

**Combating Violent Extremism in Iraq: The Viability of Counterinsurgency Strategy**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIS - Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)

APNA - Algerian People's National Army's

AQI – Al-Qaeda in Iraq

COIN – Counterinsurgency

FIS - Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)

FM - Field Manual (U.S. Army)

ICG - International Crisis Group

IIP - Iraqi Islamic Party

ISF – Iraqi Security Forces

ISI – The Islamic State of Iraq

ISIS – The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

KRG – Kurdish Regional Government

PUK - Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

UN – United Nations

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Nearly 8,000 Iraqi civilians lost their lives to sectarian violence in Iraq in 2013 as a result of attacks carried out primarily by Islamic extremist groups.<sup>1</sup> It was the largest death toll since 2006. Resurgent al-Qaeda linked groups have sparked a renewed sectarian conflict, threatening to plunge the country into a civil war and prompting this central question: *Is the use of a counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq or “COIN” as it is more commonly known, a viable option to combat the current sectarian conflict?* This question will be examined through three lenses, each critical to understanding the success or failure of a COIN strategy in Iraq. These lenses are: a history of modern counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, social and religious sectarian tensions, and the impact of politics and government.

Success for the government in the sectarian conflict in Iraq is necessary for the country’s survival as well as regional security. Islamic militant groups have successfully planned attacks on targets in all parts of the globe by establishing safe haven zones in places like Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, and now in Syria. Iraq appears to be poised to collapse into a sectarian civil war which could further destabilize the Middle East and exacerbate the refugee problem coming from Syria – the worst since World War II. The loss of Iraq as a stable state and the continued strength of extremist groups are a grave concern to security on a global level.

The question of whether to implement COIN strategy will begin with an examination of the policies of the current Maliki government, which along with the crisis in Syria, are significant

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<sup>1</sup> “Iraq attacks including bomb at Tarmiya leave 20 dead.” *BBC News Report*, December 3, 2013.

factors in the security situation in Iraq. I will then critique the past use of modern counterinsurgency strategy against al-Qaeda groups in Iraq from 2007-2010 by evaluating civilian death figures provided by the United Nations. I will outline the underlying criteria necessary for a successful implementation of COIN strategy in Iraq to defeat extremist groups. Lastly I will discuss whether or not Iraq is able to implement a COIN strategy in the face of political and sectarian issues. This last discussion will draw heavily on recommendations made by the *International Crisis Group*--a non-governmental organization committed to resolving deadly conflicts--as well as social data from surveys conducted on extremist groups in Lebanon.

Any examination of the current security crisis in Iraq must begin with a cause-and-effect look at the policies of the Maliki government and how they may have contributed to an increase in sectarian violence in Iraq since the U.S. withdrawal in 2009. Throughout his seven-year tenure, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a follower of Shia Islam, has implemented what some call a divide-and-conquer strategy that has been critical of Sunni Arab leadership. His approach has heightened tensions according to groups like the Institute for the Study of War. The Washington-based NGO claims "Maliki's consolidation of power since 2006 has been deep-seated and widespread, personalizing his control of the security forces, subverting the autonomy of parliament and independent governmental bodies, and working tirelessly to marginalize and isolate political rivals (Sunnis)."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sullivan, Marisa. "Maliki's Authoritarian Regime." *Institute for the Study of War*, Middle East Security Report, April 10, 2013.

When Maliki took over the Prime Ministry in 2006, civilian deaths were on the rise and would top out around 3500 per month that year in November.<sup>3</sup> Later that year with the implementation of “the surge”--a U.S. infusion of 20,000 more troops in Iraq--the death toll began to slowly fall as the “Awakening” movement of local Sunni tribes and U.S. Counterinsurgency strategy (COIN) took hold. By 2008, civilian deaths had declined to levels in the hundreds per month.<sup>4</sup> Civilian deaths would reach their lowest point just before the full U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011. While there is a debate about using civilian deaths as a measurement tool for success, some argue that the COIN strategy employed by the U.S. in conjunction with the local Sunni fighters of the Awakening movement had a dramatic impact on the sectarian violence level and security in Iraq.

The measurement used for the research of past COIN outcomes in Iraq will include an examination of civilian casualty numbers under the U.S.-led COIN strategy from 2007-2010, and the potential use of the same strategy against the current Islamic militant threat in Iraq, led by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) group. The numbers will be compared during the U.S. “surge,” after the U.S. withdrawal, and during the most recent years under the policies of Maliki.

A stumbling block to the use of COIN strategy in Iraq is the contentious social and religious relationship between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds within the country. These deep-seated complexities underscore why a strategy focused only on COIN strategy will fail without democratic and social reforms. In order to understand the current rise in sectarian violence in

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<sup>3</sup> Fischer, Hannah. “Iraq Civilian Death Estimates.” *Congressional Research Service*, August 27, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Fischer, Hannah. “Iraq Casualties: U.S. Military Forces and Iraqi Civilians, Police, and Security Forces.” *Congressional Research Service*, June 11, 2010.



Iraq, it is vital to understand the religious and tribal issues that underlie the conflict. The complex historic relationships, between Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish communities in Iraq and Syria are at the heart of the problems. They define how these groups see themselves and each other and must be fully understood in order to facilitate communication and cooperation between them in a cohesive Iraqi state.

This examination of social and religious complexities will then transition into a look at the history of Iraq and how its demographics shape the current character of the population. Nationalism and tribalism within Iraq and the fall of the Sunni Baath regime under Saddam are critical to understanding the current tensions within the country. The historical point of view will compare Iraq's insurgent threat to recent cases from Algeria in the 1990s and Egypt. Lessons from the past will be examined to illustrate how deadly and lengthy a conflict Iraq could be facing, and how it can learn from past failures when implementing a strategy based on COIN.

The final piece of this research paper will be a critique of the current U.S. foreign policy directive on al-Qaeda linked groups. Social research for this will come from historical documents, Congressional reports, journal articles and policy papers. I will tackle the current COIN strategy created by the U.S. military and provide critiques on how it must be improved and applied to the current situation in Iraq. This will draw from the lessons learned on the use of COIN strategy in Iraq in the past, as well as the social and democratic pieces that must accompany any COIN strategy. The strength of the relationship with the current Maliki government is a vital part of any successful U.S. policy going forward with Iraq.

Prime Minister Maliki visited Washington in November of 2013 to request military support to fight ISIS and other al-Qaeda linked groups. The U.S. has had little influence in Iraq since its withdrawal in 2011, but Maliki and his Shiite led government is reaching out for assistance. This is an opportunity for the U.S. to potentially reengage in Iraq. Elections in Iraq are taking place as this report is being written. These elections represent an opportune time for the United States to improve its tenuous relationship with Iraq and increase the democratic process in the country. It is also a critical time to examine the impact of current Maliki government policies. If the current level of violence continues in Iraq and Syria, the Maliki government could fail, further fracturing the country along sectarian lines and bringing about a civil war.

## Chapter 2

### The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Shams (ISIS): Group Background and Reemergence

#### Born in Iraq, Born of al-Qaeda

The Sunni terror group ISIS was founded in 2004 in Iraq under the name Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) as an al-Qaeda umbrella group which carried out numerous terrorist attacks against coalition forces and civilian targets in Iraq and Jordan. When ISI first emerged in Iraq in 2004, for a time the group constituted the official franchise of al-Qaeda in the country. Under the zealous leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed by U.S. forces in 2005, ISI became renowned for its brutal methods, a legacy that ISIS continued on after his death.<sup>5</sup>

ISI would eventually change its name to The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in April of 2013 following increased fighting in Syria and Iraq.<sup>6</sup> In February of 2014, al-Qaeda's senior leadership disowned ISIS in a statement released online. This reportedly occurred because Abu Bakr al Baghdadi--the leader of ISIS--repeatedly refused to obey orders issued by Ayman al Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda.<sup>7</sup> Other reports indicated that the group was "expelled" from al-Qaeda because of its insanely brutal methods in northern Syria, which have included, for example, execution of civilians for smoking and cursing.<sup>8</sup>

Following the withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq in 2011, the ISI and other groups exploited sectarian issues exacerbated by Maliki and demonstrated renewed capabilities with

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<sup>5</sup> Spyer, Jonathan. "New Sunni Insurgency in Iraq." *Counter Jihad Report*, March 24, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> "Key Free Syria Army rebel 'killed by Islamist group.'" *BBC News Report*, July 12, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda's general command disowns the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham." *The Long War Journal*, February 3, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Spyer, Jonathan. "New Sunni Insurgency in Iraq." *Counter Jihad Report*, March 24, 2014.

multiple high-profile bomb attacks in Iraq, predominantly in Baghdad. With the onset of the Syrian conflict in 2011, ISI greatly increased its attacks in Iraq and became heavily involved in the conflict in Syria. Iraqi security forces have been ineffective at combatting ISIS and al-Qaeda groups in the country and the sectarian violence is increasing. Daily bomb attacks by ISIS are commonplace in Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad, and ISIS has taken over control of multiple cities in the western Iraqi province of Anbar.<sup>9</sup>

The increase in civilian deaths and violence in the past few years can be largely traced to the reemergence of ISIS in Iraq. Additionally, a report issued by the *International Crisis Group* (ICG) in August of 2013 also points to the oppression and marginalization of Sunnis by the Maliki government as a contributor to the current violence within Iraq. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite leader in a country made up of 60% Shiites and 35% Sunnis, enacted controversial policies in Iraq that some argue worsened the security crisis in the country.<sup>10</sup> Critics point to Maliki's pursuit of new policies after 2011 through sectarian exclusionary tactics which actively alienated the Sunni and Kurdish leadership, almost completely pushing them out of the Iraqi government.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Adnan, Duraid. "Iraq Hit by Wave of Bombings and Attacks." *The New York Times*, March 21, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> CIA World Factbook. "Iraq: People and Society." Online Country Database, Last Updated January 28, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Knights, Michael. "Yes, Iraq is Unraveling." Articles and Op-Eds, Policy Analysis, *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, May 15, 2013.

## The Awakening, Syria, and the Current Situation

The “Awakening” movement of moderate Sunni tribes supported by a surge of U.S. forces, which began in 2006, had all but eradicated al-Qaeda and ISI in Iraq by 2011.<sup>12</sup> At the end of that year, deaths among the Iraqi civilian population were at historic lows. The Awakening or *Sahwa* as it is known in Iraq was a movement in which Sunni tribesmen who had formerly fought against U.S. troops, mainly in western Iraq, eventually realigned themselves to help counter other insurgents, particularly those affiliated with al-Qaeda.<sup>13</sup> While the Sunni Awakening movement was successful in combatting extremism throughout Iraq, a disturbing sectarian dynamic within the country began to emerge following the withdrawal of U.S. fighting forces in 2011.

May 2013 saw the highest number of politically-related violent attacks in the past five years<sup>14</sup> and 750 people were killed in February of 2014 (610 civilians), the highest monthly death toll of this year.<sup>15</sup> At the current rate, the total civilian death toll for 2014 is likely to exceed 2013 levels. Much of the reason that the Iraqi Security Forces have struggled to control the violence is a lack of trust from Sunnis in Iraq towards the Maliki government. The government’s seeming intent to address a chiefly political issue--Sunni Arab representation in Baghdad--through tougher security measures has every chance of worsening the situation.<sup>16</sup> Maliki’s repeated use of deadly force to break up Sunni protest camps is believed to be motivating otherwise moderate Sunnis to throw their support behind ISIS as an alternative.

