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### Smart Power in the Iraq Surge 2007-2008

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SMART POWER IN THE IRAQ SURGE 2007-2008

by

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## ABSTRACT

### SMART POWER IN THE IRAQ SURGE 2007-2008

Russell N. Reiling  
Old Dominion University, 2021  
Director: Dr. Regina Karp

This dissertation explores U.S. actions in the military “Surge” in Iraq from 2007-2008. Focus is on the entwined utilization of coercive and attractive power or smart power as an enabler of success and change from prior U.S. strategies in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The analysis is based upon an extensive set of interviews with operational participants in the Surge from across the Executive Branch. Results show that smart power was an important element of the Surge and its use facilitated success, but that doing smart power was not a simple matter of achieving some mix of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power, but rather effectively marshalling and combining attractive and coercive power resources to meet the problems at hand. The lessons learned during the Surge of developing the right “smart power” synergy of hard and soft power can be utilized in current or future counterinsurgency or “near war” environments the United States may find itself in around the world.

The key contributor to this work was the interviewees themselves, who patiently answered my questions regarding events that happened over a decade ago. The most fun part of this project was the hour (or two+!) spent doing live interviews with the people who actually made the Surge happen. Often and unsurprisingly these individuals have subsequently gone on to bigger things, so their graciousness in volunteering their time as well as providing names of other people who could contribute made “snowballing” possible. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to tell your story.

To my children Nathan and Grace who have lost their relativity standard of comparison for not getting their homework done. Loving thanks goes to my wife Pam who has faithfully accompanied me on a rewarding journey longer than either of us expected.

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So many people made this work possible that properly thanking them would end up being longer than the tome itself. First and foremost, goes to my dissertation committee chair Dr. Jesse Richman. Whatever shows up in your Christmas bonus this year for dragging me across the finish line, you more than earned it. Your patience, insight and friendship made the task a little less arduous. When this work is clear, concise and/or sound it is usually reflecting the touch of Dr. Richman.

Thanks to committee members past and present are sincerely tendered. Dr. Regina Karp, Dr. Fran Hassencahl and Dr. Marie Olson Lounsbery (East Carolina University) provided necessary rigor and willingly sat through many virtual doughnuts and cups of coffee during our Zoom progress reviews. Great thanks goes to prior dissertation committee members Dr. John Sokolowski and Dr. Simone Serfaty and their vital contributions to the final product. Sad appreciation but fondest memories go to my initial committee chair Dr. Steve Yetiv, who unfortunately passed during the course of this project. I took four classes with him, he was my academic advisor and he was a strong source of expertise and insight into the Middle East and political science. His ready smile is greatly missed.

Thanks goes to my comrades in class as we toiled to carry each other through coursework where our skill set was occasionally a step above guessing. You are lifelong friends who always brighten my day when I remember our time together if not always what we were doing.

The staff and resources at Old Dominion University (ODU) were uniformly excellent and provided the support that helped make this work better. Any errors are solely the responsibility of the author.

## NOMENCLATURE

AAR	After-Action Report
AFG	Afghanistan
AO	Area of Operations
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
ARCENT	Army Central Command
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BDIF	Brigade Detainment Internment Facilities
BDU	Battle-Dress Uniform
BUA	Battle Update Assessment
BUB	Battle Update Briefing
CA	Civil Affairs
CENTCOM	Central Command
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CF	Coalition Forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJSOTF-AP	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Arabian Peninsula
CMO	Civil-military Operations
CODEL	Congressional delegation
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CONOP	Concept of operations

CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPIC	Coalition Press Information Center
DAC	District Advisory Council
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DEPP	Describe, Explain, Predict, Prescribe
DFID	Department For International Development
DIV	Division
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
EFP	Explosively Formed Penetrator
e-PRT	Embedded PRT
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FECC	Fires and Effects Coordination Cell
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRAGO	Fragmentary order
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	Global Engagement Center
GO	General Officer
HN	Host nation
HUMINT	Human intelligence
HUMVEE	High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle

ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	Infantry
IO	Information Operations
IOTF	Information Operations Task Force
IPB	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
IPI	Indigenous populations and institutions
IPR	In-Progress Review
IR	International relations
IRI	International Republican Institute
IRMO	Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Force
JAM	Jayesh El-Mahdi
JP	Joint Publication
JSAT	Joint Strategic Assessment Team
JSPA	Joint Strategic Plans and Assessment
JSS	Joint Security Station
LNO	Liaison Officer
LOO	Line Of Operation
LTG	Lieutenant General
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps – Iraq

MND-B	Multi-National Division – Baghdad
MNF-I	Multi-National Force – Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Command - Iraq
MOC	Media Operations Center
MoE	Measures of Effectiveness
MoP	Measures of Performance
MSR	Main Supply Route
MTT	Military Training Team
MWR	Morale, Welfare and Recreation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAC	Neighborhood Advisory Council
NBC	Nuclear, Biological and Chemical
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Security Council
ODA	Operational Detachment
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
PAC	Provincial Advisory Council
PA	Public Affairs
PAO	Public Affairs Officer

PFMAG	Public Financial Management Action Group
PNG	Persona Non-Grata
POW	Prisoner Of War
PRFC	Provincial Reconstruction Finance Committee
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PT	Physical Training
PTT	Police Training Team
PX	Post Exchange
R2P	Responsibility to protect
ROE	Rules Of Engagement
RSO	Regional Security Officer
RTGS	Real-Time Gross Settlements
SIGACTS	Significant acts
SIGIR	Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction
SIPR	Secret Internet Protocol Router
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SOF	Special Operations Force
SOI	Sons Of Iraq
SOMO	State Oil Marketing Organization
SSG	Staff Sergeant
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SWAT	Special Weapons And Tactics

TFBSO	Task Force for Business and Stability Operations
TIPS	Terrorism Information and Prevention System
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USG	United States Government
USIA	United States Information Agency
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VBC	Victory Base Complex
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction
WWII	World War Two
XO	Executive Officer

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### FORWARD

“Thinkers” and “doers” live in worlds with different solution sets. It has been both my great challenge and great fortune to live in both worlds (albeit as with most hybrids, this is likely an admission that I am not particularly good at either). The point most forcefully struck home when I began working as an adjunct professor at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, shortly after retiring from a 26-year active-duty military career. In my first semester, I was given the honor of instructing their undergraduate Introduction to International Relations (IR) Theory course, where I must sadly confess that I probably learned more about IR theory than many of my students.

One of the textbooks was the excellent *Controversies in International Relations Theory* by Charles Kegley. In Chapter One, Kegley describes the four tasks of an IR theorist: describe, explain, predict and prescribe (or DEPP, as in Johnny. Thank you, Dr Yetiv, for teaching me the value of acronyms as mnemonic aids). As I attempted to describe these tasks to my students, I was struck by the fact that, during my military service as a staff planner I had also focused efforts on these four tasks. The interesting insight to me was that the relative ratios of effort expended in academia and operations in each task varied greatly, almost to the point of being opposites.

In an academic work such as this one, roughly 25% will be devoted to describing the situation, usually as four of the five “Ws” (Who, What, Where, When). The next 2/3 of the book

will be devoted to explaining the situation, or the fifth “W” (Why). Then the last chapter of the book, typically the shortest one, is devoted to both predicting and prescribing. And of that, almost all the pages are prediction. At most a page or two of the chapter was the writer saying what needed to be done about the situation.

When working as a staff officer in a military contingency, the following reflects my all-too-frequent experiences “downrange.” I would walk into my bosses’ office and describe the problem (hypothetical) to him: “Sir, there is unrest in Anbar Province.” He responds, “Okay J.R., what do you want me to do about it?” Next, I explain the problem to him: “Sir, I think it is due to the upcoming elections.” He responds, “Okay J.R., what do you want me to do about it?” Then I give my prediction of what could happen: “Sir, if the situation continues, it could negatively impact our operations in the area.” For the third time, he responds, “Okay J.R., what do you want me to do about it?” Finally, I give him a prescription: “Sir, I would recommend we develop some newspaper ads and radio spots to be broadcast in Anbar to publicize election events and registration requirements to counter the rumor mill.” Then he would say, “Okay, route a staff package to me with your funding/resourcing requirements and I’ll sign it” (particularly in Special Operations units. One great thing about working with them: they never blink at spending money).

After that, the rest of my rotation would be implementing the advertising campaign. If my time in-country were the aforementioned academic book, the first 30-page chapter was all four of the tasks in the DEPP acronym and the last 270 pages was implementation, a task not even conducted by the IR theoretician.

This dichotomy was a continual source of frustration for me as a military officer. When I would select an academic work to help me better perform my job, I would begin with a great

deal of excitement as I read the “describe” opening and felt that the author was spot on in capturing the situation. I got more excited as their “explanation” crystallized the situation in my mind and helped me appreciate situational nuances that until then had escaped me. I was eagerly awaiting the final DEPP elements even as my concern mounted over their ability to give me a blueprint for success in the decreasing number of pages remaining.

Then I reached that last chapter. I skimmed through the predictions, which made sense to me, to get to the part where the author would finally tell me how to do my job. Then I got to the last page (maybe two), which typically said something like “the UN should form a commission to further study this issue.” What a gyp! I felt like Ralphie in *A Christmas Story* after he saved his box tops to finally get his secret decoder ring and cracks the message played at the end of the Little Orphan Annie radio show to find out that the message is “Be sure to drink your Ovaltine.”

Even the civilian cultural experts hired by the military demonstrated similar challenges from the viewpoint of an implementer. They were all dedicated, intelligent, well-meaning people; the problem was that if you asked them a question, they would come back to you three months later with a 50-page answer. As a staff officer who has to answer a question from the commander at the evening update briefing on my single slide, this time frame and depth of analysis is not going to help me keep my job for another day (thank you for that line Colonel Becker). I need the 80% solution you can give me right now, not the 95% solution you can give me next quarter.

On the other hand, academicians reading the above description of military planning should see red flags jumping off the page. Our efforts were always hampered in two important areas—time and expertise.

The military typically does not get involved in a region until after the crisis begins. On 9/11, the Department of Defense had three people who spoke Pashtu and/or Dari, the primary Afghan languages. Training a new linguist takes a year. Sending an officer or NCO to earn a master's degree in a region of interest is going to take a year or more. Adversaries and the domestic political constituency are not going to wait while the U.S. gathers sufficient information and experts to make a high-confidence plan. As a result, commanders have little choice but to make the best decision possible based on the information and advice available to them.

High turnover also afflicts U.S. efforts to garner and retain expertise. One year's service is a long time in a combat environment for uniformed U.S. military personnel (civilians deploy for even shorter periods, typically a few months). Consequently, just about the time the staff is getting to understand the environment and work effectively together, they start rotating out and the process begins anew.

Expertise was usually another planning shortfall. The U.S. military wants its forces to be modular, i.e., they can deploy a military unit anywhere in the world and it will be able to perform the job, even if it is not "from there." That concept works well enough for a tank battalion or fighter squadron: changing their appearance to match the color scheme of the local flora and fauna will mostly do.

However, this does not work as well with cultural/linguistic organizations. The 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group at Ft Bragg, North Carolina has several battalions grouped by region. Members go through months of linguistic and cultural training before being assigned to their specific units. I was a member of their 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, tasked to supporting Central Command, from 2003 until 2005, a time of heavy commitment to Afghanistan and Iraq. Our

unit was supporting efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan at a time when the other battalions were not supporting major military contingencies. Even if we were augmented by members of other battalions, their value would be limited to us. Spanish and Korean linguists, or scriptwriters who had studied Europe or Asia, could not simply be recast as South-West Asian experts with a fresh coat of paint.

Even within 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion knowledge was compartmentalized. We required linguists covering half a dozen major languages. Our Urdu speaker was not going to be any help translating Arabic and vice versa. I personally performed rotations in Afghanistan serving as a planning officer to operational staffs. I was frequently looked to as a SME (subject matter expert) during planning and implementation. I would respond that I was happy to offer my opinion, but that my field of study was the Middle East. I would explain that Afghanistan was different from the Gulf Arabs: that it is a different culture, different language, even a different language group. When I finished, they would say “Okay, so what do you think?”

In fairness to the leadership, they did not have a lot of other choices. In either Iraq or Afghanistan, there might not be an officer on the staff with post-graduate work related to the region. If there was a local or expatriate advisor available, they often lacked the security clearance needed to participate in extensive planning. So yes, someone with a Top-Secret clearance who had studied anything within a thousand miles of the area of operation was in fact “close enough.”

The Middle East also demonstrated the challenges of coordinating and cooperating activities with a different culture (challenges which are bound to occur in any foreign environment: only the nuances of the challenges will change). Interviewees will talk about how in post-Saddam Iraq people were afraid to make decisions: consequently, approval for new

construction projects or budgetary expenditure could take weeks or months, creating problems for U.S. workers who then had to explain the delays to a Washington D.C. that was already impatient for results.

Thinking an agreement meant prompt action was also a cultural gap. Agreeing to do something is also just as important as actually doing it in much of the Middle East, a stand at odds with Americans who tend to be more results driven. Particularly if their initial response to your request had been “That would be difficult,” there was probably a low likelihood that your wish would be fulfilled even if agreed to.<sup>1</sup>

Saving face was another challenge. The Arabs are particularly reluctant to disagree with a superior. This trait made it particularly difficult to get advice on courses of action. My boss in Psychological Operations called it “yes yes.” You would ask your interpreter what he thought of a draft leaflet or poster and he would say “Oh yes yes it looks very good.” As an American I am probably more willing to accept criticism from a subordinate than they are used to. Particularly so if the alternative is having my boss tell me it is a piece of garbage at the staff meeting after we disseminate 100,000 of them in the city and get the opposite effect of what we wanted. It is a cultural roadblock difficult to surmount.

Coercive and attractive power as most visibly represented by the military and civilian sides respectively each have strengths and weaknesses. An organization or society lacking one will not advance. “Brains and brawn” are a powerful combination when utilized together. One of the themes that came out of the research for this work was the importance of cooperation and coordination between the various agencies working in Iraq during the Surge. With some flexibility, each can help to cover the weaknesses of the other and bring their strengths into play together. Working together smartly is a journey, not a destination.

## INTRODUCTION

This work is an opportunity to hear and learn about the U.S. Surge in Iraq in 2007-2008 directly from participants in that conflict. Both military and civilians who helped make it possible were interviewed from an array of jobs and perspectives on the counterinsurgency effort there. Grounded theory is utilized to identify common threads among the qualitative viewpoints of the participants who were selected and interviewed with a common question set based on referral sampling with previous interviewees recommending others for follow-on interviews.

Problems besetting the previous effort in Iraq are recounted. Some were problems internal to the U.S. government structure. Some were external factors on the ground in Iraq or the surrounding region. Some were unique to the cultural and sectarian situation in Iraq. Most were nested into broader principles of defeating insurgents. Planning for the change in strategy are discussed, including the publication of U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. Interviewees then describe how they implemented the new strategy and the changes that they observed. They also provided a detailed account of their lessons learned and how these could assist future counterinsurgents.

The Surge was not a magic potion. Everything in Iraq was not being done wrong prior to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker arriving. Everything in Iraq was not being done right after they arrived. Fortuitous circumstances such as the Anbar Awakening and increases in oil prices augmented the change in strategy. The people participating in the Coalition had been learning and adapting prior to 2007. The Surge fostered and encouraged these initiatives with increases in both coercive and attractive force that produced a smarter synergy of power and helped alter the course of events in Iraq.

## THESIS

Smart power was an important element of the Iraq Surge, effectively marshalling and combining attractive and coercive power resources to achieve success. Surge lessons can be utilized in current or future counterinsurgency environments.

Research for this work primarily consisted of interviews with American participants in the Surge effort, including General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. A mix of people from across the Executive Branch provided invaluable insights into the inner workings of the U.S. effort. They believed that the establishment of security was a necessary precursor to developing the stability to allow stalled economic and political process to proceed. This security could not be established by Iraqi Security Forces operating alone. Cooperation in the form of improved training and establishment of Joint Security Stations provided the synergy needed to tame the violence in Baghdad through coercive measures, while arming and paying Sunni militias helped drive the Al-Qaeda presence out of Anbar Province.

Interviewees saw the stabilization of Iraq as providing the environment to allow attractive initiatives to be more successful. Improved cooperation between the various Coalition elements translated into more effective interaction with Iraqi military and government leaders. Better reconstruction projects were mutually selected and effective oversight was established. Interviewees saw the Provincial Reconstruction Teams as helping enable political and economic contact with local leadership and creating an environment of trust and cooperation throughout Iraq.

## THE SURGE IN BRIEF

The Surge refers to the increase in capability and change in strategy that the Coalition of the Willing applied in Iraq beginning in early 2007 and lasting through the end of 2008. Additional military and civilian capabilities were added to the existing in-country strengths to try and stabilize a deteriorating security situation marked by sectarian violence and foreign-supported insurgency. Greater efforts were made to increase Iraqi formal and informal security force strength and work directly with Iraqi partners at all levels of the government.

Violence and Coalition casualties initially rose as the increased military capability clashed with insurgents in strongholds that had been uncontested for years. After a peak period they steadily decreased until they reached levels not seen since the initial stages of the invasion. A more assertive U.S. presence helped restart the political process in Iraq and turned to the reconstruction efforts need to maintain stability. The calm would continue beyond the time period of the Surge and even after U.S. military forces departed Iraq in 2011.

## PRELUDE

The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 after a military and political buildup that began in the wake of the Trade Tower terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. The U.S. publicly put forward several reasons for the necessity of the attack, primarily featuring claims of Iraq retaining Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) equipment and capabilities, direct ties between the Iraqi government and the terrorist organization al-Qaeda and changing the Iraqi government to empower leadership that would be more responsive to the will of the citizens. It

was a challenging list of objectives, but not one that was necessarily impossible. Prioritization of these objectives would change over time, particularly in the aftermath of the invasion when it was discovered how little WMD equipment or capability remained in Iraq.

The 2003 “shock and awe” campaign proved able to defeat Iraqi military forces and remove Saddam Hussein’s government from power with relative ease. However, the military “light footprint” strategy implemented at the behest of senior U.S. leadership proved to be far too small to successfully occupy Iraq after the invasion. Some pre-war critics of the small force size such as Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki had envisioned this problem and thought the occupying force should be at least twice the size of the actual force allocation. U.S. planners may have expected that “cutting off the head of the snake” would facilitate a quick transition to a more favorable government, hence occupation would be brief and shallow. Instead, the U.S. found itself forced to deal with an insurgency movement centered on Sunni-held areas in western Iraq and including large numbers of foreign fighters. The lack of occupying presence also contributed to a rise in fighting between Sunnis and Shia, as well as both sects fighting with (to a lesser degree) the Kurdish minority situated primarily in the north.

The original U.S. stabilization strategy emphasized working “by, with and through” Iraqi partners, hoping that indigenous capacity could be rapidly and effectively built up to meet political, social and security needs in Iraq and permit withdrawal of U.S. occupation forces. This strategy was in line with U.S. thinking at that time that foreigners are an ineffective counter-insurgency force for several reasons, including illegitimacy in the eyes of the local populace, inferior ability to gather intelligence on insurgent activity and serving as a spur to insurgent recruiting. Successfully executing such a strategy would also reduce costs and casualties thus lessening the onset of war weariness among the U.S. public.

The “by, with and through” strategy envisions a transition from hard to soft power whose focus is enhancing indigenous governance capabilities. Civil Affairs forces would work to build up infrastructure, Psychological Operations and Public Affairs would help inform the populace of Iraqi programs and initiatives, and combat elements would dispatch large insurgent elements and train Iraqi security forces.

One of the most important assumptions of this strategy is that the indigenous populace will be able to create and maintain an effective, credible government. This did not happen in Iraq. Occupation planning may have been fueled by optimistic assessments. U.S. leadership such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and key political appointees leaned heavily on the advice of exiled Iraqi Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress. Intellectuals such as author and political commentator Fouad Ajami and journalist Jim Hoagland advocated for the Bush administration to take action, with little discussion of the ability of Iraq to reconstitute itself after an invasion.

This ability to self-rule was largely missing in Iraq by the middle of 2006. Iraqi governance was weak, corrupt and proving unable to cope with the Sunni insurgency augmented by foreign fighters entering Iraq from throughout the Middle East and beyond. This weakness and perception of favoritism towards the Shia in Iraq was also fueling sectarian violence between the suddenly dominant Shia and the disenfranchised Sunni minority, as well as the traditionally ostracized Kurdish minority located primarily in the north of Iraq. Sectarian violence was particularly exacerbated by the bombing of the Shia al-Askari Mosque in Samarra on 22 February 2006 and continued to increase in intensity throughout the remainder of the year.

This was the situation when General David Petraeus took command of Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) on 10 February 2007. He had formerly served as commander of U.S.

forces around Mosul and had been commended by Americans and Iraqis for his ability to stabilize his area of control and work cooperatively with the local Iraqi leadership, both national and local. He wrote the book on counter-insurgency – literally. Between his Mosul and MNF-I tours, he led the planning group at the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center that promulgated Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook*. This was the first time in 20 years that the Army had published a field manual dedicated to counterinsurgency. It cited successful counterinsurgency practices from several past thinkers, including David Galula, T.E. Lawrence and Carl von Clausewitz. Nothing in the manual was particularly groundbreaking: the important thing was that it was promulgated and thus became U.S. military doctrine. Foreshadowing of Petraeus' MNF-I initiatives can be gleaned from FM 3-24 chapters titled "Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities," "Intelligence in Counter-Insurgency" and "Developing Host Nation Security Forces."

## A NEW PLAN

General Petraeus wanted to change the way the U.S. military was interacting with the Iraqi population. However, this could not be accomplished without first taming both the insurgency and sectarian violence. To do this, the simple fact was that even as Iraqi security forces were increased, more U.S. troops were needed. General Petraeus had already convinced the U.S. leadership of this need, and in fact in January 2007 President Bush had already publicly announced his intention to send more U.S. forces to Iraq. By December 2006 the U.S. force level had dropped to 128,000 troops. The plan was to introduce one additional Army brigade (roughly 4-5,000 troops per brigade) per month from January to June. The additional units were

a mix of infantry, heavy and Stryker (armored car) brigades, although their selection may have been based more on availability than desired capability. They included:

January 2007: 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 82d Airborne Division

February 2007: 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division

March 2007: 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division

April 2007: 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division

May 2007: 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division

Force levels were also maintained by extending tours of units already in-country, particularly the Marines operating in Anbar Province. At the peak of the Surge, General Petraeus commanded 166,000 troops. This was the largest U.S. force level of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, including the initial invasion, and represented an increase of about 30,000 troops over the force level prior to the Surge. Both Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and US Ambassador to Iraq Khalilzad opposed the strategy, fearing that reintroduction of US forces would slow the development of the Iraqi Security Forces.

In addition to the increase in raw numbers, a change in types of forces also occurred. GEN Petraeus specifically asked for 2 additional Civil Affairs battalions as well as PSYOP and Public Affairs force augmentation. General Petraeus himself had a dedicated Public Affairs officer in addition to the one assigned to MNF-I headquarters as a whole.

As the reinforcements arrived in Iraq, they would become part of an overall force movement back into the urban areas, reversing the policy of General Casey. They would be responsible for clearing out insurgent concentrations, then holding the terrain while Iraqi security forces consolidated the gains. They would work in partnership with these Iraqis, building small

outposts in Iraqi neighborhoods and conducting joint patrols to gain the confidence of the local residents and increase their forces' intelligence capability.

These Iraqi forces would be part of the new approach to attracting the Iraqis to the new American presence. Previously, the Americans had been advised to maintain a low profile as part of the "by, with and through" strategy wherein the preference was to have Iraqi leaders conducting photo ops and interviews. Gen Petraeus changed this and encouraged his commanders to utilize their Public Affairs capabilities to communicate with the local populations as much as possible. They were also utilized to resolve local disputes and forge connections between local leaders and Iraqi government officials.

## SURGE EXECUTION

The Surge was not a "silver bullet" that brought stability to Iraq overnight. In fact, Coalition deaths increased during the initial months (Mar-May 2007) of the Surge, a logical outcome when military forces move into areas controlled by the enemy. General Petraeus' strategy was to concentrate his reinforcements initially in the greater metropolitan area of Baghdad. Joint patrolling with Iraqi Security Forces was more aggressive. Outposts were established throughout the city to improve intelligence-gathering and improve Iraqi confidence in the U.S. presence. "Jersey barriers" were erected along neighborhood sectarian fault lines by U.S. Army engineers. These activities inevitably resulted in more frequent contact between U.S. forces and the insurgents. The plan was that reducing insurgent capabilities would increase stability, bringing about a long-term decrease in casualties, both U.S. and Iraqi.

The other major activity occurred in Anbar Province, where the Marines were able to effectively partner with the Sons of Iraq to push al-Qaeda out of the province.

Finally, one Surge brigade (4<sup>th</sup> Bde, 2<sup>nd</sup> Inf Div) was sent into Diyala Province as part of the stabilization effort between Baghdad and its sources of insurgent support in Iran.

MNF-I also utilized its soft power capabilities more effectively. Approval procedures for message products were streamlined and delegated to subordinate commands, reducing time for message dissemination. Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) budgets were increased and delegated, allowing commanders to provide Civil Affairs projects better tailored to local needs. Procedures were developed to increase promotion opportunities for Iraqi force trainers, improving the quality of U.S. soldiers willing to be assigned as trainers.

Figure 1 summarizes monthly deaths data from Iraq. Across a number of indicators, there were substantial declines in the death rates.

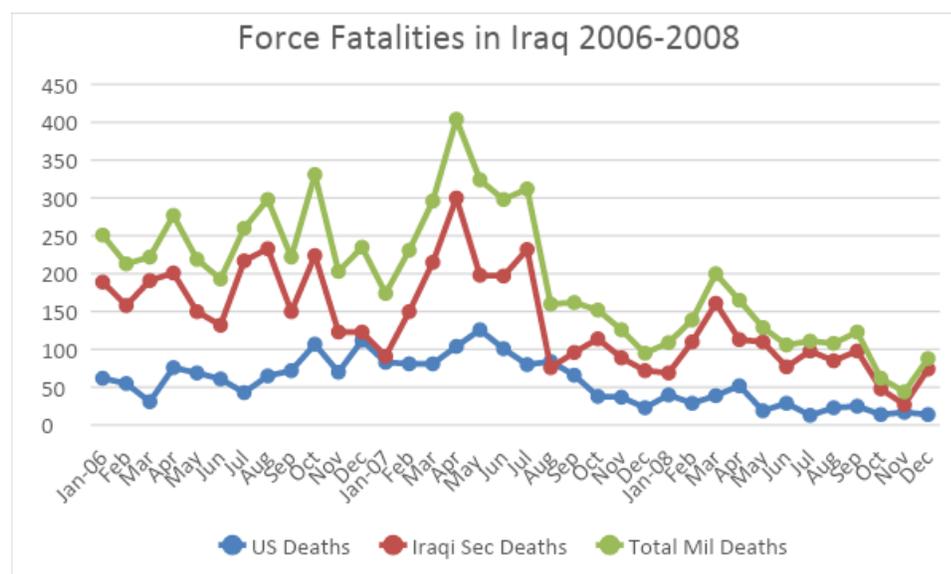


Figure 1: Force Fatalities in Iraqi 2006-2008

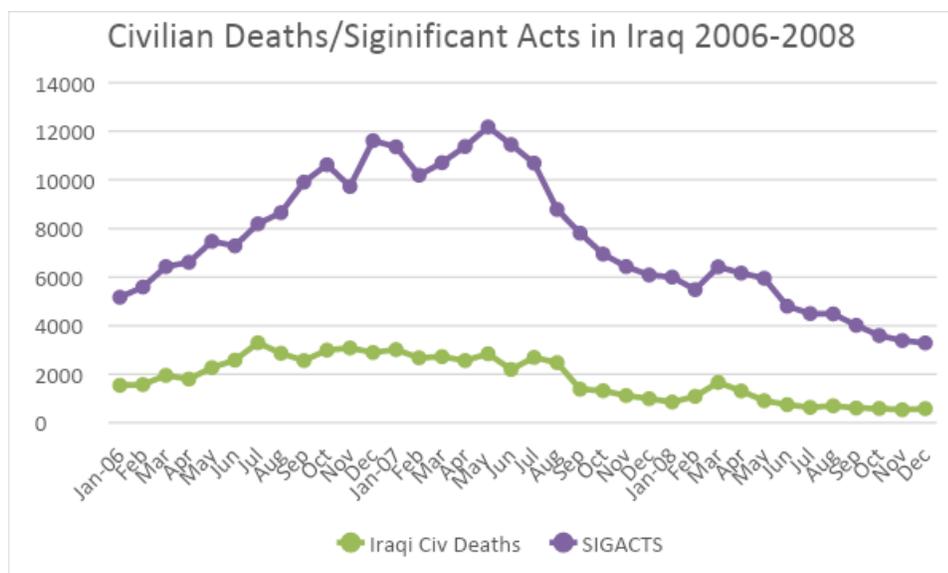


Figure 2: Civilian Deaths/Significant Acts in Iraq 2006-2008

Looking at the numbers for the four indices tabulated, we can see similar patterns for three of the four. U.S. military fatalities saw their first spike in October 2006, three months before the Surge forces began flowing into Iraq. The peak three months were April through June of 2007, averaging over 110 deaths per month. By October of 2007 they had declined to levels below that seen in the first half of 2006, where they remained for the remainder of 2007 and 2008. U.S. deaths at the beginning of the study averaged about 2 per day: by the end of the study, they averaged about one every two days, or a 75% decrease.

U.S. fatalities follow an initial path expected from a force increasing in both size and aggressive posture, combined with an adversarial response to a perceived deteriorating situation. Deaths had increased prior to the Surge but increased again as the US forces finished flowing into Iraq. However, it took only four months of full Surge operation for U.S. fatalities to begin dropping, and they stayed down with no sustained spike for the remaining 15 months of the survey period, unlike the other indicators which all demonstrated a spike in early 2008.

Iraqi civilian deaths followed a similar pattern. They steadily increased beginning in March until hitting their three-year peak of 3298 in July 2006, six months before the Surge began. Deaths remained at a high level through August of 2007 averaging over 2,779 per month, then saw a “step” decrease from September 2007 through May 2008 averaging 1,220 per month. After that they dropped decisively below even early 2006-levels, to 667 per month from June 2008 until the end of the year. Averaging over 1500 per month at the beginning of the study, they were in the mid-500s by the end, a decrease of over 60%.

The statistics for Iraqi civilian deaths demonstrate the destabilization of the situation in Iraq that led to President Bush’s decision to order the Surge. It wasn’t until September of 2007, four months after the full complement of Surge forces were in place, that civilian casualties began to decline. Then it took until June 2008 before the second “step” decrease in deaths occurred, after US troop strength had returned to its pre-Surge level.

The last similar category was significant acts (SIGACTS), or Coalition force reporting of anything militarily significant occurring in their sectors. SIGACTS steadily increased beginning in January 2006 and first breached 10,000 in October. After that they remained at well over 10,000 per month through July 2007. They steadily decreased again from August, declining to 5484 in February 2008. They spiked up by nearly 1000 in March 2008, then declined every month for the remainder of the year, hitting their study-period low of 3290 in December. Overall, they dropped from a monthly average of about 5500 at the beginning of the study to about 3400 at the end, a decrease of almost 40%.

The SIGACTS and Iraqi civilian deaths had the strongest correlation. Both increased throughout 2006. SIGACTS continued to increase into the first half of 2007 after civilian deaths had plateaued. This diversion may reflect the greater U.S. and ISF presence throughout Iraq. In

other words, the issue may not be that Iraq became steadily more violent into 2007: the Americans just became more aware of what was occurring in Iraq.

The least correlation with the other categories occurred in the data for Iraq Security Force deaths. Their numbers also demonstrated the largest fluctuation. In general, they can be characterized as running between 132 and 201 for the first six months of 2006, spiking to an average of 206 per month from July through October 2006. They then actually declined to an average of 112 per month from November 2006 through January 2007. As the Surge began, ISF deaths jumped to a monthly average of 215 from February through July 2007, with a study high of 300 in April 2007. They declined to an average of 86 per month from August 2007 through January 2008. They experienced a four-month spike, averaging over 123 per month during February through May 2008. ISF deaths did not go above 100 again for the rest of the year, hitting their 3-year low of 24 in November 2008. Averaging about 175 per month at the beginning of the study, they declined to about 50 per month at the end, a decrease of about 70%.

The ISF numbers may indicate that their role in the Surge has been underappreciated. Their statistics were the only ones that demonstrated a decline during the last three months of 2006. When the Surge began, ISF deaths jumped from 91 in January 2007 to 300 in April, before the full U.S. Surge component was in place. Whereas U.S. fatalities dropped fairly rapidly once the Surge forces were fully in place, ISF fatalities remained stubbornly high, bore the brunt of the SIGACTS spike in early 2008 and did not substantially decline until June of 2008, nearly eight months later than their U.S. counterparts.

Insurgent fatalities are more difficult to find data for. Best estimates of annual fatalities as provided by Coalition forces were 3,902 in 2006, 6,747 in 2007 and 2,028 in 2008. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence estimate for 2007 was 4,544, nearly one-third lower than the U.S. estimate,

although both represent a substantial increase over 2006 reflecting greater contact between security forces and insurgents. Based on the increase in U.S./ISF fatalities in 2007, the U.S. estimate seems more credible.

It is widely accepted that the Surge succeeded. By success, we mean that it helped suppress the insurgency. Peter Mansoor, a key staff officer in Iraq during the Surge, wrote that “The Surge has created the space and time for the competition for power and resources in Iraq to play out in the political realm, with words instead of bombs.”<sup>2</sup> As will be seen, interviewees for this work almost all said it at least produced short-term benefits of stability. Even opponents of the Surge strategy had to concede its success in retrospect. Hillary Clinton was quoted as saying that “the Surge worked.” Barack Obama acknowledged that the Surge “succeeded beyond our wildest dreams” and was emboldened to order a Surge in Afghanistan shortly after taking office in 2009. These statements are supported by several counter-insurgency progress indicators including human movement, business and agricultural activity, participation in elections and employment as well as reductions in acts of violence (number of attacks, friendly/host-nation casualties) and specific attacks on infrastructure.

## SCOPE

The U.S. effort in Iraq can be divided into four general phases: invasion, occupation, Surge, and withdrawal. This dissertation will discuss the first two phases, which contain elements of many forms of warfare, such as invasion, interstate war, intrastate war, and counterinsurgency. This work would not suffice to evaluate in-depth each of these elements, any of which would merit a separate study. It does introduce the first two phases in order to facilitate

proper evaluation of the third phase, or Surge. The withdrawal effort was discussed by interviewees in detail in response to the survey question “Did the Surge produce results?” In particular it explores the ways in which General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker changed the role and capability of the “soft power” resources during the Surge, and the ways in which this “smarter” power contributed to the success the Surge experienced.

