahadeen Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
27.) Communist Self Interested Groups	Non State	Local	27.) Army of Muhammad/Jaish Muhammad	Proactive Hybrid	Local
28.) Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami	Non-State	Local	28.) Islamic Army Iraq	Proactive Hybrid	Local
29.) Sipah-e-Sahaba	Non State	Local	29.) Iraqi Vengeance Brigades	Proactive Non-State	Local
30.) JUI	Non State	Local	30.) Swords of the Righteous	Proactive Non-State	Local
31.) Jundullah	Non-State	Local	31.) Jaysh Al-Mansoor	Proactive Non-State	Local
32.) Non aligned Chechens	Non State	Local	32.) Conquering Army	Proactive Non-State	Local
33.) HIK	Non-State	Local	33.) 31. Ansar al Sunna/Sharia	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional/Global
34.) Tehrik Islami Britain	Non State	Local	34.) Ansar al-Islam	Proactive Non-State	Local/Global
35.) al-Furqan	Non State	Local	35.) Jayshal-Tariq al-Naqshbandia	Proactive Non-State	Local
36.) Abdullah Mehsud Group (Pro-government)	Non-State	Local	36.) Fatah al-Islam	Proactive Non-State/Hybrid	Local/Regional
37.) Sheryar Mehsud Group	Non State	Local	37.) Kataib Hezbollah	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional
38.) Mullah Nazir, Wana Taliban	Non-State	Local	38.) Asaib Ahl al-Haq	Proactive Non-State	Local
39.) Haji Sharif group	Non State	Local	39.) The Promised Day Brigades	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional
40.) Islamic Jihad Union	Non State	Local	40.) The Mahdi Army	Proactive Non-State	Local/Regional
41.) Haji Omar Group	Non-State	Local	41.) Supreme Council for	Proactive Non-State	Local

			Islamic Revolution in Iraq	State/Hybrid	
42.) Abbas Group (Antigovernment)	Non State	Local	42.) The Badr Reconstruction	Proactive Non State	Local
43.) Noor Islam Group	Non-State	Local	43.) Syrian Unification Baathists	State Outsourced	Regional
44.) Turkistan Bhiitani Group	Non State	Local	44.) Kurdish Peshmerga	Proactive Hybrid	Local/Regional
45.) Asmatullah Shaheen Group	Non State	Local	45.) Random Criminal Gangs	Proactive Non State	Local
46.) Awal Khan Bhiitani Group	Non-State	Local	46.) Corrupt Governmental Authorities Backed by US	Proactive Hybrid/State	Local
47.) Punjabi Taliban Group of Wana	Non State	Local	47.) New Baath Party	Proactive Non State	Local
48.) Jamiat ul-Ansar,	Non-State	Local	48.) Fida'iyin Saddam	Proactive Non State	Local
49.) Ittihad-i-Islami	Non State	Local	49.) Al –Awdah	Proactive Non State	Local

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