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<sup>12</sup> “Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State.” *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. “Sunni Awakening.” *Iraq War (2003–11)*, Online Edition, Last updated 2013, accessed February 7, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> “Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State.” *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Abdul-Zahra, Qassim. “UN tallies Iraq's deadliest month of 2014: 750 killed in April.” *The Associated Press*, May 1, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> “Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State.” *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

## ISIS Gains and Goals

The final "s" in the acronym of the group's name ISIS, stems from the Arabic word "al-Sham". The English translation means the Levant, Syria or even Damascus but in the context of the global jihad it refers to the Levant. Reports from multiple sources estimate the current number of ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria to be somewhere near 10,000 fighters, but the true numbers are not really known.<sup>17</sup> Many of the ISIS fighters are foreign in origin according to a report analysis by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.<sup>18</sup> Car bombs are one of the deadliest weapons used by this group, with daily coordinated waves of explosions regularly leaving scores dead in Baghdad and elsewhere across the country.<sup>19</sup>

In early 2014 the group's aims evolved from insurgent style bomb attacks on Shiite areas of Baghdad to bold seizures of multiple cities in the western Iraqi province of Anbar including Fallujah and Ramadi. The seizure of cities indicates a new boldness and confidence among ISIS in Iraq. While the government has fought ISIS for control of these cities, some remain in the hands of militant months after the initial seizure including Fallujah (Figure 1). Further, ISIS has reportedly become an active force on the insurgent council that now governs the city of Fallujah.<sup>20</sup> ISIS fighters also freely operate in the vast deserts of western Anbar, making the desert highways unsafe for travelers and Iraqi Security Forces. In March of 2014

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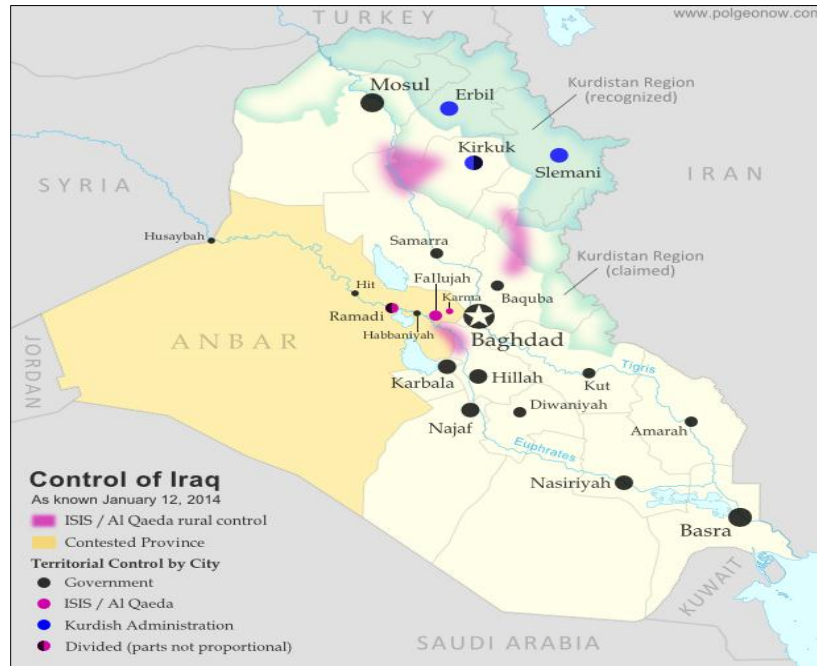
<sup>17</sup> Kitfield, James. "Can Another 'Anbar Awakening' Save Iraq?" *Defense One*, February 3, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Zelin, Aaron Y. "Up to 11,000 Foreign Fighters in Syria; Steep Rise Among Western Europeans." *Washington Institute for Near East Policy, ICSR Insight*, December 17, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Yacoub, Sameer N. "Iraqi militants accidentally kill 21 of their own." February 10, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Spyer, Jonathan. "New Sunni Insurgency in Iraq." *Counter Jihad Report*, March 24, 2014.

ISIS held a bold public parade in Fallujah atop Humvees captured from Iraqi government forces and the police.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 1 – Map of Territorial Control in Iraq at the Beginning of 2014.**  
Map by Evan Centanni (Political Geography Now), starting from this blank map by German Wikipedia user NordNordWest. License: CC BY-SA

ISIS also controls territory in Syria including the city of Raqqa, where the group provides food and social support to the local population and runs a radical Islamic school for children. The group’s stated goal is to establish an Islamic Caliphate that eventually encompasses the entire globe.<sup>22</sup> While this may sound absurd in its scope, the group’s members are zealous and dedicated in their pursuit of this goal. In the areas under their control they institute strict Islamic law and execute any who defy their religious edicts. Borzou Daraghi of the *Financial Times* described ISIS in the following terms, “It (ISIS) does not just take over villages. It repaints

<sup>21</sup> Mushreq, Abbas. “ISIS shifts tactics in Fallujah.” *Al-Monitor Iraq Pulse*, March 24, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Yacoub, Sameer N. “Iraqi militants accidentally kill 21 of their own.” *The Associated Press*, February 10, 2014.

government buildings black, hands its fighter's ministerial titles and puts them in charge of enforcing its austere vision of Islam. It speaks of Syria, Iraq and even Lebanon as one theatre of operations and boasts of its activities in all three countries."

And those who defy the ISIS groups are executed without discussion. There is not room for compromise with ISIS and the group is proud of their ultra-extremist methods. They have also expanded their bombing and terror campaign from Syria and Iraq to Lebanon and Turkey.<sup>23</sup> This choice to expand their theater of operations could spread the group thin, but continued gains in Iraq and Syria draw more foreign fighters from abroad who are inspired by the group's Islamic vision for the world. The ISIS was born in Iraq under ISI and al-Qaeda, and the latest iteration of the group still has strong ties to the country in spite of their activity in Syria.

According to experts with The Council on Foreign Relations, the group's financing comes from sources such as smuggling, extortion, and other crime, mostly in areas under its control.<sup>24</sup> The group extorts taxes from businesses small and large, netting millions of dollars in payments according to some estimates.<sup>25</sup> Supporters in the region, including those based in Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, are also believed to have provided the bulk of past funding for the group.

Hamid al-Mutlaq--a member of the Iraqi parliament's security and defines committee--told the Associated Press that ISIS and other terrorist groups have made a strong comeback in Iraq and that the security problems are far from over, and things are heading from bad to

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<sup>23</sup> Tawfeeq, Mohammed and Smith-Spark, Laura. "Islamist group ISIS claims deadly Lebanon blast, promises more violence." *CNN News Report*, January 4, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Laub, Zachary and Masters, Jonathan. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq (a.k.a. Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria)." *Council on Foreign Relations Background Profile*, January 9, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



worse.<sup>26</sup> ISIS continues to target Shiites, Iraqi Security Forces, and former Awakening council members throughout the country in daily bomb attacks. In Anbar Province a suicide bomber blew himself up at the funeral for a leader of the local Sunni Awakening council. The suicide bomber killed 13 people, including other Awakening members and tribal leaders, according to security officials, while 37 others were wounded.<sup>27</sup> This trend of attacks on government forces and their allies from ISIS and other militant groups is only expected to continue through 2014.

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<sup>26</sup> Yacoub, Sameer N. "Iraqi militants accidentally kill 21 of their own." *The Associated Press*, February 10, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Adnan, Duraid. "Iraq Hit by Wave of Bombings and Attacks." *The New York Times*, March 21, 2014.

## Chapter 3

### Maliki's Policies in Iraq 2008-2013

Understanding the current security environment in Iraq must begin with a cause-and-effect examination of Maliki government policies. The implementation of policies that appear to favor Shiites at the expense of Sunnis has been a contributing factor to an increase in sectarian violence in Iraq since the U.S. withdrawal began in 2009. Throughout his seven-year tenure, critics of Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki, such as the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, argue that he has implemented a divide-and-conquer strategy that has left the most credible Sunni Arab leadership relatively powerless.

The Council of Foreign Relations, a non-partisan think tank, described Maliki's approach to leadership in Iraq post-2011 as follows, "Maliki's tactics closely echo the pattern laid down by his predecessors, from Iraq's post-Ottoman monarchs to its first prime minister, Abdul Karim Kassem, to Saddam himself: put yourself first, and guard power with a ruthless security apparatus. Maliki's harassment and persecution of anyone deemed a threat to himself or his party has dramatically reduced freedom throughout Iraq."<sup>28</sup> Most concerning is that at a time when many Sunnis feel isolated from the government of Maliki, ISIS has infiltrated the country and exacerbated sectarian issues in Iraq, pushing the country closer than ever to a civil war.

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<sup>28</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

## Maliki's Rise to Power and Outside Influences in Iraqi Politics

Nouri al-Maliki came to power as a compromise candidate for prime minister and was formally elected to the post in May of 2006. Maliki was instrumental in the signing of the first Iraqi constitution in 2005, the drafting of which most Sunni politicians boycotted to their later regret.<sup>29</sup> This early protest move by Sunnis led to a loss of political power for the Sunni political bloc from the beginning of the new Iraqi government. Maliki also had large political and financial support from Iran which has led him to lean towards favored (and sometimes familial) Shiite appointments in the Iraqi government and support for Assad in Syria.

Joost Hiltermann, the *International Crisis Group's* deputy program director for the Middle East, stated that Maliki is very reliant on Iran for his power and Iran has backed Syria all the way in the current conflict in that country. The Iranians and the Syrians were all critical to Maliki's reelection to prime minister in 2010 and keeping him in power now, so Maliki finds himself in the difficult position of having to play to outside interests. In 2010, Iran pressured Assad into supporting Maliki for prime minister, which eventually helped Maliki gain his second term.<sup>30</sup> Since early 2011, Maliki and Assad have strengthened relations, signing trade deals and increasing Syrian investment in Iraq, a closeness not seen between the two nations in many years.<sup>31</sup> The move closer to Iran and Syria by Maliki has only worsened relations with Iraqi Sunnis, who were adamantly against closer ties with both countries.

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<sup>29</sup> "Iraq ten years on – The Slow Road Back." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, March 2, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Schmidt, Michael S. and Ghazi, Yasir. "Iraqi Leader Backs Syria, With a Nudge from Iran." *The New York Times*, Online Edition, August 12, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Schmidt, Michael S. and Ghazi, Yasir. "Iraqi Leader Backs Syria, With a Nudge from Iran." *The New York Times*, Online Edition, August 12, 2011.

But Maliki's support has not only come from Iran, and Maliki and his government do not bare sole responsibility for creating sectarian issues in Iraq and the resulting security vacuum exploited by ISIS. The slide away from democracy in Iraq began in 2008 when the newly elected Obama administration shifted its focus and funding in Iraq away from shoring up democratic principles, as it had during the surge. Instead Washington focused on securing its long-term strategic relationship with Baghdad--especially with Prime Minister Maliki--so that it could more easily withdraw U.S. forces.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the United States failed to capitalize on the gains of the U.S. troop surge and awakening movement in western Iraq, thereby damaging the chances that a unified, nonsectarian government could emerge.<sup>33</sup>

However the biggest outside influencer leading to a consolidated and sectarian Maliki government came in the summer of 2010, when the United States dropped the pretense of neutrality by backing Maliki for the post of prime minister over Iyad Allawi--a secular Shiite supported by the country's Sunnis;<sup>34</sup> even though Allawi's party had received more votes in the national elections held in March 2006. U.S. officials argued that only a Shiite Islamist had the credibility and legitimacy to serve as prime minister and disparaged any alternative to Maliki. The effects of the U.S. strong support of Maliki effectively gave him a mandate when he came to power in Iraq. The *Council on Foreign Affairs* believes that by anointing Maliki, a devout Shiite who already had Iran's endorsement, the United States gave Maliki the confidence to

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<sup>32</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

avoid serious compromises with Allawi and the Sunnis, and the green light to consolidate power.<sup>35</sup>

### **Crackdowns on Sunni's and Policies of Consolidation**

Al-Iraqiya, the political movement to which Sunni Arabs most readily relate in Iraq, slowly came apart due to internal rivalries, as Maliki resorted to both legal and extrajudicial means to consolidate power following his reelection in 2010.<sup>3637</sup> Sunnis were quickly marginalized by an ethno-sectarian apportionment that confined them to minority status in a system dominated by Shiites and Kurds.<sup>38</sup> As a result of accumulated grievances, since late 2012 Sunnis have participated in multiple peaceful protest movements in the style of the Arab spring throughout the country, although most have been in the western Sunni region and the provinces of Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Diyala and portions of Baghdad.<sup>3940</sup>

The trigger for the first violent movement among Sunnis against the Maliki government was the arrest of more than 100 men in the entourage of Rafi Issawi, Maliki's Sunni minister of finance in December of 2012. A similar move by police units controlled by the prime minister forced Tariq al-Hashemi, a Sunni deputy prime minister, into exile in 2011 on trumped up charges.<sup>41</sup> 2011 saw the emergence of Maliki as a bold Shiite leader willing to push Sunni leaders out of the Iraqi government, forge closer ties to Syria and Iran, and violently crack down

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<sup>35</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

<sup>36</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Wicken, Stephen. "Iraq's Sunnis in Crisis." *Institute for the Study of War*, Middle East Security Report 11, May 2013.