Chapter Two is a review of the key literature found by the author relating to this work. Power and its theoretical underpinnings are explored. Counterinsurgency literature is also discussed. Writings specific to Iraq play an important role in understanding the Surge: in some cases they include books or articles by this project’s interviewees.

Chapter Three describes the theory and methodology for this work. Some definitions relating to power are proposed based on the research for this project and utilized later in the work. It also describes how the database was created utilizing grounded theory and a series of interviews via referral sampling of people who participated in the Surge with a list of the questions asked of interviewees.

Chapter Four will use this operationalization to lay out the problems present in Iraq prior to the Surge, primarily as seen by Surge participants. Some of the problems lay with decision-making being done in Washington DC. Some were related to structural challenges within the U.S. Executive Branch such as manning shortfalls, short tours of duty and unclear lines of authority. Some were related to execution on the ground such as insufficient partnering with Iraqi Security Forces or government officials responsible for reconstruction. All contributed to the early lack of success in Iraq prior to 2007.

Chapter Five analyzes FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, looking at its relationship to 2007 U.S. Army doctrine and how it developed a holistic approach to applying smart power that

brought together the military and civilian efforts in Iraq during the Surge. Surge participants describe the changes they saw and developed in Iraq that demonstrate a foundation for operationalization of smarter power. Coercion and attraction were applied together in varying degrees by people on the ground in response to the local situation.

Chapters Six through Eight analyze the interviews with Surge participants to demonstrate how the better strategy translated into results in Iraq. It started with a more supportive domestic strategic structure in the U.S. that better supported General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker in terms of both resources and domestic support. In Iraq, improved partnership within the U.S. agencies and with the host nation governance and security apparatus dramatically reduced violence and set the stage for reconstruction and reconciliation.

Chapter Nine provides interviewee perspective on the Surge. Much of the information in this chapter came from three survey questions:

- 1) Did the Surge produce benefits?
- 2) What were your lessons learned from the Surge?
- 3) Are the lessons of the Surge applicable to other/future conflicts?

Chapter Ten concludes this work with some general observations and ideas for potential further research. It includes a list of the lessons learned from this work and author personal thoughts.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned during the course of this project can be grouped into three general categories and are described below:

- 1) Lessons reinforcing the literature
- 2) Lessons different than the literature
- 3) New lessons

The detailed explanation of each of the lessons is available in Chapter Eight.

## LESSONS REINFORCING THE LITERATURE

Much of what happened during the Surge was not new, hence these are not new lessons. Prior counterinsurgents had understood and documented these. It was largely during the Surge that they were “remembered” and reapplied in Iraq. They included:

- 1) Broad counterinsurgency lessons do not change, but have to be relearned
- 2) Counterinsurgency environments are complex
- 3) Cultural and religious differences are difficult to reconcileThe government is often the cause of the insurgency, otherwise there would be no insurgency  
Domestic issues complicate foreign counterinsurgency, particularly in democracies
- 4) Isolating a counterinsurgency environment is difficultModern transportation/communications make counter insurgency difficult
- 5) Counterinsurgency is more effective the lower the level at which it is executed
- 6) Smart power is normative
- 7) Coercive or attractive power are rarely effective singly
- 8) Adaptability is critical
- 9) Working with the host nation is harder, but in the long run more successful

## LESSONS DIFFERENT THAN THE LITERATURE

Interviewees provided insight to a number of issues that can be found in counterinsurgency literature but may be interpreted in a different manner or treated as a less important item. Their illumination provides an opportunity to reevaluate critical thinking on these topics. These included the items listed below:

- 1) Foreign counterinsurgency becomes less popular with the local population with time
- 2) Counterinsurgency falls into a gray area neither DoD nor DoS are enthusiastic about entering
- 3) There are many ways to incorrectly apply power
- 4) The importance of *FM 3-24* was in its existence as much as what was in it
- 5) Coercive and attractive power can be differentiated
- 6) Power elements are both more and less fungible than commonly understood
- 7) Iraq has little concept of a national will
- 8) Someone will be unhappy about any change made
- 9) Adaptability can apply to higher level guidance
- 10) Part of the fight occurs in detention facilities

## NEW LESSONS

Several interesting new lessons came out of the Surge participant interviews. In some cases it is the mere fact of accumulation of data and responses to this work. The new ideas are listed below:

- 1) Capabilities are not inherently hard or soft

- 2) The importance of personalities is often underestimated
- 3) Surge participants thought their effort made a difference in Iraq
- 4) Surge participants thought the lessons learned are applicable to other conflicts

## GOAL

Historical works tend to focus on the decision-makers at the top. Due credit should certainly be given to President Bush for his personal courage in ordering a change in mission that most opinion at the time thought was not going to work. Secretaries Gates and Rice also should be credited for implementing change and cooperation to reflect the new strategy. Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus formed an excellent working relationship in Iraq that was key to success. These people have all been justly recognized and mostly praised for creating the conditions for success during the Surge.

This work is an opportunity to hear from the people who worked at an operational and tactical level to make the Surge in Iraq a success. Commanders of Army brigades and Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Career employees and people called into active service from the military Reserves or temporary hires. Contractors and trainers who worked and lived with their Iraqi counterparts. People who worked with detainees, developed plans that integrated Coalition efforts or were responsible for communicating with Iraqis, Americans and the world at large.

They came from a wide variety of backgrounds and performed a wide variety of missions while serving in Iraq. Most interacted with Iraqis on a regular basis both at their place of business and/or travelling “outside the wire.” Almost all of them got shot at (practically every

Coalition installation was mortared on a regular basis). Some continued to serve their country in Iraq or Afghanistan after the Surge ended.

Their success was made possible by the strategic change the U.S. leadership made prior to the Surge, but only possible. In the end it was the people on the ground who improved their cooperation and coordination with each other, got smarter in using each other's strengths to overcome weaknesses, and implemented a more effective version of counterinsurgency than had been seen in Iraq prior to that time. It was their efforts that brought the "breathing space" the leadership hoped to achieve in order to give the Iraqis a fair opportunity to stabilize their country and renew the political process.

Their stories provide an opportunity to learn, or often relearn, the techniques that work or do not work in a counterinsurgency environment. A number of common themes emerged that will be explored in this work. Some are interesting in and of themselves, some can be pieced together with other insights to provide a richer mosaic of successful counterinsurgency. All are provided by people who were in Iraq in 2007-2008 helping make the Surge work.

## CONCLUSION

The Surge came at a key point in the Coalition effort in Iraq. Many people felt the U.S. was doomed to fail in achieving its objectives in Iraq and needed to simply leave. With improved support from decision-makers in Washington D.C., the interviewees for this work and their comrades were determined to prove the critics wrong. Their part in the Surge is retold in this work.

They worked to overcome a myriad of structural and operational problems to restore stability to Iraq and give the host nation and its citizens a better chance to move forward

politically, economically, and socially. Changes that had been taking place before the Surge were emphasized and expanded. Veterans applied procedures often learned the hard way from previous tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. First-timers brought enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate across the military-civilian line.

Utilizing referral sampling a pool of interviewees was developed that included a wide variety of people and missions during the Surge. Their words shed light on a number of common themes that they saw as being part of success in counterinsurgency. This work will explore those common themes in detail and compare them with the extant literature on counterinsurgency in general and Iraq in particular. Some of the themes should come as no surprise. Some take a different perspective from that commonly found in the literature. Almost all are telling their story in a public forum for the first time. As such, they provide a new and unique insight into the Surge.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### INTRODUCTION

Counterinsurgency does not tend to capture the public eye to the extent that conventional warfare does. There are a number of potential reasons for this which will be explored while reviewing the state of the existing literature. This chapter will focus on literature related to counter-insurgency warfare in general, which includes works from antiquity to modern times. These works describe elements of insurgency that still must be dealt with today and presented challenges for the U.S. in Iraq. Better understanding of these challenges was an important element of the Surge. A review of U.S. military doctrine demonstrates the fact that the U.S. was in many cases relearning lessons it had learned during prior conflicts.

Understanding the state of the current literature regarding power will demonstrate the opportunity to further refine what soft power means and its relation to hard power. This work will move beyond the theoretical hard and soft power debates with operationalized definitions in Chapter Three. These definitions can lay out a roadmap for evaluating a power strategy to see if it is “smart.”

#### THEORIZING ABOUT AND APPLYING POWER

In addition to providing important insights into the counterinsurgency struggle in Iraq during the Surge, this study contributes to the broader literature on the nature and application of

power in international relations. This more theoretical contribution comes through the application of the concepts of soft power and smart power to the activities engaged in by the U.S. government in Iraq.

The very nature of power has long been a subject of debate, not only in political science, but throughout academia. A reasonable modern era start point can be the initial works of Robert Dahl, who moved beyond a rigid power structure in a group and postulated that, particularly in a democracy, there are a number of competing power elites who must work with each other and compromise.<sup>3</sup> Iraq demonstrates some of the qualities of Dahl's ideas and the potential for conflict that lies therein. At the top are the competing Sunni Arab, Shia Arab and Kurdish elites who sway the allegiance of their respective sectarian populations. Each also has sub-group power brokers such as tribal chiefs, sheikhs and wealthy individuals and families.

## BACHRACH AND BARATZ

In response to Dahl and others, an interesting modern treatment of power was conducted by Bachrach and Baratz in *Two Faces of Power*, written in 1962. Their idea was that power actually has two faces, neither of which are understood by sociologists and only one by political scientists.

Bachrach and Baratz agreed with the political scientists that one face of power is results-based, the measure of participation in decision-making. To them, this means observing who participates in decision-making, the nature of their participation, and the measurable results that accrue from the process. Because the results and interactions are visible and measurable, they consider this the recognized face of power.

What they also saw as a second face of power was the ability to control the decision-making agenda. Just because an issue does not come up for discussion does not mean it isn't important. A group or individual with power to control the agenda will not want to raise issues that could be decided in their best interest, or ones not personally important to them. To them, organization, rules and structure exist largely as a self-reinforcing agenda of what is important and what is not. Because this face of power does not produce decisions and measurable results, Bachrach and Baratz hypothesize that it can be hidden to outside understanding and evaluation.

They believe both faces must be understood to properly evaluate power and its control among a group. Keeping an issue from being raised can be as important as how raised issues are decided. A frequent complaint among minorities or women throughout the world is that their nation does not even discuss issues such as voting, education opportunity or fair participation in public life. They and their issues are kept off of the agenda of decision-making by others.<sup>4</sup>

The person or persons who can control the agenda may often be behind the scenes. Interviewees for this work often found this to be the case in Iraq. Even though there may be an elected mayor or governor officially "in charge," interviewees often found that person curiously reluctant to work on issues that seemed to be of importance. In many cases there was a tribal chief, religious leader or businessman who controlled the actions of the elected official.

As an interesting note to the influence of Bachrach and Baratz, When Dr. Dahl published *Democracy and Its Critics* in 1989, one of his five criteria for the ideal democracy was control of the agenda. This is a corroboration of the Bachrach and Baratz idea of the importance of hidden power.

The Bachrach and Baratz model of two faces of power is interesting and important, but not necessarily the best fit for studying soft power. It can be argued that not bringing agenda

items forward for decisions is a decision as well, even though made by a smaller group. In fact, it could be treated as a form of hard power, with the community being coerced into not discussing items of importance to them. Soft power is about attraction and is unlikely to be seen in a situation where the community is not getting what it wants.

## BOULDING

A notable in-depth treatment of the topic of political power was actually conducted by an economist, Kenneth Boulding, when he wrote *The Three Faces of Power* in 1991. Boulding stated in his book that he had never seen a treatise on power written by a political scientist, although this is not correct as has been seen.

Boulding divided power into three types and assigned a component of that power to each. First was destructive power, which he commonly associated with threats as embodied in political-military activity. To Boulding, these threats could be active or passive, such as the difference between sending a gunboat to a port and having it fire on the port. This was a crucial distinction to Boulding, who emphasized that people often conflate power and force whereas he felt that force was a subcomponent of threat. Boulding also postulated that destructive power is the easiest to employ.

His second type of power was productive, with a power component of exchange as embodied in trade or simple reciprocity. As an economist, he postulated that a bargaining situation can only take place when there is an overlap between two parties of what they are willing to buy and sell. This would mean that productive power can only be utilized when the two parties have a mutual interest in cooperating: it is not a push (destructive) or pull

(integrative) situation. Boulding spent less time discussing productive power than integrative, even though his academic background was as an economist.

To Boulding the third type of power, integrative, along with its component of love as embodied socially, was the longest-lasting. To work, he said that the phenomena of conversion, or identification with an existing structure or group, was necessary. Although it is the most difficult to achieve, integrative power endures the longest and is a necessary component of legitimacy. He felt that destructive and productive power that lack legitimacy will not persist, that destructive and integrative power have a non-linear relationship, and that the tendency for unbalanced threat destructive power was in the end to destroy itself.

Boulding does not conceive the power categories as distinct sets. He discusses the idea of the three components of power as having “fuzzy logic” boundaries, so that there are elements of all three in each component of power, although one will predominate in each. For example, exchange is the dominant component of productive power. The exchange normally plays out in the economic sphere of human activity. However, threat can exist in economics in the form of price wars or boycotts. He mentions that love can also exist, but discusses it as an internal phenomenon, such as the morale of organizational employees.

When discussing his fuzzy logic, Boulding comes right to the edge of the idea that an institution composed for threat power, such as the military, can exercise his other forms of power. He points out that the military has productive and integrative elements. However, he then discusses these elements as more internal to the organization: for example, a military needs productive power in the form of money in order to buy what it needs to sustain itself. One would presume from reading his work that he would also view integrative power as internal, such as building cohesion and trust within the unit, rather than external (building love outside the unit).

He does mention that a ruler needs integrative power to legitimate his rule, but then he says the ruler must be loved, or at least respected. By adding on the minimal requirement of respect, Boulding turns away from advocating a pure integration competence for the military and instead relegates it back to its traditional threat role. Thus, his tendency is to revert to treating organizations as having a niche role within a specific component of power, and largely by default they operate within a specific type of power.

Further, Boulding advocates for three types of power, but his work basically seems to come down to whether targets of power act because they are coerced to act or because they want to act. His productive power type presumes a precise, equally-beneficial exchange which is probably almost never the case in reality. How often do friends have precisely the same amount of love and respect for each other? Won't virtually every relationship be composed of one party that feels slighted and one that feels smothered, no matter how slightly? Sometimes we cannot find a good deal when we shop: we must take the best of the bad deals available. Most Europeans probably do not like having to rely on OPEC or Russia to meet their petroleum needs, but the alternatives are worse.

With such a razor-edge middle ground, wouldn't it make more sense to simply define power as binary rather than trying to develop an unwieldy three-categorization construct? This could be where Boulding's background hindered his work: an economist would only be human if he wants to elevate his academic niche to a position of co-equality in a power model. The problem is not that economics are unimportant to power considerations: they are. The issue is assuming that there is a significant element of mutually satisfactory economic exchanges that occur among humans, when in reality most probably lean toward being either threat or love based.

The more obvious is the threat element as has been discussed with the OPEC example above. But inequality can be shifted towards love as well. A young girl might buy a pricey ticket to a Justin Bieber concert where she also manages to get his autograph. To Justin, it was primarily an economic transaction. He got his percentage of her ticket price, and certainly derives a rush from her as an adoring fan, but she was only one of 10,000 people at the concert and 100 or so for whom he signed an autograph (as one of 50-100 performances he does annually), so the love element is severely diluted (i.e. he would not have noticed the difference if she were not there). But for her, it may be the highlight of her social calendar for the year. She will talk about it with her friends for weeks. If she took a selfie near him, it may become a blowup Flat Head poster on her wall. Decades later she will pull out her autograph book and fondly reminisce on the experience. She may have paid for the ticket but for her, it was a love interaction.

Although Boulding does not really go through the door of cross-utilization of traditional power component organizations, he does leave the key for us to do so. One could postulate an integrative function of traditional productive organizations such as corporations if their products are singularly desired by consumers (status symbols vs generic brands). Many children do not want to eat a cookie unless it came out of a package with a picture of an elf on it. Culture and politics can play a role as well, such as the exhortation to “Buy American.” One can also postulate a true integrative function for military organizations as well, for example peacekeepers. Boulding’s ideas are a starting point that other thinkers could build upon.

## LUKES

Steven Lukes developed a better basis to expand the concept of two faces of power. He also believed that the two faces described were inadequate to cover the full potential of power. For him, the third face of power is described as the power “to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things.”<sup>5</sup>

Lukes is skeptical of Marxist or other theories that believe there is a greater will or role (proletariat or worker for example) that people will willingly subsume themselves in and strive to make their identity. But if so many people appear to be complying with an oppressive or exploitative system, his question is why do people appear to willingly submit themselves to domination rather than continuously resist?

Lukes builds upon the checklist developed by Charles Tilly in 1991. It includes things such as the idea that people are continuously rebelling, but in smaller, covert ways, or that resistance is costly, or that force and inertia hold them in place. Lukes singles out one in particular, that “As a result of mystification, repression, or the sheer unavailability of alternative ideological frames, subordinates remain unaware of their true interests.”<sup>6</sup>

Lukes used this idea of Tilly’s as a launching point for evaluating power in terms of three faces. He felt that Tilly was on the cusp of an important element that was capable of standing alone as a “face of power.” To Lukes, this could take a variety of forms such as tradition, culture, or misinformation both deliberate and unintentional. He thought that this psychological element would be able to bias decision-making against the interests of the individual. In other cases, the people may be aware of it, but their “rebellion” only exists in the form of jokes or

secret conversations. This can be occurring even while people are “officially: supportive of the domination regime.

Lukes saw concerns by other writers that defining power in too broad terms risked turning it into a meaningless concept. However, he felt that it was such an important concept that it was better to see power in an all-embracing way than not to try and do so.

Interviewees for this work consistently felt that the Surge was successful in part because it made a greater effort to work with Iraqis below the national level. The military conducted robust joint patrolling with Iraqi Security Forces and co-inhabited smaller outposts. Provincial Reconstruction Teams were established by Department of State at provincial level. This allowed the U.S. to establish trust and a belief in the Iraqis that they did not have to have centralized direction in order to be successful. In some cases, the Iraqis were already aware of this, but U.S. support helped enable events such as the Anbar Awakening by Sunnis who wanted to rid themselves of al-Qaeda but did not trust the Shia-dominated Iraqi government to help them achieve their goal.

## NYE AND KEOHANE

Theories about soft power provide a critical framework for this analysis. Much of the scholarship on soft power is put forth by liberal authors such as Joseph Nye, Robert Keohane and Robert Pape who have written extensively on the value of soft power.

Nye first proposed the concept in his 1980 book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Along with Keohane, he further refines the term in *Power and Interdependence*. Keohane and Nye define soft power as “the ability to get desired outcomes

because others want what you want; it is the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion.”<sup>7</sup> Pape explored the idea that the current US hegemony in terms of coercive power forces states trying to balance against the US to employ soft power approaches such as diplomacy, international institutions and economic statecraft to counter US global policies.<sup>8</sup>

Another good group study of hard versus soft power is found in *Soft Power and U.S. Foreign Policy*, edited and based off a collection of speakers from a May 2008 symposium conducted at the University of Manchester.<sup>9</sup> The timing for the study is near the end of the Surge in Iraq, an extremely fortuitous circumstance for this work.

In it, Dr Nye discussed his views of hard and soft power in more detail. He emphasized that the effectiveness of soft power should be judged from the perspective of the target, not the instigator. He believes that realists tend toward a materialist bias that causes them to downplay the importance of soft power. He defines smart power as the “...ability to combine the hard power of coercion or payment with the soft power of attraction into a successful strategy.” He listed five recommendations from a Smart Power bipartisan commission he co-chaired that included:

- 1) Restoring alliances, partnerships, and multilateral institutions
- 2) Prioritizing global development
- 3) Emphasizing a more personal public diplomacy
- 4) Economic integration
- 5) Addressing climate change and global security

In Chapter Two, Geraldo Zahran and Leonardo Ramos explored the fungibility of what Boulding would call power components. They criticized Nye’s concept of power as lacking

rigor, making a strict definition difficult to obtain. They discuss how states can use hard power as a foundation to develop soft power, such as the U.S. using WWII to develop the United Nations. However, they posit a problem for states being that much of the power being utilized in a soft role lies outside the control of states, such as non-governmental organizations (NGO) or religious groups. They also criticize the idea that a “universal culture” as a basis for soft-power activities exists: in other words, even institutions and concepts commonly associated with soft power can conflict. They say that smart power is a state strategy characteristic, not power itself.

Zahran and Ramos use the idea of hegemony to demonstrate their criticisms. After World War II (WWII), most countries have tolerated U.S. hegemony not because they thought it was the best deal, but rather the best deal available. Similarly, after the War of 1812 the U.S. did not contest Britain’s domination of the high seas for nearly a century, not because they preferred it, but because it was perceived as fair enough for the U.S. After WWII, the U.S. followed a similar model, making some effort to acknowledge the interests of other states and not creating a system that totally favored U.S. interests. As a result, global balancing against the U.S. among friendly and neutral nations did not occur. One could contrast this with the less successful regional hegemony established by the U.S.S.R., which failed in part due to perceptions of domination by the Soviets, and particularly Russians, among the other members.

In Chapter Three, Edward Lock posits that Nye’s unstrategic conception of soft power results from conflating relational and structural power. He thinks that Nye confuses between an entity attempting to exercise power versus the social system under which power is viewed as attractive. Lock believes this is because Nye wants to address soft power in the context of U.S. foreign policy making. Similar to Zahran and Ramos, he thinks this can lead to a problematic assumption that power is something which can be possessed. Lock concludes that Nye’s

unstrategic conception results from inadequate appraisal of the interdependence between the agent and subject of power. He describes power employment as a clash of interdependent strategies.

Personal experience and the interviews for this project corroborates the constructivist element of Lock's concept. The author's experience with reconstruction programs in Iraq and Afghanistan were instructive. Americans in particular have a tendency to tell the local people what they need rather than let those people tell them what they want. The author found that most of the planning sessions for local projects at headquarters did not have a single local leader present. The return on expenditure in refurbishing a village school is going to be far less if the tribal chief really wanted a well dug. It also causes the Americans to come across as aloof and not interested in the needs of the local population. If outsiders do not operate in concert with local perceptions of themselves and their environment, the outsider's efforts will inevitably end up less successful than envisioned by their leadership. Interviewees for this work emphasized that successful projects started with close coordination with local leadership.

In Chapter Four, Christopher Layne laid out a case for the limited abilities of soft power. He makes a strong point that states probably do not make foreign policy decisions because they "like" another state or its leaders. This would be in line with the thinking of Washington and Jefferson that states have interests, not friends. Layne also believes that foreign policy decision-making by state leaders is little influenced by public opinion. Layne specifically points to the Surge as a decision by the Bush Administration to increase commitment in Iraq even after the Democrats had scored huge gains in the 2006 national elections. He also tends to be dismissive of soft power because it is harder to measure than hard power.

Other studies have disagreed with Layne's assertion that the public has little influence on policy decisions. Paul Burstein concluded that the impact of public opinion is substantial, although our ability to generalize conclusions is limited. WlENZEIN and Soroka said that there is a fundamental link between public opinion and public policy, although influence can vary across political domains. Layne uses the Surge as an example of a politician (President Bush) not following public opinion, citing the 2006 electoral victories by the Democratic Party as proof that the American public wanted to reduce the U.S. presence in Iraq. However, Bush's policy can be viewed as akin to that of Soviet Premier Gorbachev when he increased the Red Army presence in Afghanistan upon taking office: a short-term increase with the long-term goal of stabilizing the country and setting the stage for a military drawdown. Many of the interviewees for this work described how the U.S. change in presidents in 2009 played a huge role in changing the U.S. policy in Iraq.

Many analysts may miss the subtle impacts that soft power can have, not from a state exercising it, but the principles underlying it. Americans opposing a sitting president will often turn to the court of world opinion to air their viewpoints. Tyrants the US opposes may gleefully pass the criticisms along to their citizens through the state-run media. The criticisms may astonish the foreign listener, but not in the way the critic or tyrant expects. Many of the members of the foreign audience are not astonished that America has such a horrible president: they are astonished that an American can say horrible things about their president and not be "disappeared" by the authorities. Information like that is difficult for a pollster to capture; they may not even realize they should be looking for it. But it is there.

The difficulty in measuring soft power is one of the reasons that bureaucratic organizations are reluctant to support it with funding and resources. States can track how many

insurgents are killed by Predator missiles. What they cannot track is the number of previously neutral people who got so angry with the U.S. attacking their village that they decided to join the insurgency, or at least begin supporting it with money or resources. This opaqueness cuts both ways. Hard power advocates will tend to downplay the potential impact of soft-power efforts, asking for objective proof that is difficult to positively determine.

Conversely, soft-power practitioners are also prone to exaggerate the impact of their tools. If you drop leaflets on an enemy unit encouraging them to surrender and they surrender the next day, did they surrender because of the leaflets, or was it because they were surrounded, cut off from supplies, and under continual bombardment? Absent concrete information, soft power practitioners who are struggling for actual or perceived relevancy (and funding) may be prone to take credit even where credit cannot be proven. Interviews for this work shed light on the challenges involved in demonstrating soft power's "bang for the buck."

A problem may lie in reading too much into Keohane and Nye's definition of attraction, including by Keohane and Nye themselves. Their definition does not go into detail over whether attraction can be ephemeral or permanent. This may lead them and other academicians to lean toward the idea of permanent attraction: reshaping politics, economies, friendships and even societies. Nothing in the definition says this must be the case.

The specific power act this plays out most visibly in is bribes, which Keohane and Nye described above as the "hard power of payment." Why is a bribe coercive? The recipient reaches out in a voluntary act to accept the payment. They are attracted to the payment and desire it: they are not being forced to accept it.

By example, the U.S. as an occupying power may be experiencing attacks on its supply convoys. The U.S. goal is to stop the attacks. They make an offer to the offending tribe of

payment in exchange for ceasing the attacks. The tribe accepts the payment, and the attacks cease.

Where is the coercion in this case? The U.S. was able to create a shared desired outcome with the tribe of U.S. convoys not being attacked. Just because it is temporary or not heartfelt does not mean it is not a shared desire, even though it probably will not last beyond the U.S. payments.

Britain discovered the latter to their dismay during the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Afghan War. The supply line for the British occupation army in Kabul ran through the Northwest Frontier back to India. For two years the British paid the local tribes not to attack their forces. There were no problems. Then the India office eliminated the tributes as a cost-cutting measure. The tribes promptly rebelled, forcing the Kabul garrison to evacuate and be slaughtered on the retreat to safety (one man made it back to Jalalabad).

The British experience demonstrates the downside of the ephemeral nature of bribes, but nonetheless for two years they had created a situation where they and the tribes were mutually attracted to the goal of British forces not being attacked. Sometimes that is the best an occupier can realistically hope to achieve. It is usually unlikely that an occupied nation will become attracted to their occupiers. In fact, any initial gratitude that may have accrued from the occupation, such as by being liberated from a ruthless dictator, will also prove ephemeral.

Part of the problem may be the Western/liberal/colonial desire to “improve” the locals by bringing them more into line with “modern” ideals and systems. Though admirable, the desire to help may also carry a somewhat paternalistic assumption that “improving” the lot of the locals will decrease their desire to attack U.S. convoys. One interviewee for this work was critical of the Dollard-Doob frustration-aggression theory that people join the insurgency

because they are frustrated because they are out of work.<sup>10</sup> A case can even be made that forcing structural change on an occupied country will be to the detriment of the established elites, hence is itself coercive. Decreeing that the new Iraqi Parliament had to have at least 25% women may be admirable, but it essentially meant that ¼ of the males who were formerly part of the leadership lost their place of privilege and are unlikely to be happy about it.

A related problem may lie in the distasteful nature of bribes. No one wants to admit that the only way they can elicit compliance in another short of coercion is through handing them a stack of cash. A parent may wish their children would get good grades simply because they want to: most parents find that a financial sweetener helps.

Finally, writers may be incorrectly linking bribes to noncompliance threats normally associated with them. In this case, the U.S. may make clear to the tribes that failure to accept the bribe will result in U.S. military action to proactively protect their convoys, i.e. cleaning out insurgent strongholds such as villages providing them shelter. This confuses the issue because any carrot can be proffered with a threatened stick as the alternative. The tribe may not be given a great choice, but it is a choice they voluntarily enter into.

## BALDWIN

For *Handbook of International Relations*, David Baldwin contributed a chapter titled “Power and International Relations.” He believed that all politics involved power, although they were not always about power. To him, the discussion of power shifted from power as a possession of actors to power as a relationship between actors. As a result, the discussion shifts to a multi-dimensional one encompassing scope, domain, weight, costs and means.<sup>11</sup>

What is important to Baldwin as a result of the shift is understanding that because power is a relationship, different types and degrees of power may be more effective in some situations than others. For example, the U.S. was far more powerful militarily in Vietnam, but military power lacked the fungibility to address the non-military problems the U.S. faced. The same problem occurred in Iraq. Every U.S. Army division has an artillery brigade, a tremendous hard power asset. After the invasion, most were repurposed as infantry or Civil Affairs because artillery was useless in a counter-insurgency environment. Armor, ground-attack aircraft and naval gunfire were among other U.S. assets that were rarely employed, repurposed or removed from the battlefield entirely.

Considering relationships also allows for integrating unintended effects into analysis, effects that are nonetheless consequential to relationships. A brigade commander stationed in Iraq prior to and during the Surge related a story that epitomized this problem.

A senior commander arrived in (his sector) with a very large check to restart a bakery that had been defunct since about 2003 when the owner left. The office issued the check to some guy who claimed he was the bakery owner. I had not heard anything about this before this senior officer arrived: I thought he just wanted to see the bakery. Little did I know that he would issue a check, along with all these people with cameras and people from these various organizations. Afterward I advised this officer that what he had done was demonstrate favorability towards a business owner and just put at risk several other Mom-and-Pop shops that had grown up and were providing baked goods to the Iraqi citizens and security forces. Now they had direct competition based on U.S.-government funding for an activity that had long since not been an issue. The locals had figured out a way to solve the problem, so why not just embrace these locals and give them the money?<sup>12</sup>

## OTHER WORKS

All schools of international relations thought can advocate for soft power to some degree. Karl Marx and his political theories were based on the inevitable attraction that would result

from a prosperous world as his economic theory of communism took hold.<sup>13</sup> Alexander Wendt talked about how attraction will bring about changes in a state as collective norms shift over time.<sup>14</sup> Even the realist Samuel Huntington talks about culture, although Keohane and Nye disagree with his assertion that soft power is power only when it rests on a foundation of hard power.<sup>15</sup> Joseph Grieco highlighted the importance of relative versus absolute gains but also said that states will enter voluntarily into agreements if they feel it is in their best interests to do so.<sup>16</sup> Robert Gilpin and his obsolescing bargaining theory postulated that over time sunk costs allow states to get the upper hand in their relations with multinational corporations (MNC), but the initial agreements are based on mutual attraction.<sup>17</sup> Marc Sageman writes about terrorist social networks and says that in many cases social bonds between members predate ideological commitment, and that these soft bonds are what induce young recruits to join these radical organizations.<sup>18</sup>

International relations practitioners often categorize elements of national power as being either hard or soft. For example, the comparative politics textbook *The Good Society* lists the three forms of state power as political (including military), economic and cultural. It tells us that “cultural power exists when people can convince others to adopt their values, ideas and premises as their own,” clearly seeing cultural power as soft power. Regarding economic power, they say that “people who control scarce resources...obtain compliance from those who need them,” thus categorizing economic power as hard. Similarly, they say “political power is grounded in coercion.”<sup>19</sup> Draper and Ramsey reflect a common tendency among political scientists to pigeonhole forms of power as being definitively hard or soft.

Literature exploring soft power elements of the Surge include Krowley and Rutherford on U.S. influence campaigns and their effectiveness.<sup>20</sup> Kimberly Kagan’s *The Surge: A Military*

*History* describes initiatives developed by US forces working in tandem with Iraqi Army and Police units to improve their capabilities, understanding that locals are the best counterinsurgents.<sup>21</sup> Hammes and Bakir describe challenges the U.S. faced with insurgent intimidation and the explosive growth of media in Iraq.<sup>22</sup>

This work will advocate for the concept that almost any form of power can be hard or soft depending on how it is employed. In the case of the Surge, this will demonstrate that the tools of power available to decision-makers are more flexible than previously understood. The success of the Surge lay in part with the ability of the U.S. to repurpose part of its military strength to soft power missions.

## SMART POWER

Smart power is both a relatively new political science term and a normative one. The concept itself is of course not new: the “carrot-and-stick” approach has been understood for millennia. *FM 3-24* emphasizes that you cannot kill your way out of an insurgency. However, one of this work’s interviewees pointed out in an article he wrote that you cannot buy your way out of one either.

The challenge in developing a common definition is that smart power is normative. Confusion is worsened by the tendency to bin capabilities as either hard or soft. Dr. Nye is one of the leading smart-power thinkers, but demonstrates an “either/or” train of thought. He talks about hard and soft power resources with the implication that a specific tool is only useful as hard or soft. For example, The Center for Strategic and International Studies says that smart power is “an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily

in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand one's influence and establish legitimacy of one's action."

Not only does this definition assume military capability is hard, but that things like alliances are soft. Alliances are typically viewed as hard power by the nation or nations they are directed against. The 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement was clearly a precursor to the invasion and division of Poland. The Warsaw Pact was formed in response to the perceived threat of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Arab unification efforts in 1967 resulted in the pre-emptive Israeli strike known as the Six-Day War. The security dilemma first espoused by John Herz is exemplified by alliance/counter-alliance moves by multiple parties, even if they see these moves as a soft power effort of attracting like-minded nations.

Likewise, Chester Crocker starts by listing the capabilities and recommending they be mixed wisely, but then describes the engagement of "both military force and all forms of diplomacy." Again, the "both" implies certain tools are limited to certain tasks, even that diplomacy is a soft power, although it includes options such as recalling the Ambassador or severing diplomatic relations entirely. Such thinking can be potentially hazardous to decision-makers who take such actions thinking "The other side won't feel threatened because this is just soft power."

Specifically describing challenges in Iraq, West, Russell and Robinson talk about the importance of soft power, pre-Surge steps U.S. forces were beginning to make in employing smarter power and bringing in the right numbers and force mix to properly do the job.<sup>23</sup>

Building on the idea that any tool of power can be hard or soft, this work will explore how this concept increases the options available to decision-makers in a counterinsurgency environment. It can also help them understand that soft power is in the eye of the beholder.

Surge participant interviewees provide a number of examples of military and civilians synergizing their capabilities to implement smart power solutions to the situations confronting them in Iraq.

Personalities were critical. West talks about coordination problems among senior U.S. officials. Ricks discusses some of the initial problems General Petraeus had coordinating with Admiral Fallon, Central Command commander.<sup>24</sup> See Sky for tensions between U.S. military and civilians in Iraq, as well as West for scarcity of U.S. civilians dispersing reconstruction funds.<sup>25</sup> Pre-Surge problems with reconstruction efforts such as little Iraqi input, inept rollout and rewarding of DoD contractors were described by Allawi.<sup>26</sup>

Interviewees will discuss how important positive working relationships were to success in Iraq. They also underscore the importance of spending money on the right economic projects. They also talk about the importance of military action to stabilizing Iraq so that soft power efforts would have the chance to take hold, confirmed by the nation-wide drop in violence by the end of 2008. In Chapter Three a working operational definition of soft power, hard power, and smart power will be provided and defended, so that these concepts can be applied to U.S. operations in Iraq.

## COUNTERINSURGENCY LITERATURE

Counterinsurgency study and literature may suffer because it lacks the “curbside appeal” of major combat operations. Military history readers tend to be more interested in conventional war. D-Day or Pearl Harbor are much tidier and compelling stories than intermittent small-scale conflicts that often take place in obscure locations with complex motives and unclear objectives.

Also, the public tends to be more interested in reading about or recreating the large-scale conflicts.

Consequently, it can be anticipated that historians and other researchers would tend to gravitate toward large-scale combat. Combined with a valid concern that lessened public interest would lead to smaller book sales or interest in publication by magazines and journals, it is understandable that counterinsurgency warfare often fails to attract the same level of interest as Operation Barbarossa or the Yom Kippur War.

This paucity of literature does not reflect global U.S. interests. Since WWII, the U.S. has fought perhaps five conventional conflicts when defined as state vs state conflict: Korea, Grenada, Panama, the 1991 liberation of Kuwait, and the initial occupation phase of Iraq in 2003). By contrast, even a partial list of US involvement in insurgency/counterinsurgency efforts would include Greece, Lebanon (multiple times), Cuba, Somalia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Libya, Bosnia, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. Many attribute the U.S. failure in Vietnam to its insistence on attempting to treat the conflict as a conventional one.

Insurgency/counterinsurgency campaigns are a rich environment for employment of soft power. An important part of the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) has been efforts to delegitimize the ISIS leadership, and publicize their excesses. Similarly, the U.S. shaped the global perception of the Taliban to gain support for its effort to remove them from power.

## WHY IS WRITING ON COUNTERINSURGENCY OFTEN SPARSE?

Insurgencies are often internal to a single state. Consequently, a single government has the opportunity to contain it. States in general and dictatorships particularly do not like publicly airing the “dirty laundry” of the mere fact that they are home to an insurgent environment, let alone getting into the details of its scale and the expenditure of lives and resources in their attempts to defeat it. The Westphalian system also tends toward a default option of treating these situations as internal affairs that neutral countries prefer to avoid.

Insurgencies are prone to foster violations of international laws pertaining to armed conflict as well as human rights, which governments in particular are reluctant to publicize. Opposition groups usually try to publicize government excesses whenever possible, a challenge to governments that has become more acute with telecommunications advances. Even worse from the government’s point of view, some insurgents welcome publicity of their own excesses: to them, notoriety may be preferable to anonymity.

Insurgent writing may be hampered by a combination of high fatalities and low literacy. Much insurgent leadership will perish during the course of the struggle. The high-ranking leadership of an insurgency is often made up of educated people. However, much of the mid-level leadership are often people who advanced through the ranks by being able to survive, not necessarily due to academic prowess. Even on the government side, war tends to winnow out poor leaders even if they went to all the right schools, in favor of selecting leaders based on combat skills. During WWII, the U.S. Army saw promotion of “mavericks,” enlisted men who earned direct commissions, and pilots who had not completed high school. Neither is even imaginable today, where a bachelor’s degree and officer candidate school are required.

Obstacles to academic study of counterinsurgency persist even after the conflict. Most insurgencies fail (see Plakoudas for rebuttal of the assertion by Van Creveld and others that most counterinsurgencies succeed<sup>27</sup>), and the victorious government typically does not wish to remember or write about it in detail. Most states continue to downplay the scope of a rebellion even after they successfully subdue it for the reasons discussed above. Sources and complete records are often hard to find and sketchy in detail, making empirical analysis difficult. Release of classified records can take decades.

If we classify the American Civil War as an insurgency, it will appear to be an exception. Yet it can be argued that Americans on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line commemorated the battles, yet never fully addressed the underlying causes of the war, particularly slavery, which persisted afterward in the form of the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow laws in the South. Despite all the Southerners who were slave-owners, slave traders, or overseers, the only person tried and executed after the war was Henry Wirz, commandant of the Andersonville prisoner-of-war camp, which housed an almost all-white population.<sup>28</sup>

## WRITINGS

There is nevertheless important literature dealing with insurgency. The current debate begins over whether counterinsurgency (COIN) is even feasible anymore, specifically when a foreign power joins the government in attempting to suppress the insurgency. Writers such as Gentile, Metz, Greene, Branch and Wood, Joseph, and Hammes all bring out various points in support of this idea. Gentile feels counterinsurgency is morphing into Responsibility to Protect (R2P) but doubts introducing foreign military forces protects the locals, and fears that developing

a counterinsurgency strategy insinuates that COIN is winnable.<sup>29</sup> To Branch and Wood, if the ingredients necessary for counterinsurgency, such as reliable intelligence and host nation ability to deliver services to its citizens are present, then there will not be an insurgency.<sup>30</sup> Hammes and Greene bluntly state that a foreign power cannot establish the legitimacy of a host-nation government, with Hammes saying that it is not a cost-effective solution.<sup>31</sup> Chapter Seven will recount interviewee lessons learned and applicability to future conflicts with opinions regarding the viability of counterinsurgency.

Others feel assistance still possible, though in an indirect role. Metz and Hammes wrote about using temporary expeditions or providing assistance and training without direct engagement against insurgents, as was the case in the early stages of Vietnam. Metz, Fitzsimmon and Chin feel that modernist, materialist COIN practices fail to take into account religious or cultural motivations that cannot be stymied through improving social services. To Chin, these concepts are Maoist and Cold War ones that will not meet desired objectives in the post-modern environment.<sup>32</sup> Metz and Byman also point out that host-nation elites are expected to act irrationally in order to meet Western concepts of modernization, and are pessimistic of desired results beyond the margins.<sup>33</sup> Chapters Six and Seven will include interviewees' accounts that a direct presence was an important stabilizer in Iraq.

At a more practical level, the debate often touches on the soft vs hard power dilemma. Common themes can be seen from the earliest writings to modern times. Many of these were being ignored or misapplied during the early stages of the U.S. operation in Iraq. There is also discussion of the relatively new concept of "smart" power. There is evolving discussion over the "right" mix of soft vs hard power and ensuring that the right capabilities are being properly employed for both. Plakoudas expanded upon the concept of dividing counterinsurgency into

two basic approaches. The first is enemy-centric or focusing on combat operations against the insurgents, such as done by the Romans or Ottomans.<sup>34</sup> An extreme version put forward by Downes even suggests that when civilian loyalty is not flexible, indiscriminate targeting may be required to stop support to insurgents. The second is population-centric, focusing action on the population. He then sub-divides this into either coercive action against the population or a combination of selective violence and reform.<sup>35</sup>

As will be discussed later, evidence from the interviews suggests that the Surge was successful in part because it moved in the direction of recognizing that additional hard power was needed to bring stability to Iraq. Plan success included the need for an increase in military troop strength and expansion of the Iraqi Security Forces. Byman wrote before the Surge of the need to provide security and order before any lasting reconstruction could take place, an idea echoed by numerous interviewees for this work. Chapters Five and Six demonstrate the belief of a majority of interviewees that smart power had to include hard power.

Another important theme in the counterinsurgency literature involves sensing and effectively adapting to local conditions. Sun Tzu understood the importance of manipulating the local political situation to your advantage. Julius Caesar's *Conquest of Gaul* describes the various local alliances Caesar developed to assist his military campaigns. The American Revolution has been written about extensively and well by authors such as David McCullough and Robert Harvey, describing the poor job Britain did of finding common ground with the colonists.<sup>36</sup> Popkin and Kilcullen provide excellent theories of reasons people become insurgents beyond ideology or even religion, reinforcing the importance of proper evaluation of local conditions.<sup>37</sup> De Tray stresses that working with local governments—districts, towns, and

communities—offers the best chance to strengthen people’s ties with their own government. The interviews show just how vital this was in the successes experienced by the Surge.<sup>38</sup>

Another important theme involves the contest for the support of the local population. By A.A. Cohen, *Galula: The Life and Writings of the French Officer Who Defined the Art of Counterinsurgency* demonstrates the US military beginning to absorb historical lessons on counterinsurgency, in particular the French campaign in Algeria in the 1950s in which Galula was a participant. Galula went on to lecture at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School and worked with U.S. Air Force General Edward Lansdale, one of the leading U.S. counterinsurgents of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>39</sup> Galula believed the population was the object of both sides in counterinsurgency, and that their support was conditional. This was a lesson the U.S. slowly relearned in both Vietnam and Iraq as demonstrated in Chapter Five when discussing development and implementation of *FM 3-24*.

## COUNTERINSURGENCY CHALLENGES IN IRAQ

No country ever has the luxury of entering a counterinsurgency with a perfect plan, resources or organization to participate in the conflict. Even totalitarian states are beset with challenges. Democracies have an additional layer of problems brought on by the requirement for transparency. In *The Post-modern State and the World Order*, Robert Cooper pointed out that as a hegemon policing pre-modern states, the U.S. cannot be as good as the rules it tries to uphold.<sup>40</sup> In trying to develop democracy in Iraq, the Coalition to an extent found itself in the dilemma Ed Mansfield alluded to in *Electing to Fight* that developing democracies are the most violent countries of all.<sup>41</sup> Plakoudas agrees that suppressing an insurgency has always constituted a

challenging task for every government no matter its military power.<sup>42</sup> Chapters Four and Five include interviewee belief that Surge success was in part due to the ability of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to justify the Surge to the U.S. Congress and public.

Being the sole remaining superpower is/was not easy. We can see writing on the subject encouraging a stable international system but cautioning that maintaining one requires national will. Robert Keohane saw the decline of the superpowers but felt that international institutions would help maintain system stability.<sup>43</sup> Charles Kindleberger felt that a hegemon was required to create a stable international system but cautioned in that that hegemon needed the will to enforce the rules of the system.<sup>44</sup> Writing in the *Harvard Journal of International Affairs* in 1998, Lisa Martin hypothesized in a similar vein, saying that the international institutions built by the U.S. became self-binding.<sup>45</sup>

U.S. efforts were initially slowed by the reluctance of the administration to admit that an insurgent problem existed in Iraq. As late as 2005 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had difficulty acknowledging the insurgents in Iraq as anything greater than “dead-enders” from the Saddam regime. Allawi described these mischaracterization problems which kept the U.S. from properly responding to the threat at hand.<sup>46</sup> Schiff advocates her concordance theory which posits a more interactive relationship between the military and senior civilian leadership.<sup>47</sup> She may be overrating the pre-Surge civilian-military separation: the National Security Council and Joint Chiefs of Staff serve as advisory bodies to the White House. The issue was not that Bush/Rumsfeld could not listen to the military; they just did not. In Chapter Five interviewees discuss the importance of General Petraeus’s ability to access the White House.

The U.S. also needed to achieve greater internal cooperation. Kilcullen, along with Pirnie and O’Connell, talked about the importance of developing a planning process that

embraces all departments of the U.S. government and is on the same battle rhythm as troops in the field.<sup>48</sup> To Kilcullen this may matter more than formal unity of effort. Joseph asks if war is the continuation of politics, and politics at the ground level is never considered in strategic interaction, why should we be surprised when defeat occurs?<sup>49</sup> Schiffrin feels that the very decision to Surge gave Iraqis the impression—and U.S. troops the opportunity to foster the impression—that the United States had recommitted to Iraq.<sup>50</sup> Chapter Five lays out in more detail than past authors how the U.S. bolstered its interagency planning process for the Surge.

Authors who discussed the structural challenges the U.S. had to overcome in Iraq include Ricks, Brinkley and Kaplan. Confusion over authority inhibited reconstruction efforts. Insufficient military force was in place to tamp down both anti-government forces and the Shia militias. Overoptimistic assessments of the Iraqi government was causing disillusionment among the Iraqi citizens. Russell stipulates that bureaucracy exists precisely to slow change so it should not be a surprise that increasing Iraqi bureaucracy would slow the process of reconstruction.<sup>51</sup> Interviewees go into great detail describing these problems and how they affected operations.

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) reports provide a number of insights regarding staffing and organizational shortcomings that hindered the U.S. efforts in Iraq. There was a lack of overall regulatory guidance. There was no template for a “typical” reconstruction team in an occupied country. Manning was haphazard and rarely long-term. This work will expand on the manning and structural problems encountered as the U.S. tried to implement a coherent reconstruction strategy in Iraq. Interviewees provided details and deeper insight regarding the practical problems created by the U.S. Executive Branch’s structural problems such as short periods of service, the importance of effective working partnerships

within the Executive Branch as well as with the Iraqis and making sure that political and economic initiatives better meet the needs of the population.

Building trust in a multi-ethnic war is difficult. Problems included abandonment of the Kurds and Shia in 1991 during the First Gulf War.<sup>52</sup> Russell and Sky talked about the initial unwillingness of Americans to meet with former regime leadership and other insurgent groups.<sup>53</sup> Allawi described the secretive nature of Ambassador Bremer's decision-making.<sup>54</sup> Ali discusses Iraqi distrust of U.S. motives, particularly feeling they were primarily oil related.<sup>55</sup> West describes U.S. Army surveys indicating 40% of the soldiers did not like the Iraqis and 38% felt they did not need to be treated with respect.<sup>56</sup> Also see Ali and Ahmed for endemic Iraqi corruption and sectarian issues that needed to be understood for an effective counter-insurgency campaign.<sup>57</sup> In Chapter Six, interviewees show how getting off the large bases and back into Iraqi communities improved trust and respect issues between both sides.

International players with differing goals than the U.S. sought to influence events in Iraq. In *Soft Balancing Against the United States*, Robert Pape showed that the U.S. was not going to be able to "seal off" Iraq from other international actors who would utilize economic and political soft power to disrupt U.S. activities and objectives in Iraq, particularly Iran and Syria.<sup>58</sup> The Bush administration refused to meet with the Syrians or Iranians while ignoring Saudi support to Sunni insurgents and was also reluctant to provide a larger role to the United Nations (UN).<sup>59</sup> Allawi went into detail about Iranian goals and techniques that were at odds with the U.S. effort, although they also favored installation of a Shia government.<sup>60</sup> See Kilcullen for a description of al-Qaeda's global base of support and for the idea that the security force "area of influence" needs to include neighboring countries.<sup>61</sup> Buchanan emphasizes two key points of influencing Syria constructively to stop the flow of terrorist activity into Iraq and the same goal

for Iran while also recognizing the sovereignty of Iraq.<sup>62</sup> Interviews demonstrate that some effort was made in this area, but it proved difficult to stymie activities of international players with objectives different than those of the U.S. although the emergence of some common interests with key international intervenors may have played an important role in near-term Surge success.

Domestic U.S. politics also played an important role. Ricks shows loss of popular support for the war in the U.S., but also Democratic reluctance to take responsibility for the situation.<sup>63</sup> Hammes explains that the factor of time must be a central consideration in any counterinsurgency campaign that requires major U.S. forces, but also believes that the U.S. public has demonstrated patience if they feel the cause is worthy: they are not time-averse, but incompetence-averse.<sup>64</sup> Mansoor details how GEN Petraeus invested a great deal of time on his confirmation process with Senate leadership.<sup>65</sup>

Other writers have also discussed the tactical approach to counterinsurgency. Eastin and Gade think that too little hard power can actually help insurgents by allowing them to signal strength and resolve without threatening them with annihilation.<sup>66</sup> Gentile is concerned that COIN expects fence-sitters to become loyalists if the right strategy is applied.<sup>67</sup> Gompert wanted to see less Western propaganda and more influencing by Muslim scholars.<sup>68</sup> Malkasian and Marston, Pirnie and O'Connell, and Greene describe concerns with empowering the Iraqi authorities. Pirnie and O'Connell even advocated preparation for host nation support in the event of a government collapse (in Iraq).<sup>69</sup> Chapter Six will detail interviewee accounts of the tactical approaches during the Surge that usually worked best when smaller, more realistic goals were sought.

## U.S. MILITARY COUNTERINSURGENCY GUIDANCE

The U.S. military interest in updating its counterinsurgency guidance is episodic: when it is involved in a counterinsurgency. The following table demonstrates this tendency:

Doctrine	Date Published	Conflict	Select Headings
<i>USMC Small Wars Manual</i> <sup>70</sup>	1940	Central America Caribbean	Relationship with the State Department, Military-Civil Relations, Armed native organizations, Military government, Supervision of elections and Withdrawal
<i>FM 31-15 Operations Against Irregular Forces</i>	1961	Vietnam	Ideological Basis for Resistance, Political Factors, Cold War situations, Propaganda and Civic Action, Police Operations
<i>FM 100-5 Field Service Regulations Operations</i>	1962		Unconventional Warfare, Military Operations Against Irregular Forces, Situations Short of War
<i>FM 31-16 Counter guerrilla Operations</i>	1967		Internal Defense and Development forces, The Hostile Guerilla Force, Advisory Assistance Operations, Civil Affairs
<i>FM 100-5 Operations of Army Forces in the Field</i>	1968		Unconventional Warfare, Cold War Operations, Stability Operations
<i>FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency</i>	2006	Iraq Afghanistan	Unity of Effort: Integrating Military and Civilian Activities, Developing Host Nation Security Forces, Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency

Table 1: U.S. Military Counterinsurgency Guidance 1940-2006

All of the works share common elements. There is recognition that U.S. forces are operating in a foreign country. There is discussion of the need for cooperation between the military and civilian branches of the U.S. executive agency, typically the Department of State.

There is an understanding that the goal is not permanent occupation, but to reach a point where the U.S. forces can be withdrawn.

One previous analysis of the U.S. military and counterinsurgency doctrine was conducted by the RAND Corporation. Published by Austin Long in 2008, *Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence* focuses on U.S. military counterinsurgency during Vietnam and the period up to and immediately after publication of *FM 3-24* in Iraq. Long concludes that publication of counterinsurgency doctrine did not materially alter attitudes or operations by U.S. forces. In fairness to Mr. Long, his work was published in 2008, before the full effectiveness of the Surge was evident. The interviews in this work suggest that *FM 3-24* and General Petraeus' command did have a substantial impact on conduct in Iraq during the Surge.

This work will argue in Chapter Five that doctrine is not necessarily intended or expected to change attitudes. What it did in this case was provide authorization for individuals who already espouse those ideas the latitude to carry them out in practice. *FM 3-24* did not open General Petraeus' eyes to a potential new way to combat insurgents in Iraq: it codified an approach he already felt would be superior to the strategy of his predecessors. It also reinforces the importance of individual leaders. Most of the interviewees for this work emphasized the personality-dependent nature of success or failure in carrying out their duties in Iraq. That the U.S. would try this new strategy started at the top with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker and filtered down to their subordinates. Thus, doctrinal innovation synergized with command commitment in Iraq during the Surge.

The Long study may not have appreciated how mentioning issues such as building local trust or reintegrating insurgents into the body politic are mentioned only infrequently in prior publications. By contrast, analysis of *FM 3-24* will demonstrate that the importance of the host

nation population permeates the entire work. Cooperation, communication, minimizing collateral damage and effective partnering are the building blocks of the manual, not merely mentioned.

This work will analyze in Chapter Five how *FM 3-24* moved beyond the ideas of its predecessors. It demonstrated a superior ability to treat the local population and leadership with respect. Consider this line from the *Small Wars Manual*: “The future opponent...will have the inherent ability to withstand all the natural obstacles, such as climate and disease, to a greater extent than a white man. All these natural advantages, combining primitive cunning and modern armament, will weigh heavily in the balance against the advantage of the marine forces.” The earlier works have a paternalistic, condescending air that writers of *FM 3-24* worked to minimize. Keep in mind that none of the documents were classified, so the target populations can access them.

One person who participated in the drafting of *FM 3-24*, Frank Hoffman, published an analysis of it in *Parameters* (2007). He said that the authors tried to mesh traditional approaches with the realities of the modern world. He classified this merger as “neo-classical counterinsurgency.” Hoffman felt that the manual gives commanders an understanding of the complex environment in which counterinsurgency operates but did not give them an understanding that different organizations may require different approaches. He also felt that it did not sufficiently treat religion or communication. He summarizes the manual as being “a step in the right direction.”

## CONCLUSION

As this review of the past literature has demonstrated, counterinsurgency has received limited scholarly and military attention, and some argue that the lessons of counterinsurgency are repeatedly relearned by a military that frequently fails to apply them. History demonstrates that effective counterinsurgency requires a mix of soft and hard power deployed smartly. Many contemporary authors even argue that counterinsurgency is no longer a feasible option, even for a superpower.

Several challenges are suggested by the literature that make it particularly difficult to mount an effective counterinsurgency operation for the U.S. including endemic U.S. government structural problems, employment challenges, a complex environment that includes a role for other external powers, and the ceaseless search for the proper mix of hard and soft power. The U.S. was even slow to develop doctrine to deal with the situation in Iraq, waiting until the situation had become seemingly irredeemable.

The next chapter will lay out the methodology used by this work to explore through in-depth qualitative interviews with key participants in the Surge in Iraq the ways in which improved counterinsurgency approaches were applied during the Surge, and the consequences that followed.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### INTRODUCTION

Terminology will be defined in this chapter. One of the key elements of this study is a common understanding of power. With a working definition, this study will be able to better distinguish between hard and soft conceptions of power as well as analyze states utilizing them in combination. This will be important as this work will also argue that capabilities should not necessarily be treated as either hard or soft. It will also offer a definition for smart power or attempting to put the right resources to use in the right combination. This work will further distinguish between smart power and simply mixing hard and soft power, which of itself does not guarantee the correct combination. Hard and soft power will be operationally defined in terms of coercive or attractive power.

Methodology for this study will also be explained. To explore soft power in Iraq during the Surge, this work employed grounded theory and its applicability to gathering primary-source data from interviews. Interviewees included military and civilians who were stationed in Iraq during the 2007-2008 Surge. The interviewee data was compiled via the method of gathering known as referral sampling or snowballing. Most interviewees were recommended by prior interviewees whom they had worked with in Iraq or knew had knowledge germane to soft power in the Surge. This research enabled the development of a rich database drawing previously unpublished or analyzed data from a broad range of interviewees. Their participation and

insights opened up a number of interesting avenues of analysis, including ones not envisioned by the author prior to research.

## TERMINOLOGY

### Power

The Oxford Online dictionary defines power as “The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.”<sup>71</sup> The definition broadly encompasses what this work will discuss as hard (direct) and soft (influence) power.

Parsing this broad definition allows breaking out the difference between hard power, which Joseph Nye defines as “The ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will” and soft power which he treats as “getting others to want the outcomes you want.” In other words, it is the difference between coercion and attraction, both of which would fall under the above definition of power.

Dr. Nye’s definitions suffice as a theoretical starting point for defining power. There is broad agreement on the concepts he is describing as being either coercive or attractive in nature. This work will also explore the idea that almost any action can be coercive or attractive depending on the point of view of recipients and other interested parties.

A working definition of smart power is also needed. The difference is that smart power is a normative concept. History does not demonstrate a precise admixture of hard and soft power that invariably creates smart power. Furthermore, even if there was such a ratio, it assumes the right tools are being employed in each role, which is not always the case. The U.S. was spending

billions on reconstruction in Iraq prior to the Surge: the problems stemmed from ill-chosen projects, poor implementation and little to no oversight. Chapter Eight will detail how part of the success of the Surge can be attributed to not just more resources, but better use of those resources. A central theme that emerged in research was the need for a greater effort on the part of the U.S. leadership to better employ the tools of national power in Iraq. In many cases they were relearning lessons that had been successful in previous conflicts.

This work will employ the following new definition:

SMART POWER: Employment of the range of available tools of power in a combination of attraction and coercion to efficiently accomplish national objectives.

This definition allows the tools of power to be utilized in either a hard or soft role depending upon circumstances. Military power is not predetermined to be hard, cultural power is not predetermined to be soft. This opens a wider range of options for policymakers and allows for creativity in the employment of available assets. The size difference between DoD and DoS means that, like it or not, if the U.S. wants to expand soft power activities overseas, utilization of the military in an attractive mode is necessary. Interviewees confirmed that DoS manning shortfalls made this necessary during the Surge, even assigning DoD members to DoS billets in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

This definition does not predetermine the optimal mix of hard and soft power but allows that ratio to be tailored to the operation. The World Wars were overwhelmingly hard power. The relief operations in Haiti and Indonesia were mostly soft power. The ratio can even change within a counterinsurgency effort, as adversary strength ebbs and flows around the battlefield.

Interviewees frequently described the first six months of the Surge as “a gunfight.” As the U.S. military gained the upper hand in the fighting, it could devote more resources to soft power efforts in Iraq.

This definition strives for an efficient balance between hard and soft power. National resources are finite, thus being able to use them wisely reduces the strain on the national purse and gives the taxpayer more confidence in the likely success of the operation. The Surge leadership demonstrated a marked improvement in the ability of the U.S. to synchronize its efforts in Iraq and move toward achievement of smart power.

### Soft Power

Social scientists tend to categorize power capabilities as being either soft or hard. Military capabilities and some economic actions are usually considered hard. These are commonly thought of in terms of threats or use of military force, embargoes, or even bribes. On the other hand, social and cultural capabilities are typically considered soft. These can include things such as education, innovation in political structures, or religious proselytization.

By these traditional measures, the U.S. military would be treated as an element of hard power. College textbooks such as *International Relations* by Pevehouse and Goldstein talk about the military in terms of the ability to exercise short-term power to influence another state. However, The U.S. military does not consist solely of hard power elements. It does have components that can engage in the “war of ideas” described by Pevehouse and Goldstein. The military is usually by far the largest element of a U.S. government occupation effort (called “stability operations” in U.S. military manuals) in another country, to such a degree that even its

soft power elements may be larger than the entire Department of State contribution. Therefore, it is critical to consider these forces when evaluating U.S. use of soft power.

The U.S. military approach to soft power can be best understood by looking at its doctrine as promulgated by the Department of Defense. The two most important for influence activities are *Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, Information Operations*, and *JP 3-13.2, Military Information Support Operations*, also known as Psychological Operations. For planning purposes, the U.S. military treats Psychological Operations as a subset of Information Operations, which also coordinates Military Deception, Operational Security, Electronic Warfare and Cyber Warfare. Note this is not a perfect delineation. For example, Electronic Warfare and Cyber have offensive components whose primary purpose is to support kinetic operations by military forces.

*JP 3-57, Civil-Military Operations*, is the US military force guidance for working directly with local officials and population. It defines Civil-Military Operations (CMO) as “...the activities performed by military forces to establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relationships between military forces and indigenous populations and institutions (IPI). CMO support US objectives for host nation (HN) and regional stability.”

Because all three publications have a “3” prefix, they are considered part of Operations. This is an important categorization. Operations is normally the focal point of U.S. military activities, and as such normally has first call on resources and manpower with all other elements of the force such as the J-1 (Administration) or J-4 (Logistics) in support. The fact that PSYOP, Information Operations (IO) and CMO have 3-prefix designators gives them a “seat at the table.” That is the good news.

The bad news is that there has to be a separate “3” prefix for soft power capabilities. Although there are publications covering land, air and maritime operations, there are none for armor, bombers or destroyers. It is true that CMO in particular can be performed by units other than civil affairs, but such specialized coding is a subtle sequestering of soft power functions such as messaging and rebuilding.

Like any bureaucratic organization, the military says the right things about many topics. Equal Opportunity is important, Operational Security is important, morale is important. No one has the time to devote full attention to all the areas the military claims are important. Leaders will consequently focus on several things they think are truly important while paying lip service to the remainder. Members of the unit will take their cue from the leaders. The same effect occurs based on doctrine. It is the difference between just being “important” and actually being important.

Because these assets and operations are at least included among joint and Army regulations, they do allow a leader such as General Petraeus to determine that they are important and stress them in his operations. This was the true contribution of *FM 3-24* when it was published. It gave General Petraeus and other leaders the ability to decide that the soft power elements of counterinsurgency were important and emphasize them during the Surge.

### Operationalizing Power

How do we know hard or soft power when we see it? The current literature goes into detail on theoretical aspects of hard and soft power. These theoretical discussions will typically be bolstered by specific examples. However, none have provided a working definition that

operationalizes hard and soft power in a way to allow case-by-case categorization in a satisfactory manner.

Boulding talked about destructive power and placed it in a primarily hard power context. He said it could be active or passive, delineating between the threat and employment of power. He also postulated that his three types of power (destructive, productive, integrative) can overlap in employment, making it hard to break them into distinct categorizations for analysis. Both Lukes and Baldwin help move the debate toward the power recipient rather than the capability itself. It is the effect on the recipient that will help determine whether the power is hard or soft. Keohane and Nye give us the theoretical distinctions of coercion and attraction, providing a starting point for potential operationalization of hard and soft power.

To empirically evaluate the data collected for this study, working definitions that encompass theoretical hard and soft power concepts need to be defined based on these theoretical constructs provided in the literature. Keohane and Nye's coercion and attraction provided the best basis for operationalization of the hard and soft power concepts. This work proposes the following new operational definitions of coercive and attractive power:

COERCIVE POWER: Actions whose consequences the recipient would not want repeated.

ATTRACTIVE POWER: Actions whose consequences the recipient would want repeated.

To parse the advantages and disadvantages of each, the following definitions are also required and will be explained following the table:

Time: The amount of time required to go from decision to conduct an action to action completion.

Permanence: A measure of the length of time the effect of a completed action will persist.

Undesired Consequences: Results of an action that are not in the best interest of the actor but can be reasonably expected to correlate with the action.

The following table demonstrates operationalization of these definitions:

ACTION	DO NOT WANT MORE	WANT MORE	TIME	DURATION	UNDESIRED CONSEQUENCES
Bombing a House	<b>Insurgents</b> , innocents in the house	Locals terrorized by the targets	10	10	Collateral Damage, Martyrs, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party response
Severing Diplomatic Ties	<b>Government</b> , local citizens	Inimical states	10	2	Resentment
Erecting Barriers	<b>Insurgents</b>	<b>Citizens and business owners</b>	5	5	Inhibits reconciliation
Economic Sanctions	<b>Local Citizens, government</b>	Smugglers	1	2	Reduce respect for rule of law
Cordon-and-Search	<b>Insurgents, Local Citizens</b>	Citizens outside the search zone	6	3	Roundup of innocents, spillover
Internment Facilities	<b>Insurgents, family members</b>	Other citizens	4	6	Abu Ghraib
Checkpoints	<b>Insurgents, local citizens</b>	<b>Local citizens</b>	7	5	Slows traffic, fosters corruption
Influence Messaging	Insurgents	<b>Local citizens</b>	2	9	Message fatigue, cynicism
Uncoordinated Civic Action	Insurgents, <b>government</b>	<b>Contractors</b> , looters	3	3	Mismanagement, looting, indifference of local citizens (true intended target)
Information Messaging	Insurgents	<b>Local citizens</b>	9	4	Dependency on occupying forces
Joint Presence Patrolling	<b>Insurgents</b>	Local citizens, <b>security forces</b>	3	4	Dependency on occupying forces
Political Oversight	insurgents, <b>power brokers</b>	Local Citizens, governance aspirants	1	8	Perceptions of bias, ingratitude
Coordinated Civic Action	Insurgents	<b>Government, local businesses, citizens</b>	5	7	Mismanagement, looting
Bribes	non-recipients	<b>Recipients</b>	10	1	Favoritism
Education/Training/Support		<b>Bureaucrats, govt, citizens</b>	5	9	Possible dependence

Hard/Soft Spectrum: **Red** = Hard, **Green** = Soft.

**BOLDFACE** = Intended Targets

Plain Font = Others

Time: 1 = Slow, 10 – Fast

Effect Duration: 1 = ephemeral, 10 = permanent

Table 2: Operationalization of Power in Iraq

The first column outlines a series of typical actions in a counterinsurgency environment. They can be performed by either military or civilian elements acting alone, or a combination of the two. It is not an exhaustive list: there are hundreds if not thousands of activities that can be performed in an insurgency environment.

The color coding of the first column attempts to roughly place actions along a spectrum from coercive (red) to attractive (green) power. Employment of weapons can be considered the most coercive of measures, even firing warning shots. Education or training programs are usually soft in nature. It is important for this work to note that not all diplomatic actions are attractive and not all military actions are coercive. This is a departure from much of the literature on power which often equates a capability with a type of power. For example, the military is considered hard power, cultural programs are considered soft power. Many of the activities shown in Table 3.1 can be carried out by either military or civilian personnel, even if one is not the best choice.

The second column gives a short list of people who would likely not want to see the action, or others like it, repeated. It can consist of people intentionally or unintentionally recipient of the action. Intentional recipients are bold-faced in the chart. It can consist of people directly or indirectly affected by the action. People indirectly affected may view hard power as beneficial, or soft power as detrimental. Insurgents are almost always one of the members of this list. As power gets more attractive, they are often the only ones on this list.

The third column gives a short list of people who likely would want to see the action or similar actions repeated. As with those who would not want the action repeated, they can be indirectly or directly affected, and can be intended or unintended targets. Note that even coercive actions will have supporters among the local citizenry. Repeating actions should be

treated as a general category. A village that has had a well dug does not want another well dug but may want further civic actions such as refurbishing their school or being visited by a medical team.

The determination of whether an action is hard or soft is based on the direct recipients. Looking at a cordon-and-search operation, it is conducted in a specific geographic area with the intent of finding insurgents. This makes it employment of coercive power, even though there may be people outside the cordon area who are happy to see insurgents being captured and would want to see other areas (probably not theirs!) cordoned and searched. Note that it is also coercive power to the people inside the cordon area who are being sealed off and having their dwellings searched. Although innocent people living in the cordon area are undeserving recipients of coercive power, a secondary effect can be convincing those locals to turn in insurgents they are currently hiding.