<sup>38</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Bergen, Peter L., Fishman, Brian. *Bombers, bank accounts & bleedout al-Qaida's road in and out of Iraq*. Combating Terrorism Center (U.S.), Harmony Program, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, New York, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> "Iraq ten years on – The Slow Road Back." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, March 2, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

on Sunni protest movements and label those participating as terrorist. These three tenants create the basis for Maliki's policies in Iraq with regard to Sunnis since 2008.

The protests by Sunnis have been directed at Maliki and his policies which lessen Sunni participation in the government. They are led mostly at the local level by tribal and religious leaders and split more or less into two factions: *Iraqiya*, a secular non-sectarian coalition, and a more religious Islamist movement mainly headed by the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), which has led many of the major protests.<sup>42</sup> Not having a united political front further lessened Sunni power as they had no single representative in the government and became more fractured. Maliki reportedly exploited this fracture, splitting Sunni party votes in the Iraqi Parliament, by supporting certain Sunni factions and playing them off each other.<sup>43</sup>

When Maliki became Prime Minister for a second time in late 2010, he took control of the interior, defense, and national security ministries, while consolidating important positions and pushing out Sunnis.<sup>44</sup> This is also around the time Maliki started to ignore renewed calls from the U.S. for Iraq to honor democratic reforms that were promised to Sunnis but never delivered.<sup>45</sup> Not long after in 2011, Maliki tightened his grip on the mainly Sunni provinces and also started breaking up the remaining Awakening council members and slashing their pay.<sup>46</sup>

Part of the success of the Awakening movement was that the U.S. made sure that the Anbar Awakening, the Awakening councils, and the Sons of Iraq--all groups of former Islamist

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<sup>42</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Parker, Ned. "The Iraq We Left Behind - Welcome to the World's Next Failed State." *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, March/April 2012.

<sup>44</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism* 2 No. 1, NDU Press, 2010.

fighters turned counterinsurgents--were well paid. But Maliki cut the payment to this defense force by over half and made higher paid government jobs available to them instead in order to buy loyalty.<sup>47</sup> This move both weakened the defense force against jihadist groups in the lawless Sunni regions where the Iraqi Security Forces had a tough time operating, and further enraged local Sunnis who saw Maliki as a bully fracturing the Sunni political movement. Security immediately began to deteriorate in the areas near Syria, just as the conflict in that country was intensifying. Maliki had also been a vocal supporter of the Assad regime, which played into Sunni grievances and created more recruitment ammunition for ISIS and other jihadist groups.

### **Increased Protest Violence in 2013**

This past year has seen some of the worst sectarian issues boil over in Iraq, which most security specialists believe are directly the result of Maliki's policies. As events in Syria nurtured their hopes for a political comeback, Sunni Arabs launched an unprecedented, peaceful protest movement in late 2012. Maliki chose to break a four-month protest stalemate lead by moderate Sunni groups. On 23 April 2013, government forces raided a protest camp in the city of Hawija, in Kirkuk province north of Baghdad, killing over 50 and injuring 110.<sup>48</sup> This sparked a wave of violence exceeding anything witnessed in over five years. Before this event, deaths related to sectarian violence in Iraq remained at their lowest levels since the U.S. invasion, but after Hawija the violence increased to near record levels of deaths as quickly as mid-2013.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Jocelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda in Iraq, Syria a 'transnational threat'." *The Long War Journal*, Online Edition, November 1, 2013.

The violent dispersal of the protest camp at Hawija was the first major violent crackdown by the Maliki government on Sunni opposition protests, but would not be the last. On December 30, 2013, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) stormed the al-Ramadi protest square, forcibly dispersing protesters yet again. The move resulted in open clashes between the ISF and armed members of the al-Anbar tribes.<sup>50</sup> Maliki has also banned the media in Iraq from reporting on the government crackdown in Ramadi.

In a recent assessment of the government action in December 2013, the Arab Center for Research and Policy in Qatar described the actions of the Maliki government in Ramadi as resorting to threats and intimidation, framing the protests as externally-backed acts of treason. In their report translated from Arabic, they claim Maliki created official committees to study the protestors' key demands while at the same time attempting to link the protest movement to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS).<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, in order to justify issuing arrest warrants on "terrorism" charges, the government accused the protest movement's leaders of inciting violence and sectarianism, forcing most of them to leave Iraq.

Disunity among Sunni political groups caused by Maliki interference has led many locals to support the ISIS militant group currently in control of multiple cities in western Iraq. This is a situation that will quickly spin out of the control in the west if ISIS is able to maintain its foothold in cities it currently occupies, including Fallujah. Control of towns by ISIS has brought harsh Sharia-based governance to local communities, where both moderate and even right-

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<sup>50</sup> "Maliki's Policies: The Quest for Salvation at Iraq's Expense." *The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*, Policy Analysis Unit – ACRPS, Assessment Report, January, 9, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> "Maliki's Policies: The Quest for Salvation at Iraq's Expense." *The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*, Policy Analysis Unit – ACRPS, Assessment Report, January, 9, 2014.



wing Sunnis have found themselves marginalized again, and this time by the jihadists.

Prolonged deterioration of Iraq's internal security threatens to render any possible political initiatives irrelevant.<sup>52</sup> Maliki is not blind to the current security situation his policies have created, but as long as he has strong oil revenues and the support of Iran, he has no incentive to give Sunnis more power in the Iraqi government.

Maliki is suspicious of Sunni leaders, and some of the leaders of the protest movement fought in the insurgency against the Iraqi government led by Maliki from 2006-2009. He does not trust the Sunnis for that reason and he may prefer a violent Iraq, where he has near total control, to a more stable and democratic Iraq where he has to relinquish his control to Sunnis. The current political culture under Maliki is eroding the democratic institutions established under the occupation of the United States. Ramzy Mardidni of the Iraq Institute for Strategic Studies put it succinctly in a recent op-ed on Maliki's policies, "While a constitution exists, Iraq is not a constitutional state; Parliament passes legislation, but the rule of law is selective; elections are merely a game to divide the spoils between corrupt elites; and the government gets massive profits from oil exports, but fails to provide basic services, while nearly a quarter of Iraqis live in poverty."<sup>53</sup>

This kind of centralized internal power and financial control helps to ensure that Maliki can weather protests and still pursue policies that seem at odds with the security situation. An internal balance of power has failed to emerge. Instead, Iraq's political system favors the prime

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<sup>52</sup> Wicken, Stephen. "Iraq's Sunnis in Crisis." *Institute for the Study of War*, Middle East Security Report 11, May 2013.

<sup>53</sup> Mardini, Ramzy and Sky, Emma. "Maliki's Democratic Farce." *New York Times*, Op-Ed Pages, October 27, 2013.

minister over the legislature, the judiciary and the rest of the political class, and the central government over the regional and provincial governments.<sup>54</sup>

Government armed forces in Iraq are caught up in a violent cycle of repression and reprisal killings against Sunnis – making a bad situation worse. Shiite militias are also reforming as a way to protect themselves from the Sunni insurgent groups and ISIS attacks. The violence seen now reflects the growing alienation of the embattled Sunni Arab population in the context of intensifying regional sectarian polarization.<sup>55</sup> This heavy handed Maliki response followed by Sunni attacks and Shiite reprisals is leading a brutal cycle of sectarianism. Additionally, in the years since the first Awakening a number of Sunni tribal sheikhs who took part in the movement have been arrested by the Baghdad government or assassinated by al-Qaeda groups.

### **Security Implications**

According to security analyst and national security expert James Kitfield, Maliki's promises to give the Sunni sheikhs government salaries and incorporate their militias into Shiite-dominated Iraq Security Forces were never fully kept. A new generation of Sunni tribal leaders now believes their elders were duped by Maliki, and many of them have no intention of helping him out of the current crisis.<sup>56</sup> Robert Baer, a former Middle East case officer for the CIA who has recently been in touch with a number of the Sunni tribal sheikhs, described his opinion on the situation between Maliki and the Sunni tribes. "There is a revolt going on in the Anbar desert, led by a younger generation of Sunni tribal leaders, who are pissed off and reject

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<sup>54</sup> Mardini, Ramzy and Sky, Emma. "Maliki's Democratic Farce." *New York Times*, Op-Ed Pages, October 27, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State." *International Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144*, August 14, 2013.

<sup>56</sup> Kitfield, James. "Can Another 'Anbar Awakening' Save Iraq?" *Defense One*, February 3, 2014.

the older generation's failed outreach to Maliki, and they see only a future of repression in a Shiite-led Iraq," he said. "They just want to cut all ties to Baghdad and break the country apart, which is what is happening before our eyes."<sup>57</sup>

Former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James Jeffrey described the current U.S. view of the situation involving Maliki. "The best option now," he said, "is for the United States to give the Iraq government military aid to enable them in the fight against al-Qaeda, and then to use that leverage to convince Maliki to be more reasonable in dealing with the Sunnis."<sup>58</sup> When the Maliki government's policies are examined from many different viewpoints, what emerges is a consistent theme of marginalization and sectarianism. While Maliki did not create the ISIS problem in western Iraq, it appears that the policies enacted under his leadership exacerbated an already tense sectarian divide between Sunnis and Shiites, especially in western Iraq.

While the security situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, Maliki has reached out to the United States for assistance in combating ISIS. In October of 2013, Maliki traveled to Washington to meet with President Obama in order to secure aid and weaponry to fight ISIS. While the Pentagon already has sped up the delivery of missiles and surveillance drones to Iraq, the message coming from Washington has been clear: Maliki is on his own this time.<sup>59</sup> But this could be problematic.

Without involvement from the U.S. in shaping the strategy against ISIS in Iraq, and without a guarantee from Maliki that increases Sunni involvement in the Iraqi government, such powerful military aid may only worsen the violence. Iran will also continue to be an

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<sup>57</sup> Kitfield, James. "Can Another 'Anbar Awakening' Save Iraq?" *Defense One*, February 3, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Gaskell, Stephanie. "Can Iraq Be Trusted with U.S. Attack Helicopters?" *Defense One*, January 9, 2014.

obstacle to a Sunni reconciliation in Iraq and will continue to put pressure on Maliki to support Assad. It is important to note that parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place in Iraq on April 30 of 2014. Maliki is running for his third consecutive term as prime minister, and if he wins, he would remain in power until 2018.

## Chapter 4

### An Examination of COIN Strategy in Iraq from 2007-2010

#### What is COIN Strategy and How Was it Used in Iraq?

This chapter will examine the past use of modern counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy against al-Qaeda groups in Iraq from 2007-2010 by the United States, local Sunni tribes, and the Iraqi Security Forces. This will be done through evaluating civilian death data during the time period as provided by the United Nations. Focusing on civilian death figures as a measurement tool does admittedly have limitations in its ability to fully assess the success or failure of COIN in Iraq, but it is a major factor that mirrors levels of violence in Iraq and thus provides a good baseline to compare against current civilian death figures and levels of violence.

U.S.-led COIN strategy in Iraq was first implemented in 2006-2007 following a rise in attacks by Sunni extremist groups including al-Qaeda and their affiliates. The U.S. military's COIN strategy in Iraq was based on the Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) entitled simply *Counterinsurgency*. This manual had recently been re-written in 2006 with the assistance of academics, diplomats, intelligence officers, lawyers, human rights experts, and journalists, under the direction of Army general David Petraeus and Marine Corps general James Mattis.<sup>60</sup> *Counterinsurgency* formed the basis for COIN strategy used in Iraq from 2007-2010.

In order to understand how COIN strategy was used in Iraq, it is important to define the term counterinsurgency and understand the U.S.-led effort to combat Sunni extremists which

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<sup>60</sup> Kilcullen, David J. *Counterinsurgency*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2010.

began in 2006-2007. It is also critical to understand the roots of the Sunni Awakening movement that accompanied the U.S. troop surge and COIN strategy that was so instrumental in countering extremist groups. The FM 3-24 Army and Marine field manual broadly defines counterinsurgency strategy as the military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.<sup>61</sup>

COIN strategy blends many different factors that affect whether or not an effort against an insurgency will be successful, most of which are not focused solely on military force. COIN strategy emphasizes strong engagement of the local population and puts a premium on avoiding civilian casualties. In the language of counterinsurgency, this effort is referred to as winning the hearts, minds, and acquiescence (cooperation) of the local population. The core component of a successful COIN strategy is ensuring that the local population feels that it can trust foreign forces. Locals must believe that they have a legitimate voice in the government in the transition phase that follows the completion of any successful counterinsurgency strategy. It is critical to understand that in Iraq the main reason that COIN strategy was successful was the participation of local Sunni fighters and political tribal councils.