The fourth column breaks out actions by assigning a time factor for the desired effect to be achieved. Severing diplomatic ties can be done in the time it takes the Ambassador to be driven to the Foreign Minister's residence. Trying to install a new political system can take years or even decades. Note the difference in time between informational messaging and influence messaging. Things such as warnings of impending military operations or date/times of local elections pass immediately upon completion of the subject action. Influencing Sunni Iraqis not to support al-Qaeda was maintained throughout the time of the U.S. commitment in Iraq and beyond.

The fifth column assigns a permanence score to the action. Killing someone is permanent: they will not directly impact the insurgency environment again. Bribes are

ephemeral: recipients cannot be counted upon to continue to perform the desired action or inaction once the bribe is removed.

The sixth column is a short list of potential undesirable effects of the action. For example, this takes into account that even though killing one insurgent permanently solves that problem, if his death inspires three of his brothers to join the insurgency, then the net effect of the action is to turn the battlefield odds even more against the striker. Undesired effects usually involve the local citizenry, but they can also include international players or even domestic audiences.

This chart helps picture why weapon employment is a favored action for decisionmakers. It is fast and it permanently solves the problem at hand. Further, a country like the U.S. with advanced weaponry such as Predator drones and Tomahawk missiles can employ them with little risk of its military personnel getting hurt. It is also readily available to the U.S. and its global military presence. The disadvantages basically accrue to third party effects and responses. Collateral damage may occur to property and innocent people. Killing a prominent insurgent can inspire others to join the cause. The international community may condemn the weapon employment and its effects. Domestic audiences may not be willing to underwrite death and destruction if they do not perceive a vital national security objective at stake.

On the other hand, the chart demonstrates the plusses and minuses of working to install a government system or overseeing the political process. It is a softer approach to effecting change, and the change can carry a great degree of permanency, which are important. But it is slow. It can also not create the outcome desired by the instilling country. When given an opportunity to express their views, the people will often not select the course of action preferred by the occupier. For example, Western powers keep trying to develop democratic institutions in

Muslim countries in the hope of getting secular, moderate leadership, but Islamist groups keep getting elected, often overwhelmingly.

Two sets of closely related actions can help elucidate the complexity of actions in a counterinsurgency environment.

### Information Versus Influence Messaging

The first is the difference between information and influence messaging. Information messaging is typically a Public Affairs function, and comprises things like information about curfews, voting registration and details of past violent acts. It typically supports immediate, definitive events and does not directly attempt to permanently change audience behavior. As a result, the products can be developed and disseminated quickly, but their effect may not last beyond the event of interest. The goal is that eventually the local government and media will take on this role.

Influence messaging in the U.S. Army is handled by Psychological Operations, and comprises things like inducing insurgent desertion, turning the local population against the insurgents, or encouraging local population support for the government. It usually is more subjective in nature and hence is more open-ended than information messaging. Influence messaging can take longer to take effect, years or even decades. If it is well-planned and conducted, it can result in permanent behavior changes from the target audience. If inaccurate, poorly carried out or lacks deeds that back its message, it can create message fatigue or even cynicism among the target population.

Neither information nor influence messaging is desired by the insurgents, who are rarely the target of the first but often the target of the second. Local citizens can be targeted by both. They are usually receptive to information messaging, but not as receptive to a foreigner trying to change their behavior.

### Civic Action

Another paired set worth examining is uncoordinated versus coordinated civic action. Civic works projects are most common here. The difference is whether the occupier asked the local citizens what they wanted or decided what they needed. Going it alone was a continual U.S. problem in Iraq. Though ill-advised, these actions do not meet the definition of hard power. The issue is not that the local citizens do not want the consequences repeated: they just do not care. They would probably prefer the occupier talk to them about what they want, but they are not trying to alter their behavior to make the occupier stop the action. About the only categories that want to see uncoordinated civic action repeated are contractors content to keep taking U.S. dollars even to build useless projects, and looters happy to have something to steal that no one will try to recover.<sup>72</sup>

A squadron commander in Baghdad prior to the Surge illustrated the problem. In the middle of his district was a fountain ringed by several lions. A general ordered his unit to repair it. They spent over \$200,000 with local leaders telling him he was the third American to fix it.



Figure 3: Baghdad Fountain, Photo Provided by Interviewee

It worked for exactly one day: within weeks the grass was dead and anything useful had been stolen. When he asked the Iraqi District Advisory Council Chairman if they could dedicate some money to maintain the fountain, he replied, “No one cares about the lions except you.”<sup>73</sup>

Coordinated civic action takes longer to initiate because time is taken to work with the local leadership to select projects they see as useful (and not all the locals may agree on project prioritization). However, getting local involvement in the decision process means they will be less tolerant of a contractor dragging out the project to increase the cost, or improper building. They will also be loath to see pilfering or other sabotage of the project during or after completion. Coordination does not eliminate these problems but brings the locals in as an

interested party to a successful outcome. With an uncoordinated project the locals will not care if it being built properly, on-time or under budget. Coordination takes time but increases the likelihood that the effort will have a lasting effect.

#### Measures of Effectiveness vs Measures of Performance

When available, direct measurements of U.S. efforts include things such as numbers of pamphlets/radio broadcasts/newspapers circulated in Iraq or clinics built. Direct measurements (known as measures of performance or MoPs by the military) do not necessarily indicate effectiveness. However, they are easier for a staff officer to track. They also “brief great” at staff meetings. The PSYOP officer puts up a Power Point slide showing a map of the country depicting circles indicating radio coverage on the three largest population centers in the country and says “General, your message is reaching over 60% of the local population 18x a day via our radio broadcasting.”

Savvy commanders know to look past these metrics. They ask questions like “Does anyone listen to our broadcasts? Are the dialects and themes familiar to the local audience? Are our broadcasts interfering with local broadcasting? Have we considered buying airtime on local stations instead of trying to run our own broadcasts?” He or she will be more concerned with indirect benchmarks known as Measures of Effectiveness (MoE), which indicate whether the audience performed the actions recommended in the messages. Are attacks on US forces decreasing? Is there an increase in TIPS-line reporting? Did more of the population participate in the last election? Are people utilizing the court system to adjudicate disputes?

This work will utilize both MOPs and MOEs in its analysis. When feasible, weight of importance will be given to MOEs. MOPs are valuable information and should not be entirely discarded, but should be treated with caution as they are an indirect indicator of operational effectiveness.

## METHODOLOGY

Getting data from a war zone proved difficult. The original intent of this work was to obtain and analyze data related to manning, employment and observed effects as recorded by units operating in Iraq. Most of this data, though known by the author to have been tabulated and reported, is still not releasable to the public. As a result, the author determined to capture the unclassified information available from Surge participants utilizing a grounded theory approach.

## GROUNDED THEORY

This project has inductive and deductive elements and utilizes an approach similar to grounded theory in which each interview, and other data collection leads to revision of key theoretical claims, and the revised theoretical claims then help guide future interviews and lines of questioning. Grounded theory was developed in the 1960s by Barney Glazer and Anselm Strauss. They were sociologists seeking a means to objectify qualitative research data such as patient interviews. They wished to restore a balance between it and quantitative research, which by the 1960s had taken primacy in the field of scientific research. Many scholars at the time felt

that qualitative research was inductive and hence speculative, and wanted to see a focus on empirical, real-world data.

There were four basic stages of grounded theory research elaborated by Glazer and Strauss:

- Codes: anchors around which key data points gather. This involves taking data from interviews and written works and identifying key phrases or ideas and marking them for further analysis. Work focuses on a posteriori knowledge from first-hand participants, trying to identify and codify as much as possible actual events and experiences by the individuals on the spot.
- Concepts: groups of similar codes. In this step recurring codes are identified, tabulated and categorized. Concepts often stretch across a spectrum of interviewees.
- Categories: broad groups of similar concepts. Now the work brings together similar or correlative concepts into more generalized batches.
- Theory: product of subject categories. Finally, theories are induced from the aggregated categories. Ideally a range of categories will provide a range of specific ideas from which generalized theories may be developed.

A similar approach was adopted for evaluation of the interviewee data for this work. Phrases or observations that appeared in multiple interviews are brought together and treated as common codes among interviewees. For example, both military and civilian interviewees remarked on the problems created in Iraq by the issue of short tour lengths. Treating short tour lengths as a code, it can be grouped with other issues such as difficulty in getting qualified personnel into billets in Iraq as a broad concept of manning issues. The concept of manning

issues can then be grouped with other concepts such as force protection issues into a broad category of structural limitations. Structural limitations can be placed alongside categories such as execution problems to develop encompassing theories of reasons for ineffectiveness when conducting counterinsurgency.

Evaluation must keep in mind that interviewees responses were in most cases generated by interviewer questions. For example, a large amount of data on messaging was gathered. This should not be surprising given that there was a specific interview question on messaging. To some extent the staging is being guided by the researcher.

The grounded theory approach was employed to modify questions over the course of conducting interviews based on unanticipated avenues of interest that opened up based on prior interviews. For example, two interviewees volunteered that they had participated in the 2009 “Surge” in Afghanistan. Most interviewees after that were asked if they had participated in the 2009 “Surge” in Afghanistan, providing another data point of interest to the research.

## THE SAMPLE

All research was conducted in accordance with Old Dominion University guidelines regarding human subject research. Research proposal package 1574657-1 was approved March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 and is available at IRBNet for review.

Data was gathered utilizing referral sampling. This is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. It was developed to increase sampling among hidden populations such as drug addicts. Also known as snowball sampling, the idea is for the subjects themselves to guide the interviewer

toward future research subjects. New subjects can reinforce existing research or spur branch research ideas.

Referral sampling was the best approach to develop the current database. A random approach would have required far more interviews than one researcher would be capable of conducting and might not have adequately covered interviewee characteristics important for this work. Timothy Johnson points out that this technique allows for selection of further interviewees based on these characteristics of interest.<sup>74</sup> The intent was to gather snapshots from a spectrum of agencies, locations, and jobs. Referral sampling was able to meet this goal with far fewer interviews. A questionnaire would not have been as effective in soliciting opinions and recollections that were not anticipated by the researcher but provided valuable insight into the Surge effort. The impact of attractive power can be hard to capture in a box-checking format. Conducting live interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions as interviewees provided unanticipated paths to explore facts germane to the Surge.

Referral sampling proved an effective technique for all categories of Surge participants. Only five of the interviewees were personally known to the author prior to the study. Interviewees were quick to recommend additional potential subjects, did so within and across the military-civilian divide, and normally facilitated introductions to the new person. This study did not seek classified information. It captured unclassified data, recollections and generalized observances and trends.

Interviews were typically built around broad questions following upon “yes/no” questions. For example, “Did you work with Coalition partners?” would, in the event of an affirmative answer, be followed up with “Were there any you thought were particularly effective at soft power and why?” Interviewees might go into detail about effective techniques they

observed from Coalition partners. Alternatively, they might on their own detail Coalition partners or strategies they felt were not effective, even though this was never an interview question. This format allowed the interviewee leeway to move into areas that may not have been previously considered by the interviewer or categorized as inconsequential. As a result, the research developed and often branched off into areas not anticipated by the researcher.

Referral sampling carries inherent weaknesses as a non-random process. Subjects will tend to refer people they knew and worked with. This potentially reduces the geographic “spread” of interviews. For instance, a majority of the interviewees worked in Baghdad during the Surge. Interviewees will tend to recommend people they worked with, so it logically follows that once the snowball rolled to Baghdad, it tended to stay in Baghdad.

On the other hand, this interview “bulge” can also be taken as a demonstration of a flaw in the U.S. counterinsurgency effort that General Petraeus sought to reverse, the “big base” mentality. At its height, the Victory Base Complex (VBC) housed 46,000 people, over one-third of the total U.S. strength in Iraq. Then include the U.S. Embassy complex with over 5,000 Americans, and it is easy to understand how personnel strength in Iraq did not directly transcribe into the “in the grass” capability most effective in countering insurgency.

Interviewees will tend to recommend like-minded participants and friends, complicating the process of gathering viewpoints across the spectrum of opinion on an issue. They are more likely to remain in contact with people they were friends with during the deployment. They are more likely to recall them as people they successfully worked with, making progress in the mission with them. There was not a single instance of someone speaking negatively about the person who recommended them during interviewing.

Post event interviews do not represent raw data, which is both a strength and weakness of the methodology. Interviewees have had time to crystallize their thoughts and beliefs regarding the Surge and reflect upon what they experienced and learned. On the other hand, time allows for bias to enter their memory and possibly distort the true picture of what actually occurred during the Surge.

Forty-three people were interviewed for this work. Seven were specialized interviews or otherwise were not interviewed using one of the standardized interviews, the remaining thirty-six followed the standard interview format reproduced in Tables 3.2 or 3.3. All interviewees save one agreed to be recorded, although that one did allow notetaking. Two subjects who published works on the Surge declined interviews but did answer specific questions. Most interviews were conducted by phone: some were done via the Skype, WebEx or Zoom meeting platforms. Some interviewees provided documentation to support their answers or to further this project's research. No interviewee ever declined to answer a specific question. Most interviewees seemed eager to participate in this study and were interactive during the interview process.

Transcribed interview average length was 8.5 pages. Military interview length averaged 10.7 pages. Civilian interview length averaged 6.2 pages.

Results were broadly representative of a variety of roles and positions within the U.S. effort in Iraq on a variety of dimensions. Interviews were roughly divided between military and civilian roles, including individuals who worked in Baghdad and elsewhere. There were both soft power and hard power specialists, leaders and staff, and a majority of people who regularly left their base and interacted with Iraqis. It also included people who had been in Iraq prior to the Surge and/or participated in the subsequent "Surge" in Afghanistan. The following table summarizes interviewee data:

Category	In Category	Out of Category	Not Categorized
Military	21 (54%)	18 (46%)	0
Career	24 (62%)	15 (38%)	0
SPS	32 (82%)	6 (15%)	1(3%)
PEII	28 (72%)	7 (18%)	4 (10%)
Leader	16 (41%)	22 (56%)	1 (3%)
BDE+	37 (95%)	2 (5%)	0
Conventional	36 (92%)	3 (8%)	0
Baghdad	29 (74%)	10 (26%)	0
TOTW	27 (69%)	2 (5%)	10 (26%)
MWI	33 (85%)	1 (3%)	5 (13%)
Detainees	11 (28%)	17 (44%)	11 (28%)
AFG Surge	14 (36%)	18 (45%)	7 (18%)
SPB	36 (92%)	0	3 (8%)
SPA	32 (82%)	1 (3%)	6 (15%)

Table 3: Interviewee Data<sup>75</sup>

Of the thirty-six standardized interviews nineteen were military, seventeen were civilian. This was consistent with the sample diversity goals. Intent was to generate a balanced database of interviewees based on their service as either military or civilian participants. Sufficient samples of each were obtained to explore the soft versus hard power issues in detail across the spectrum of department perception.

There was some diversity in both the civilian and military department assignments, although this mix was slanted heavily towards DoS and U.S. Army. Sixteen interviewees were U.S. Army, two were Marines, thirteen were Department of State, four were other U.S. government agencies, one was a British national.

No Iraqi nationals were interviewed. Snowballing to them was not effective. By and large the interviewees had not maintained contact with Iraqi or Coalition partners they worked with during the Surge. Some also stated that on subsequent returns to Iraq they found that all the Iraqis they had previously worked with had been murdered. Fear of retribution may have also played a role in interviewee reluctance to snowball Iraqi friends. When the author reached out to

a British Army friend who works in Psychological Operations, he told him that by 2007 they were mostly out of Iraq and focusing on Afghanistan.

Twenty-five interviewees were full-time careerists of their respective department. Eleven were individuals such as military Guardsmen or Reservists, contractors or Department of Defense temporary hires known as 3161's after the regulatory section authorizing their hiring. This category is intended to search for differentiation in opinions of full-time careerists versus others to discern if one or the other was more likely to appreciate and embrace soft power techniques. Full-time careerist specifically excludes Guardsmen and Reservists, who may spend 30 years in the military but not on a full-time basis. This categorization does not imply superiority of careerists over others.<sup>76</sup>

Thirty-one interviewees were specialists in a field commonly associated with soft power, Five were hard power specialists, usually Army brigade commanders. Military soft power elements are normally dispersed to units across the battlefield. Even though there are stateside brigades or groups of soft power Army elements, and sometimes these headquarters deploy as controlling/oversight elements to a higher (corps and higher) command, they rarely operate in combat as an autonomous, complete unit. This categorization allows analysis to look for differences in opinions on the efficacy of soft power between practitioners and combat leaders. Soft power practitioners can be expected to advocate for their field of endeavor, although interviews demonstrated some who questioned if not the soft power concept, its application in Iraq. Of interest is combat leaders who came to see soft power as a preferable alternative to hard power.

Twenty-five interviewees had previously served in Iraq prior to the Surge. This includes interviewees whose tour substantially overlapped both the Surge and the prior period. The

dividing line was set as February 2008, when General Petraeus assumed command of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), although Surge units had begun flowing into Iraq in January. In this case, subjects were preferred who had spent at least two months both prior to and after February 2008. This categorization allows exploring whether Iraq veterans saw a difference in soft power employment during the Surge versus prior experience. All Surge participants did not serve tours congruent with General Petraeus' time as MNF-I commander. Interviewees were considered to have served in Iraq prior to the tour if their tour began at least two months prior to General Petraeus' arrival.

Thirteen interviewees were leaders such as unit commanders or Provincial Reconstruction Team chiefs. Twenty-three were staff or other support personnel. Deputy commanders were treated as commanders for this category. This split will allow evaluation for differentiation in opinions between leadership and subordinates on how the U.S. in general and their organization specifically implemented soft power during the Surge. Subordinates might be more inclined to be open about implementation shortfalls, while leaders might be expected not to stray from the "company line". Sufficient sample sizes of each were gathered.

Thirty-five interviewees operated at Brigade level or higher: only one was at a lower unit level. PRT's are treated as brigade level for this study. Referral samplers tended to snowball sideways or up, i.e., they would recommend people at an equal or higher level to them. The interviews as obtained do not provide an expansive opportunity to explore the opinions of Surge participants working at battalion level or lower.

Three interviewees worked in Special Operations: the remainder of the military interviewees were conventional forces. U.S. Army Special Operations is primarily composed of the Special Forces Groups, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. Special Forces elements

normally work in small groups among the population of an area of interest. As a result, they often practice many of the precepts of soft power as a matter of course and can be quickest to embrace and support soft power activities. Special Forces in Iraq had a separate reporting authority back to Special Operations Command in Tampa: they did not report directly to General Petraeus, although liaison was maintained from both sides.

Twenty-six interviewees primarily worked in Baghdad or the band of nearby towns during the Surge, ten worked outside of Baghdad. Another consequence of referral sampling trending sideways or up was that the interviews tended to be Baghdad-centric. MNF-I and Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) were both located there. Approximately one-third of all the U.S. troop strength in Iraq was housed on the Victory Base Complex near Baghdad International Airport. Sufficient non-Baghdad samples were gathered to allow for comparison between Baghdad and the rest of the country. These samples also allow for comparison between the two prime insurgent sources. The focus in Baghdad was against the Shia militias, whereas most of the non-Baghdad interviewees were facing Sunni insurgents in a combination of al-Qaeda and former Saddam regime elements.

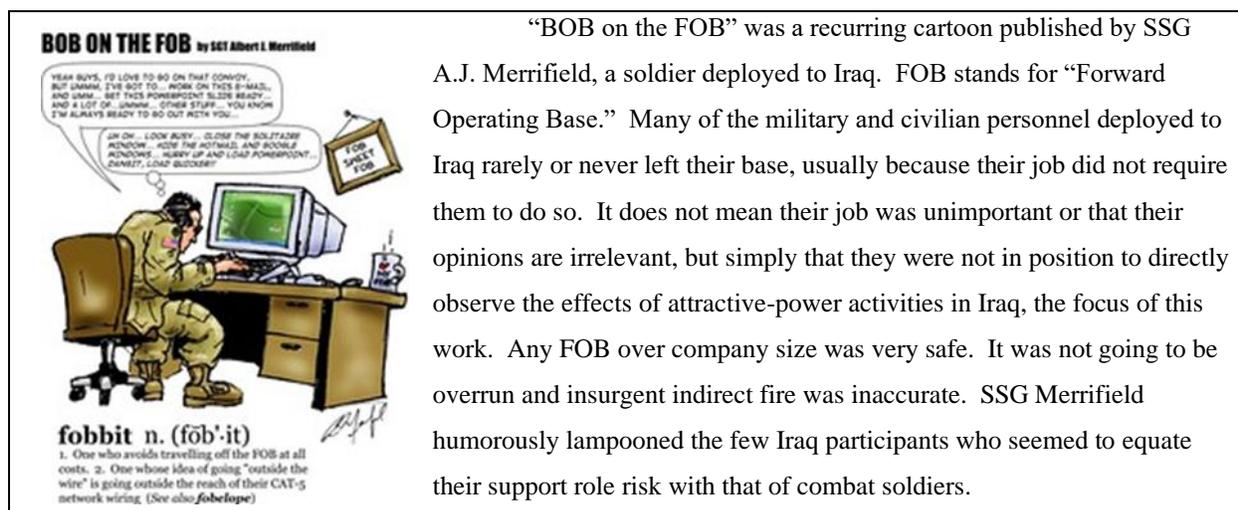


Figure 4: Bob on the FOB Cartoon, Reprinted with kind permission of SSG A.J. Merrifield

Twenty-four interviewees regularly conducted missions “outside the wire”, defined as departing their installation multiple times weekly. These departures could be as part of larger elements and missions or smaller groups with more specific tasks. Sufficient samples were generated of Surge participants who were regularly conducting ground-level missions in the field and getting first-hand information on what was happening in Iraq. Some care must be taken because in many cases, particularly for senior leaders, as they often had sufficient security that they were close to “bringing the wire with them” when they left their compounds.

Thirty interviewees regularly met with Iraqi locals and leadership, defined as multiple times weekly. These could be formal, scheduled meetings or a consequence of regular travel outside the wire. The bulk of the interviewees regularly worked with Iraqis, whether going to their offices, bringing them to their offices or via telecommunications. This allows exploration of the importance of direct communication with the host nation leadership and citizens in soft power endeavors. Interviewees will repeatedly demonstrate their opinion of the value of direct contact with Iraqis.

Five interviewees regularly worked with detainees, not necessarily as a prison facility guard or overseer. Recidivism among captured insurgents is a concern in any counterinsurgency environment. Sufficient samples were obtained to allow exploration of U.S. efforts to prevent captured insurgents from rejoining the fight upon release. It is an audience that allows for the type of long-term approach that tends to be most effective for soft power.

Fourteen interviewees are known to have participated in the 2009 Surge in Afghanistan. An initial interview question was whether interviewees thought the lessons of Iraq were applicable to other/future conflicts. After multiple interviewees volunteered that they had been

in Afghanistan in 2009, a question specific to the Afghanistan Surge was added. This provided an opportunity to explore whether interviewees immediately applied lessons learned in Iraq to the Afghanistan Surge, and to what extent they were successful. It also allowed the researcher to uncover an interesting opinion of “Two-Surge” interviewees that is explored in Chapter Seven.

## THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The strength of the interview method is that it allowed for collection of primary source data of Surge participants, not secondary data. Primary source data is collected first-hand from participants.<sup>77</sup> This allows for direct interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, eliminating possible confusion from derived sourcing. It is considered captured data, meaning it was purposefully collected for this work.<sup>78</sup> It also allows the researcher to direct the interview into unanticipated but interesting areas.

Post-event interviews represent raw data, which is both a strength and weakness of the interviews as a source of information. They allow for reflection and hindsight on the part of the interviewee that can place events into a broader context. Amanda Bolderston described 30-50 interviews as being necessary for a grounded theory approach to ensure that the researcher can saturate categories and detail a theory. She also pointed out that these interviews are ideal for looking at perceptions and experiences of interviewees.<sup>79</sup>

Drawbacks include concerns of accuracy when utilizing source interviews. Additionally, the interviews are being conducted over ten years after the events in question. Several subjects joked about memory issues in trying to recall events that far in the past. Official records and cross-checking with other interviewees reduces the potential magnitude of the problem and is

recommended by Bolderston. The author personally transcribed all interviews, which Bolderston demonstrates best allows the researcher to become familiar with the data.

The following initial statement was read to all interviewees: “My name is J.R. Reiling. I am a retired US Army Psychological Operations officer. I am currently a PhD candidate at Old Dominion University. My dissertation focuses on the soft power component of the U.S. Surge in Iraq from 2007-2008. I am interviewing people who participated in the Surge as decision-makers, operators or both. Based on your Surge experience, I would like to interview you to improve my understanding of the Surge. Interview should take approximately one hour and is unclassified. Your participation is voluntary. You may stop the interview at any time. Your information will be kept confidential and only released with your permission. May I record the interview? May we proceed?”

There were two basic categories of interviews: military and civilian. Interviewer would interject or alter questions as deemed applicable during the interview, particularly if points of interest were touched upon. Elite-level interviews, particularly with General Petraeus and Ambassador Croker, were also conducted. In those cases, a tailored set of interview questions was utilized. Interview length was kept at approximately 20 questions. This section will list basic interviewee questions and explain their importance.

## Military Interview Questions

QUESTION #	QUESTION
1	Can you tell me your unit and role related to the Surge?
2	What was your soft power (compliance through attraction) background prior to the Surge? Also called non-lethal or non-kinetic. Did you deploy to Iraq prior to the Surge?
3	As part of pre-deployment planning, how did you view the utility of soft power elements such as PSYOP, IO, PAO and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)?
4	Can you describe your unit's organic soft power capability? Did you or your unit request additional soft power elements and/or integrate them into pre-deployment training? For example, cultural awareness briefings for deploying soldiers or exercises including actors portraying civilians/tribal leaders? To what extent were these requests filled by your unit and higher headquarters?
5	Upon arrival, what was your initial assessment of soft power "gaps" in your unit operations?
6	Can you describe interagency relations, particularly with the Department of State and PRTs? Did you feel DoD and DoS were proactively cooperating or competing?
7	Were there Coalition partners you believed were particularly effective at soft power and how? How were you able to integrate and cooperate with these partners?
8	Was soft power worked by, with and through Iraqi partners (government, military)? How did this impact pursuit of U.S. national security objectives? How or why not?
9	Did your unit interact with local tribal/religious figures? Did this change your ability to conduct operations?
10	Did your unit interact with local/regional media (local TV/radio, Al-Jazeera)? How or why not?
11	Did your unit interact with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? How or why not?
12	Were you involved in messaging? How long was the staffing process? Did this change during the Surge? To what extent was accuracy sacrificed? Did you feel your messages were getting out in time to be useful?
13	Did your organization work with detainees? If so, were soft power elements such as vocational training, counterindoctrination or educational opportunities provided?
14	Can you describe the interaction between hard and soft power? For example, did soft power supplant hard power (compliance through coercion)? Did you see the "ratio" of hard to soft power change over time? If so, how was this achieved?
15	Was hard power used to support soft power such as providing security for reconstruction teams or Rewards for Justice programs? What ways proved most effective?
16	Did the insurgents practice soft power? If so, did the insurgents change/increase their soft power focus in response to Coalition efforts and how? Were there insurgent soft power tactics you felt were particularly effective?
17	Did you perceive the ratio of U.S. to ISF casualties shifting during the Surge? How?
18	Were there elements of soft power (written vs audio vs video messaging, Civil Affairs, face-to-face interaction, leaflet drops) that were more effective than others? Which and why?
19	Did the Surge produce benefits in Iraq? If so, were they long-term or transitory?
20	What were your "lessons learned" for soft power efforts during the Surge?
21	Are the soft power lessons of Iraq applicable to other/future conflicts? Why or why not?

Table 4: Military Interview Questions

The questions were formulated to gather information specific to the soft power component of the Surge in Iraq as seen through the eyes of the military people stationed there. The following section details the specific purpose of each question asked.

1) Can you tell me your unit and role related to the Surge?

This question established that the interviewee was present during the Surge, where they were stationed, and what type of work they were performing during the Surge. Desire was to have interviewees who were stationed throughout Iraq and served in a variety of locations and differing levels of authority and responsibility. Intent was to see if any of these factors influenced answers.

2) What was your soft power (compliance through attraction) background prior to the Surge?

Also called non-lethal or non-kinetic. Did you deploy to Iraq prior to the Surge?

This question established whether the individual had previously worked in or with international soft power efforts. Intent was to establish whether they were already familiar with soft power concepts or would have to learn “on-the-job.” Not all participants arrived in Iraq with General Petraeus. Asking whether they had deployed to Iraq prior to the Surge included full tours from a prior time or people who had been in Iraq for several months prior to GEN Petraeus’ arrival.

3) As part of pre-deployment planning, how did you view the utility of soft power elements such as PSYOP, IO, PAO and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)?

This question explored whether interviewees had any preconceived notions of the value of military elements associated with soft power that could have impacted how they employed or worked with these elements.

- 4) Can you describe your unit's organic soft power capability? Did you or your unit request additional soft power elements and/or integrate them into pre-deployment training? For example, cultural awareness briefings for deploying soldiers or exercises including actors portraying civilians/tribal leaders? To what extent were these requests filled by your unit and higher headquarters?

This question established what soft power elements commanders in particular had at their disposal. Follow-on questions provide insight into the commander's appreciation of the importance of non-kinetic capabilities throughout his command, and whether he was supported in this by higher headquarters.

- 5) Upon arrival, what was your initial assessment of soft power "gaps" in your unit operations?

This question demonstrates shortfalls the interviewee had to overcome while working during the Surge. It is also an indicator of the interviewee's perception of the importance of soft power projection.

- 6) Can you describe interagency relations, particularly with the Department of State and PRTs.

Did you feel DoD and DoS were proactively cooperating or competing?

This question is intended to reveal how the individual felt interaction with the other primary implementor of the Surge improved or inhibited their ability to carry out their assigned duties. Follow-on question provides insight as to interviewee's perception of whether the cooperation was forced.

- 7) Were there Coalition partners you believed were particularly effective at soft power and how? How were you able to integrate and cooperate with these partners?

This question provides insight as to whether the interviewee felt there were other nations who demonstrated effective counterinsurgency procedures, assuming there were other Coalition

partners in their area of operations. Follow-on question indicates whether good practices were shared and synergized across the Coalition.

- 8) Was soft power worked by, with and through Iraqi partners (government, military)? How did this impact pursuit of U.S. national security objectives? How or why not?

This question shows the ability of the interviewee and their unit to integrate their actions with the host nation. Follow-on questions can shed light on whether this partnering remained in the overall U.S. interest.

- 9) Did your unit interact with local tribal/religious figures? Did this change your ability to conduct operations?

This question provides insight on the willingness and necessity of working outside official Iraqi channels, which may not have always been the “key figures” in the area of operations. Follow-on question allows the interviewee to discuss whether this interaction positively or negatively impacted U.S. efforts.

- 10) Did your unit interact with local/regional media (local TV/radio, Al-Jazeera)? How or why not?

Question indicates whether the interviewee’s organization capitalized on the opportunity to bring local media into the messaging process. Follow-on question can shed light on whether any shortfalls were due to lack of opportunity or willingness.

- 11) Did your unit interact with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? How or why not?

Question indicates whether the interviewee’s organization capitalized on the opportunity to engage others in getting the work done. Follow-on question can shed light on whether any shortfalls were due to lack of willingness or opportunity.

12) Were you involved in messaging? How long was the staffing process? Did this change during the Surge? To what extent was accuracy sacrificed? Did you feel your messages were getting out in time to be useful?

Question indicates whether the interviewee was involved in framing the dialogue explain to the Iraqis the actions and intent of U.S. forces. Follow-on questions for applicable interviewees indicate whether the Surge adapted messaging to make it more useful.

13) Did your organization work with detainees? If so, were soft power elements such as vocational training, counterindoctrination or educational opportunities provided?

Question indicates whether the U.S. was capitalizing on the opportunity to influence Iraqi prisoners. Follow-on question may not be applicable to most units, who were operating temporary detention facilities.

14) Can you describe the interaction between hard and soft power? For example, did soft power supplant hard power (compliance through coercion)? Did you see the “ratio” of hard to soft power change over time? If so, how was this achieved?

Question allows the interviewee to describe smart power efforts in his area of operations. Follow-ons provided insight as to whether the goal of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to increase soft power efforts was realized.

15) Was hard power used to support soft power such as providing security for reconstruction teams or Rewards for Justice programs? What ways proved most effective?

This is a variant of the previous question as a concrete demonstration of whether the unit was in fact attempting to practice smart power. Follow-on allows the interviewee to explore how.

16) Did the insurgents practice soft power? If so, did the insurgents change/increase their soft power focus in response to Coalition efforts and how? Were there insurgent soft power tactics you felt were particularly effective?

This was the question most likely to have interviewees respond, “That is an interesting question.” Primary intent is to discern whether the interviewee’s unit was factoring insurgent response into the campaign plan.

17) Did you perceive the ratio of U.S. to ISF casualties shifting during the Surge? How?

This question is intended to indicate whether the burden of fighting shifted to the Iraqi Security Forces during the Surge.

18) Were there elements of soft power (written vs audio vs video messaging, Civil Affairs, face-to-face interaction, leaflet drops) that were more effective than others? Which and why?

This question was intended to discern if there were elements of soft power that the interviewee felt were more effective than others. If so, follow-up question was to determine the ones the interviewee felt were effective.

19) Did the Surge produce benefits in Iraq? If so, were they long-term or transitory?

This question is intended to reveal whether the interviewee felt that the Surge improved the overall situation in Iraq, regardless of their opinion of whether the entire U.S. intervention itself was beneficial to Iraq. Follow-on question allows the interviewee to opine on the permanence of the Surge benefits.

20) What were your “lessons learned” for soft power efforts during the Surge?

This question allowed the interviewee to summarize their overall experience with soft power during the Surge, both positive and negative.

21) Are the soft power lessons of Iraq applicable to other/future conflicts? Why or why not?

This question allowed the interviewee to speculate on whether they felt that the soft power tactics and techniques they employed in Iraq would work in other conflicts. A related question was added asking interviewees if they had participated in the 2009 surge in Afghanistan after two volunteered that they had.