Following the invasion of Iraq by coalition forces in 2003, Sunnis revolted against relinquishing governmental power they had enjoyed under Saddam rather than share control with Shiites. The main motivation for Sunni groups to partner with the United States in 2006 against extremist groups - known as the Sunni Awakening - was an attempt to recoup Sunni losses once the United States had seemingly changed its position in response to their

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<sup>61</sup> Kilcullen, David J. *Counterinsurgency.* Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2010.

grievances.<sup>62</sup> One of the main incentives for the Sunni community to work with the Americans was that they increasingly saw al-Qaeda and Iran as more immediate threats than the U.S. occupation or the Iraqi government.<sup>63</sup>

## **Defining Success**

It must be acknowledged that other variables can be used to assess the success of the COIN strategy used in Iraq. COIN success varies widely depending largely on the particular insurgency under examination. R. Scott Moore, a counterinsurgency expert and practitioner with the U.S. Marine Corps, defines COIN strategy success in the following terms: "Successful counterinsurgency results from a long-term, continuous, and integrated civil-military strategy carried out by soldiers and civilians operating side-by-side, that builds lasting social, political, and economic stability in a state or region while resolving the underlying causes that that led to insurgency."<sup>64</sup> Iraq met many of these measurement metrics that constitute COIN success, including an integrated strategy with civilians and soldiers operating side-by-side.

Solving the underlying causes that led to the insurgency is a more of a mixed bag. Until the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, it can be argued that political gains were made between Sunnis and Shiites. Looking at the sectarian issues in Iraq today, it appears that the underlying issues remain, but this actually has more to do with political policies instituted since the COIN strategy ended in 2011, not as a result of tactics used during the effort. In the case of Iraq, other metrics exist for measuring success such as control of urban areas, denial of safe

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<sup>62</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Moore, R. Scott. "The Basics of Counterinsurgency." *Retrieved September 8 (2007): 2007.*

havens in which insurgents can safely operate, control of territory, support of the local population, and institution of new governance in areas formerly controlled by insurgents.

For the purposes of this paper, civilian deaths will be used as the primary measuring variable for success of COIN strategy. Using civilian deaths as a measurement of success is by no means a complete and comprehensive assessment of COIN operations in Iraq, merely an examination of outcomes based on levels of violence. It should be noted that in all other variables that constitute success of COIN outlined above, significant gains were made in Iraq during the Awakening. Civilian death numbers provide more data and numbers with which to compare changes over time and were thus selected as the variable for comparison in this examination. That does not mean it is neither the sole measurement tool for COIN strategy nor the only considered in making an assessment of success in Iraq in this paper.

### **Sunni Awakening Movement and COIN Implementation**

Retired Major General Najim abed al-Jabouri--an international fellow at the National Defense University--describes the Sunni Awakening movement as having two main parts: the Anbar Awakening and the Awakening councils, commonly known as the Sons of Iraq program. The Anbar Awakening was an Iraqi grassroots initiative supported by the United States and paid for by the Iraqi government.<sup>65</sup> The Sons of Iraq program was a U.S.-led and -funded initiative to spread the success of the Anbar Awakening into other Sunni areas, particularly heterogeneous areas, and was not fully supported by the Iraqi government.<sup>66</sup> Both of these initiatives were

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<sup>65</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.



highly successful in combating al-Qaeda insurgents in Iraq and the programs provided key intelligence to U.S. forces which was vital to eliminating their strongholds in the west of Iraq.

In his analysis of the U.S. COIN strategy in Iraq, al-Jabouri makes the important point that if not for al-Qaeda's murder and intimidation campaign on Sunnis and its tactic of creating a sectarian war, the Anbar Awakening--a fundamental factor in the success of the 2007 surge--most probably would not have occurred, and it would have been difficult for the United States in 2006 to convince Sunnis to partner with them in a fight against al-Qaeda. After the U.S.-led invasion, and until 2006, al-Qaeda had provided safe havens for Sunnis fearful of Shiite reprisals. This all changed as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) began targeting Sunnis as well as Shiites in attacks that took on a cruel and vicious quality. Sunnis who joined the Sons of Iraq program saw American troop deployments as a great benefit because they were a stabilizing force in what were otherwise potential grounds for increasing sectarian violence fueled mainly by AQI and its affiliate groups.<sup>67</sup>

The U.S. supported and coordinated with Sons of Iraq and Awakening fighters and empowered the Sunnis in Iraq who felt they would have no voice and would suffer further sectarian discrimination from Maliki and his government. While the U.S. supplied the money and the strategy, the COIN effort would have failed without Sunni cooperation. As David Kilcullen pointed out in his treatise on counterinsurgency strategy, "Provided you mobilize the population, you will win."<sup>68</sup> The U.S. was also seen as more of an honest broker to Sunnis than

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<sup>66</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Abed Al-Jabouri, Najim and Jensen, Sterling. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." *Prism 2 No. 1*, NDU Press, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Kilcullen, David J. *Counterinsurgency*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2010.

the Maliki government, which they highly distrusted and saw as an Iranian puppet. The role of the U.S. as a trusted mediator between the Sunnis and Iraqi government was crucial to the COIN strategy.

The main focus of the actual U.S. COIN strategy was an increase in U.S. troop levels, commonly called the “surge,” with tactics that involved an immersion of coalition forces among the Iraqi population. This involved moving U.S. troops and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) out of their remote bases outside of cities and placing them directly among local populations. This was designed to demonstrate to locals that ISF and U.S. forces were there to protect the civilians and offer them support on a daily basis. The COIN strategy also focused on more involvement of the population in governance and rebuilding areas destroyed during the invasion and insurgency.

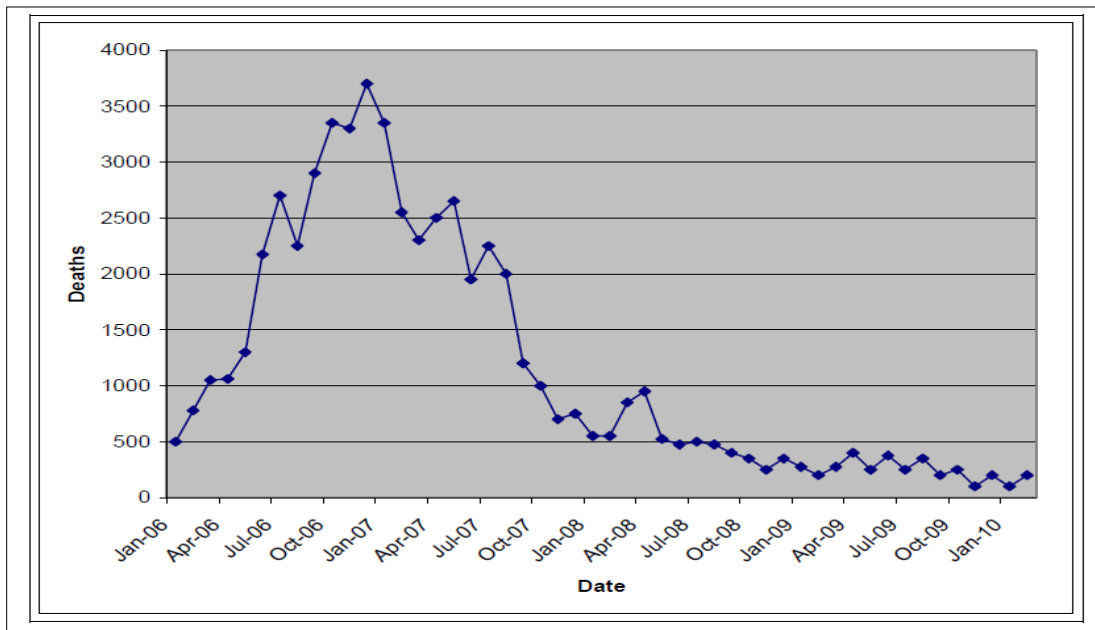
This involved community engagement with Sunnis in the west of Iraq where there was a large amount of mistrust and distance between U.S. troops, Iraqi Shiites, and Iraqi Sunnis. The successful COIN strategy in Iraq combined three areas of importance: transforming the attitudes and beliefs of Sunnis, sustained action and operations against insurgent groups including ISI, and rebuilding structures and authorities in lawless areas like Anbar province.<sup>69</sup> These three areas of importance constituted the legs of the table of COIN strategy in Iraq as implemented by the U.S., ISF, and local Sunni tribal fighters.

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<sup>69</sup> Moore, R. Scott. "The Basics of Counterinsurgency." *Retrieved September 8 (2007): 2007.*

## Iraqi Civilian Deaths – COIN Outcomes by the Numbers

Much of the recent sectarian violence that emerged in Iraq speaks to the Maliki government’s policy decisions following the U.S. withdrawal and an outright unwillingness to respond to accumulated grievances by Sunnis. As Sunnis in Iraq felt more marginalized by Maliki, he continued to attempt to consolidate political power, just as violence from the outbreak of civil war in Syria spilled over into Iraq. When Maliki took over the Prime Ministry in 2006, civilians deaths were on the rise and would top out around 3500 per month that year in November (see Figure 2 below).<sup>70</sup>



**Figure 2 – Department of Defense - Iraqi Civilian Deaths, January 2006-February 2010.**  
U.S. Congressional Research Service rendition of DOD graph, as derived from *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2010, p. 30, at [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Measuring\\_Stability\\_and\\_Security\\_in\\_Iraq\\_March\\_2009.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Measuring_Stability_and_Security_in_Iraq_March_2009.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Fischer, Hannah. "Iraq Civilian Death Estimates." *Congressional Research Service*, August 27, 2008.

Later in 2006, with the implementation of the surge, the civilian death toll numbers began to slowly fall as the Awakening Movement combined with U.S. COIN strategy took hold, and by 2008, the death numbers had fallen to levels in the hundreds per month.<sup>71</sup> While they would spike twice in early 2008, the numbers consistently fell as the surge continued to be effective and civilian deaths were at their lowest point ever (since the U.S. invasion) when the U.S. fully withdrew from Iraq in 2011 (see Table 1 below).

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

\*2011 totals are through October. Beginning May 2010, we are compiling information regarding civilian fatalities from Iraqi government figures. In July 2010, the U.S. military released figures much lower than the Iraqi government, but many months over the 18 months prior were similar using both reporting methods.

**Table 1 – Total Estimated Iraqi Civilian Fatalities, by Year.**  
 Source: *Brookings Institution Iraq Index Report January 31, 2011.*  
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Centers/saban/iraq%20index/index20110131.PDF>.