### Civilian Interview Questions

QUESTION #	QUESTION
1	Can you briefly tell me your organization, role and timeframe related to the Surge?
2	What was your soft power (compliance through attraction) background prior to the Surge? Did you ever work previously with U.S. government employment of hard power (compliance through coercion)? Had you been assigned to Iraq prior to the Surge?
3	Had you previously worked with U.S. military Psychological Operations, Information Operations, Public Affairs or Civil Affairs?
4	How often did U.S. military proactively come into contact with your organization? Were military liaisons embedded with your organization or vice versa?
5	Was joint planning and coordination conducted with U.S. military? What types of interactions and frequency? How did these contribute to the success of the mission?
6	Did you travel “outside the wire”? If so, were non-security U.S. military elements also part of the mission?
7	How often did you work with Iraqi partners (government, military)? How did this impact pursuit of U.S. objectives?
8	Did you interact with local tribal/religious figures? Were any techniques or activities more effective than others?
9	Did you interact with local/regional media (local TV/radio, al-Jazeera)?
10	Did you see your efforts impacting violence in Iraq and if so, to what extent?
11	Did you see the “ratio” of hard power to soft power change over the course of the Surge? If so, which elements of each increased or decreased?
12	Did the insurgents change/increase their soft power focus in response to Coalition efforts if at all?
13	Did international players (Coalition partners, proxy states) employ soft power effectively? How?
14	Were non-governmental agencies integrated into soft power planning and execution? Which ones and how?
15	Were there elements of soft power that were more effective than others? Which and why?
16	Did you see the Surge as providing long-term solutions and how?
17	What were your “lessons learned” for soft power efforts during the Surge?
18	Are the soft power lessons of Iraq applicable to other/future conflicts? Why or why not?
19	Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Table 5: Civilian Interview Questions

Most of the questions asked of the civilians were the same as asked of the military.

Variations are discussed below.

- 2) What was your soft power (compliance through attraction) background prior to the Surge?

Did you ever work previously with U.S. government employment of hard power (compliance through coercion)? Had you been assigned to Iraq prior to the Surge?

As a reverse of a question asked of military members, intent of this question was to determine if any of the civilian interviewees had been involved in a prior international coercive operation by the U.S.

- 3) Had you previously worked with U.S. military Psychological Operations, Information Operations, Public Affairs or Civil Affairs?

Intent of this question was to determine if the civilian interviewee had prior familiarity with the military elements traditionally associated with soft power.

- 4) How often did U.S. military proactively come into contact with your organization? Were military liaisons embedded with your organization or vice versa?

Intent of this question was to determine if the civilian interviewee felt the military made an effort to interact with his organization. Follow-up question would demonstrate the strongest form of proactive contact, a permanent liaison.

- 5) Was joint planning and coordination conducted with U.S. military? What types of interactions and frequency? How did these contribute to the success of the mission?

Intent of this question was to determine whether the U.S. military was able to tamp down its tendency to “go it alone” during the Surge. Follow on questions determine depth of effectiveness and whether the interviewee saw this interaction as beneficial.

6) Did you travel “outside the wire”? If so, were non-security U.S. military elements also part of the mission?

Intent of this question was to determine whether the interviewee left their parent base on a regular basis. Follow-on question provides insight as to whether or not joint soft-power missions were being conducted.

## INTERVIEWEE DATA

The following chart tabulates key data and questions regarding the interviewees for this work:

Category	In Category	Out of Category	Not Categorized
Military	21 (54%)	18 (46%)	0
Career	24 (62%)	15 (38%)	0
SPS	32 (82%)	6 (15%)	1(3%)
PEII	28 (72%)	7 (18%)	4 (10%)
Leader	16 (41%)	22 (56%)	1 (3%)
BDE+	37 (95%)	2 (5%)	0
Conventional	36 (92%)	3 (8%)	0
Baghdad	29 (74%)	10 (26%)	0
TOTW	27 (69%)	2 (5%)	10 (26%)
MWI	33 (85%)	1 (3%)	5 (13%)
Detainees	11 (28%)	17 (44%)	11 (28%)
AFG Surge	14 (36%)	18 (45%)	7 (18%)
SPB	36 (92%)	0	3 (8%)
Applicable Elsewhere	32 (82%)	1 (3%)	6 (15%)

Table 6: Interviewee Data

## CONCLUSION

Terminology discussion focused on the key definition of power and its delineation into hard and soft for this work. A new definition was proposed for smart power. New and operationalized definitions were proposed for coercive power and attractive power. These definitions will help separate power capabilities from the power categorizations themselves. Smart power is a normative concept, but one which integrates contemporary theory regarding power projection and will also prove valuable in demonstrating how the Surge differed from the previous U.S. effort there.

Grounded theory and referral sampling were described to lay the foundation for the data accumulation basis of this study. Forty-three interviews were gathered for this study with a healthy mix of civilian and military participants who served in a variety of positions and locations in Iraq during the Surge. Most of the interviewees were unknown to the author prior to introduction by previous interviewees. Their willing cooperation resulted in an excellent database that will allow this study to empirically pursue points of interest regarding the U.S. application of power in Iraq in 2007-2008.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRE-SURGE PROBLEMS

#### INTRODUCTION

Counterinsurgency is not easy. Smart power is a normative term: hence there is not a formula that tells planners the right mix of hard and soft power to create smart power. Success normally requires a large investment of people and resources by the occupier over an extended period. Problems both internal and external will beset a country attempting to apply power against an insurgency, particularly if they are operating on foreign soil.

This work has defined smart power as “employment of the range of available tools of power in a combination of attraction and coercion to efficiently accomplish national objectives.” Smart power is normative. Consequently, there is no precise allocation of hard and soft power that will produce the desired result for every contingency, or every time or location in a contingency, or even a different day in the same location. Metz and Byman wrote about the inherent problem that as a foreign power increases the capabilities of the host nation government, its ability to influence them declines.<sup>80</sup> Branch and Wood talked about lack of intelligence, particularly in the early stages of the insurgency, hindering the ability of the intervening power to plan a proper strategy.<sup>81</sup>

Many of the problems begin before assets even begin to be deployed. This chapter will detail these structural flaws in the U.S. starting with the limitations imposed by the unique U.S. form of government. Interviews shed light on problems related to force composition, tour lengths and lines of authority, and some of the steps taken to correct these flaws before and

during the Surge. Guidance from senior leadership at times hamstrung operations. Financial considerations played a role in limiting effectiveness of U.S. efforts in Iraq. The patience of the U.S. voter acted as a nebulous but ever-present “statute of limitations” often forcing the U.S. to favor short-term versus long-term approaches.

Further problems arose after arriving in Iraq. Interviewees consistently emphasized the personality-dependent nature of their efforts and that getting along with peers, particularly from other agencies, was crucial to success. International problems ran from Coalition partners with differing national objectives to regional states and non-state entities who also desired to shape the course of events in Iraq. Reminiscent of Vietnam, local government corruption, bias and incompetence dogged U.S. efforts to establish a legitimate governing authority.

## STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

Proper exercise of power in Iraq was made difficult by structural flaws in the U.S. and the international system. The ideas of Dahl about exercise of power being a result of compromise by elites was evident when looking at the fractured Iraqi political mosaic. Almost as important was the need for compromise by the elites involved. Those in Iraq and Washington, military and civilian, and U.S. and Iraqi, needed to develop a more cooperative effort emphasizing the strengths and weakness of each. This chapter will detail some of the institutional problems that had to be worked through or around.

The second “facet of power” can be understood by looking at Bachrach and Baratz and their treatment of the second face of power, which to them was the agenda-controlling ability of senior leadership during the early stages of the U.S. intervention in Iraq. Even before the

invasion, recommendations by the military of needed force levels were ignored. State Department concerns about post-liberation governance were also marginalized as that role was even initially handed to the military. After liberation, military concerns about the growing insurgent threat and how to respond to it were downplayed by Donald Rumsfeld in particular. The U.S. military and civilian leadership in Iraq were intelligent people who had ideas for changing the Coalition approach in Iraq, but they were disregarded.

The third facet of power postulated by Lukes could be applied to any number of the misperceptions and misinformation extant in Iraq. Sunni, Shia and Kurdish misperceptions of each other and Coalition intentions were paramount. External actors such as Iran and al-Qaeda appeared to be beneficial to the Iraqis because they opposed the Coalition. The leadership in Washington D.C. was forcing a flawed strategy on its subordinates in the belief that it was the correct strategy. Military and civilians in Iraq were reluctant to work together because of preconceived notions about the other and were not working effectively with their Iraqi counterparts.

## OCCUPATION

Any occupying power can expect difficulty adapting to an insurgency environment in a foreign country. A senior DoD official who worked reconstruction in Iraq described the problem:

One of the biggest gaps was sending 18 and 19-year-old kids to a place where they don't speak the language and asking them to restore security and maintain local order as a kind of police action post-invasion.... Use the U.S. as an analogy. We have trained, extremely well-prepared police officers working in communities where they not only speak the language, but they live and they work and they understand every aspect of the culture they are in. Yet they fail in those daily jobs in ways that create tremendous unrest. On

that scale, think of the burden we placed on young men and women when we sent them into Iraq with none of those backgrounds, asked them to do a role much more complicated and gave them no support.<sup>82</sup>

The best solution in Iraq was to stand up Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and enable them to take on the task of restoring stability and order in the country, moving toward Hammes' idea that indirect support of local contingencies is a better strategy than employing foreign forces<sup>83</sup>. This proved difficult due to issues of time, funding and factional mistrust. Unfortunately, prior to the Surge the U.S. continued to act as if these forces were effectively taking on the pacification role and proceeded with drawing down its presence when it was obvious that the ISF was not ready to take the lead in restoring order. A consistent theme among interviewees for this work was that the ISF were manifestly unready to take on the security role in 2007.

The problem was even more difficult because the policymakers in Washington did not want to simply restore an old order in Iraq: they were trying to create a new one built around a democratic system. An interviewee who worked influence operations in Iraq felt that the U.S. never really mapped out what it would mean to build a new social order and take to do so. He felt there were sufficient resources in Iraq, the U.S. just did a poor job with them.<sup>84</sup> Gentile correctly warns that no amount of military adaptation can rescue a flawed policy.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, adaptation can produce short-term results such as the Surge demonstrated.

## U.S. PROBLEMS

### Division of Power

The Founding Fathers wrote a ground-breaking document of governance, but it was deliberately designed not to be fast. Diffuse lines of authority make it difficult for any one person to effectively control the whole. This spirit of diffusion permeates throughout the Executive Branch in particular. Various agencies jealously guard their prerogatives of authority, funding and manning, and are loath to see other agencies interfere in “their” area. Gompert saw that a related problem was the U.S. tendency to address “problems” by creating new layers of bureaucracy.<sup>86</sup> Interviewees will demonstrate that success was usually predicated on the opposite tack, eliminating the “red tape.”

These problems were occurring from the beginning in Iraq. Ambassador Timothy Carney, who was one of the interviewees for this work, was initially in Iraq with ORHA, the Pentagon’s Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. When he returned, he wrote an editorial for the *Washington Post* titled “We’re Getting In Our Own Way.” This piece was critical of the effort there.<sup>87</sup> Ambassador Carney (who had previously served as Ambassador to Sudan and Haiti) mentioned some of the minor problems such as housing accommodations and water shortages he endured throughout his time there, which may be humorous but are symptomatic of the larger coordination and resourcing issues in Iraq prior to the Surge detailed below.

ORHA was organized by and reported to the Pentagon, not State Department. This is not unusual. Direct military rule of a conquered area ends up being the only realistic option when

countries occupy other countries. There is usually a high threat level, and diplomatic/civilian resources are typically not ready to assume control over the occupied area. This did not in and of itself have to be a problem: William H. Taft was an exceptionally effective military transitional governor in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.<sup>88</sup>

The problems arose with planning and implementation. Little time was allotted to ORHA to organize and develop their plan. ORHA Director Jay Garner knew this would create difficulties. He recounted that when he went in to see Secretary Rumsfeld in January 2003, he told him that George Marshall had started working on post-WWII planning in 1942, while they were just beginning to plan for a problem that would probably happen in March or April.<sup>89</sup> A senior stability commander who was on the CENTCOM operations staff in 2003 said ORHA was mostly designed as a fly-in package to help the Iraqi ministries get back to business. Unfortunately, after the invasion all the Iraqi technocrats walked away.<sup>90</sup> Bringing back the ones willing to come back took time.

Some staffers at ARCENT had begun planning for a post-invasion occupation, but it was a haphazard effort not coordinated with the main planning effort or State Department. Furthermore, an officer who worked in planning during the Surge pointed out that the Administration decided to do something different before the ORHA personnel had even begun deploying.<sup>91</sup> Schiff's concordance theory works under an idea that lack of communications structure was preventing adequate input to the Administration from the White House, but interviewee evidence indicates that the input was there: the Administration simply chose not to listen.

ORHA was not prioritized by the military leadership in Iraq. Ambassador Carney described continual problems trying to get functional telephones (their satellite phones only

worked outside). The military dictated multiple-vehicle force-protection requirements to leave their compound, then provided only a fraction of the transportation they needed to get out and perform their mission. Because of the state of Iraq's banking system, Iraqi government officials had to be paid in cash: vehicles carrying boxes of cash frequently had to move with no security.

ORHA was subordinate to the land forces commander in Iraq, hence they did not have a direct line back to Washington D.C. This meant that when problems cropped up, they had no ability to go around bureaucratic or personal obstructions to get those problems solved. Director Garner and his staff lacked the stature to overcome these obstacles. All they could do was get into arguments with military staff who had little understanding of or interest in their mission. He also ran afoul of authorities in Washington who wanted a faster de-Ba'athification process.

ORHA would soon be replaced by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) under Paul Bremer, who also assumed the titles of U.S. Presidential Envoy and Administrator in Iraq. The organization still resided within the Department of Defense, meaning Bremer was technically not an ambassador. However, everyone understood that he had the backing of the White House, along with United Nations Resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003 which recognized the United States and Great Britain as occupying powers in Iraq and transferred authority for expenditure of Iraq's oil revenue from the United Nations to the CPA, as well as responsibility for developing institutions for representative governance.<sup>92</sup>

Bremer secured his administration backing by promptly promulgating orders dissolving the Iraqi army and mandating extensive de-Ba'athification. Most interviewees agreed with the State Department Chief of Staff who said that army dissolution and de-Ba'athification sowed the seeds of the insurgency.<sup>93</sup> The problem was particularly acute in the Sunni-majority provinces such as Salah al-Din, Saddam's home province, where the U.S. brigade commander there was

faced with large numbers of senior Iraqi officers, generals with no jobs who felt underappreciated. It also resulted in inferior membership in the new Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>94</sup> Many of these disenfranchised officers had fought in the Iran-Iraq War.

When sovereignty was transferred to Iraq on 28 June 2004, the Department of State was at last able to establish an Embassy in Iraq and resume a more traditional diplomatic role in the country. However, the military retained outsized responsibility for governance and reconstruction in Iraq in addition to its security function.

Interviewees have stated that the Embassy and military were actually integrating prior to the Surge. Embedment and liaison between both agencies did occur. However, military were often placed into civilian slots due to manning shortfalls. There was also lack of coordination between the Embassy and the DoD-funded Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO).<sup>95</sup> Part of the problem was security restrictions that made it difficult for State Department people to travel outside their compounds. A legacy of the 1998 Embassy bombings was mission travel authorization being moved to security officials in Washington who imposed much greater safety-based restrictions on movement of non-uniformed personnel.

A senior member of the TFBSO said that this led to other coordination problems. Because the Embassy personnel were largely restricted to their compound, they were reliant on second-hand information. He felt that they turned into a self-generating organization, simply passing the same information back and forth amongst themselves. In 2006 there were 25 separate weekly meetings at the Embassy devoted to economics. The TFBSO found it difficult to even send representatives to all of these meetings. When they did not attend, it created resentment among the State Department officials who felt that the TFBSO was doing whatever it wanted and would not talk to them. The TFBSO sympathized with their frustration but the

senior member acknowledged that the TFBSO de emphasis on inter-agency coordination came back to haunt them later when the organization was eventually shut down with the enthusiastic support of the State Department.<sup>96</sup>

### Insurgency: War or Peace?

Is insurgency a small war or a tenuous peace? Metz described insurgency as not military, but military-centric.<sup>97</sup> In practice, it falls into a gap in U.S. Executive Branch international affairs. There is no one agency specifically designed to deal with all of the challenges inherent in an insurgent environment. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction report *Hard Lessons* reflects the multitude of agencies that had to be assembled to deal with post-invasion Iraq. Plakoudas recognized that some of the challenge to counterinsurgents come from the bureaucratic politics within their own government.<sup>98</sup>

A short-term hire with private sector experience described the problem. A Foreign Service Officer suddenly thrust into the role of a project manager for a major economic construction or operational project simply does not have that sort of background. It is not what they are trained for and capable of doing. Asking them to do it would be as unfair as taking a private sector manager and asking them to walk in and negotiate a treaty.<sup>99</sup>

The same is true of a career officer, although that person may have had more interaction with the defense industrial sector. Military officers do have unit budgets: however, these are rarely intended for construction projects. Civil Affairs and the Corps of Engineers are the only U.S. Army components who continually oversee construction projects beyond remodeling an office or repaving a parking lot. Most officers are only going to take on projects that can be

completed in their tour of duty (cynically, so it reflects on their fitness report), so their bias tends to be toward short-term projects.

The Executive Branch lacks a middle class of leaders capable of moving into the full spectrum of soft power requirements. Worse, both DoD and DoS will claim that they do have the ability to perform the role because they want the resources that come with it. The TFBSO official described this as an institutional gap driving problems on the ground.<sup>100</sup> It should be noted that this is typically a play for funds that the gaining organization will subsequently attempt to divert to what it sees as its core missions. It is not because either organization wants to take on the counterinsurgent mission.

#### Intraagency

A huge problem within DoD was getting the different messaging organizations of Information Operations, Psychological Operations and Public Affairs to plan together. Public Affairs is tasked to provide information to the public from the owning military unit. An MNC-I planner talked about the distinction between PSYOP and PAO and the IOTF, which is understandable but continually frustrating because none of them could talk to each other and the commander had to try to integrate them at his level. He felt that their different “silos” were appropriate in WWII but are irrelevant today.<sup>101</sup>

The Embassy was not just Department of State workers. It also contained people from a number of agencies such as Treasury, FBI, Commerce and the DEA. In his interview for this work, Ambassador Crocker made it clear that as the President’s representative in Iraq, he had control over all of the non-DoD agency entities operating in Iraq.<sup>102</sup>

The challenge is with the transient nature of the assignment. Someone seconded to Iraq understood that they would have to return to their parent organization at some point. As a result, they had to keep in mind the goals and objectives of that organization or risk censure upon their return home.<sup>103</sup> What the interviewees saw was similar to the problems described by De Tray (2008) regarding the reluctance of qualified people to take positions in Iraq.

### Interagency

Dixon described the success of the British approach to counterinsurgency as partly attributable to their ability to recognize the importance of cooperative civil-military relations. His logic is that if only 20-25% of successful counterinsurgency is shooting, then the bulk of the responsibility lies with the civilian presence. He believes that if this is the case, then the politicians should be in charge.<sup>104</sup> This would not play out in Iraq: however, interviewees stressed the importance of the excellent working relationship between General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker in revitalizing the authority of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq. This is more in line with Kilcullen and his thinking that a common diagnosis of the problem may be more important than formal unity of effort across multiple agencies.

Perhaps the most common flaw interviewees mentioned was the service and personality-dependent nature of interagency cooperation in Iraq. Interviewees agreed with a Civil Affairs officer who pinned much of the blame on individual stress, not an organizational plan. If a person was being a jerk, it wasn't because their controlling agency wanted them to be a jerk, it was usually just the stress of combat.<sup>105</sup> A Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leader described a meeting with the military camp commandant where he told her that her team was

lucky he was feeding and housing them and had not pushed them out onto MSR (Main Supply Route) Tampa (i.e. “the street”). And this was after the interagency cooperation memo had been signed.<sup>106</sup> Often the military leadership considered the civilian presence to be a nuisance that added no value to their operation.

An Embassy planner prior to the Surge said that the military was attempting to flex its muscles and take over some aspects of soft power, but not in a coordinated way. He said that this was a particular problem with CERP money, which was nearly \$2 billion.<sup>107</sup> A Special Operations commander said that he would run into State Department people who felt the military was doing their job. Others might be happy as long as the spending was integrated with what the State Department was doing.<sup>108</sup> An MNC-I planner said that the biggest soft-power gap was that DoD had all the resources and money, DoS had all the authority and much of the expertise.<sup>109</sup>

An Embassy analyst prior to the Surge described the difference in analysis. The Embassy utilized Iraqi data as part of its metrics. MNF-I did not do so relying instead on Coalition data only. The joke at the Embassy was “If an Iraqi was shot by a civilian, was he still dead?”<sup>110</sup> Joseph wrote about similar problems with the Human Terrain Teams, whose effort he felt never translated into transforming military perceptions of the battlespace.<sup>111</sup>

## Domestic Support

In 2007 Congress had switched to Democratic control of both houses for the first time since 1995. This naturally ramped up the partisan nature of the debate concerning the effort in Iraq, with funding a critical part of being able to maintain the U.S. rebuilding effort. Every confirmation hearing for a general officer assuming a command throughout DoD, not just in Iraq,

became another opportunity for Congress to question the war effort in an open forum. General Petraeus and his staff understood that his Congressional testimony would be as vital to the war effort as military success in Iraq and would spend a tremendous amount of time preparing him for his Congressional hearings.

Public support for military action in Iraq declined as the conflict dragged on with little measurable progress. Easton and Gade emphasized the importance of home nation support and how eroding that support is often a key insurgent goal.<sup>112</sup> Impatience for results drove Washington to demand quick solutions in Iraq even though this was not realistic. An Ambassador working in Iraq prior to the Surge said that they were on six-month clocks. Washington would say, “You have six months to fix this” even though no non-profit would ever say they could do that sort of work in so short a time. He called it the “7,000-mile screwdriver.”<sup>113</sup>

A senior USAID official also said that it was difficult to hash out agreement with the military, who tended to operate on a shorter timeline than the civilians. By comparison, USAID was on the ground in South Korea and Turkey for decades before they were able to leave when the host nation no longer needed them.<sup>114</sup>

## NON-U.S. PLAYERS

### International Players

Any ideas the U.S. and its selected “Coalition of the Willing” had of being able to “wall off” Iraq from outside influence were dashed by nations and non-governmental organizations

determined to pursue their own objectives in the country. A senior CENTCOM planner said that by 2004-2005 there was a clear international effort to create influence inside of Iraqi society and prevent the influence of the U.S. According to him this changed the dynamic so that it was no longer about stabilizing Iraq: it was about fighting against deliberate efforts to accrete or deprive power.<sup>115</sup> These efforts came in particular from Iran, Sunni Arab states, and non-governmental organizations. There was a greater understanding if not ability for the Coalition to inculcate the idea of Kilcullen that effective counterinsurgency needs to influence neighboring states.

## Allies

The Coalition of the Willing proved problematic. It was important politically for the U.S. to avoid the appearance of engaging in a bilateral war with Iraq. However, President Bush was unable to duplicate the success of his father in obtaining a UN resolution authorizing the 1991 liberation of Kuwait. He was also unable to invoke a formal international agreement to develop his coalition as had been the case in Afghanistan, where the 9-11 attacks had activated the NATO defense pact to protect the U.S. as the victim of aggression (This was ironic, as it is doubtful if any of the drafters of the NATO agreement had ever envisioned that the U.S. would be the country asking for assistance). The alternative became an informal grouping of nations under the heading of Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I).

Many of the contributing nations provided only small contingencies, often with little soft power capability. One brigade commander described the Eastern European brigade with him as lacking capabilities such as PSYOP or Civil Affairs in addition to the language barrier: it was mostly young infantry guys who wanted to “go out and shoot stuff.” The commander’s troops led by

example, and the Europeans learned to do things like pass out flyers and shake hands, but they did not do it as a unit.

Some smaller Coalition partners demonstrated positive results when placed in the right environment. The South Korean Zaytun Brigade deployed to Erbil from 2004-2008. There was little violence in the Kurdish region, allowing the Brigade to focus on reconstruction activities. Their lone fatality was a suicide. One Civil Affairs officer described them as being very well received<sup>116</sup>, while a USAID official said they demonstrated good results in jobs and economic growth.<sup>117</sup> The Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group was a smaller unit that operated primarily around Samarra in the Shia-populated south from 2004-2006. It was the first Japanese foreign deployment of troops outside of UN mandates since World War II. Along with the troops, Japan committed nearly \$5 billion to reconstruction efforts in Iraq, nearly a third of the U.S. amount.

Overall, both the Korean and Japanese contingents were described by multiple interviewees as having good success, although one pointed out that the U.S. usually took the most difficult sectors. Both military contingents were eventually withdrawn due to domestic unpopularity.

The British generally received high marks from those who saw them in action. One planner felt that the civil-military link for economics was much stronger than in the U.S. Their Department for International Development (DFID) was an independent agency and worked well with the Ministry of Defence. It was as if USAID did not have to go through the Embassy to work with DoD. The biggest drawback for the British was lack of funds: they continually had to ask the U.S. for money to fund their ideas. The British often contributed excellent insights to the process as co-participants, planners and advisors. A Psychological Operations officer said

that they helped the Americans focus on sources of violence such as sectarianism rather than where it was occurring.

Unfortunately, by 2007 the British focus was on the insurgency in Afghanistan, not Iraq, because it was a NATO operation, and they were concerned about the opium flow into London. The author contacted several British friends for potential interviews for this work, but the consensus was that by that time Iraq was no longer a priority for the Ministry of Defence. A pre-Surge planner in Baghdad felt that by that point the British presence in Iraq, proactive and valuable in the initial phases, had degenerated into a defensive perimeter around Basra airport, the sort of big base mentality that was precisely what General Petraeus was trying to reverse during the Surge.

#### The United Nations

The United Nations was unenthusiastic about the idea of overthrowing Saddam by force in the first place. Their attempt at direct post-invasion involvement was severely curtailed by the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003 that killed 22 people including Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello. A contractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Baghdad pointed out that after the attack the UN pulled most of its people back to Amman, Jordan. This meant that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank had no presence in Iraq: the USAID workers modernizing the Iraqi banking system had to leave the country to meet with the IMF.<sup>118</sup> This hindered the U.S. ability to obtain international funds for the reconstruction effort and forced individual member states, particularly the U.S. and British with some help from the Japanese and Koreans, to directly

contribute most of the funds.<sup>119</sup> An MNC-I planner said that they would either have to go to Jordan to conduct meetings with the UN or coordinate by phone or video.<sup>120</sup>

On the other hand, the minimal UN role gave the U.S. more freedom of action. When interviewed for this work, Ambassador Crocker was critical of several aspects of UN operations. His experience working with the relief effort during the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan led him to believe that a multinational effort without a strong U.S.-led presence is usually ineffective. He felt that the UN and many of the NGOs are more interested in headlines than relief, and that they spend too much of their time criticizing the U.S.<sup>121</sup>

#### Non-Governmental Organizations

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was an important piece of the puzzle in Iraq. Their focus was on the detention facilities run by the Coalition, particularly after the abuses at Abu-Ghraib were publicized. A stability operations Army commander in Baghdad prior to the Surge pointed out that the bad guys facilities never get inspected. Only those thoughtful enough about the importance of the ICRC get inspected.<sup>122</sup>

USAID is a government organization, but most of their contract partners are non-government organizations (NGO). These entities usually preferred to downplay their relationship with the U.S. and distance themselves from the Coalition to avoid insurgent retribution. Unfortunately, this means that the partners are operating with less U.S. oversight. The stability operations commander voiced the concern that this lack of oversight can turn the NGO into the insurgent supply chain, not for weapons but for sustainment.<sup>123</sup>

## Iranian Smart Power

Iran was understandably unhappy with the creation of an American military presence on their western and eastern borders. Deep-seated antagonism against the U.S. dates to the CIA-sponsored counter coup that removed Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953 and restored the Shah to power. U.S. support to Iraq during the 1980s war started by Saddam Hussein continued to exacerbate the hostility of the two countries. An Embassy lead planner who worked during the Surge said it was unrealistic to think that the U.S. would not have to partner with Iran to implement change in Iraq, pointing out that Shia and even Kurds fleeing Saddam's massacres frequently ended up in Iran.<sup>124</sup>

Iran proved to be a formidable adversary utilizing both hard and soft power in Iraq for their own brand of smart power. Hard power support included funding of Shia militias and development of weapons including the Explosively Formed Penetrator (EFP), a shaped charge specifically engineered to create molten copper "bolts" capable of penetrating the armor on U.S. military vehicles.<sup>125</sup>

The Iranian soft power effort was even more extensive. Several interviewees for this work described how they employed effective propaganda directly and indirectly through their proxies in Iraq such as Badr Corps. A U.S. Embassy economics coordinator also said that the Iranians would steal food basket deliveries and deliver them to the locals. Several interviewees described how when a project such as a bridge was completed a placard saying "A gift to the people of Iraq from the people of the United States" would be attached. They would come back a month later and the placard had been replaced with one saying, "A gift to the people of Iraq from the people of Iran."<sup>126</sup>

Numerous people interviewed for this work credited the Iranians with expertly filling soft power gaps in Iraq overlooked or under-resourced by the U.S. and its allies. As one ambassador leading economic planning in Iraq put it, “The U.S. tried to build power plants: the Iranians built libraries. We tried to do all the hard stuff in Iraq. The Iranians came in, did the easy stuff, and got all the credit.”<sup>127</sup>

### Sunni Countries

Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf nations are ambivalent toward the idea of a powerful Iraq, as is Syria. Iraq has a larger population that is overwhelmingly Shia. The other Sunni Arab leaders had no love for Saddam Hussein but considered a potential confederation of Iran and Iraq to be a bigger threat. They also knew that Saddam kept Iraq stable and feared that anarchy would allow terrorists and other groups to attempt to come in and alter the balance of power. Syria was frequently a refuge for Sunni leadership when threatened, either by the Coalition, Iraqi government or insurgents throughout the U.S. time in Iraq. This was a problem Metz understood when he said that traditional counterinsurgency concepts assume that partner and neighbor nations support modernizing and reforming the target nation<sup>128</sup> although this was not the case in Iraq.

There was also the problem of differing schools of Islam. Saudi Arabia is dominated by the Wahabi branch of the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence, the smallest but most austere of the four schools. The Saudis have used the opportunity provided by their oil wealth to further the spread of Wahabi practices throughout the world and naturally took advantage of the opportunity provided in Iraq to increase their effort there.

A former ambassador and senior member of the Baghdad Embassy described the problem the U.S. faced in underappreciating the importance of external powers such as Syria and the Gulf States, instead thinking in terms of one state, Iraq, that they believed was contained around the edges. He felt that the extent to which these countries could make all of the U.S. planning irrelevant was an under looked factor.<sup>129</sup> For example, U.S. efforts to limit violence in Iraq would be ineffective if Sunni nations were providing logistic support and recruits to anti-government forces in Iraq utilizing the tribes in Anbar Province disaffected by the loss of lucrative smuggling opportunities created by the UN sanctions after the First Gulf War.

An Army stability commander said that soft power occurred in the form of food deliveries to Sunni enclaves from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. He described the international competition for power and influence in Iraq as one of the untold stories of the conflict.<sup>130</sup> A State Department PRT member said the relationship between Syria and Iraq was complex because of the historical antagonism between the two Ba'athist strands, but support for the Iraqi Sunnis including basing out of Syria existed.<sup>131</sup>

## Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda relished the opportunity to challenge the U.S. directly in a Sunni Arab state. It meshed with their strategy of trying to instigate conflict to turn the Muslim world against the Christian West.

Jihad in Islam is complex. The Arabic word literally means “struggle.” Most Muslims take it to mean the inner struggle all people wage to try and do good and avoid evil. Many Muslims consider this the “Greater Jihad.” There is also the concept of the “Lesser Jihad,”

which is considered the defense of the faith, either by the sword or by persuasion. Both versions are subject to dispute among Muslim scholars.

Groups such as al-Qaeda seize upon the lesser Jihad with their vision of spreading Islam via military conquest followed by conversion of conquered populations. Both are widely considered distortions of the commonly accepted concept of Lesser Jihad, which is generally agreed to be defending Muslim lands rather than conquering new ones, and logical persuasion rather than forced conversion.

It is disappointing that the U.S. did not really foresee the possibility of Iraq becoming the new Jihad for ambitious young Muslims. Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya should have demonstrated that conflict against Christian nations in particular was almost guaranteed to be a magnet for the next generation of would-be mujahedeen, with unofficial support from the veterans of those previous campaigns now living in Sunni Arab countries. Their religious fervor would make them tenacious and uncompromising opponents. AQI was even utilizing the Internet as part of its propaganda campaign. As one Embassy analyst in Iraq said, "If you're using PowerPoint, you're good."<sup>132</sup>

It is also disappointing that once there, the U.S. did not mount an effective campaign to divide the al-Qaeda jihadists from the local population. This was in part because the Shia-dominated government was reluctant to cooperate with the Sunni population. The Surge would be successful in part because the Americans finally began to provide direct assistance to the Sunnis trying to get rid of the jihadists, although this violated normal counterinsurgency emphasis on empowering the local government. This was a long-overdue unity of effort between the Western tribes and the U.S. which Byman had described as the Iraqis understanding that the U.S. was the "least worst" side to be on.<sup>133</sup>

A Treasury Department official working in Baghdad prior to the Surge described the power of money in enabling the insurgency. She described cash as the ultimate attractive nuisance. It is a flexible tool for non-government entities such as al-Qaeda because there is no legal tangle or accountability trail comparable to what government financing dictates, which still results in charges of corruption or fund misuse.<sup>134</sup>

## EXECUTION PROBLEMS

Authority limitations inhibited the ability of Executive Branch agencies to carry out actions required in Iraq. An Army stability commander described the disconnect between institutional knowledge and policy. The military might pass along the lessons of the past, but policy people come in with little knowledge of the circumstances or history of the area of interest. He felt that they are driven by politics at the time and the operators end up repeating the mistakes of the past even when they push back against the policies, and according to him they pushed back quite a bit.<sup>135</sup> This further demonstrates the limits of Schiff's Concordance Theory that assumes a willingness on the part of senior authorities to listen to recommendations from the field.