A report created by the Congressional Research Service in 2010 indicated that by 2008 the monthly death toll for civilians in Iraq had begun to drop sharply and that it continued to go down during the two year-period when the Awakening Movement and COIN strategy was in full swing from 2008-2010.<sup>72</sup> As a result of the COIN strategy, by February of 2008 Iraqi civilian deaths were down to a 23 month low.<sup>73</sup> The death toll for Iraqi civilians would continue to fall through 2011 where the death figures would eventually bottom out, right as the COIN strategy

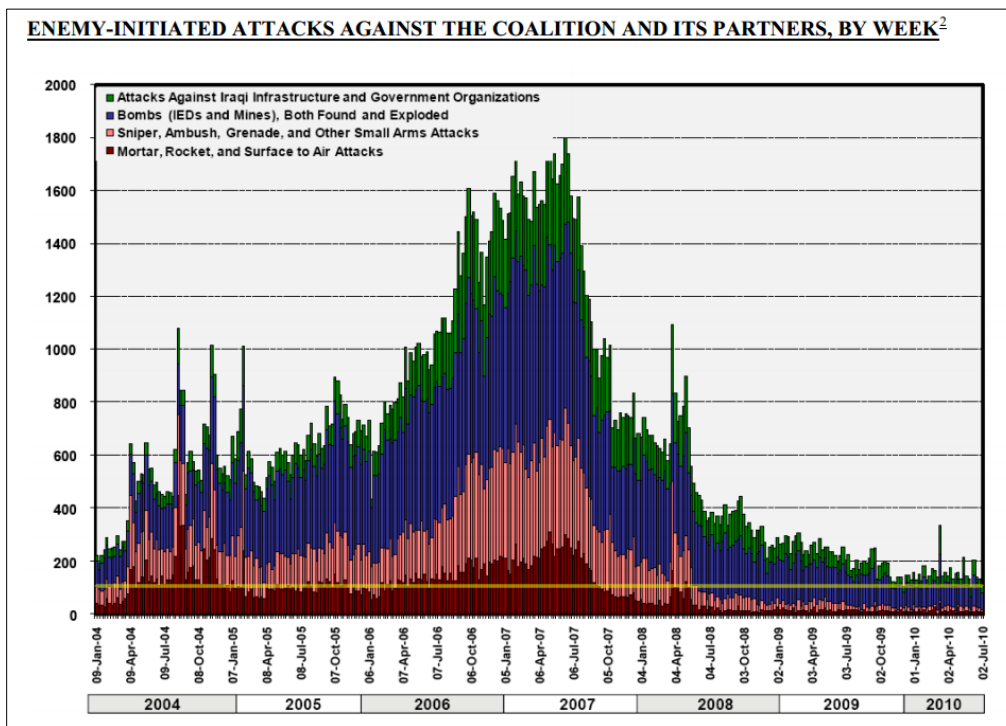
<sup>71</sup> Fischer, Hannah. "Iraq Casualties: U.S. Military Forces and Iraqi Civilians, Police, and Security Forces." *Congressional Research Service*, June 11, 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

ended, shortly after U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq, and right as the war in Syria was beginning.<sup>74</sup>

Some believe that the number of attacks against Iraqi and coalition forces began to decrease from 2007-2008, a downward trend that mirrored the reduction in Iraqi civilian deaths. The graph below (Figure 3) created by the Brookings Institution Iraq Index Report from 2011, shows the total amount of attacks against coalition forces and its partners (Iraqi Security Forces and Sunni tribal forces). This illustrates that violence overall in Iraq did fall significantly once COIN strategy combined with Sunni tribal forces began to be implemented from 2007-2008.



**Figure 3 – Enemy-Initiated Attacks against the Coalition and its Partners, by Week.**

Source: Brookings Institution Iraq Index Report January 31, 2011.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Centers/saban/iraq%20index/index20110131.PDF>

<sup>74</sup> "Iraq attacks including bomb at Tarmiya leave 20 dead." BBC News Article, December 3, 2013.

More importantly, when the U.S. withdrew from Iraq in 2009-2010, Maliki continued many of the COIN strategies that were put in place under the Americans. In fact, the counterinsurgency strategy carried on by Maliki continued to bear fruit and in 2010 the two leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq--Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi--were killed by Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>75</sup> However, from 2011-2012 Maliki began aggressively pursuing his new marginalizing policies by cracking down on Sunni grievances and protests and defunding of local Sunni fighters. At the same time, the war was also breaking out in Syria. The civilian death toll began to creep up again in Iraq in 2013 as a result of these policy decisions, along with spillover violence from Syria, and has reached heights in 2014 not seen since the peak of the insurgency in 2008.<sup>76</sup> According to figures collected by the U.S. government, in 2013 ISIL carried out thirty-eight separate suicide bombings in Iraq in the October of 2013 alone and twelve in the month of November.<sup>77</sup>

However, the issue of whether COIN was successfully implemented by the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq has still not been decided conclusively. Critics argue that factors other than COIN --such as the Sons of Iraq program -- played a more significant role in reducing the insurgency and violence in Iraq.<sup>78</sup> Looking at civilian death data offers at best a limited assessment of the COIN strategy in Iraq, which would necessitate a full research effort in itself. Rather, this shows that observable gains in lower civilian deaths were obtained during the implementation of U.S. COIN strategy and its enlistment of the local Sunni movement.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibrahim, Waleed. "Al Qaeda's two top Iraq leaders killed in raid." *Reuters News Article*, April 19, 2010.

<sup>76</sup> "Violence in Iraq's Anbar province 'displaces 300,000'." *BBC News Article*, February 12, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Roggio, Bill. "ISIS continues to launch suicide assaults in Iraq." *The Long War Journal*, Online News Article, December 4, 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Mark, C., "Kilcullen and the efficacy of contemporary counterinsurgency." *APSA Conference 2010*, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, September 27-29, 2010.

Maliki's repeated marginalization of local Sunnis who control the western Syrian border regions is undermining the security of that area. The tribes and fighters in the west during the surge were critical in providing intelligence about local al-Qaeda operations, as well as in establishing a political coalition for Sunnis to rally around. At the time of the COIN effort, there was a limited political reconciliation and dialogue between the Iraqi government and Sunnis. This approach helped to ensure short term security, but it was quickly abandoned by Maliki following the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Long term stability continues to evade Iraqis as a result.

The importance of the cooperation of the Maliki government in the success of the Awakening Movement and U.S. COIN strategy was paramount. Maliki worked closely with Sunni leaders to coordinate security efforts and provide support. Without cooperation between Maliki and Sunni leaders, the COIN strategy in Iraq would not have been as successful. It was only effective because there was full participation from both Shiites and Sunnis, with the U.S. working as a mediator between the two.

## Chapter 5

### **Sectarian Society in Iraq: Social and Religious Demography and the Role of Popular Support in the Current Insurgency**

The main questions examined in this chapter are: How do the social and religious relationships between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds impact the success of implementing a Counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and why would local Sunnis support such an extreme group as ISIS? This section will also examine why a social welfare element provided by a government is so vital to supplement a Counterinsurgency strategy, and how that works in a society with such varied sectarian and religious differences as Iraq.

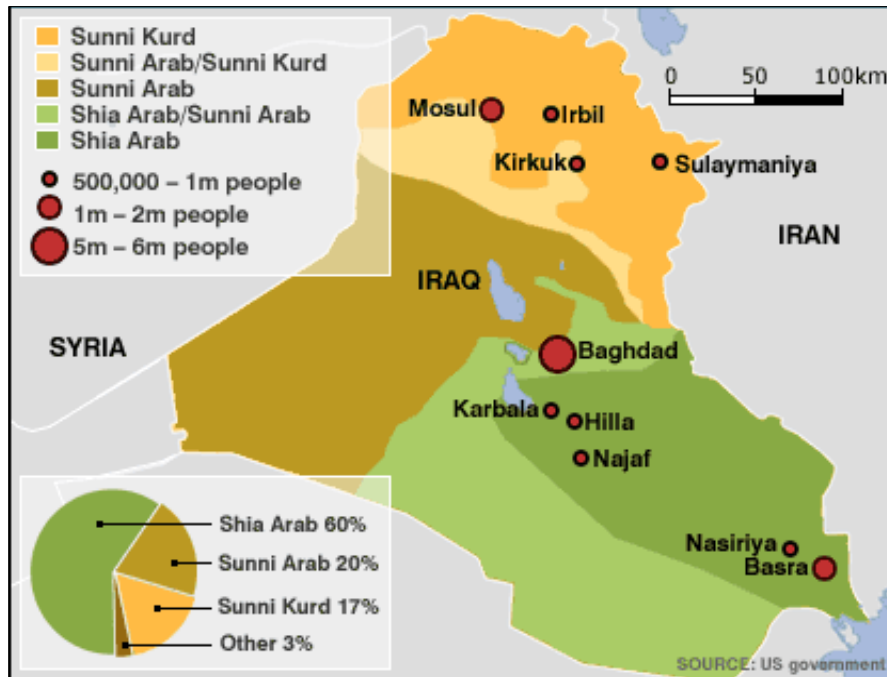
Democratic and social reforms in Iraq are necessary, but they must take in all of the complexities within the country. In order to understand the current rise in sectarian violence in Iraq, it is vital to also understand the religious and tribal issues that underlie the conflict. The Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish social elements in Iraq and Syria are at the heart of the problems. How these groups see themselves and each other must be fully understood in order to facilitate communication and cooperation between them all in a cohesive Iraqi state.



## Demographics of Iraq

Iraq's 32 million inhabitants are mostly Muslim. They are divided along both religious (Shia and Sunni) and ethnic (Arab and Kurdish) lines (Figure 4). Under Saddam Hussein and the secular rule of the Baath party, the Sunni Arab minority dominated political and economic life.<sup>79</sup>

While there has been voluntary relocation of many Christian families to northern Iraq,



**Figure 4 – Map of Religious and Ethnic Groups in Iraq.**

Source: United States Government

recent reporting done by the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook indicates that the overall Christian population may have dropped by as much as 50 percent since the fall of the Saddam's regime in 2003, with many fleeing to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.<sup>80</sup> The Kurds are the

<sup>79</sup> "Life in Iraq – Iraq: 10 Years On." *BBC News Special Report*, July 29, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> "Iraq: People and Society." *CIA World Factbook*, Online Country Database, Last Updated March 11, 2014.

largest ethnic minority, comprising 15-20% of the population.<sup>81</sup> The Kurds speak their own distinct language and are dominant in the northern and mountainous region of Iraq, known as Kurdistan. Other minorities--Turkomen and Assyrians--make up roughly 5% of the population and are interspersed throughout the country.<sup>82</sup>

A theory for explaining the continued internal strife between these various ethnic and religious groups comes from Matthew Saayman, an author for the journal *Conflict & Security*. He posits that one of main sources of sectarianism in Iraq has mostly to do with the agnostic and exclusionary make-up of Iraqi society. He argues that the disparate religious (or secular) groups and ethnic populations of Iraq share no "social identity." Social identity theory is an individual's conceptualization of himself or herself based on a perceived membership in a group.<sup>83</sup> What makes a society heterogeneous is not merely the existence of multiple group identities but the multitude of certain types of group identities.

Saayman uses social identity theory to look at Iraq and highlights work done by Janet Gross Stein. Stein contends that an individual's identification with a particular group intensifies during or after a conflict to the point that negative perceptions are engrained in the minds of individuals; these perceptions, or "enemy images," are difficult to reverse.<sup>84</sup> In a situation of uncertainty or insecurity--such as the breakdown of state authority or the current conflict in Iraq--an individual will more closely associate with some identities than with others, often to

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<sup>81</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> Haslam, Alexander S. *Psychology in Organizations - The Social Identity Approach*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, Chapter 2: The Social Identity Approach, pp. 26-57, 2001.

<sup>84</sup> Stein, Janet Gross. "Image, Identity and Conflict Resolution." *Managing Global Chaos*, eds. Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson and Pamela Aall, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, pp 93-111, 1996.

the point of exclusion.<sup>85</sup> More simply, in times of stress or conflict, individuals tend to group themselves with their religious or ethnic counterparts, often to the exclusion of others. Saayman points to Iraq's current security situations as being predicted by the literature on conflict resolution. Individuals began seeking security with militant groups that corresponded to their religious or ethnic identity; enemy images became ingrained, and a tit-for-tat pattern emerged between insurgent groups.

Sunnis in western Iraq began working with ISIS and al-Qaeda groups. Shiite groups began working more closely with militant groups like those of radical Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr (supported by Iran) or more closely with the Shiite led government, in spite of not really supporting the missions of their respective social group in either example. Not unlike Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Sadrist movement in Iraq created networks of charities and social welfare groups to distribute food and supplies to ordinary Shi'a Iraqis while at the same time acting as a source of radicalization.<sup>86</sup> Iraqi society is therefore marked by multiple and exclusionary ethnic and social identities while also functioning as a multinational society.<sup>87</sup>

Without a doubt, ethnic, religious and national identities matter in the current conflict within Iraq.<sup>88</sup> The violence since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 occurred largely along the lines of antagonistic and exclusionary social identities. Saayman concludes by arguing that the heterogeneous character of Iraq is in fact insufficient to explain sectarianism. He points to a recent 2013 poll done by Routledge Press which found that up to 70% of Iraqis support the idea

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<sup>85</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

<sup>86</sup> Michael R Gordon and Bernard E Trainor. *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, From George W Bush to Barack Obama*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

<sup>88</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

of a unified Iraq.<sup>89</sup> I agree with Saayman that the majority of Iraqis want a unified Iraq, but the current course of violence for the country threatens to push religious and ethnic groups farther into their distinct social groups and a fracturing of the country along sectarian lines is likely if the violence continues.