### Manning Limitations

Posting shortfalls affected all agencies in Iraq. During the days of the British Raj, English officers were posted to areas of interest as commissioners for five years or even longer with no vacations. They had sufficient time to become familiar with the area and earn the trust

of the local population. The U.S. has no comparable system for long-term emplacement of officials in foreign countries. Pirnie and O'Connell talked about the difficulty of trying to develop a coherent and balanced counterinsurgency strategy in the type of partnering role that requires a long-term commitment, which was becoming problematic in light of the waning U.S. willingness to remain in Iraq.<sup>136</sup>

### Military Manning Limitations

U.S. Army conventional force members might be posted to Iraq for 12-15 months, with a two-week leave during their tour. There was some effort to rotate units to the same locations so that veterans would at least be able to pick up established relationships within the local community, but this would mainly be applicable to full-time active-duty Army forces. Most of the Army's soft-power practitioners such as Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations reside in the Reserves, which were not being rotated into Iraq as frequently.<sup>137</sup>

Special Operations forces would also deploy to the same locations, although on shorter deployment cycles. They were also more likely to have active-duty Civil Affairs (CA) and PSYOP elements attached to them during their rotations, providing a better soft power continuity than in the conventional force. One CA officer who worked with Special Forces in Iraq said that it gave him the flexibility to focus on human-terrain mapping and incentivizing behavior of key individuals, in contrast to the regular force units conducting more traditional CA missions.<sup>138</sup>

It is also important to note that all 160,000 Surge participants did not arrive in Iraq and depart the same days as General Petraeus. It was not a D-Day situation where everyone started at the same time working off a developed and rehearsed plan. Many of the assets were already

in-country and fighting before the Surge was even announced. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker faced the challenge of trying to reshape the mission in many cases of extant organizations already in contact with the local environment, citizens and insurgents alike, in order to align with the Surge grand strategy.

Units were often assembled piecemeal. One brigade commander said that of the five battalions he commanded in Iraq, two were not from his brigade. They were units already in country when he arrived and were later replaced by two other battalions he had never commanded or trained with.<sup>139</sup> Another had two of his maneuver battalions and his artillery battalion detached to other missions, not working for him.<sup>140</sup>

#### Civilian Manning Limitations

Inadequate as this was, State Department postings were even shorter. Because service in Iraq was classified as a hardship location, tours were limited to one year. Eleven months and one day counted as a year. They were also entitled to two 30-day leaves during their tour. In other words, State Department workers spent nine non-continuous months in Iraq. A military Information Operations planner in Baghdad prior to the Surge described his State Department counterparts as great Americans hampered by the rules requiring them to depart every 90 days. As a result, he had to deal with blank spots where there was zero coordination.<sup>141</sup> It was difficult to even get civilians to head the PRTs according to another planner, let alone provide their full staffing complement.

The resulting manning issues were illustrated by a team leader in Baghdad who said that he had five State Department people working for him, and there was not a single day when all

five were present to work due to individuals being gone on leave.<sup>142</sup> The same team leader gave another example of the problem. He had negotiated a procedures agreement with some of the military, State and USAID managers in-country. When he returned several months later, he found that not one of the managers he had negotiated the agreement with were still in-country, and none of their replacements had even heard of the agreement.

Secretary of State Rice wanted to implement “Vietnam rules” regarding Iraq. During the Vietnam conflict State Department people who refused assignments to Vietnam were also expected to resign their position. She was not able to impose this strict measure: consequently, Foreign Service Officers would refuse Iraq assignments and State would just keep going down the list, with a predictable drop off in quality. Interviewees saw that many of the ones who did deploy were straight out of school. They were smart and conscientious but had no experience and were now running a section in arguably the most important U.S. embassy in the world.<sup>143</sup>

A USAID contractor said the State Department people were nice, but they spent 3-4 months trying to adjust, worked for a while, then started working on their next assignment. Going to Iraq was something they had to do to get ahead.<sup>144</sup> A brigade commander with extensive experience in Iraq also said that many of the State Department personnel he worked with viewed Iraq as a failed policy.<sup>145</sup> Some of the State Department personnel even agreed that they viewed the invasion of Iraq as a mistake and many policies as failed: however, many felt that they were there to try to rescue a “screwed-up” situation.<sup>146</sup>

## Soft Power Without Hard Power Is Not Smart

Walk softly and carry a big stick.

- Theodore Roosevelt

U.S. leadership was focused on soft power prior to the Surge, they just failed to marry it with hard power. This fails to acknowledge that there simply are some people that will not change their behavior no matter how much attractive power is used on them. Lessons learned from previous conflicts included the need to include coercive power to stabilize the environment. Iraqi Security Forces were not strong enough to coerce behavior out of adversarial entities in Iraq. The consequence was a sharp uptick in violence in Iraq in 2006 and early 2007.

In his interview for this work, A former ambassador who worked with the reconstruction effort in Baghdad during the Surge stated that soft power was being employed prior to the Surge. He singled out the MNC-I commander as being an officer who “got it,” meaning the importance of soft power. The question was how do you win hearts and minds when you don’t control the land? For example, he described a typical situation where the U.S. would build a health center, one faction would gain control of it, and the other side would blow it up. He could not usefully build more health centers if they kept getting destroyed.<sup>147</sup> Another Embassy planner described as faulty the notion that just getting the Iraqis jobs would stop the violence. He said that the Iraqis were not fighting for jobs, they were fighting for political control.<sup>148</sup>

Interviewees continually stressed the importance of hard power as a necessary handmaiden to successful soft power efforts. An Embassy Chief of Staff during the Surge likened the situation to the quote by Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of this section. As he

said, “Who wants to do dumb power?”<sup>149</sup> A colonel who was a senior planner in Baghdad talked about the mantra under General Casey of “As they stand up, we stand down” referring to the Iraqi Security Forces. The U.S. forces would move from tactical overwatch to operational to strategic or relinquishing more and more of the close fight to the Iraqis. A strategy assessment officer pinpointed General Casey’s refusal to make protecting the population part of the campaign plan as the key element lacking in the pre-Surge strategy.<sup>150</sup>

A commander in Baghdad prior to the Surge said that it did not make sense to spend money on large-scale projects that could not even be visited because security was so bad. Water treatment plants with no pipes or sewage treatment facilities with no connection to homes became monuments to U.S. stupidity. He said that Iraqi leaders who talked to him simply did not believe the Americans could be that incompetent by accident; that the U.S. was doing it deliberately to keep their (Sunni or Shia) side down. A popular Iraqi indictment was how the U.S. could put a man on the moon but could not manage to fix their water/electricity/clinics/etc. It just had to be a conspiracy.<sup>151</sup>

This should not imply that open season was declared against the Iraqis in the manner of Downes who went so far as to suggest indiscriminate targeting of civilians supporting insurgents.<sup>152</sup> Chapter Five will demonstrate that the Coalition leadership made the decision to go in the opposite direction and work more directly with the Iraqis. Easton and Gade concluded from their study that insurgent strength can actually increase if violence applied against them is too little, leaving them perplexed to explain the success of the Surge.<sup>153</sup> However, they may not have understood that the initial stages of the Surge actually saw an increase in violence against the insurgents. Many interviewees for this work describe the first half of their Surge experience as a “gunfight.”

## Power That Does Not Leave the Compound is Not Smart

Prior to the Surge, all elements of U.S. power were too tied to their installations for different reasons that will be explored. Inadequate support and oversight to the Iraqi Security Forces and government were the inevitable result, failing to stabilize the country or provide viable reconstruction. This was a problem that does not seem to have received great attention in the literature.

A deputy brigade commander working in Baghdad recognized that this was the strategy developed by Lieutenant General (LTG) Chiarelli and said his favorite mantra was “Killing insurgents just creates more insurgents.” However, the commander felt while the Coalition was ramping up soft power activity, the insurgency, civil war and score-settling continued to increase.<sup>154</sup> A stability commander in Baghdad pointed out that the U.S. was not doing nation-building, which is simply helping a country trying to help itself. The conditions of stability had to be present first before there could be nation-building.<sup>155</sup>

Interviewee after interviewee echoed the assessment of the PSYOP officer who worked in Baghdad before and during the Surge that face-to-face was the most effective means of communicating a soft power message to the local populace. He talked about how it empowers them and makes them feel like part of the process.<sup>156</sup> But how can you interact face-to-face if you never go outside the wire? Baldwin laid out the importance of being able to measure military success,<sup>157</sup> measures that would be reprioritized during the Surge, particularly securing the local population.

## MILITARY BIG BASE STRATEGY

The U.S. wanted the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to take charge of security in the country. A sensible goal, but one that likely led to wishful thinking. The pre-Surge strategy dictated by Washington was to pull U.S. forces back to a smaller number of larger bases. An Embassy director with extensive private-sector background felt that this decision may also have been influenced by logisticians trying to make their job easier. Surveys indicated that most Iraqis had never even seen an American,<sup>158</sup> a problem exacerbated by pulling the U.S. forces back to a smaller number of larger compounds.

Interviewees with early experience in Iraq said that the initial invasion had spaced troops around the country which assisted in providing stability. One said that including contractors there were probably 250,000 or more people in-country situated at local levels. Big installations like Camp Victory did not exist.<sup>159</sup> As the smaller outposts were shuttered, insurgents were able to filter back into those areas and operate against the Coalition. General Casey and the leadership in Iraq understood the limitations of the big base strategy but were unable to convince their superiors of the need to disperse.

As a result, it became more difficult for the soft power elements to get outside the wire. A Civil Affairs officer said that he would tell his own teams about something going on which they knew nothing about because they never left. He said that there were even a few who were afraid to leave the FOB.<sup>160</sup> This needed to change in line with Gompert's idea that flexibility and opportunism were needed, or Byman comparing Iraq to the classical principal-agent problem of adequately monitoring an employee.<sup>161</sup>

## Civilian Security Limitations

The 1998 al-Qaeda bombing attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya killed over 200 people, including 12 Americans. Among the ramifications of this attack was the Crowe Commission's determination to give more force protection authority to the DoS security apparatus in Washington and take it away from the Ambassador, the President's on-the-spot personal representative, and his Chief of Mission.<sup>162</sup> The result was a reduction in the degree of freedom Embassy personnel had to go outside their compounds. An Embassy analyst prior to the Surge said that General Casey would not allow the military to provide security for the PRTs prior to the Surge.<sup>163</sup> A Civil Affairs officer said that the PRT he worked with had excellent USAID workers, but they wanted to dig in.<sup>164</sup>

Consequently, the State Department workers were not getting out and seeing what was truly happening in Iraq. Much of their contact with Iraqis ended up being with the elites, who a senior Army planner in Baghdad said led to them not getting a true picture of the situation in Iraq.<sup>165</sup> A Marine training team leader also saw DoS as working with the wrong people, Iraqis trying to ingratiate themselves with the Coalition.<sup>166</sup> A leading DoD economics official felt that the inability of the DoS personnel to leave the compound kept them from being able to develop their own picture of the true situation in Iraq.<sup>167</sup>

## Imperial Hubris

A PRT leader relayed the story of a meeting that the co-located brigade commander had with the local provincial council after they had sent him a letter detailing their requests for things

such as food and relief supplies. He arrived at the meeting, had his soldiers close and bar the door with weapons drawn, and walked up to the dais where the council leader was standing. The commander told him to go sit with the others, told the group they were corrupt, and tore up the letter they had sent him.<sup>168</sup> The PRT leader did joke with him that he had set up a “good cop/bad cop” relationship with the locals, that the PRT relationship with the locals could not possibly be worse than his was.

Leadership can say the right things about soft power even as their actions demonstrate differently. A Marine Military Training Team (MTT) member said that they were continually told that their mission of training the Iraqi Security Forces was the main effort. Then when senior leaders came to visit the area, they never came to visit the MTTs they visited the “straight leg” (infantry) units in the area.<sup>169</sup>

#### Who to Talk to?

The initial problem was not including Iraqis in planning. A State Department team leader described a December 2005 meeting with General Casey and his senior staff briefing an 8-pillar strategic plan for Iraq. Although they all agreed there should be an Iraqi lead for every element of the plan, he pointed out that there was not a single Iraqi in the room.<sup>170</sup> A USAID official said meetings were always about U.S. objectives.<sup>171</sup> The Surge would align much more with the subsequent advice of de Tray and Gompert previously discussed that partnering with local government would be more effective and strengthen the local ties with their own government.

In line with its idea to change the governance of Iraq from being top-down driven to bottom-up driven, the U.S. tried to push responsibility down to regional and provincial levels.

The result was the creation of Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NAC) and Provincial Advisory Councils (PAC). However, the organizations were outside the Ba'athist structure that was not overturned by the Transitional Administrative Law and the 2005 Constitution.<sup>172</sup> Worse, they were not staffed by the natural local leadership. A brigade commander described how one of the NACs was not meeting the needs of the local community. Upon investigation he discovered that the man placed in charge of running the NAC by the Americans was not even in Iraq: he lived in London.<sup>173</sup>

The same commander described another situation where they had been trying to restore power in part of Baghdad. He would go to the NAC leaders who said *inshallah* it will be done. It did not get done. The commander finally asked them who the guy was who used to run the power. They told him, the commander found him, and within 30 minutes power had been restored. He said the councils were often amazed that the guy who used to do the job might be the best person for the job. The situation is similar to that encountered after World War Two when aggressive Allied de-Nazification often resulted in removal of the only person qualified to perform a particular job.

An important initiative was the Provincial Reconstruction Finance Committee (PRFC) which gave small budgets (\$15-18 million) to provincial leadership to spend as they decided. An ambassador working economic issues in Baghdad before and during the Surge said this was a huge development: Saddam had never asked provinces for their input on spending. He said that consequently the locals were really into it. The initial problem with the program was that Washington felt it operated too slowly, whereas the ambassador felt that its strength was precisely that they were taking the time to do it right.<sup>174</sup>

## What to Talk About

Mismanagement of reconstruction funds was a problem from the beginning. Part of the issue was higher headquarters emphasis on spending money, regardless of outcome. A squadron commander prior to the Surge said that a commander's competence was based not on how he was doing in all the other Lines of Operation, but whether he had spent all his Commander's Emergency Reconstruction Program (CERP) funds. Weekly reports on spending were sent up the chain of command, and woe be unto the commander who wasn't spending as much as his peers. He said that this was the surest way for a commander to get into trouble other than an accidental discharge (of a weapon, most commonly when a soldier forgot they had a loaded weapon and discharged it into the clearing barrel located outside the dining facilities).<sup>175</sup>

As an example, he said he got in great trouble the week he had a zero for his spending update slide. He felt that they were reducing violence and making progress economically in his sector, so if he could do that without spending money wasn't that great? Higher headquarters disagreed, saying that if he were spending the CERP money he could be doing even better.<sup>176</sup>

A Marine officer who did planning in Baghdad prior to the Surge saw a similar problem working with the Iraqi ministries. Even when they did spend money, it was not spent wisely. Hospitals and clinics that should have been built in six months took two years: many were never completed. Even for the ones that were, the Ministry of Health had no doctors or nurses to put there.<sup>177</sup>

Much of what the U.S. was trying to do was a learning process for the Iraqis. A leader of the U.S. messaging effort before and during the Surge said that the problem with "by, with and through" (the common U.S. government catchphrase for putting the locals in charge and up

front) is that it forgets “on.” He said that the core issue is you are working to try and change them as much as by, with and through them.<sup>178</sup>

### Whom to Empower?

Greene concluded that elections in Iraq often served to reinforce existing sectarian and ethnic differences rather than working to overcome them.<sup>179</sup> De-Ba-athification had also eliminated many of the technocrats who had been running Iraq prior to the invasion, particularly in the Sunni-dominant areas. There were many cases where the Americans were not working with the right Iraqis to demonstrate smart power even when trying to apply power in an attractive manner.

Trying to empower Iraqis with no experience at real power, particularly at lower levels, was challenging. A former ambassador working with economics prior to the Surge said that the sheer aspects of responsibility and authority that serious budget authority and managing money at the local levels would have given was clearly missing. That does open the possibility of corruption and requires a strong effort at accountability.<sup>180</sup> A senior stabilization commander in Baghdad prior to the Surge described the American approach as too blunt and insensitive. The U.S. culture was to try and drive change, mostly through the military.<sup>181</sup>

The commander also felt that a monument to incompleteness was more damaging in the long run than the combat losses. It was important for the U.S. to start a project, protect the project, and finish the project. Do not hand it over and the furniture never goes in, or the teachers never get hired, or the building blows up, all of which he said happened.<sup>182</sup>

A surprising problem was getting the Iraqis to spend the money they did have. A commander of a U.S. brigade operating in a provincial area said that decades of oppression under Saddam had taught the leadership to avoid decisions for fear of getting shot. Consequently, many fundable projects languished simply awaiting someone to take responsibility and approve them.<sup>183</sup> Other ambassadors working in reconstruction concurred that Iraqis were reluctant to spend the money they did have or lacked the proper infrastructure and oversight capability.<sup>184</sup>

There were corruption and competency issues among the Iraqis as well. Branch and Wood believe that if host-nation governments was simply better-informed about grievances in society, then they could implement reforms without the need for military action.<sup>185</sup> This benevolent government concept is not corroborated by interviewees for this work. Closer to Marston's idea, they felt that from Prime Minister Maliki on down, the Shia-dominated Iraqi government knew the problems the Sunnis were experiencing, they simply did not care or were even deliberately accentuating them.<sup>186</sup> Fitzsimmons criticized much of the academic literature of the time for downplaying the importance of sectarian and ethnic strife in a civil war and trying to recommend rationalist, materialist approaches.<sup>187</sup>

### Losing the Information War

The U.S. wanted to be accurate in disseminating information to the Iraqi people. This was a noble ideal, but it meant that the insurgents and other unfriendly elements were continually given the opportunity to get their side of the story out first. Message approval authority resided at higher headquarters: brigade commanders did not have the authority to approve messaging in their area of operations.<sup>188</sup> As a result of mission authority residing at such a high level, a

PSYOP officer in Iraq prior to the Surge said they sometimes ran into problems with higher headquarters saying “you really shouldn’t be doing that: that’s not in your lane: that should be at our level.”<sup>189</sup>

The fact that it was a dangerous environment meant that the press was not always enthusiastic about direct embedment. An IO planner in Baghdad said that even when the U.S. tried to invite the regional media like Al-Jazeera they weren’t sure if they wanted to go because they didn’t want to get shot at either.<sup>190</sup> Journalists are human too.<sup>191</sup> Additionally, international news media were reducing their staff in Iraq due to both insurance costs and declining viewer interest.

Another problem was making sure that the PSYOP products were actually being aired. The planner found that he would have the TV on and would see what he knew was a Coalition product come on and go right off again. He would call the PSYOP chief and say “Al-Arabia just shortchanged you by about 45 seconds.” He emphasized that they were not cheap and the price was going up, so he thought it would be very interesting to see how much of what the Coalition paid for was broadcast.

There were also embarrassing incidents such as the accusations that consultants such as the Lincoln Group were paying Iraqi media to publish stories favorable to the Coalition or submitting stories to them while posing as free-lance reporters. The Coalition response was that the stories were necessary to counter insurgent misinformation. The same planner found the situation absurd: he felt that it was silly to make him responsible for reporting being done off someone else’s op-ed page.<sup>192</sup>

## Sectarian Appeals

Marston and Fitzsimmons were concerned that religion and ethnicity were underappreciated elements of counterinsurgency warfare, particularly in Iraq. Fitzsimmons felt that the focus should be less on the governmental structure and more of who was being placed in charge.<sup>193</sup> Chapter Six will demonstrate that the Surge saw a greater effort by the U.S. leadership to try to develop a more inclusive structure in Iraq to accommodate Sunnis, Shia and Kurds.

The various factions were skilled at appealing to their respective co-religionists. An Information Operations officer said that they kept to simple messages. Al-Qaeda told Sunnis they were there to help them and told the Americans they were there to kill them. The threatened other action to Sunnis was a gun to the head. The insurgents had videos, pamphlets and even television and Internet programming.<sup>194</sup>

The Shia groups proved effective at messaging to their constituents. They pressured the Shia-dominated government to marginalize the Sunnis and portrayed the U.S. as an occupying power. A former ambassador at the Embassy before the Surge agreed said that Muqtada al-Sadr was good at communicating with the Iraqi Shia, partly because of his father's reputation and partly due to his own skills as a speaker, and that the Americans did not seem to know how to counter it<sup>195</sup>. An interviewee who developed U.S. messaging in Iraq said that Muqtada al-Sadr was the most effective civil-military integrator on the battlefield. He believes that this is why Sadr is still an important player even today.<sup>196</sup>

Another described how Sadr's militias borrowed the Iranian trick of claiming credit for U.S. relief deliveries. They would use their inside knowledge of Coalition activities to learn

when a delivery was scheduled. They would then show up at that village the day prior and say “Relief supplies will be delivered tomorrow. They will claim it is from the Americans, but it is not: it is from Sadr.” This worked because the U.S. did not directly deliver supplies: they were contracting the work out precisely to try and maintain a low presence.<sup>197</sup> These micro-level examples of Iranian influence have not been detailed in reviewed literature.

The U.S. would meet with religious leaders, although it was often not about religious issues. Usually, the religious leaders were acting as representatives of their community to make sure they were being included in economic development projects or being part of the political process.<sup>198</sup>

A Treasury Department official who worked in Baghdad prior to the Surge described a subtle way that the American presence resulted in sectarian oppression. She worked with an Iraqi corporate CIO who was also a Christian. Under Saddam Christian women did not have to wear a head scarf: only Muslim women were required to. With the Coalition in Iraq, it was easier to brief them that it is a Muslim country and make all the women wear headscarves. An attempt to be accommodating thus ended up being used against them in a manner too subtle for the American leadership to understand.<sup>199</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The U.S. effort in Iraq was beset with problems that inhibited its ability to achieve national security objectives. The very nature of insurgency itself was a challenge, particularly for a democratic nation.

Structural problems flowed from the design of the U.S. government, particularly the Executive Branch. Authority was often unclear, with multiple agencies fighting turf wars for control of what they felt came under their area of expertise. At the same time, gaps appeared for missions that neither DoS nor DoD wanted to do. The international community played a role, from the UN absence or Coalition partner shortfalls to adversary nations that were not willing to cede Iraqi nation-building to the U.S. Trans-national organizations such as al-Qaeda rushed into the power vacuum created by the 2003 invasion.

Execution problems hindered even the sincere organizations and individuals in Iraq. Tour lengths and personnel quality were not conducive to a “long war.” Pre-Surge doctrine shied away from hard power and was over-reliant on soft power to create stability. The desire to maintain personnel security frustrated efforts to conduct effective soft power activities with the Iraqis. Personalities could make the difference between success and failure in carrying out assigned missions. Sectarianism frustrated U.S. efforts to combine the warring factions in Iraq into a viable national entity.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SURGE PLAN

In some cases, I was supporting counterinsurgency.  
In other cases, I was supporting insurgency.  
- Brigade Commander in Iraq<sup>200</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

A new approach was clearly needed in Iraq. A new approach would require a new plan. General Petraeus would spend most of 2006 preparing that plan while he was assigned to Fort Leavenworth. *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, was a major departure from the U.S. Army doctrine in existence at that time, reflecting the reality of the situation in Iraq. It gave “top cover” to General Petraeus as he was selected for and prepared to take command at Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I). He would be fortunate to be joined in Baghdad by a like-minded ambassador, Ryan Crocker. They set the stage by securing more effective backing from the leadership in Washington D.C. Then they went to Iraq and set the example by their cooperative attitude that filtered down to both the military staff and workers from State and other agencies.

The new thinking encompassed a number of approaches. More U.S. soldiers would be sent back into contested areas as the hard power element of the Surge. More Iraqis would be recruited to help with security, both formal units and militia.

On the soft power side, reconstruction and reconciliation would be increased to try and deflate the insurgency. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) would be staffed and expanded to cover every province in Iraq. Better measures of effectiveness would be utilized, and better

means of communicating Coalition successes would be employed. Reconciliation would be practiced to a greater degree in the Coalition internment compounds. And good timing and fortune played a role as well.

## THE BATTLE PLAN

The most important military doctrine related to the Surge is *Field Manual (FM) 3-24, Counterinsurgency*. Why? Because General Petraeus himself was head of the working group that developed the manual at Fort Leavenworth prior to his taking command in Iraq. In essence, *FM 3-24* gives us an unclassified version of the battle plan General Petraeus would bring to Iraq.

Field Manuals are Army doctrine while Joint Publications pertain to all branches of the service. Some topics are most applicable to a specific branch of the service. Consequently, that branch may be considered the service expert in a particular discipline. For example, the Navy's use of E-2 Hawkeyes as an integral part of aircraft attack packages makes them the leading service in Electronic Warfare. The Air Force tends to be the lead in Cyberwarfare. Over 90% of all DoD Psychological Operations (PSYOP) capability resides in the Army, thus Joint Publications on PSYOP closely resemble the Army field manual.

At the time there was no recently published doctrine at any level regarding counterinsurgency. Doctrine is not just the way to do something, but authorization to do it. Commanders taking actions not covered by any doctrine open themselves up for questioning or condemnation by higher authorities. Officers who act beyond doctrine better be right, or they will find themselves alone if things go wrong. Conversely, no one goes to jail for following the doctrine, even for a poor outcome. The result is naturally a service that is slow to embrace new

ideas. The fact that the Army was even willing to allow General Petraeus to promulgate a new field manual for counterinsurgency is a testimony to how desperate leaders perceived the situation in Iraq was by 2006, because by implication it represents the Army acknowledging that they were fighting a war beyond their institutional thinking.

There was a void in the U.S. military approach to counterinsurgency. Voids create opportunity. Sensing that the other services would be inclined to view the Army as the counterinsurgency expert, General Petraeus likely saw this as a chance for the Army to “take the lead” in developing counterinsurgency doctrine for not only the Army, but all of DoD. He smartly partnered with the other DoD “land force,” the Marines, solidifying the likelihood that the final product would become the basis of future joint doctrine.

General Petraeus held a planning conference on Information Operations (IO) and invited a long list of people, including his critics, to attend. He believed that IO would be particularly important as part of a counter-insurgency effort. He ran into problems with senior Army leadership with his group’s assertions that all soldiers are information-gatherers, which did not sit well with the intelligence community. General Petraeus also knew that he would probably be selected to be the next commander in Iraq, so he only had a year to publish the new field manual, a process which can ordinarily take several years. Nonetheless he persisted and the manual was published by the Army (and concurrently by the Marine Corps) in December of 2006, two months before his assumed command of Multi-National Force-Iraq.

The 2006 edition of *FM 3-24* is a 284-page (on the computer) document consisting of a short introduction followed by eight chapters:

Chapter 1: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Chapter 2: Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities

Chapter 3: Intelligence in Counterinsurgency

Chapter 4: Designing Counterinsurgency Campaigns and Operations

Chapter 5: Executing Counterinsurgency Operations

Chapter 6: Developing Host-Nation Security Forces

Chapter 7: Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency

Chapter 8: Sustainment

*FM 3-24* also has the following appendices: A Guide for Action, Social Network Analysis and Other Tools, Linguist Support, Legal Considerations and Airpower in Counterinsurgency.

In some ways the format follows that of the established field manuals. A scene-setting opening chapter, another with calls for unification and cooperation with other government agencies or nations, the nuts-and-bolts of planning operations in the middle and concluding with a chapter on logistics. Following traditional field manual layout was a logical move by the developers. It helps acclimate traditional thinkers to new concepts if the structure follows a format they are comfortable with and increases the likelihood of acceptance.

Like any introduction, *FM 3-24's* is the author's best opportunity to insert opinion. It states up front that the US possesses overwhelming conventional military superiority, which ironically forces our opponents to practice asymmetric warfare. It tells us that militaries typically start poorly in counterinsurgency operations, but the ones that prove most adaptable and overcome their inclination to wage conventional warfare against insurgents are most likely to prevail. It lays the groundwork for the importance of bottom-up initiative and innovation focused at local levels of the battlefield. It warns that insurgents are clever and often barbaric, but that a unified, adapting effort can enable counterinsurgents to prevail.

Chapter 1, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” is a typical field manual opening chapter. The third-longest chapter in the manual, it introduces definitions and lays out the rationale for its unique contribution to Army doctrine. On page 1 it clearly tells the reader that insurgency is about political power and that long-term success in counterinsurgency depends on people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to government rule. It points out that the insurgents get to operate paying less heed to rules of warfare and truth in broadcasting, but that this asymmetry narrows as they expand their territory and seek to acquire legitimacy. It then goes into some detail on the history and theory of insurgency, focusing from the beginning of the twentieth century and particularly on the writings of Mao Zedong. It lays out elements of both insurgency and counterinsurgency such as means and ends. It then highlights counterinsurgency paradoxes such as “Sometimes the more you protect your forces, the less secure you are,” “The best weapons for COIN don’t fire bullets,” and “Sometimes it’s better for the local people to do something poorly than for us to do it well.”

Chapter 2, “Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities,” is one of three distinctly shorter chapters in *FM 3-24*. In most field manuals, the second chapter discusses unity of effort. However, other manuals typically focus on integration with the other branches of service or foreign militaries, with some discussion of interagency U.S. cooperation. *FM 3-24* is more concerned with cooperation with non-military organizations, with a title even putting civilian before military. When it speaks of civilian agencies, it does not just mean U.S. government, but international organizations, non-governmental organizations and even corporations. It sets the stage by saying that integration of civilian and military activities is crucial to waging successful counterinsurgency.

Chapter 3, “Intelligence in Counterinsurgency,” is the longest chapter in *FM 3-24*. Overall, the word “intelligence” appears 433 times in the entire manual. By comparison it appears a total of only 358 times in *FM 3-0, Operations*, and *FM 5-0, Army Planning and Orders Production*, combined. What made intelligence such an important topic to the authors? The chapter opens with a quote about the importance of intelligence by General Creighton Abrams, who integrated many of the lessons learned in Vietnam into the US Army. It then tells us that intelligence in counterinsurgency is about people both in the sense of who has it and its importance. It follows the standard Army manual format of intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), which again is a smart way to make the manual look familiar to conventional warriors, but continually stresses the importance of civil structure and functions. Society, culture, economics and even language are items *FM 3-24* tell us must be considered during mission planning. About halfway through the chapter is when it starts talking about the insurgents. It talks about their force capabilities, but goes into greater detail about personalities, media capabilities and politics internal to the insurgent group and ways to exploit them.

Chapter 3 also devotes considerable space to discussing the importance to counterinsurgency of human intelligence, or HUMINT. It is certainly a two-edged sword: HUMINT is simultaneously the most unreliable and most insightful intelligence source available. Conventional force leaders tend to dislike the unreliability aspect of HUMINT: they prefer satellite imagery or signal intercepts. *FM 3-24* embraces the positive aspects of HUMINT, points out that it often provides intelligence impossible to obtain by technical means, and offers ideas for protecting and maximizing the value of this resource. In the spirit of Donald Rumsfeld’s “unknown unknowns,” HUMINT can provide answers to questions you did not even know you had.

Oddly, the increased importance provided the intelligence community in *FM 3-24* did not stop them from balking at one element during the drafting process. They objected to a sentence that said “All soldiers and marines are intelligence collectors” as an infringement upon Congressional authority. The objection is not entirely parochial. Most military funding is sourced through Title 10 of the United States Code: however, intelligence is funded through Title 50. The initial draft did not appear to supersede the analysis responsibility of the intelligence community and was merely striving to emphasize the importance of field-level intelligence sourcing.

Chapter 4, “Designing Counterinsurgency Campaigns and Operations,” is the shortest chapter in the manual. It adheres closely to standard Army planning guidelines such as Lines of Operation which continues to establish it as a “legitimate” work in line with the Army way of doing things. It does talk about the importance of local considerations, adaptability, and counterinsurgency goals.

Chapter 5, “Executing Counterinsurgency Operations,” is the second-longest chapter in the book: we can infer that though designing a counterinsurgency campaign in many ways resembles conventional technique, executing it is a different matter. It immediately lists five overarching requirements for successful counterinsurgency operations: all five highlight enhancing host nation government legitimacy and/or integrating operations with host nation security forces. Chapter 5 also details training and employing host nation security forces and recommends a vibrant information operations component of the battle plan focused on the perceived legitimacy of the host nation government by the locals.

Chapter 6, “Developing Host-Nation Security Forces,” is a noteworthy inclusion: an entire chapter devoted to developing internal defense, a job treated with a large measure of

disdain by conventional force commanders. “Host nation” appears zero times in *FM 3-0* and *5-0*. “Local” only appears in them about 50 times but in reference to security forces or conditions. The term “host nation” attaches a greater degree of importance to the indigenous population and dynamics than “local” and subtly reinforces the idea that Americans are the outsiders who should be operating under authority and limitations developed by the indigenous population, not ourselves.

Interestingly, the Coalition would subsequently disregard one piece of advice from this chapter during the Surge, the admonition that security force pay should be distributed through government channels. One component of the success of the “Sons of Iraq” movement in Anbar Province was the U.S. “going direct” to pay the local militias instead of relying on the mistrusted Shia-dominated regime in Baghdad to pay Sunnis.

Chapter 7, “Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency,” is a small but interesting component of *FM 3-24* not found in contemporary field manuals (these will be discussed in greater detail below). Ethics in leadership is discussed, particularly regarding warfighting versus policing, proportionality and discrimination, and prisoner detention (think Abu Ghraib). It reinforces the concept that learning and adaptability will be key to succeeding in counterinsurgency.

Chapter 8, “Sustainment,” closes the main reading with another familiar topic to conventional fighters, logistics. It says that logistics in counterinsurgency is different because there is no traditional rear area. In fact, logistic units may be directly interacting with local populations and shaping the environment for future military operations. Potential support to maintaining host nation security forces must also be considered.

The word security appears 512 times in *FM 3-24*. It is used in several different contexts, including securing your own forces and “operational security.” Approximately 146 usages refer to the national or local security environment and population security. Another 211 usages refer to host nation security forces, or local police and military units. Local security as provided by local security forces is emphasized as a vital element of successful counterinsurgency operations, a departure from the areas of focus for U.S. Army planners prior to the Surge.

We can gain greater understanding of what a change in institutional thinking this was by comparing *FM 3-24* to *FM 3-0, Operations*, and *FM 5-0, Army Planning and Orders Production*. In U.S. military planning, the next 24-96 hours are considered current operations and are planned and conducted by the J-3, or operations, staff. Time frames beyond that are considered future operations and are planned by the J-5, or plans, staff. Higher-level echelon units have an increasing percentage of J-5 staff: tactical units may not even have a J-5. *FM 3-0* and *5-0* cover the full range of contingencies and timeframes the Army expects to plan for.

Between the two documents, the word “security” appears only 229 times, less than half the frequency of *FM 3-24*. It almost always refers to the security of US forces. At best 10 could be stretched to touch on some aspect of security of the local population. And in most of these cases, it references things such as route and port security which are really a means toward the end of protecting the U.S. Army force, with only a secondary benefit of securing the local populace.

Comparisons of other key words further differentiates *FM 3-24* from *FM 3-0* and *5-0* and can be seen in the table below:

WORD	FM 3-24 COUNT	FM 3-24 FREQUENCY PER PAGE	FM 3-0/ FM 5-0 COUNT	FM 3-0/FM 5-0 FREQUENCY PER PAGE
Insurgency/insurgent/insurgents	1,254	4.45	0	0
Social	160	0.57	0	0
Population/populace	462	1.34	117	0.19
Civil/civilian	304	1.08	276	0.49
May	604	2.14	845	1.37

Table 7: Word Frequency Comparison *FM 3-24* vs *FM 3-0* and *FM 5-0*

Concepts that are crucial to *FM 3-24* are barely treated in *FMs 3-0* and *5-0*. The frequency comparisons validate General Petraeus' belief that there was a gap in US Army planning for counterinsurgency warfare. Even the relatively close use of "may" is still enlightening. Although "may" is a more frequent word in both *FM 3-0* and *FM 5-0*, *FM 3-24* seems about 50% more likely to realize that events on the battlefield will not always occur the way you planned them beforehand.