This sentiment was also endorsed by the *International Crisis Group* in their recent report on Iraq in August of 2013. They concluded that in the absence of a dramatic shift in approach, Iraq's fragile polity risks breaking down, and that Iraq is on the verge of a relapse into a generalized sectarian conflict—which in fact is already underway. At present, at least one-third of Iraqi provinces are seeking to transform themselves into regions enjoying the same degree of autonomy Kurdistan has already achieved.<sup>90</sup> The Kurds have separated themselves from the Maliki government and provide their own military and civil government. This approach is one of the aims of the ISIS group in western Iraq.

According to statements made by the group, they aim to break the region off from the central government in Baghdad and form a separate Islamic state for the region.<sup>91</sup> ISIS is already instituting Islamic law in areas under their control and attempting to provide social services to the Sunni population. According to other quotes from the group, ISIS is committed to stoking sectarian conflict in both Syria and Iraq against all other religious and ethnic groups which they see as apostates.<sup>92</sup> They claim an obligation to fight these groups in the context of a

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<sup>89</sup> Berdal, Mats, Suhrke, Astri. "The Peace in Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding." *Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding*, Routledge Press, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> Ottaway, Marina. "Analysis: Anbar violence goes beyond sectarian conflict in Iraq." *BBC News Analysis Report*, January 3, 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs Houses of Representatives One Hundred Thirteenth Congress. "al-Qaeda's resurgence in Iraq: a threat to US Interests." Second Session, February 5, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> Smyth, Phillip, Zelin, Aaron Y. "The Vocabulary of Sectarianism." *Foreign Policy - The Middle East Channel*, January 29, 2014.

greater religious war. And if the local Sunnis offer aid to ISIS in their quest, it will be very difficult for the government to dislodge the group from Iraq.

### **Social Welfare Support - Demographics and Hezbollah in Lebanon**

ISIS has engaged in outreach to locals by providing social services that resemble what Phillip Smyth, a researcher and author at the University of Maryland on the Middle East, terms the mechanisms of a “proto-state.”<sup>93</sup> This mirrors the activity of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah. Much of Hezbollah’s current popularity within Lebanon comes from the social welfare support it provides the Shiite community. It receives the majority of the funds for these projects from Iran, its sole financial backer. Hezbollah has remained a potent militant force in Lebanon and is very popular when compared to the government.

Professor Simon Haddad, Associate Professor of Political Science at Notre-Dame University in Lebanon, conducted a survey in 2010 to determine the true motivations of Shiite support for Hezbollah within Lebanon. He assumed that the main reason many Lebanese supported Hezbollah was their shared religious beliefs.<sup>94</sup> What he discovered in the survey, however, was that the social welfare efforts of the group had a greater impact than any other factor on whether Shiites supported Hezbollah, including views about religion and attitudes towards Israel<sup>95</sup>. In other words, the local Shiite population in Lebanon supports Hezbollah more for its welfare programs than for its religious and political views.

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<sup>93</sup> Al-Tamimi, Aymenn Jawad. “The Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham’s Messages and Self-Presentation in Syria and Iraq.” *Web Article*, 2014. <http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/the-islamic-state-of-iraq-and-ash-sham-wider-goals.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Haddad, Simon. "A Survey of Lebanese Shi'i Attitudes towards Hezbollah." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 16, No. 3, pgs. 317-33, 2005.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

Haddad's research documented something that was observed for years anecdotally among experts on counterinsurgency: the more a group can ingratiate itself within a local population with social welfare support – clinics, law and order, food subsidies, and education – the more that group will be protected by the local population. This support of the local population is critical to the success of any insurgency or separatist movement.<sup>96</sup> This was true in Vietnam, Northern Ireland, and during the failed occupation of Afghanistan under the Soviet Union.<sup>97</sup>

So why does this information matter? Once ISIS seized multiple Iraqi cities in western Iraq, they immediately began providing social welfare support including food and Islamic schools to Sunnis in areas under their control. In so doing, they are supplanting the current local tribal support network as well as that offered by the central government in Baghdad. This is a disturbing trend. It shows that the stated goals of ISIS to make a new Islamic state in Iraq are real and that they have plans to separate the western provinces from the Iraqi government and set up shop long term. They aim to separate the Sunni west from the rest of Iraq and to govern the Anbar region.

The social identity of Iraqis does go beyond sectarian lines. Iraq has historically been a unified nation since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As stated earlier, most Iraqis want a non-fractured Iraq. Iraqi society was by no means destined by its multi-ethnic and religious character to descend into the sectarian chaos of 2006-2008.<sup>98</sup> This was precipitated by violent Islamic

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<sup>96</sup> Kilcullen, David. *Counterinsurgency*. Oxford University Press, April 21, 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Haddad, Simon. "A Survey of Lebanese Shi'i Attitudes towards Hezbollah." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 16, No. 3, pgs. 317-33, 2005.

<sup>98</sup> Saayman, Matthew. "The Origins of Sectarianism in Iraq." *Conflict and Security*, September 17, 2013.

extremist groups with sectarian agendas. The same is now happening again with ISIS. The worry is that the central government cannot provide a viable social welfare alternative to ISIS in many Sunni areas.

This will continue to be an issue for the Maliki government and will remain a barrier to long term peace and security in Iraq. Religion indeed matters in Iraq, but what the people *most* want is a unified country with a government that all citizens have a voice in and that provides basic services. The lack of this remains the largest barrier to defeating ISIS for good, not a lack of military might or religious divides. Haddad's survey data shows that the more those services are provided – no matter the religion of the organization providing them – the more support the people will put behind the provider. As long as the Maliki government neglects the political and social problems that are plaguing Iraqis in the west, ISIS will continue to find Sunnis open to their message. Simply put, Iraqis have the cultural foundation and desire necessary to support a unified Iraq, but Maliki continues to undermine that fragile foundation.

This is not a sectarian issue alone, but ISIS exploits the differences in religion for its benefit. It should be remembered that Maliki's work with Sunni locals during the Anbar Awakening movement was effective in combating al-Qaeda in the west. This came with adequate pay for Sunnis in the west as well as a role in shaping the future of Iraq. The social element was vital for the success of the COIN operation in Iraq, and the removal of social support of Sunnis saw the success in security gains crumble.

## Chapter 6

### Lessons from Insurgencies in Algeria and Egypt

The insurgency currently underway in Iraq is by no means unique and shares similarities to conflicts in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Algeria, and Egypt. While all the insurgent movements involved in these conflicts differ in their ideologies and motivations, they share common attributes that present a set of lessons that can be applied to the current situation in Iraq. For the purposes of comparison to Iraq, two cases will be examined: the decade-long insurgency in Algeria between the government and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and Armed Islamic Group (GIA) groups, and the recent insurgency between the new Egyptian military-backed government of Field Marshal Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and Islamist extremist groups in the Sinai region of Egypt.

I will examine the decisions made by the government in Algeria which led to the removal of the FIS from power after a democratic election in 1991, and the group's subsequent transformation into various Islamic guerilla groups that took up arms and began to combat the military-backed government.<sup>99</sup> Egypt's new military-backed government led by al-Sisi is headed for a similar long-term insurgency with the Muslim brotherhood, Bedouin fighters, and Islamic extremist groups linked to al-Qaeda, mainly in the Sinai Peninsula. These two cases offer insightful lessons for Iraq and the Maliki government in dealing with its insurgency.

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<sup>99</sup> Hagelstein, Roman. "Where and When does Violence Pay Off? The Algerian Civil War." *Households in Conflict Network*, HiCN Working Paper 43, March 2008.



## Algeria's "Black Decade"

What is called the Algerian civil war began in 1992 and officially lasted until 2002, although remnants of the violence continued for many years and the legacy costs of the war remain to this day. This decade of civil war or "black decade" was caused by the Algerian People's National Army's (APNA) military coup to remove a democratically elected Islamist party from power in order to keep direct control over the country. While it is called a civil war, it was a true insurgency in the purest form of the term. The insurgency was sparked by the interruption of the first Algerian legislative elections, which the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front or FIS) party was about to win.<sup>100</sup> On January 11, 1992, the Army deposed President Chadli Bendjedid in a bloodless coup, outlawed the FIS, soon declared a state of emergency, and sent most of the FIS' senior members to detainment camps in the Sahara.<sup>101</sup>

By the end of 1992 the FIS had lost power to the newly formed Armed Islamic Group (GIA) militant group based in the cities. It later formed the FIS-loyalist Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in the rural mountainous areas and took up arms in a full-fledged insurgency movement against the new military's puppet president and government. In late 1992, Mohammad Boudiaf, the president of Algeria who was placed in power by the APNA, was assassinated by his body guard during his first public appearance.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Martínez, Luis. "The Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998". Translated from the French by Jonathan Derrick, New York: Columbia University Press in association with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, 2000.

<sup>101</sup> Hagelstein, Roman. "Where and When does Violence Pay Off? The Algerian Civil War." *Households in Conflict Network*, HiCN Working Paper 43, March 2008.

<sup>102</sup> Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres. "Operation Boudiaf." *Cornell Library Archive*, Portions translated from Arabic language, Accessed August 17, 2013. <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/i8maol.htm>.

Between 1992 and 1998, the GIA and the AIS conducted a violent campaign of attacks against both military and civilian targets--often wiping out entire villages in its area of operation--including hijacking an airliner, kidnappings, beheadings, assassinations and numerous mass casualty bombings.<sup>103</sup> These tactics share a frightening resemblance to the recent wave of attacks in Baghdad being carried out by ISIS. The response to the violence by the Algerian military was equally as brutal and led to the deaths of thousands of civilians as well. The year 1999 saw the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and the implementation of a law giving amnesty to most Islamic guerrillas.<sup>104</sup> Under this law, most groups--including the AIS and large numbers of GIA fighters--gave up the fight and returned to normal life.<sup>105</sup>

The violence in Algeria declined substantially after the new law and peace with the AIS in 2000, but it tightened the military's control over power and governance.<sup>106</sup> The remnants of the GIA group were pursued by the Algerian army down over the next few years, and by 2002 only small remnants of the group remained.<sup>107</sup> The Algerian civil war left a legacy of strong military control of the country and brutal reprisals against Islamic groups. All told, the estimated death toll of the Algerian civil war is somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 lives.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Taylor, Peter. "The Paris Plot: Age of Terror." *BBC World Service*, June 18, 2008, Archived from the original on February 1, 2009, Retrieved October 4, 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Martínez, Luis. "The Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998." Translated from the French by Jonathan Derrick, New York: Columbia University Press in association with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, 2000.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Chronologie d'une tragédie cache. *A Timeline of Violence during the Algerian Civil War*. Translated into English language, Accessed August 23, 2013. [http://www.algeria-watch.de/mrv/2002/chrono/chrono\\_1992.htm](http://www.algeria-watch.de/mrv/2002/chrono/chrono_1992.htm).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Hagelstein, Roman. "Where and When does Violence Pay Off? The Algerian Civil War." *Households in Conflict Network*, HiCN Working Paper 43, March 2008.

## Egypt's "Revolution"

In early July of 2013, Egypt's military gave president Muhammad Morsi an ultimatum to leave office and then replaced him -- in a move resembling a coup -- with an interim administration, cancelling the Islamist-based constitution and calling for new elections to be held in a year.<sup>109</sup> Since the removal of Morsi from power, the army has banned the Muslim Brotherhood party, imprisoned its top leaders, and instituted a state of emergency throughout Egypt. Morsi stands accused in court of inciting murder and violence during riots last year outside the presidential palace in Cairo and nearly all other high profile leaders of the movement have been arrested along with an estimated 2,000 other Muslim Brothers.<sup>110</sup> Due to the turmoil in cities across Egypt over the last two years, the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula has been neglected and is deteriorating.

The Sinai area of Egypt is remote and relatively lawless; most of the armed fighters in the area are Bedouin who have long-standing grievances against the central government in Cairo.<sup>111</sup> Militant Islamists, including al-Qaeda linked groups, are exploiting the situation and have joined forces with the Bedouin to significantly step up attacks against security forces in the area.<sup>112</sup> The current military government led by al-Sisi is expected to announce his candidacy for the upcoming 2014 election.