Conceptual differences can also be seen by comparing the respective word clusters of *FM 3-24* and *FMs 3-0* and *5-0*:



Figure 5: *FM 3-24* Word Cluster

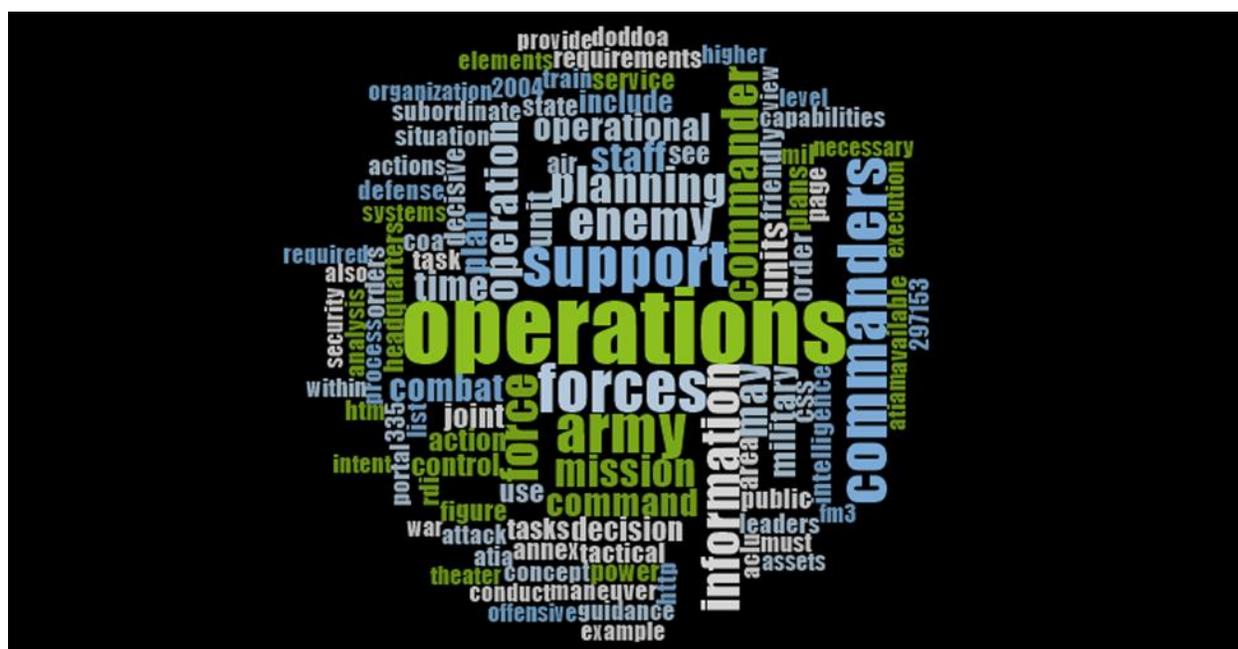


Figure 6: *FM 3-0* and *FM 5-0* Word Cluster

Operations is at the heart of what the Army does in both cases, and things such as support and forces are comparably high, but we can see major differences as well. In *FM 3-24*, leaders, governments and organizations are training, designing and understanding people and insurgents to provide support and success. By comparison, in *FMs 3-0* and *5-0* commanders, headquarters and units are offensively maneuvering, conducting decisive actions, and using tactical power to complete tasks against the enemy.

What explains the differences? It is human nature to try to simplify our complex world whenever possible, and combat operations are no different. It should not be a surprise that military leadership has a desire to “sanitize” the battlefield whenever possible. Planning for combat is complicated enough already. The commander’s preference is that things like weather, time and popular support are not constantly getting in the way of strictly military calculations. As a result, commanders can fall into the trap of trying to pretend these problems do not even exist and developing plans that fail to take them into account.

This thinking is evident in the understated acknowledgement in the pre-Surge *Field Manuals 3-0* and *5-0* of even the presence, let alone importance, of local civilian populations. Both manuals were published in 2001. Reading through *FMs 3-0* and *5-0*, they talk about Lines of Operation, logistics and force security. They delve into details of tactics such as ambushes and retreats, and even briefly mention factors such as nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapon employment, but barely acknowledge the battlefield presence of civilians who could impact operations.

The Army as an institution needed a positive injection of guidance regarding counterinsurgency warfare to enable it to carry out its mission in Iraq. The last major insurgency the U.S. had been involved in was Vietnam. The time in-between had been dominated by the

Cold War, ideal conditions for leadership that wanted to focus on strictly military planning. Large conventional forces were concentrated in Europe preparing to repel a conventional force invasion, but never actually being employed. As a contemplated defensive action, planners did not have to worry about occupying potentially hostile territory. Damage done to local infrastructure would be inflicted by the enemy. Forces could conduct exercises in isolated areas free of civilians. The largest U.S. military operation conducted between 1973 and 2001 was the first Gulf War, which further reinforced conventional force thinking. Operation DESERT STORM was a Cold Warrior's dream come true: force-on-force combat in the desert. It was Central Germany without Germans.

Others paid attention to Gulf War I as well, and often did a better job of assimilating its lessons. Most saw that a conventional fight against the U.S. is a fools' errand. When asked what he had learned from Gulf War I, the Indian Chief of Staff reportedly said, "Never fight the U.S. without nuclear weapons."<sup>201</sup> The groups who lacked the luxury of nuclear weapons were driven towards the other end of the spectrum of conflict: asymmetric warfare. Al-Qaeda was demonstrating the viability of unconventional attacks against the U.S. even prior to 9-11, conducting assassinations, bombing embassies, and attacking on the *U.S.S. Cole* in Aden. Even Saddam adapted. As a result of Gulf War I he retooled the Iraqi armed forces, placing greater emphasis on forming stay-behind units of fedayeen, roughly "those who would sacrifice themselves." These were to become the core of resistance groups loyal to the regime in the event Iraq was invaded. Although they did little good to Saddam, they were tailor-made to become part of the insurgent movement that sprang up after the 2003 Coalition occupation of Iraq.

General Petraeus and his working group knew that they had to produce guidance pertinent to the conflict in Iraq. Getting U.S. Army approval for *FM 3-24* was the first step in

giving him the flexibility he needed to bring a new way of looking at the problem to his new command in Iraq. With it, he now had the document he and his subordinates could point to and say, “We’re doing this because that’s what our doctrine tells us to do.”

## SUPPORT FROM ABOVE

“...gaining and maintaining U.S. public support for a protracted deployment is critical.”

- *FM 3-24*

This analysis of *FM 3-24* helps better understand the need for writing it and how it would serve as the foundation for the Surge strategy of General Petraeus. It provides insight to how he and the U.S. viewed the best response to the threats and problems in Iraq. As with the discussion of challenges in the previous chapter, this discussion will begin with U.S. political institutions and the American people. Whatever success could happen in Iraq would require stateside support across the board. Changes in attitude and leadership helped create an environment more conducive to a change of strategy in Iraq.

## Executive Branch

“The NSC staff, guided by the deputies and principals, assists in integrating interagency processes to develop the plan for NSC approval.”

- *FM 3-24*

The Surge would not work without clear support at the top. The Concordance Theory of Schiff was demonstrated not through institutional change, but individuals. Changes in the Administration's personnel and the arrival of leadership in Iraq who had the "pull" to coordinate directly with the President and his top officials resulted in increased willingness to allow the people on the ground in Iraq input into strategy. Ambassador Crocker said in his interview with the author, if it is not important to the President, it is not important to anyone. If it is important to the President, he needs to demonstrate that by having someone empowered by him to make sure the effort succeeds. This White House support was demonstrated in the form of General Douglas Lute, Deputy National Security Advisor. Ambassador Crocker considered him a key player in getting other agencies to provide needed personnel in Iraq. He was empowered by National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, but also by the President.<sup>202</sup>

For the military, the Surge above all meant a temporary increase in force by about 30,000 soldiers. Attention was paid to soft power. General Petraeus said that he got at least 1-2 additional Civil Affairs (CA) battalions one of which was put up in the Kurdish region and the other in Nineveh Province. There was also Public Affairs (PA) augmentation and more PSYOP elements.<sup>203</sup> A senior Information Operations developer said that the Surge by itself did not cause a major change in what his office did though they did adapt strategy and narrative.<sup>204</sup> Another said that he recalls thinking they had the (soft power) assets needed. What was needed more than messaging was successful actions with well-coordinated messaging.<sup>205</sup> Metz is pessimistic that a comprehensive, effective counterinsurgency narrative can be maintained in the modern information environment,<sup>206</sup> but interviewees in Chapter Six will describe improved effects related to timely, coordinated messaging.

The successful actions would come from the combat units that made up the bulk of the Surge reinforcement. Multiple interviewees talked about the overriding importance of establishing security as a prerequisite to successful soft power initiatives. A brigade commander in Baghdad during the Surge said that in his area there were pockets (of resistance) they had to eliminate that they might not have been able to do without the Surge force increase. He believed that the higher concentration of soldiers during the Surge got things under control. There were areas they just could not satisfy, either lethal or non-lethal, without the additional forces because the troop-to-task<sup>207</sup> ratio was just too great.<sup>208</sup> The situation in Iraq prior to the Surge supported the idea of Eastin and Glade that small amounts of counterinsurgency force can strengthen an insurgency by providing it the opportunity to demonstrate resolve.<sup>209</sup>

State Department's ability to get the right people to Iraq was strengthened by the arrival of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary, with John Negroponte as her Deputy. Negroponte has served as the first U.S. ambassador to Iraq upon dissolution of the CPA under Paul Bremer. Both were solidly behind the Surge. Ambassador Crocker explained that it is traditional in the DoS system that someone hoping to be an ambassador or who already has her name in play goes to see the Deputy Secretary to see how the plan lies. What Negroponte did after becoming Deputy was to say, "If you haven't been to Iraq, don't even bother walking through the door."<sup>210</sup> This was further effort by the State Department to mitigate the difficulties observed by de Tray of getting the right people in Iraq.<sup>211</sup>

Ambassador Crocker also built a more practical security process for the Surge. In Iraq he worked out arrangements with General Petraeus whereby the command with the appropriate assets, whether military or civilian, would manage movements. In 98% of the cases that meant military assets would move embassy people. He signed and the RSOs (Regional Security

Officers) did not object. It got people where they needed to go, although at an increased risk: military movement standards are not as stringent as State movement standards.<sup>212</sup>

Ambassador Crocker knew that personalities would be important and worked hard to get the best ones lined up on his side. He said that a lot of it was personal effort, calling everybody he could think of for the senior positions and that he got terrific responses.<sup>213</sup> As proof of his effort, there were at least 5 ambassadors working in Iraq during the Surge, reversing trends of the inadequate State Department manning observed by de Tray.

A military planner on the MNF-I staff felt that AMB Crocker was the hero in the Surge and that to the extent that the Surge was considered successful, much of the credit can be attributed to him. He felt that Generals Odierno and Petraeus were great, but the most valuable player was Ryan Crocker. He ascribed a lot of the Surge success to Ambassador Crocker's leadership in overcoming the institutional biases that were present (and that have still not been reformed in his opinion).<sup>214</sup> They would prove more successful at integrating military and civilian contributions as outlined by Pirnie and O'Connell and Dixon.

Congress

“Information and expectations are related; skillful counterinsurgents manage both.”

- *FM 3-24*

General Petraeus understood that Congressional support was crucial to maintaining budgeting and public support for the Surge. Many representatives would have probably agreed with Gentile and Metz that victory in direct counterinsurgency warfare was not a realistic

goal.<sup>215</sup> General Petraeus and his staff spent tremendous time and effort preparing for his Congressional testimony.<sup>216</sup> He did not want to create a false expectation, and was blunt in his initial forecast to them:

I told Congress during my confirmation hearing in January 2007 that the violence, the situation would get worse before it got better. That our casualties would go up, because we went into these areas where the violence was the highest, which is where we had to go and did indeed go and separate the warring factions. They were going to fight back: that is exactly what they did do. The casualties did go up, although fairly quickly the Iraqi civilian casualties started to go down, and then over time the sensational attack numbers started to go down. Then sectarian incidents started to go down: all of that was very important.<sup>217</sup>

General Petraeus also wanted to increase funds available for the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). This was discretionary money that military commanders at all levels had to spend on local civic projects. According to General Petraeus, the history of CERP started after they achieved security in Mosul, where the interim provincial council and governor had a lot of activities ongoing. It was clear that they needed money for a host of ongoing projects to help restore basic services, to repair damaged infrastructure, to help repair damage to ministry facilities, to rebuild Mosul University and a variety of other educational institutions, and to rebuild the police academy. Ultimately the Coalition Provincial Authority got permission to use the more than a billion dollars found in regime official's buildings and so forth. After that was gone, they wanted to find a way to continue to fund these projects.

He had talked to then-Senate Majority Leader Frist (TN), who represented a state in which a big part of Ft Campbell is located and who had done thoracic surgery on Petraeus after a training accident he had as a battalion commander. He said that Senator Frist took a keen interest in the issue and that's when Congress passed legislation that authorized the appropriate funds for what came to be known as the Commander's Emergency Response Program. It was a

major component of the military soft power effort in subsequent years.<sup>218</sup> One of General Petraeus' senior staff officers before and during the Surge agreed that this was a point of emphasis in the meetings with key Congressmen: General Petraeus asked for additional CERP money and authority for usage and got it.<sup>219</sup> This demonstrates the high level of access General Petraeus had to leadership in Washington as observed by Schifrin.<sup>220</sup>

Willingness to challenge the rules became more frequent as well. A State Department manager with private sector experience got frustrated whenever he was told that something was against the law or required by Congress. When he would ask if anyone had ever called Congress to explain why the rule was not working in a war zone, they would say no. He would get on the phone and call a couple of Congressional staffers and they would say, "We didn't realize that: its fine."<sup>221</sup> A senior Embassy transition official said that during the Surge policy in Washington was actually being driven by the field.<sup>222</sup> This is another instance of approximating Schiff's Concordance Theory although via personal initiative versus structural change.

According to Ambassador Crocker:

I became concerned over Embassy staffing and structure early on. In a perpetual crisis atmosphere, staffing decisions were often made quickly and without reference to overall coherence. I asked Pat Kennedy, Undersecretary of State for Management, for help. Kennedy himself came out to Baghdad for an extended period and produced the Kennedy Report. It laid out recommendations to alleviate manning and employment issues in Iraq.<sup>223</sup>

The Kennedy Report provided for improved training, equipping and staffing of contracted security, particularly for convoy movement. It increased Regional Security Officer (RSO) direct involvement in convoy movement. It brought State Department security procedures more in line with those of the military and increased cooperation between the two. It also mandated more cultural sensitivity training for contracted security. The result was an

Embassy that was able to lash up more effectively with its military counterparts and expand its ability to restore stability to Iraq.

## LEADERS IN COOPERATION

Unity of effort must be present at every echelon of a COIN operation.

- *FM 3-24*

Surge participants at all levels talked about the importance of personalities in fostering cooperation between the various elements of the Executive Branch. It is an element of success that was stressed by participants who published works related to the Surge, such as Mansoor, Brinkley and Sky. Journalists who covered the conflict also talked about how changing people could change the effectiveness of relationships. For Kaplan, it began stateside as General Petraeus was overseeing the writing of *FM 3-24*.<sup>224</sup> Kagan and Ricks both talk about relationship-building between the Americans and Iraqis.<sup>225</sup> The journalists encompass part of the cooperation concept. However, even they do not talk in as great detail about the improvement in cooperation within the U.S. elements in Iraq. Academic writings regarding counterinsurgency understudies the difference having the right person in a position can make.

Interviewees continually stressed the importance of the excellent working relationship Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus maintained. Ambassador Crocker said, “The campaign plan that Dave and I developed at the outset was something we regularly tweaked and tuned.”<sup>226</sup> General Petraeus spoke in the same light, saying “we actually both signed the

comprehensive civil-military counter-insurgency campaign plan. We oversaw together the review of the plan that we inherited ... and then did everything together.<sup>227</sup>

This should not be read to mean that previous partnerships of Ambassador and General were not cooperative. A military planner with experience in Baghdad prior to and during the Surge said that he was surprised at how well General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad got along. They shared a waiting room. If you were going in to see General Casey, you would go into the waiting room and turn left: if you were going in to see Ambassador Khalilzad you would go in and turn right. What was important to him was that General Petraeus took it even further, because he was “really into the soft power element.”<sup>228</sup>

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus regularly attended and co-chaired meetings related to security and reconstruction.<sup>229</sup> They rarely, if ever, publicly disagreed on an issue. Such a relationship is invaluable in preventing subordinates on both sides of the aisle from believing there is a “mommy/daddy” situation where they could concentrate on one and be more likely to get what they wanted. An ambassador working at the Embassy during the Surge said that the linkup between Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus was critical to making sure dramatic progress was made at every level.<sup>230</sup> Their practice was in line with Kilcullen’s recommendation that a common diagnosis of the problem might matter more than formal unity of effort across agencies.<sup>231</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

As has been seen, by 2007 the Coalition of the Willing had mostly become the United States, although other countries such as Great Britain were still there in limited roles. The

United Nations maintained few operations or personnel in Iraq. As a benefit, there was less need for Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus to build consensus for their actions in Iraq, allowing them to develop a plan that best suited U.S. goals.

A U.S. military force commander has almost no authority to pursue operations outside of his designated theatre in the manner prescribed by Kilcullen. This meant that attempts to limit Iranian or external Sunni influence were in many ways outside of the control of Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. “Rat lines” importing weapons, fighters and logistic support to insurgents or sectarian factions could only be shut down within Iraq. This would make the Sons of Iraq and Anbar Awakening initiatives so important. Turning the Sunnis in particular against external influencers meant that those sustainment tracks would turn into rat lines to nowhere.

## STRATEGY

The military forces that successfully defeat insurgencies are usually those able to overcome their institutional inclination to wage conventional war against insurgents.

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General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker understood that smart power had to include a mix of hard and soft power. Multiple interviewees agreed with this assessment. An Embassy planner with the Joint Strategic Assessment Team described it as a combination of US and British military and folks from the State Department both inside and outside the embassy, and some academic experts. He said they had about a six-week period of doing intense planning and research to put together the report, then after that report was received by Ambassador Crocker

and General Petraeus, MNF-I J-5 started turning it into the new campaign plan.<sup>232</sup> A Treasury official at the Embassy agreed that during the Surge a lot of people with subject matter expertise were looking at making things work holistically, both from a political and administrative level.<sup>233</sup>

A senior staff officer at MNF-I during the Surge said that Gen Petraeus was intent on a whole of government approach to counterinsurgency. He made it quite clear that he needed more of everything that the country could provide. Not just soft power: more enablers—more military police, more aviation, more engineers—but also more IO, more PSYOPs, and more diplomats. He understood that the Coalition had to get the violence levels down and the only way to do that was through kinetic action, but any sort of permanent gains would have to include the nation-building aspects of counterinsurgency as well. This is where the soft power came in. The officer said that General Petraeus was very hands-on in terms of the IO aspects<sup>234</sup> of the Surge.<sup>235</sup> To one MNF-I planner, General Petraeus did not think of counterinsurgency as just hearts and minds or just hard power. It was not just offense or defense. It was all of that together.<sup>236</sup>

An ambassador working at the Baghdad Embassy during the Surge said that it was not a solution in and of itself. He described the Surge as a change in tactics, a change in resourcing. It was a whole-of-government focus on making things work. To him, it demonstrated that you could make that work: putting a whole-of-government approach together with resources and far-sighted management of them.<sup>237</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff said that unity of effort does not mean “a Surge,” but a coordinated vs ad hoc effort. For example, he said that there were numerous buckets of money in Iraq and Afghanistan: what was needed was a jointly agreed upon strategy with conditions.<sup>238</sup>

It started with security. According to General Petraeus, unless you can achieve security, you do not have a foundation on which to build anything else. You have got to get security. That could only be achieved in some cases by separating the Shia militia and Sunni insurgents.<sup>239</sup> This clearly required an active Coalition presence aware of the internal problems within Iraq recognized by Dixon.<sup>240</sup>

Success would ultimately depend on better application of hard power. A Civil Affairs officer working throughout the country during the Surge said that hard power never went away as the punch you needed to have per classic realist theory that you must project strength to enable the other things you want to do. He said that the units that did it the best brought down the hammer when they needed to, but they did not overplay it. They then let soft power move to the fore and work the problem with hard power as the “free safety.”<sup>241</sup> One brigade’s motto put it bluntly: “Positive, Polite, Professional; Prepared to Help, Prepared to Kill.”<sup>242</sup> Another brigade commander said that his mantra going into Baghdad was “This is not my problem. This is your problem Mr. Iraqi Citizen and Mr. Iraqi Governance. I’m here to help, and I do have a mission, and this is what I will do.” He saw his mission as eliminating violent threats and criminal activities to set the conditions for a legitimate government.<sup>243</sup> A Special Operations commander during the Surge period felt that his operations were probably still much more on the kinetic side.<sup>244</sup> This was a lesson General Petraeus had learned during his time in Mosul, going after the irreconcilables with even more relentless pressure. The special mission forces were employed in cases of high value targets.<sup>245</sup>

General Petraeus did not intend to use the force increase to make the existing installations bigger. Another lesson he brought from Mosul was living with the people to secure them with small combat outposts and other bases. He felt that the key for the Surge was to go from big,

consolidated bases as had been done throughout 2006 back into the neighborhoods because that is the only way that you can secure the people and combine that with a variety of different population control and security measures. During the Surge, he actually reversed the handoff to Iraqis of a variety of security tasks and essentially took control back, which is similar to what he had done in Mosul.<sup>246</sup> Eastin and Gade talked about the soft power element of the Surge but may not have understood that initially the U.S. assumed a greater security role in Iraq.

A Baghdad brigade commander said that the Surge was about putting in the right number of soldiers to accomplish what General Petraeus intended. It was not the same in all areas. In some areas he needed more guys to shoot and be in the close fight. That was what it was going to take to rule the area and hand it off to the locals. In some it was having enough soldiers on the ground to interact and do projects. The Surge brought money, projects and some of these additional multipliers such as the PRTs. It brought in a higher concentration of soldiers and put them in the right places based on the analysis that was done for hard and soft power.<sup>247</sup>

A stability operations commander in Baghdad spoke similarly about what hard power needed to accomplish. He described the Surge as providing sufficient forces to engage in clearance operations in a given area and having enough presence to hold it while clearing in another operational area. The Surge provided more combat units to fight for consolidating the gains made by clearance operations. He said that prior to that the Coalition would clear an area, move to another area to clear, and the virus would come back. Clear and hold came from the combat forces. Clear would be the primary emphasis, the weight would be there, with build being a sub-emphasis. Hold would take root as clear would lose some of its primacy, becoming hold and build. Build would then take it over as they reduced the amount of U.S. force presence

in a given area after it was relatively stabilized. That was the shifting of the weight over time and an important part of the process of stability operations.<sup>248</sup>

It would also be important to increase the civilian side of the Surge. Some of the military expectations for the civilian Surge may have been unrealistic. A Special Operations commander during the Surge said that because the military was adding five brigades it was probably expecting several thousand civilian people, when the real number was about a thousand.<sup>249</sup> As an example, a Civil Affairs officer described the situation wherein Mosul had a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and Kirkuk had a military PRT. General Petraeus had set it up as military because he could not get State Department personnel for Kirkuk. His whole theory was to let the CA and military guys do it and as they get replaced by State, they will just roll out.<sup>250</sup> A stability operations commander in Baghdad felt that the Coalition had to close that gap between them and USAID, to help them understand that the military could accelerate, enhance, secure and protect the work they were doing.<sup>251</sup>

But what mattered as much was getting the right civilians into the right positions. A senior MNF-I staff officer agreed that the PRTs were morphing into a combination of geographically based PRTs and unit-based, embedded PRTs. General Petraeus wanted those fleshed out with increased CERP authority which he put a lot of stock in.<sup>252</sup> However, the goal was to have the PRTs staffed and led by civilians. An MNC-I economics planner said that when fighting an insurgency, if you put all your cards on hard power you are going to lose. In Vietnam we talked about hearts and minds, and that became a cynical expression that was abandoned in our thinking and planning. But it was absolutely correct.<sup>253</sup> Another Embassy analyst said that there was more of a push to get more civilian officials out into the field and beef

up those PRTs so that by 2008 they were opening slots around the country for more civilian PRT positions.<sup>254</sup>

There were also participants who understood that provinces outside of Baghdad needed help too. A PRT leader said that at the time, the *modus operandi* was that if they can tame Baghdad, then they would get the rest of the country on board. They were trying to surge capacity on the civilian side in Baghdad including at the PRTs. He successfully argued that he needed to be in Salah al-Din because the problem was with the Sunnis. The Sunni problem was more acute: the Shia in Baghdad was something that he felt they had plenty of resources dedicated to.<sup>255</sup>

A provincial Civil Affairs officer said that the PRT mission really evolved from the bottom up more than from the top down. There was a general strategy unveiled in about 2005 that guided PRT development, but they were given very little on PRT operations. Based on the collective experiences of PRT throughout Iraq, they saw what was working and what was not and incorporated the successes into a solid PRT operations template. The entire thing was informal and after action-driven from the field.<sup>256</sup> An Embassy analyst did express a common concern among the civilians when the brigade PRTs started to pop up. There was a reluctance to use military security for the civilian efforts. General Petraeus shifted that somewhat as he implemented doctrinal COIN activities, but there was still much that State Department workers felt military personnel did not understand about US civilian capabilities.<sup>257</sup> The ultimate solution was simply to increase civilian staffing at the PRTs in keeping with Plakoudas as well as Pirnie and O'Connell emphasizing the importance of the civilian component or even primacy as recommended by Dixon.<sup>258</sup>

## STAYING IN TOUCH

The U.S. Ambassador and country team, along with senior HN representatives, must be key players in higher level planning; similar connections are needed throughout the chain of command.

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Regular joint meetings would be conducted throughout the Surge. According to Ambassador Crocker, their two full teams would meet on a quarterly basis to review, assess and reprioritize. He said that at the command level they were tightly knit, and it worked pretty well particularly given all the turbulence, political as well as kinetic.<sup>259</sup> Another ambassador there agreed that they had a military/civilian joint campaign plan with frequent review sessions.<sup>260</sup> An ambassador leading economic development at the Embassy during the Surge emphasized that every six weeks or so they held meetings of the Conditions Assessment Synchronization Board (CASB) at Camp Victory. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker and about 200 key staff would spend a day doing a review of where they were on the plan. He described it as a complete civil-military matchup.<sup>261</sup>

A senior MNF-I staffer said that soft power coordination was maintained on a weekly basis as well. In the BUB (Battle Update Brief) there was one day a week that was a “soft power” day. General Petraeus and his staff flew to the Embassy Annex to take the BUB from that location. That was the day that all soft power and nation-building activities were briefed to General Petraeus.<sup>262</sup>

There was also a greater effort to get the military and civilians planning and working together. A senior USAID director said that planning closely together allowed them to work together even more closely during the Surge planning. Discussion was also very important during the Surge. USAID senior officers were embedded with the military in the hottest areas.<sup>263</sup> An ambassador working economics during the Surge said that he probably traveled to more places than any other senior officer in the embassy. The trips were almost always with the military engagements they had coordinated together.<sup>264</sup>

Gentile believes the shift in strategy was evolutionary rather than revolutionary.<sup>265</sup> Certainly, much of what was done was a refinement of existing techniques such as arming Sunni militias and creating more PRTs. Even evolutionary change is not possible without command support: General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were successful because they were willing to find strategies that worked and build upon them.

## GOOD FORTUNE

Skillful counterinsurgents can adapt at least as fast as insurgents.

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Several external circumstances worked to favor the Surge as well. Global oil prices were rising, meaning there was a substantial increase in revenue available to the Iraqi government. In fact, by 2007 oil revenue was several times the total Coalition financial contribution toward rebuilding in Iraq.

A degree of exhaustion with fighting was also beginning to set in with the local population. One brigade commander in Baghdad felt that the Surge happened at the point that everyone just wanted the bad stuff to end.<sup>266</sup> Another commander pointed out that the process of removing incompetent Iraqi commanders had been done mostly in 2006, so that by 2007 there were some “pretty good guys” leading Iraqi forces.<sup>267</sup>

The biggest circumstance working in favor of the Coalition in 2007 was the Awakening movement in Anbar Province and other Sunni areas. Much of the Sunni population had grown tired of the al-Qaeda presence in their areas. They had appeared initially attractive with their financial resources and anti-U.S. and Shia stance. However, by 2006 their conservative interpretation of the Koran had combined with their indifference to collateral damage from their operations to make them an unwanted presence (forced marriages to the daughters of tribal chiefs had also become odious to the locals). Most importantly, their financial resources were beginning to run low. A Marine Military Training Team (MTT) member based in Ramadi during the Surge said that in his town, al-Qaeda wasn't really an effective paying customer anymore. They were instead starting to do a murder and intimidation campaign.<sup>268</sup> An ambassador working in Iraq at that time said that he remembered their political-military counselor really pounding hard on the need for population security, not general security.<sup>269</sup>

As a result, the Americans found that they were pushing on an open door. A PSYOP officer in Iraq before and during the Surge thought that the Surge set the momentum where Iraqis realized that the U.S. really meant it when it said it wanted Iraqis to take the lead.<sup>270</sup> The MTT member said that they were organizing their (local) guys, most of them were “pissed off” enough at al-Qaeda that they didn't need to be paid, they just needed the *wasta*<sup>271</sup> of the tribe and affirmation of the sheikhs.<sup>272</sup> The PSYOP officer said that it had nothing to do with the plan: it

was already taking place as early as September 2006. The Surge was really capturing those events, what was working, put it in an umbrella plan, and then sprinkled in a few more actions. To him, if it had simply been more “Let’s take into consideration more of what the Iraqis want to do,” it would have been just as effective.<sup>273</sup>

According to Winston Churchill, “Success has a thousand fathers: failure is an orphan.”

The first half is certainly true in the case of the effort to organize and integrate the Sunni militias.

A provincial U.S. brigade commander recalled:

Sons of Iraq was interesting. In the peninsula where my mechanized unit was, there was a string of IEDs that were destroying Bradleys (vehicles). In Anbar Province the Marines get credit for starting Sons of Iraq. I give credit to my battalion commander sitting down on the peninsula who came up with the idea. These folks who had no money to feed their families would take money from al-Qaeda to plant IEDs. Instead, give them PT belts and allow them to carry their AK-47 and allow them to ring a bell if there were nefarious activities. When they rang the bell, everybody came to engage that evil element. We also paid them to provide protection along key stretches of the MSR. When Sen John McCain visited, he asked a very pointed question, “How much are you paying these guys? How much is it costing the government?” I told him it was half a million dollars a year. He said that that was a lot of money. I responded that one destroyed Bradley would take care of that, and the U.S. soldier cargo inside was priceless. He agreed.<sup>274</sup>

General Petraeus discussed this program as initiating a training and equipping program, multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian, and using those forces to augment our own forces. They were under the brigade combat teams performing a variety of missions of fixed site security; for example, a major ammunition storage point and securing a whole host of valuable infrastructure assets and so forth.<sup>275</sup>

Sons of Iraq was largely concentrated in and near Baghdad. The Marines did not see it in Fallujah (and points west) much, because a lot of those groups were ad hoc militia.<sup>276</sup> However, the Marines were employing the same core concept of directly funding Sunni militias, which undercut the counterinsurgency principle of legitimizing government institutions, in this case military (the Iraqi Security Forces) and political (the Shia-dominated central government in

Baghdad). A stability operations commander in Baghdad summed up the challenge, saying that they did not want to displace the Iraqi Security Forces as the trusted entity that helped provide them the security that made it possible for them to rise.<sup>277</sup> Legitimacy was provided by a promise from Prime Minister Maliki to integrate many of these militia elements into the regular army, although this promise went largely unfulfilled to the dismay of Sunnis who saw themselves being shunted aside in favor of the Shia.

The important result would be a dramatic decrease in violent activity. A PRT team leader said that the Surge numbers are underestimated because what was happening at the same time as the Surge was convincing the Sunnis not to take up arms, which really doubled the size of the Surge by decreasing “enemy” numbers.<sup>278</sup> A Special Forces commander in Iraq prior to and during the Surge considered that as part of a broad soft power effort to pull insurgents off the battlefield.<sup>279</sup> The Embassy was in agreement. A State Department PRT leader said that the new ethos that was coming online in 2008 was about partnering with tribes: helping them figure out their own security mechanisms and supporting that through the Coalition’s Brigade Combat Teams.<sup>280</sup> Gentile gives primary Surge credit to Sunnis turning against al-Qaeda (along with standdown of the Shia militias).<sup>281</sup> Biddle, Friedman and Shapiro are probably more accurate in stating that the Surge was a necessary precondition for evicting al-Qaeda, pointing out that previous attempts to do so that lacked U.S. support failed.<sup>282</sup>

## REBUILDING THE ISF

While it may be easier for U.S. military units to conduct operations themselves, it is better to work to strengthen local forces and institutions and then assist them.

Enabling the Sunni militias would be an important part of defeating al-Qaeda in Iraq. At the same time, the Coalition needed to continue to improve the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to move towards the goal of long-term stability. Metz believes that long-term stability requires locals to be in the lead with foreign elements in a supporting role.<sup>283</sup> A staff officer who worked with General Petraeus before and during the Surge said that what they applied in the Surge was born out of General Petraeus' work at MNSTC-I (Multi-National Security Command – Iraq). There was a lot of tension between what he wanted to do at MNSTC-I and what he was able to do with the constraints put upon him and the tension between MNSTC-I and MNF-I.<sup>284</sup>

General Petraeus recognized that the ISF had been beaten up during 2006 by a level of violence they were not prepared to deal with. He also saw that in a number of cases inadequate leaders needed to be replaced. They put the Iraqi Police Brigade into 30 days of training which also included a replacement of almost everybody from brigade commander on up and some of the battalion commanders.<sup>285</sup> In the interim, the U.S. force Surge increase and movement off the large compounds would relieve pressure on the hard-pressed Iraqi units while they reconstituted. A stability operations commander in Baghdad before and during the Surge said that it was about reversing the direction they were going in at the time. It was not to take over more from the Iraqis: it was to commit the U.S. more fully in addition to the Iraqis.<sup>286</sup>

## RECONCILIATION

Offering amnesty or a seemingly generous compromise can also cause divisions within an insurgency and present opportunities to split or weaken it.