Since July 2013, more than 300 reported attacks have taken place in Sinai. The violence is also spreading into the Egyptian mainland, with recent attacks on a security facility in Cairo,

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<sup>109</sup> "Egypt timeline: from revolution to the current crisis". *The Telegraph Newspaper*, Online Edition, July 3, 2013.

<sup>110</sup> Arrott, Elizabeth. "Morsi Trial Raises Tensions in Divided Egypt." *Voice of America*, October 15, 2013.

<sup>111</sup> "Egypt's Sinai desert: A haven for malcontents." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, July 13, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> "Egypt's Sinai desert: A haven for malcontents." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, July 13, 2013.

and the killing of an Interior Ministry official in the capital.<sup>113</sup> Hopes that al-Sisi's seizure of power would lead to a return to order in Egypt are rapidly dissipating. Rather, the new regime is facing a similar test to that endured by Mubarak in the 1990s and Nasser in the 1950s – both of whom faced Islamist extremists fomenting the overthrow of their military-backed governments.<sup>114</sup>

### **Parallels to Iraq**

The parallels between Algeria and recent events in Egypt are strikingly similar. Both the FIS and Muslim Brotherhood parties won generous majorities in what were widely considered to be legitimate electoral contests. In Algeria, the removal of the FIS directly contributed to the rise of violent Islamic opposition and guerilla groups whose aim was the overthrow of the military government. The same movement is now happening in Egypt. This level of violence has continued to a level not seen since the last rise in Islamic extremism in the country, which led to the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat by members of Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

Since Mr. Morsi's ouster on July 3, 2013, there has been an increase in violence by Bedouin peoples and Islamist groups with direct ties to al-Qaeda.<sup>115</sup> Daily attacks on security forces by these insurgents have become commonplace. Most of the gunmen are Bedouin angry with the central government in Cairo. Many state that they are barred from joining the army or police; they find it hard to get jobs in tourism; and they complain that many of their

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<sup>113</sup> Spyer, Jonathan. "Salafi insurgency fermenting in northern Sinai." *The Jerusalem Post*, February 14, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> "Egypt's Sinai desert: A haven for malcontents." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, July 13, 2013.

lands have been taken from them. Exploiting the situation, militant Islamists have jumped on the Bedouin bandwagon.<sup>116</sup>

The mayor of el Arish--the provincial capital of Sinai--recently gave this assessment in *The Economist* on the situation in Sinai, "Only if Egypt can be quickly put back on the path to democracy can Sinai be prevented from turning into a battlefield of Islamists pitted against the Egyptian army."<sup>117</sup> The parallels between the removal of democratic representation by the government in Egypt and Algeria were catalysts for increased insurgencies that saw their respective government as corrupt, non-inclusive, and violent government reprisals only reinforced their narrative.

This mirrors almost exactly the situation that has arisen in Iraq following the implementation of sectarian governmental policies and political marginalization. Additionally, in Algeria and Egypt there were large portions of the local population who had their voice silenced by the power of a strong, centralized government. This is also the case with Maliki's government and Sunni grievances in Iraq. Lack of democratic means of expression in all of the cases led groups to take up arms against the government or form alliances with those who had. This is true for the FIS in Algeria, the Sinai Bedouin and Muslim Brotherhood groups in Egypt, and Sunni groups in Iraq.

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<sup>116</sup> "Egypt's Sinai desert: A haven for malcontents." *The Economist Magazine*, Print Edition, July 13, 2013.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

## Lessons Learned

While differences exist between the two cases, Egypt has begun its journey down the same violent path as Algeria, and if no democratic and social reforms are enacted by the government, the risk of further violence and a protracted insurgency are very real. Iraq has also seen the impact of government policies that are sectarian in nature and exclusionary. Algeria and Egypt both created no room for political participation with groups that had grievances with the government, and in both cases it led to increased violence. It is important to note in the Algerian case that only when the Algerian government finally engaged the Islamist insurgent groups in real dialogue, and gave them a true civic voice, did they give up the fight and end the insurgency.

This civic engagement was also accompanied by strong military force and use of counterinsurgency tactics. The Algeria government fought the insurgency for ten years with brutal and violent tactics, which accelerated the conflict and precipitated reprisal attacks between the Islamists and ANPA forces for years. This same trend has emerged in Iraq with Maliki's deadly crackdown on Sunni protest movements. It has only gotten worse as Maliki continues to use indiscriminate force to defeat ISIS and other extremist forces holding Ramadi and Fallujah. In contrast, the amnesty offered by the Algerian government to Islamist insurgents in 2000 helped to build trust and move the nation forward.

Amnesty could be successful in Iraq for Sunni tribal fighters who have joined up with ISIS. The majority of the ISIS fighters are hardened extremists who will never accept such an offer. However they only survive with the support of local Sunnis in Iraq who provided them assistance and recently have fought alongside them. If Iraqi Sunnis accepted an amnesty offer

for their role in violence against the government, it would erode the popular support among some Sunnis for ISIS, making it difficult for the group to survive in Iraq. Differentiating between hardened extremist fighters -- many of whom are foreigners -- and sympatric local Iraqis, is critical to replicate the kind of success seen in Algeria.

COIN strategy and kinetic force were not enough to defeat the insurgency in Algeria and will not win the long-term struggle in Egypt. Only by working through the true grievances at the core of the conflict – participation and involvement in the government and democratic reforms – was a solution reached in Algeria. Iraq will similarly only see progress in the long run if the government considers how it can successfully engage Sunnis in the country. Egypt has struggled to get a handle on the situation of al-Qaeda violence in the Sinai since the removal of Morsi as president in 2013. Some of this can be attributed to the terrain and remoteness of the area, but much of it also comes from a history of the peoples of the Sinai being marginalized by the government in Cairo. This is a common theme in Algeria, Iraq and Egypt.

## Chapter 7

### **Potential Avenues Forward: Is COIN a Viable Option for the Current Conflict in Iraq?**

After considering all of the issues surrounding Iraq, the central question remains: Is COIN strategy in Iraq a viable option to combat ISIS in the current conflict in Iraq? I set out at the beginning of the research process with the idea that the answer to this question was most certainly yes. The tactics of COIN strategy used by the U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces in Iraq from 2008-2011 were arguably successful. The death rate fell dramatically during the time it was implemented in Iraq among civilians and military personnel.

More importantly, the Sunni groups and the mainly Shiite government under Maliki were able to work together to push out violent Islamic extremist groups including al-Qaeda in Iraq. But it quickly became clear under a closer look that this relationship was only possible with the U.S. acting as a mediator between the government and Sunni tribes. And once a true examination of the current security and political situation in Iraq was conducted, the hypothesis that COIN was a viable option for Iraq right now had changed from a tentative yes to a concrete no. COIN is not a viable option for the current conflict in Iraq due to a lack of trust between various groups and the government, little to any unit cohesion among the Iraqi Security Forces, no hope for political reconciliation or reforms from Baghdad, and the loss of the U.S. as a mediator between sectarian groups.



## Trust – The Missing Component

David Kilcullen – the creator of COIN strategy for the U.S. Army – wrote the following statement regarding the most necessary component for a successful COIN effort: “For your side to win, the people do not have to like you but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and *trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises*, particularly regarding their security.”<sup>118</sup> This statement illustrates why a COIN effort led by the Iraqi government against ISIS would not succeed and is not currently a viable option. A coordinated COIN effort requires trust as the bedrock of any effort. COIN works when local partners work hand-in-hand with counterinsurgency forces. This relationship requires an immense amount of trust.

As was pointed out earlier in this paper, the Maliki government has undermined Sunni groups in western Iraq where the conflict is fiercest. Maliki has excluded Sunni groups from the political process, ceased payments to Sunni tribal fighters to assist Baghdad, and cracked down on a legitimate Sunni protest movement with violence. What is left for Sunnis is a Maliki government that they see as completely unreliable and actively promoting Shiite interests. The Maliki government has no trusted networks in Anbar province and local Sunnis see no reason to assist the government in fighting al-Qaeda groups, which they find preferable in some ways to Baghdad control. The emergence of the Iraqi insurgency began among these disaffected Sunni tribes, yet groups like ISIS could have not have operated from urban settings in western Iraq without the support of the Sunni tribes as well.<sup>119</sup>

Additionally, ISIS has begun instituting social services and administrative services in areas in which it has gained control. While these services are sparse, and most of the justice is

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<sup>118</sup> Kilcullen, David. “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency.” *IOSphere Joint Information Operations Center*, Summer 2006.

<sup>119</sup> Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. “Iraq’s Security Outlook For 2013.” *ISPI Analysis No.197*, September, 2013.

harsh and follows strict Sharia law, it offers more support than the region has seen from Maliki. This is even more concerning as any successful COIN strategy depends on winning the support of the local population as one of its core principles. At this time, ISIS is winning the fight for the local Sunni population as well. It should be pointed out that ISIS and its violent brand of jihadi justice has a way of alienating the local population, as occurred with al-Qaeda in Iraq during the Awakening movement.

These extreme tactics by ISIS were a large part of the reason stated by al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, for expelling ISIS from their group in February of 2014. The continued extreme course being pursued by ISIS actually leaves hope that local Sunnis may eventually turn against the group. ISIS is composed of many foreign fighters, which also proved to be very unpopular with local Iraqi Sunnis dealing with al-Qaeda in Iraq prior to the Awakening movement. However, currently the local Sunnis do not see the Iraqi government as a suitable partner to fight ISIS due to a lack of trust. It is likely that ISIS will eventually waste whatever good will it gained from its minor social welfare support. If they continue to use extreme tactics and implement strict sharia law in areas under their control, there is a good possibility that local Sunnis will eventually turn against the group—if they have the courage to stand up to life-threatening ISIS intimidation.

## Political Reform, ISF Capabilities and the Loss of a Mediator

Kilcullen, reflecting on the success of the first COIN strategy in Iraq, recently commented that COIN strategy is a last resort that should only be undertaken when some onerous preconditions have been met. Those preconditions would primarily center on the host government's willingness to reform, and its political viability and political will at home.<sup>120</sup> This is a large obstacle for the current government in Baghdad. Without a willingness to reform Iraq politically, short-term security and long-term stability will continue to evade Iraq.

Politically the country is fractured and Maliki has shown no signs of attempting to seek political reconciliation with Sunnis. While the first COIN strategy was somewhat effective, that success was due in large part to the oversight and coordination given the effort by the U.S. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) is still not strong enough to lead such an effort its own. Even with the political will, finances, and a well-trained fighting force, the U.S. struggled to effectively implement COIN strategy in Afghanistan. Afghanistan certainly presented another set of unique challenges to the U.S., but the ISF – even with U.S. support -- is not equipped or prepared to launch a long-term COIN effort against ISIS.

The ISF is also not a unified fighting force and lacks unit cohesion. The armed forces are afflicted by the same sectarian divides that beleaguer Iraq's population as a whole. Ibrahim Al-Marashi--an Assistant Professor of Middle East History at California State University San Marcos--recently observed that both the regular armed forces and the intelligence agencies in Iraq remain divided among religious or ethnic lines, with various units either reporting directly

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<sup>120</sup>Ricks, Thomas. "Kilcullen speaks: On COIN going out of style, his recent book, Syria, and more." *Foreign Policy*, Best Defense Column, February 12, 2014.

to Prime Minister Maliki or to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).<sup>121</sup> Security forces in Iraq suffer from the problem of divided loyalties, where members use the coercive arms of the state to pursue the interests of militias, such as Muqtada al-Sadr's Shiite Mahdi Army, the Arab Sunni Reawakening, or the Peshmerga forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).<sup>122</sup>

Preparation, training and a unified mission are critical to COIN strategy. Without all of these elements no military or fighting force has a chance of executing such a complex and difficult strategy. In the COIN operation in Iraq, the U.S. contributed billions of dollars and a fighting force of tens of thousands over multiple years. The U.S. Army is arguably the most technologically capable military force in the world. Even with all of the resources that the U.S. brought to bear in Iraq, the surge was only marginally a success.

The security situation in Iraq now is worse than it was when the surge was implemented, and the Iraqi Security Forces are certainly not in the same class as the U.S. military. The ISF has divided loyalties among its unit commanders and fighters. There is no way that the ISF, even with close U.S. cooperation, could effectively implement such a complex strategy as COIN against ISIS. Such a strategy takes a large, well-trained and cohesive fighting force with a unified vision, as well as a government committed to political reconciliation and inclusive social policies. The current Maliki government has none of these.

During the COIN strategy against al-Qaeda groups from 2008-2011, the U.S. served as a reliable mediator between Sunnis and the Maliki government. The U.S. ensured Sunnis were paid, cultivated trusted Sunni intelligence networks, and provided social support. While ISIS could likely end up alienating the local population in the future due to their extreme methods,

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<sup>121</sup> Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security Outlook For 2013." *ISPI Analysis No.197*, September, 2013.

<sup>122</sup> Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security Outlook For 2013." *ISPI Analysis No.197*, September, 2013.

the Iraqi government does not represent a trusted option for the Sunnis to team up with in combating the group. If the Maliki government hopes to defeat ISIS and regain control of western Iraq, it must start by reengaging Sunnis in the political process, and then providing them social support and security. The U.S. will continue to provide military hardware and advice to the Maliki government, but trust can only be built overtime between Iraqis themselves.

Unless political reengagement begins soon, a fractured state along sectarian lines is the most likely outcome for Iraq. Another politically problematic development is the emergence of a de facto autonomous Kurdistan across northern Iraq and northeastern Syria. In February of 2014, the Kurdish Regional Government began exporting oil without approval from Baghdad, while civilian councils in northeastern Syria call themselves the councils of "western Kurdistan."<sup>123</sup> The implementation of any successful COIN strategy in Iraq would need active local partners, which are now largely absent. In fact, the window of opportunity for the Maliki government to reengage Iraqi Sunnis may have already passed entirely.

### **COIN as a Cure-All and Political Reconciliation**

While this paper examines the viability of COIN strategy as a potential avenue forward, there are certain changes that must happen in Iraq no matter the strategy. The way forward for Iraq must include a combination of political reconciliation and a military strategy that looks to work with both Kurdish and Sunni locals to push out Islamic extremists. Ibrahim Al-Marashi also supports a unified security and political solution in Iraq. He stated that ultimately the solution to the insecurity in Iraq cannot depend on military solutions alone, noting that the new

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<sup>123</sup> Ricks, Thomas. "Kilcullen speaks: On COIN going out of style, his recent book, Syria, and more." *Foreign Policy*, Best Defense Column, February 12, 2014.

Iraqi government has failed to engage in the all-elusive process of national reconciliation between the various ethno-sectarian communities.<sup>124</sup>

Marashi's sentiment echoes recommendations made by the *International Crisis Group*, which asserts Maliki's need to institute better democratic reforms and politically reengage with Sunnis. Solutions to the tensions in Iraq will also largely depend on creating a security force that can restore the public's trust. To create a force with an effective, vigorous, and streamlined intelligence capability for the Iraqi leadership, politicians will have to create a system based on merit rather than continue the Saddam-era patronage-based system that favored party, ethnicity or sect.<sup>125</sup> A military victory against ISIS will be hollow without healing the sectarian divides that fractured the country in the first place.

David Kilcullen was interviewed in February of 2014 on his thoughts about COIN strategy use in Iraq during the surge. He drew important distinctions between execution of a successful COIN strategy and the difficulties that remain in translating COIN success (or indeed, military success generally) into long-term political stability.<sup>126</sup> Iraq cannot heal its sectarian and political problems at the end of a gun barrel. Even if the government could push out ISIS on the battlefield, it will still be left with a country that needs massive reforms. If political reengagement does not occur, any military victory will only be short term. The underlying problems will continue to exist. Kilcullen believes that this is largely the reason that ISIS was able to reemerge following the successful COIN operation and subsequent withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

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<sup>124</sup> Al-Marashi, Ibrahim and Keskin, A. "Reconciliation Dilemmas in post-Baathist Iraq: Truth Commissions, Media and Ethno-sectarian Conflicts." *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 243-259, Summer 2008.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Iraq's Security Outlook For 2013." *ISPI Analysis No.197*, September 2013.

<sup>126</sup> Ricks, Thomas. "Kilcullen speaks: On COIN going out of style, his recent book, Syria, and more." *Foreign Policy*, Best Defense Column, February 12, 2014.

Kilcullen also warns in the interview about the deification of COIN strategy as a blanket solution for all militant threats. While the security threat in Iraq was removed, the underlying social and political problems of Iraq were never addressed by the government. This created an environment ripe for exploitation by militant extremists at a time when they were gaining strength in neighboring Syria. Kilcullen stated that we (the U.S.) must to be ready to move away from what we think we know--including COIN.

In the article, Kilcullen cautioned about overuse, "COIN, in its 21st century reincarnation, was an adaptation we (U.S.) made, under fire, to fix a problem we should never have gotten ourselves into in Iraq. To the extent that it hardens into some kind of eternal dogma, we need to be very wary of it, because the next big challenge might be an insurgency, but it might not. Even if it is an insurgency, it may or may not be amenable to the techniques that are in the current COIN doctrine (strategy)."<sup>127</sup> While ISIS is certainly using insurgent tactics that does not mean that another COIN strategy based on the kind used previously in Iraq is a good fit, because in reality it is not. Elements of COIN such as winning hearts and minds and forming excellent local partners should be implemented to fight ISIS; unfortunately, too many other hurdles keep it from being a viable option at this point and time.

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<sup>127</sup> Ricks, Thomas. "Kilcullen speaks: On COIN going out of style, his recent book, Syria, and more." *Foreign Policy*, Best Defense Column, February 12, 2014.

## Chapter 8

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The militant threat in Iraq is real, threatening the very future of an extant country. As the government struggles for a solution, many call for the use of a familiar remedy, COIN strategy. COIN is the use of military, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency movements. But conditions in Iraq have changed since the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011, and such a strategy must be fully examined. *Is the use of a counterinsurgency strategy (COIN) in Iraq a viable option to combat the current sectarian conflict?* While pieces of COIN strategy could work, the underlying structure required to undertake such a strategy simply does not exist in Iraq. Experts on counterinsurgency strategy underscore the importance of trust, political reconciliation, planning and capabilities in any successful COIN effort. Iraq fails to meet the standard of all of these categories.

The question of whether to implement COIN strategy began with an examination of the policies of the current Maliki government, which along with the crisis in Syria, are significant factors in the failed security landscape of Iraq. From the violence in Syria emerged the brutal extremist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) which has fiercely attacked the Iraqi government and taken control of multiple cities in western Iraq. ISIS exploited social and religious sectarian divides in Iraq which threaten to tear the country apart.

This new threat from ISIS is reminiscent for many Iraqis of the emergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2003 and the COIN strategy launched three years later by the U.S. military, Awakening Sunni tribal fighters in Anbar, and the Iraqi government under Maliki. Successes with this



strategy radically reduced violence in the country and offered an opportunity for reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites. This opportunity was ultimately wasted by the Maliki government in favor of continued marginalization of Kurds and Sunnis. The U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 also removed a necessary and trusted mediator between Sunnis and Shiites. In the meantime former al-Qaeda fighters in Iraq benefitted from the chaos in Syria and regrouped under the new ISIS moniker while Maliki grew closer with Iran.

The deteriorating sectarian situation in Iraq shows modern parallels to Egypt and Algeria in the violent response of the government to peaceful protest movements. While the COIN strategy was used successfully in Iraq in the past to fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq and keep them from launching an all-out insurgency, the conditions on the ground are now different than in 2007. Trust between sectarian partners has vanished and political reengagement is something that Maliki has stated is not on the table. Even David Kilcullen, the former architect of modern COIN strategy for the U.S. military, cautions that such a strategy should not be used as a blanket solution for all insurgencies, especially now in Iraq.

## **Discussion**

There are several reasons why a COIN strategy is not currently viable. The most glaring is the lack of trust between Sunnis and the Shiite Maliki government. A COIN strategy is built on trust, integrity, and the ability for a government to deliver on promises. This eventually worked in Algeria and led to the disarming of most Islamic radical under an amnesty. Political reform under Maliki is highly unlikely and again critical to a good COIN strategy. He has proven to be an untrustworthy partner to Sunnis and there is no reason to believe that will change anytime soon. Maliki demonstrates a pattern of reaching for force to solve problems--political

or otherwise--and has wasted opportunities for reconciliation in favor of centralizing and consolidating his own power.

Maliki's priorities are to further his party, play favorites with Shiites, and above all work to strengthen his hold on power. None of these traits make him a viable candidate as a mediator with Sunnis. Sunnis and Kurds have already moved on to create their own independent futures that do not involve the government in Baghdad. The fight to keep the country together will continue but without a willingness to reform the underlying political issues, long term stability will remain elusive. Social issues plague western Iraq including poor energy access, medical care and other basic services.

The data from Professor Simon Haddad's survey work illustrates that social welfare support carries more importance than religious affiliation when measuring popular support among locals for insurgent movements. ISIS understands this and has moved to fill the large void left by the government. The vast majority of Iraqis polled still support the idea of a unified Iraq, but without political participation those voices mostly fall silent.

As I noted earlier, religion matters in Iraq, but what the people most want is a unified country where the government provides basic services and citizens have a voice in the government. These remain the largest barriers to defeating ISIS for good, not a lack of military might or religious divides. Military tactics and operations against ISIS are only as good as the social and political reforms that go with them. This is a cycle that the Maliki government continues to ignore out of fear of losing its grip on power.

My personal response to the finding that COIN was not a viable option came as a shock. I had always been a strong supporter of counterinsurgency as a strategy, especially in Iraq

where I perceived it as successful in the past. What I have come to understand is that the building blocks of trust and local partnerships that are the bedrock of any successful COIN strategy are non-existent in Iraq at present. Based on the pattern of Maliki's power-seeking behavior and policy decisions, the underlying problems show no signs of improving in the near future. I learned the value of closely evaluating a strategy such as COIN to make sure it meets rigid standards before being considered. Kilcullen himself--a COIN guru--stated that even if it meets the criteria for implementation, it (COIN) should only be used as a last resort.

The collapse of Iraq into separate sectarian states would be devastating for the region. Syria has already created the largest refugee problem since World War II and destabilized security in Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey. A full blown civil war in Iraq would amplify an already dire situation in the region and threaten the interests of all countries--not least of which is providing safe haven for other militant extremist groups intent on launching attacks on western nations. The situation will likely get worse and the use of COIN as a ready-made solution for this conflict is unwise. It does not meet the criteria necessary for its implementation and the Iraqi Security Forces are woefully unable to carry out such a complex strategy.

### **Final Thoughts**

My recommendation is that a deeper study should be carried out on the possibility of best political and social options to enable reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq. The military will continue to receive aid, equipment and advice from the U.S. and other nations in the fight against ISIS, but the focus on the battle for the people of western Iraq will need military and financial help. The United States might be able to effectively leverage democratic and political reforms as a condition to aiding Maliki. The conditions should ensure that any

U.S., U.N., or NATO military aid to Iraq requires the government to provide more social support to Sunnis and reengage them in a peaceful political dialogue. The Iraqi government should also consider amnesty for those Sunni fighters who may have taken up arms with ISIS.

While COIN may not be a viable option, the lessons of trust building, political reform and social welfare support are recommendations that should be adopted by the Iraqi government. These tenants of COIN strategy must be implemented if Iraq is to stay a united country. The fact of the matter is that Iraq is a country with a widening sectarian divide and violence that is spiraling out of control. Force can only move an enemy out of an area, not remove the underlying issues that allowed him to be there in the first place. If Maliki wins the presidential elections in April of 2014 as expected, Iraq is likely to continue to move closer to Iran. This will only widen the sectarian divide within Iraq.

The future of Iraq will be won through social and political reforms, not through brute force. As long as the conflict in Syria continues, Iraq will face spillover militant violence. The only long term solution is to give Sunnis on the frontline a reason to fight for Iraq. This is more powerful than any weapon. If Sunnis feel they have a stake in the country and the government, they will fight for it. If they do not see Baghdad as a partner, they will look for a new one or create their own future. All Iraqis must feel they have a voice in their country or it will collapse. Tragically, if Iraq does collapse, the fallout will resonate on a global scale for decades to come.

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