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Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus also understood the importance of bringing as much of the reconcilable population as possible back into the discourse. General Petraeus said that many of the approaches that were used during the Surge were employed in Mosul during his time in command there. He said that they did reconciliation with Sunni Arabs. In that case it was reconciliation with former members of the Ba'ath party, Level 4 and below, something done again during the Surge.<sup>287</sup>

One of the requests that General Petraeus had for Prime Minister Tony Blair when he stopped in London on his way to Baghdad was that he extend General Lamb as MNF-I deputy for a number of months. General Petraeus knew him well from his time in Bosnia while General Lamb was head of British Special Forces and they had “chased war criminals together.” They were also division commanders together in the first year of the war and when General Petraeus was at Leavenworth General Lamb was at the equivalent job in the UK. When the Surge began General Lamb was the MNF-I deputy and General Petraeus wanted to keep him there to help convince U.S. leaders that they had to reconcile with as many of the rank and file and lower-level insurgent leaders as was possible, and ultimately to do the same thing with the militia leaders, while then pursuing even more relentlessly the irreconcilables.

As you might imagine, a number of our brigade and battalion commanders questioned why we would sit down across the table from people who had our blood on their hands. And that is a reasonable question, but at the end of the day you cannot kill and capture your way out of an industrial-strength insurgency. You have to reconcile with as many as you can, those who can be truly reconciled.<sup>288</sup>

Other interviewees agreed that one of the most valuable pieces the British leadership brought to the table was their hard-earned experience in Ireland where they finally realized that a

peace that excluded the Irish Republican Army was unrealistic. They helped the Americans understand that the peace process in Iraq had to be as inclusive as possible. Olson Lounsbury and Pearson postulate that insurgents are less prone to violence if they perceive the government acting in a conciliatory manner and feel they can achieve some or all goals by working within the system.<sup>289</sup>

## RECONSTRUCTION

An essential COIN task for military forces is fighting insurgents; however, these forces can and should use their capabilities to meet the local populace's fundamental needs as well.

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A viable long term U.S. strategy in Iraq needed to work to put the country back on a stable footing. The literature is surprisingly sparse on the economic aspects of the Surge strategy. De Tray talked about previous issues related to poor PRT manning and project oversight.<sup>290</sup> Many authors talk about soft power, and may delve into its political, religious and cultural dimensions, but few seem to tackle the topic of actual reconstruction. It is a curious lapse given that authors across the board continuously state that improving the lives of the locals, implying standard of living increases, is paramount to permanently stabilizing a country.

Conversely, Surge participants felt that poor economic conditions were a core cause of the insurgency. An economics planner on the MNC-I staff said that his section took the view that it was more greed than grievance, so if they could accelerate the growth of the Iraqi economy and increase the number of jobs available for young men, it would increase the

opportunity cost of joining the insurgency.<sup>291</sup> Even employment as additional security is still an alternative to insurgency.

We have seen that General Petraeus liked CERP spending and encouraged its liberal use by commanders. A stability operations commander in Baghdad said that they built some strong processes for rebuilding Baghdad's infrastructure and had great success with it as part of the Surge effort. It was his responsibility to organize CERP spending. One planning concern was avoiding creating inflation. His preference was not to hand out money but to purchase needed items. For example, they could purchase 50 small generators, distribute them throughout a particular district of Baghdad and create a micro-economy.<sup>292</sup>

## MEASURING CHANGE

It is essential that commanders designate a group of analysts to perform comprehensive insurgency analysis.

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One of the changes that occurred with the new Surge leadership was a change in focus on what constituted success. A State Department analyst in Bagdad before and during the Surge said that the prior leadership had been very interested in special projects being conducted in Iraq. Ambassador Crocker showed a greater interest in population security metrics, which at that time looked very bad. Ambassador Crocker focused on the security metrics and was always interested in knowing if things were getting better or worse. The State Department analyst said this went hand-on-glove with General Petraeus' "take/hold/build" approach in the military

sector. Prior to that the second Baghdad Security Plan had not been going well. Now the leadership was unified in viewing the population security metrics as the most important criteria of success in the Surge.<sup>293</sup>

Another State Department analyst said that General Petraeus was great at getting everyone pulling in the same direction. In his daily BUBs he would put people on the spot to answer questions and demonstrate progress on a whole host of things he was trying to do, and that his contribution was achieving the synergy between hard and soft power.<sup>294</sup>

The unified leadership in common metrics meant the analysts started working closer together. An ambassador leading economic planning during the Surge said that the Embassy had a section of about 20 foreign service officers and contractors who worked with the MNF-I Strategic Effects section every day, participated in the daily BUB with General Petraeus, and hosted meetings with the Iraqis that usually had military officers present.<sup>295</sup>

A brigade commander in Baghdad observed that if you are improving things like electricity and sewer it has to be to their standards, not yours. It needs to be good for them, not necessarily good for you. It needs to be something they can sustain after you leave. The U.S. needed to make sure what was provided to them by way of soft power was sustainable once the Coalition left.<sup>296</sup> A TFBSO official said that they were under constant pressure by General Petraeus' staff with their desire to "count stuff, turn it into a bar chart, and measure it."<sup>297</sup>

An Information Operations officer in Baghdad before and during the Surge gave an example of the importance of metrics that focus on the final goal. He said that the problem with having a TIPS hotline for Iraqis to call was:

- a) Would somebody answer?
- b) If someone answered, did they send anybody to help?

c) If the ISF did show up, would they help or would they shake you down?

Three out of four are lousy outcomes. That is the level of measurement that was really missing.<sup>298</sup> Chapter Six demonstrates that the Coalition would continue to granulate what was happening in Iraq and improve its ability to measure effectiveness towards U.S. goals and objectives.

## MESSAGING

By publicizing government policies, the actual situation, and counterinsurgent accomplishments, IO, synchronized with public affairs, can neutralize insurgent propaganda and false claims.

- *FM 3-24*

In his interview with the author, General Petraeus emphasized the need to be first with the truth:

That means you provide the facts as you best understand them, there is no putting lipstick on pigs. What you do is try to beat the bad guys to the headline. If that is your goal, you have to do it a lot faster than we did it. We did dramatically increase speed in a whole variety of messaging and communications efforts in general.<sup>299</sup>

One of the senior staff officers at MNF-I during the Surge said that this is what General Petraeus was adamant would not happen: an event happened on the ground and the insurgents would make hay of it in their propaganda and the Western media would pick up on it. Meanwhile the Coalition would launch an investigation that would take days or weeks and would come out with a much more accurate version of the truth which often exonerated its soldiers, but by that time no one cared. When he stuck his finger in the chest of the IO guys and said, “we are going to beat the insurgents to the ticker,” that meant the ticker that goes on the bottom of the

CNN screen, the breaking news. He wanted the Coalition version of what happened to be there, even if it was incomplete. It was not going to be a lie, it might be incomplete, and as more information came out the U.S. would fact-check and rewrite any statements that were incorrect. The Coalition would be first with its version of what had happened. And that would force the enemy to react and force the media to use the Coalition narrative initially and then both sides would be competing for the media battlespace. But he was determined that the Coalition would be better at that competition by being first with what it knew to be the truth at the time.<sup>300</sup>

One of the senior Public Affairs officers (PAO) at MNF-I saw the same thing. According to him, they went there with the idea that when the Coalition talked to others, it should be at the speed at which a political campaign moves.<sup>301</sup> To a great degree this was accomplished due to the flattening of how General Petraeus did business. He believed that in order to do that they had to have to have the trust from the commanding general, that he trusts the staff to be able to work within the guidance he provided or knowing what his intent was. For example, if the PAO needed to get something out, and he knew this was in keeping with current guidance, the PAO didn't really ask permission, although he would always give him a follow-up "Here's what I did." The PAO felt that you had to have that trust.<sup>302</sup>

There was also more of an effort to try to get product release authority delegated to lower command levels, which decreases approval time and allows better tailoring of products to local situations. An Embassy planner saw that what General Petraeus wanted to do was push down the level of authority to do things like flyers and IO activities.<sup>303</sup> Joseph among others has criticized U.S. counterinsurgency efforts as consistently failing to link their effort to local levels of governance.<sup>304</sup> Delegating message release authority to lower levels improves the ability of commanders to shape messaging to their area of operations.

General Petraeus also wanted the various influence strands to plan and coordinate together. There is a tendency for PAOs to be reluctant to be aware of the activities of Psychological Operations in particular to give them “credible deniability.” General Petraeus’ PAOs would sit in on IO meetings as he felt necessary. According to the PAO, early on it was uncomfortable for them (“Why is the PAO in here?”).<sup>305</sup> It allowed for better message synchronization between all the Coalition elements. He also kept a close eye on Coalition messaging. A senior member of the Information Operations Task Force (IOTF) described their first meeting with General Petraeus. As General Petraeus was being briefed, he kept scratching out questions on his note pad. At the end he half-jokingly said, “I don’t know what you are doing, but keep doing it.” The IOTF considered that an absolute win. They found him to be an “engaged, smart decent guy.”<sup>306</sup>

## THE CAMP WAR

Effectively disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating former insurgents and their groups must be part of the overall COIN plan.

- *FM 3-24*

One of the big ideas that General Petraeus brought to the Surge was that the Coalition needed to conduct counterinsurgency inside the wire as well as outside. They had to identify the extremists, the irreconcilables, and detain them inside the compound where they were previously being disruptive and making it impossible to do anything such as rehabilitation job training or moderation in religion or any other initiatives. They needed to get them out of the enclosures,

but if they went in with weapons they would fight back as well as the other 800 people in there in some cases. Once they put them into maximum security facilities, they were able to commence rehabilitation, a review process, job training, basic skills, basic education, and a variety of other initiatives to dramatically reduce the recidivism rate of those that were released. The Coalition goal was to stop releasing such detainees until they had such measures established because the recidivism rate was very high.<sup>307</sup>



Figure 7: Iraqi Children Playing in the Visitation Area of a U.S. Interment Facility

Despite the international focus on U.S. detention facilities such as CIA secret sites and Guantanamo Bay, U.S. detention facilities in Iraq received little media attention post-Abu Ghraib

and less academic treatment. Although academic works mention atrocities that garner international attention, day-to-day operation of detention facilities and their contribution to force objectives receives less attention. General Petraeus was concerned about recidivism and considered detention facilities an important part of taming the insurgency.

A detention facility commander in Iraq during the Surge described his contribution this way:

My biggest opportunity to push COIN (counterinsurgency) was family day. I think we would have it every Friday where family members could come and visit their loved ones who were incarcerated or detained in our facility. I do not think each prisoner had a weekly visit: we staggered it every other week. Family members would bring fruits and vegetables, maybe scarves and blankets, things that they might think their loved ones might need or for comfort. We vetted it to make sure there was nothing usable as weapons. They would bring a lot of kids. My guards enjoyed playing with the kids, kicking around a soccer ball a little bit. I thought that we could take this to a higher level. If family members see we are treating their loved ones well, they would go back to their villages and say that the Americans are good people and are treating our loved ones well, versus saying we did not treat them well depending on what they see. I started have my soldier's family members send us toys, coloring books and extra clothing that we gave to the children and families when they came over. A lot of the family members were not doing very well because their main source of income was now sitting in an internment facility, so they were facing hardship. The idea was treating them well, and they will go back to their villages and tell the others how they are treated with dignity and respect. We also built a playground for the kids to play on when they came. We tried to spruce up the area, we painted the walls and asked any detainees with the inclination to draw murals on the t-walls. We went from a drab internment facility to a much better place to be.<sup>308</sup>

The compound commander described some of other initiatives such as sewing (there were prisoners of both genders at the facility) and computer classes. Instruction was also provided on a more moderate view and interpretation of the Koran. There were also opportunities for education, as some of the detainees were as young as 14 years old, trying to bring them up to a high school level of education.<sup>309</sup>

## LEVEL OF INFLUENCE

Forces that learn COIN effectively have generally...coordinated closely with governmental and nongovernmental partners at all command levels.

- *FM 3-24*

An important element of General Petraeus' plan was increasing interaction with Iraqis below the national government level. At the time, this went against U.S. strategic planning as normally practiced by the Department of State which was to try and work with Iraqis at a government-to-government level. It also aligns with progressive interventionist ideas of trying to remake a national entity out of a collective of villages, tribes and even individuals.

This idea of reshaping a country at a national level is encapsulated in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, one of the early Marxist thinkers who founded the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci believed in the unifying power of ideology, and that it could be employed to mold the citizens of a country. One of his paragraphs states:

The main problematique of the State is to incorporate the will of each single individual into the collective will turning their necessary consent and collaboration from "coercion" to "freedom". This means that the State functions so as to create "conformist" citizens who internalize the most restrictive aspects of the "civil life" and accept them as their natural "duties" without having any resentment.

This passage encapsulates many of the strategic flaws that bedevil interventionist planning by nation-states.

In his essay "Two Concepts of Liberty," Isaiah Berlin wrote about "...the fallacy of regarding social groups as being literally persons or selves, whose control and discipline of their members is no more than self-discipline, voluntary self-control which leaves the individual agent

free.” There are about 9 billion human wills on the planet: like snowflakes, no two are exactly alike. Spouses do not even have a collective will, let alone their children and extended family. If there is no such thing as a collective nuclear family will, how much more unrealistic is it to speak of an Iraqi collective will?

Turning...coercion to freedom. In “Two Concepts of Liberty” Isaiah Berlin attacked this fallacy as well. “To coerce a man is to deprive him of his freedom.” To him, manipulating men toward goals set by others is to degrade them, regardless of the rationality or loftiness of the goals. Even universal consent to loss of liberty still results in oppression. Forcing the Iraqis to make 25% of their parliament women, even if for a noble end, is still coercion and deprives the Iraqis to learn from making their own choices. Former Congressman Ron Paul said, “Freedom to make bad choices is inherent in the freedom to make good ones.”

Without...resentment. One truism of human beings is that we do not like other human beings telling us what to do. The U.S. needed to recognize that although most Iraqis were glad Saddam was gone, they still resented foreign occupation, and that this resentment would increase the longer the U.S. was there.

U.S. planners for the first four years of the occupation of Iraq were being unrealistic in believing that there was a collective Iraqi will to be tapped into, collaborated with or expected to produce nation-wide control. Iraq is a state with two major ethnic groups and two major Islamic sects, in addition to Turkmen, Assyrians, Christians, Yazidis and others that probably comprise roughly 20% of the population. Historically, these groups have been antagonistic to one another, antagonism exacerbated by outside sponsorship.

The problem played out most visibly in the attempts to hold national elections. Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds may have been new to democracy, but they were not new to math, and they

understood that it would be extremely difficult to implement a majority-rule system that prevented the 60% Shia population from dominating the political landscape. The Sunnis boycotted the 2005 national elections, which they soon realized was an even bigger disaster than participating. Although they did participate in future elections, they never developed trust in the system they claimed with some veracity was dominated by the Iraqi Shia.

A collective national will is probably impossible to find, but the lower one can interact with a population, the more likely one is to operate within the more successful local parameters described by Olson Lounsbury and Pearson.<sup>310</sup> Accordingly, one element of General Petraeus' strategy that was probably a step in the right direction was reaching out to Iraqi interest groups below the national level. Sunnis in Anbar Province, Kurds in Mosul and Marsh Arabs in the south of the country have different needs and are more likely to work with outsiders if they feel they are not being treated as part of some abstract greater entity. He would be helped by the increase in number and quality of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) that tailored reconstruction and political needs to local and provincial levels.

This showed in the various arenas the Coalition interacted with the Iraqis. Even while supporting a national political structure, there is still room to work economically, culturally and even militarily at a sub-national level. Oil may be the biggest economic concern at the national level in Iraq, but a city mayor may think getting the local marketplace reopened is a bigger priority. A tribal chief may simply be looking for someone to inoculate his camel herd. Civilian interviewees for this work in particular emphasized their mission of trying to diffuse governance power to provincial levels and below, a major challenge in a country whose intellect and initiative had been stymied by 30 years of centralized control under Saddam Hussein.

The same holds true in the military sphere. The pre-Surge strategy had been continuing to move U.S. forces into large bases isolated from the population but still mortar attack magnets. How is that establishing a sense of security and partnership with the local population? Better to utilize those forces as General Petraeus did: small outposts jointly manned with Iraqi security located right in the heart of contested cities. With this change, American forces were able to reach a more meaningful “collective will” that resonated with the local population and made them feel like they were being treated as more unique.

Level of influence was an important component of the Surge strategy, following the advice General Petraeus had laid down in U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*. Specifically, he tied it into the military principle of decentralized execution laid out in *FM 6-0, Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*. *FM 3-24* devoted a section of Chapter One to stressing that delegating to the lowest levels possible is particularly important for counterinsurgency operations, particularly for effective information and civil-military operations. Chapter Five went into further details highlighting the need to operate and interact with the local population as much as possible.

Strategists should understand that seeking a collective will in a target audience greater than one person is unrealistic. However, the lower influence and planning go, the closer they can come to approaching the concept of understanding and reaching common interests and mutually agreeable goals that permit a certain degree of functionality. This functionality is more difficult to achieve at a national than regional level, more difficult to achieve at a regional than tribal level, more difficult to achieve at a tribal than village level, etc. Modification of a collective will strategy in favor of going around the national Iraqi government, even at times to its displeasure, was a key component of the Surge strategy and amplified its effectiveness at reaching out to

lower-level leaders and reducing violence within the country, most notably with the Sons of Iraq and Anbar Awakening developments. The U.S. did not initiate these movements but recognized how they meshed with its counterinsurgency strategy and embraced them.

## CONCLUSION

The Surge would be built upon the insights found in *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency*, as developed under the guidance of General Petraeus prior to his taking command in Iraq in 2007. It was a departure from current Army doctrine, although it contained insights gleaned not only from Iraq, but prior U.S. “small wars” as well. *FM 3-24* provided a blueprint and justification for the change in U.S. strategy that would be implemented during the Surge.

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus proved to be an able team. They secured improved domestic support through communication and knowing how to work the system. They set the example for interagency cooperation by maintaining a visible, unified presence to civilians and the military alike. They formulated a realistic strategy tailored to the strengths of the military and civilian workers in Iraq.

Hard and soft power would be mixed to try and stabilize the country and allow political progress. Strengthening the Iraqis while weakening the insurgency, risks would be taken to take the fight to the enemy and calm the volatile situation in Iraq. This smart strategy would prove to be more flexible and adaptable than that previously employed. Better messaging, effective tracking and putting pressure on anti-government forces would all play a role in the Surge, as will be explored in detail in Chapter Eight.

## CHAPTER VI

### A SMARTER STRUCTURE

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter and the succeeding two chapters examine the events and operational strategies applied during the surge, beginning here with the structure of government operations, and then continuing in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 with an examination of the use and combination of coercive and attractive power in smarter ways during the Surge.

The shift in Surge strategy and operations was made possible to an extent by changes to the support structure of the U.S. government's Executive Branch. Dahl's idea that there are competing power elites who must compromise had been evident prior to the Surge. The proclivity of the Rumsfeld-led Department of Defense to minimize State Department (DoS) input and participation in particular delayed development of a robust civilian framework capable of taking on the role of reconstruction in Iraq. The ascension of Defense Secretary Gates, a more inclusive leader, and Secretary of State Rice, a more influential person with the Bush White House, resulted in better cooperation at the national level. Additionally, Secretary Rice in particular would work to correct systemic flaws within DoS that hindered the effort in Iraq. None the less, structural challenge was partial, and some issues persisted.

## SUPPORT FROM ABOVE

The Concordance Theory of Schiff talked about the importance of subordinates working in harmony with their superiors and having meaningful input to the senior level decision-making process. Getting their ideas into the plan provides them greater flexibility to implement policy on the ground, and this increased flexibility granted to the Coalition was important in enabling them to achieve national security objectives.

Both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker enjoyed better access to their superiors in Washington DC and ability to influence them than had previously been the case. This was partly due to their track record of success, and partly due to the deteriorating situation in Iraq creating a greater willingness on the part of the Administration to listen to input from their subordinates. To an Embassy stability coordinator in Baghdad, policy in Washington was actually being driven by the field.<sup>311</sup>

Working to overcome budgeting issues was an ongoing challenge, although increased coordination helped to alleviate that. According to a senior Embassy planner, several months of getting the Surge started were wasted deciding who would pay for what, although ultimately the American taxpayer will pay so what difference does it make which agency pays? He developed a two-page memorandum based on President Bush's wishes, and got the White House, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and DoD to sign off on. His office then spent two more weeks negotiating with DoD, who turned it into a ten-page memorandum. The lead ambassador said the process was "tougher than negotiating with the North Koreans." He finally went to the Defense Department and his counterpart refused to sign it because it did not spell out who would pay for getting the State Department dead home from the PRTs. He asked for a pen and wrote

on the agreement “The State Department will pay to get its own dead home from the PRTs” and she agreed to sign it. After all that, he said they never got a single bill from Defense Department for the cost-sharing.<sup>312</sup>

As another example, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leader returned from Iraq and was working in the NSC Iraq office on economics and PRTs when a call came from the OMB saying that it appeared that the military had just zeroed out the Iraqi police training funding. They had a very tense meeting with Pentagon comptroller personnel. The PRT leader said that this was not an MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) program, wholly controlled by the military and internally focused: it was a presidential directive, a vital national security interest and that the Pentagon needed to do it. At the time there were about 2000 military personnel working on training. For the equivalent amount of money the military was spending, contracting to replace that capability would have gotten 350 people at most. In general, she felt that Washington never came to grips with the fact that they needed to increase the budget and redirect funds.<sup>313</sup>

Increasing State support at the provincial levels meant increasing the number of PRTs in country. A senior State advisor for stabilization said that the 10 original PRTs were increased to 36 at the provincial and sub-provincial level. The PRTs served as mini-embassies to reach out to local leaders, be they tribal, business, civil society or local government and strengthen provincial government, help the moderates push back on the efforts of Al-Qaeda to take down the government. They were headed by a senior Foreign Service Officer and the deputy head of each PRT was a colonel. Recruiting was done by State, USAID and DoD.<sup>314</sup> An ambassador at the Embassy said that required national-level presence was met in part by building smaller PRTs.<sup>315</sup>

Another DoS initiative was development of a Quick Response Fund. Two interviewees who worked at the Embassy co-authored the fund, which was a \$150-250 million dollar program that allowed PRTs to spend quick money to fund local initiatives as a workaround for government contracting which tends to be slow. One felt that the most effective way of doing soft power is through direct engagement with community leaders, getting outside the wire, and working through local organizations, not only through contractors but also by providing them resources directly.<sup>316</sup> To him the Quick Response Fund was invaluable in this regard.

Experience also played a role in getting policymakers to take advice from the field. A division stability operations commander had served on the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review as co-chair of the sub-committee on Strategic Communication along with the then-Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Larry De Rita. They talked about integrating different activities and where to maintain appropriate firewalls. Those experiences and practices of integration would be brought to bear in Baghdad and helped accelerate the process and precision of their work.<sup>317</sup>

Some devised clever workarounds to maximize cooperation benefits. A brigade commander recounted that getting key information into the Pentagon required him to go through many layers: a division, MNC-I, MNF-I, and CENTCOM before it could get to the higher levels of government. He found that the State Department structure was much “flatter.” When the co-located PRT team leader sent cables to Washington they went directly to DoS and Secretary Rice. He used that process to get information into the Joint Staff that may have been lost in the layers he had to pass through.<sup>318</sup> His initiative is laudable, but what made it possible was the existence of the PRT and the cooperative relationship he had developed with its team leader.

Interest from high could be good and bad. A stabilization director at the Embassy recalled that the enemy began to go after weaker, softer targets, specifically against the religious minorities of Iraq. That led the President in early 2008 to create a task force protecting religious minorities in Iraq. That was another interagency effort, military and civilians working together to come up with a response and assistance programs to protect the minorities against Al-Qaeda because they were the weakest targets.<sup>319</sup> An ambassador working economics recalled a major funding handover to the Iraqis in Ramadi attended by Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus, and, as it happened, Senator Joe Biden, who was visiting at the time, came along. There was a major tribal engagement with about 60 sheikhs. Speeches were given and both sides exchanged good wishes on how much had been accomplished, but also on how much more needed to be done. He recalled it as a “hyper” tribal engagement that was very successful.<sup>320</sup>

On the other hand, another ambassador working on economic development recalled that “Secretary Gates, the White House, everyone was pounding the table asking why they couldn’t get more than 6,000 watts” (of electricity on a national basis). He said that no matter what they did it was always the Achilles heel, there were just so many ways insurgents could undermine success, especially because the Coalition was usually trying to do it quick. As he observed, you do not build power plants in the U.S. in six months.<sup>321</sup> A Treasury Department official in Baghdad during the Surge said the military had a difficult time understanding that the budget cycle was like a pregnancy: it takes two years to go through the cycle of funding, approving and observing the budget expenditures. The military wanted to speed up the process by adding more people. She said that trying to shorten or extend that time frame just creates problems like a pregnancy: “if you add two more women you are not going to get a baby in 3 months.”<sup>322</sup>

Structural problems in State Department that hindered employing the full potential of attractive power tools have been discussed previously. The Surge time period saw improvements in this area, but problems still persisted. In many cases the military was forced to step in and fill civilian side manning shortfalls.

A PRT leader in the same province later in the Surge said that even with the Surge it was still the military in the lead and more of the military taking on soft power activities by pushing themselves out to the grassroots rather than integrating soft power experts into what the military was doing at the lower levels.<sup>323</sup> He said that the civilian side was centered on expanding the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) that had already been established earlier. These would serve as mini-embassies to reach out to local leaders, be they tribal, business, civil society or local government and be able to strengthen provincial government, help the moderates in the effort to push back on the efforts of Al-Qaeda and others to take down the government. Department of State expanded the original 10 PRTs to 36 PRTs and sub-provincial teams. These were headed by a senior Foreign Service Officer and the deputy head of each PRT was a colonel. Staffing at each was meant to cover everything from agriculture to business development. Recruiting was done by State, USAID and DoD. An Embassy transition director said that the entire operation from planning and staffing to execution was all jointly done.<sup>324</sup>

Civilian personnel shortages meant that Baghdad in particular housed a number of “brigade PRTs” or e-PRTs (embedded PRT). A Civil Affairs (CA) officer recalled that the “Baghdad Belt” e-PRTs were much more like a classic CA team attached to a brigade combat team and told to make the people a little happy, give some PSYOP capability to show we are spending some money but that they were not intended to expand local capacity.<sup>325</sup> A planner on the Embassy JSAT team said this came partially out of frustration with the size of the civilian

Surge and that the e-PRTs were not really provincial. They were commanded by military personnel and might have one or two civilians but that was about it, a mirror image of the PRT. They increased the “footprint” in Iraq and were similar to the US military-run PRTs in Afghanistan. The problem to him was that the military did not really bring the proper set of soft power skills and they tended to be hard power-oriented, because that was what they knew. To him, if you put an armor guy in charge of a brigade PRT, he is going to act like an armor guy. If he had a civilian, he may or may not listen to him.<sup>326</sup>

A brigade commander in Baghdad during the Surge further explained the difference:

I never felt we had enough diplomatic presence. Even early on in the Surge we were trying to get the NACs and DACs (Neighborhood and District Advisory Councils) organized. The last time I had tried to organize a governmental-type meeting was when I was in the fraternity in college. We did OK because we were calling the meetings and we had the guys and money. But we were not good at understanding the needs, because we came in with an agenda and stuck to it. The PRTs and the experts that came in with political-military expertise knew how to run meetings and how to listen and play off the individuals in the room. They had the skills to negotiate with the locals that we did not have. Maybe I or my battalion commanders did, but many times it was majors or company commanders holding these neighborhood meetings and they did not have the experience to do it. As we moved to higher council meetings, we needed the expertise because the Iraqis knew politics. Many of them were selected, elected, and appointed because they had skills and knew how to represent their people. You could screw around and make promises you couldn't keep, and it would not help you when you went out amongst the people.<sup>327</sup>

A lesson he did learn was to combine Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations missions whenever possible, what the Army calls a TTP (Tactics, Techniques and Procedures).<sup>328</sup> One of the Civil Affairs officers leading an e-PRT said the brigade provided security convoys (and on-site security) to get his personnel to their engagements, projects, and functions. He did see value in the effort, with the greatest effectiveness happening when BCT (Brigade Combat Team) and PRT personnel conducted joint engagements with local leaders – allowing the PRT to focus on “soft” issues and the BCT to focus on “hard” issues (security).<sup>329</sup>

Missions like this illustrate the potential of combining coercive and attractive power to create smart power, a goal both military and civilians continually tried to achieve despite numerous challenges.

## LEADERS IN COOPERATION

Kilcullen and Pirnie and O'Connell have been mentioned as understanding that unity of effort can be just as decisive as a unified command structure. The U.S. military and civilian leadership in Iraq worked to integrate their structures and activities more closely in an effort to overcome Joseph's idea that such strategic interaction is no longer possible.<sup>330</sup>

General Petraeus summed up the importance of his relationship with Ambassador Crocker in setting the example of unity at the top:

Every meeting we had with the Prime Minister was together. We attended the Iraqi National Security Council Meeting together. We did the video teleconference each week with the President of the United States together. We did the video teleconference that the President did with the Prime Minister of Iraq together, and we testified together on Capitol Hill at the six-month mark and at the 12-month mark. It was totally integrated into the civil-military counterinsurgency campaign plan.<sup>331</sup>

Multiple interviewees were impressed by the close interaction between the two men. A senior TFSBO official said their interplay was so natural they seemed like Butch and Sundance.<sup>332</sup> A Public Affairs officer at MNF-I said that they knew full well that the Ambassador was head of the country team but at the same time, it was a very collegial partnership, and that is the way they wanted it. Typically, one did not say anything without the other.<sup>333</sup>

An experienced ambassador working economic issues said that success of the mission depends on not having one side dominant. If you say the military is in charge and have a few

political advisors, it helps but it is not going to get the job done because there are so many angles that a couple of political advisors will not be able to cover them all. He felt that sending in diplomats to try and solve a complex issue with a large security component and a few military advisors was not sufficient.<sup>334</sup> The Surge worked to get the division of labor more in line with Dixon (2009) and his idea that if only 20-25% of counterinsurgency is shooting insurgents, then the political component of the effort needs to be larger.

The major meeting point became the Effects Assessment Synchronization Board which was the large ¾ day briefing of the current ambassador and 4-star general. An Embassy planner described the quarterly meeting as an opportunity for both sides to meet with access to the same data and information. For him, one month per quarter would be devoted to putting together this series of briefings.<sup>335</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff who worked to bridge the gap between MNF-I and the Embassy in understanding the economic situation in Iraq felt that the strategic change was dramatic once MNF-I and USEMBASSY increased synergizing of their efforts in combination with the establishment of the Joint Security Stations.<sup>336</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS

Many nations and non-governmental organizations continued to attempt to influence events in Iraq. The challenge for the U.S. was that the number of influencers whose goals roughly aligned with the U.S. was waning, while the number of malign actors or actors whose vision for Iraq was diverging from that of the U.S. was increasing. The fragmented nature of Iraqi society meant that the non-aligned actors were generally able to reach out to Iraqis who felt an external patron gave them a chance for achieving their objectives.

Although the number of Coalition partners had decreased since 2003, they still had a valuable role to play. There were about 15,000 forces from other nations according to an MNF-I planner,<sup>337</sup> in addition to individuals in key roles throughout the country. This was about 10% of the total Coalition commitment in Iraq.<sup>338</sup> A senior member of the Joint Strategic Plans and Assessment (JSPA) team recalled that what really mattered was General Petraeus' ability to focus all efforts toward achieving goals which included Coalition partners.<sup>339</sup>

An ambassador leading economic planning recalled his role in bringing together Coalition partners that had economic interests in the country, such as the Greeks and British. He described a Norwegian who focused on agriculture as "right out of central casting." Because many tended to live out among the Iraqis, he benefited because they provided insights to him while he worked to help them understand and reinforce what the U.S. was doing. He also spent a lot of time with the UN team.<sup>340</sup> Another Embassy planner said that the idea was that the battle for Baghdad was going to open things up for the UN to be able to come in more broadly. He felt that they also played an integral role with transnational justice programs, working directly with the Iraqi government but also behind the scenes in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy on topics such as Iraqi de-Ba'athification.<sup>341</sup>

A senior MNF-I staffer described the important role of United Kingdom Lieutenant General Graeme Lamb, Deputy MNF-I Commander as the one that originally got General Petraeus interested in reconciliation. He did so by relating his experiences in Northern Ireland. He said, "You Americans are going about this all wrong. You are trying to reconcile with people who are already your friends. That's not the people you reconcile with." In Northern Ireland, he would sit down to negotiations with the Irish Republican Army with people who in previous weeks had been swinging pipes at his "lads," and he said that those are the people you have to

reconcile with. Some of them you can reconcile with, and then there are the irreconcilables. The staffer said that it changed the nature of how they approached the insurgency, moving from monolithic bad guys to cleaving off the reconcilables and bringing them back into the tent. Then they would have fewer to hunt down and kill or capture. Consequently, they created the Force Strategic Engagement Cell to pursue that idea. Lieutenant General Lamb was not in charge of that cell, but it was always a British major general that was in charge.<sup>342</sup>

Another important element of rebuilding Iraq would be attracting foreign investment. Oil prices were relatively high in 2007-2008, and as a result an ambassador working economic affairs at the Embassy said that the Iraqis were shipping more oil.<sup>343</sup> According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Iraqi oil exports had gone from a low of about 1.3 million barrels/day in 2003 and 1.8 million barrels/day as internal violence began to increase in 2005 to approximately 2.3 million barrels/day in 2007-2008.<sup>344</sup> According to an Embassy stabilization director during the Surge the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO) under Paul Brinkley played a role in bringing important business representatives of the US to Iraq.<sup>345</sup> An MNF-I planner who helped oversee the second oil bid round recounted that it brought in 15 oil companies from 13 other countries pledging to spend over \$100B of their own money, not government money. He also pointed out that a positive element of the 2005 Iraqi constitution was that it provided for allocation of oil revenue to each province based on population.<sup>346</sup>

Banking services in Iraq needed to be modernized. An official working with the TFBSO U.S. Treasury was pushing for an electronic payment system utilizing Montran, a company that they had previously worked with when assisting modernizing nations. Montran would not come into Iraq, citing security risk. The official ended up as the person intervening between them and the Iraqi central bank and facilitated bringing in their equipment.<sup>347</sup> An MNF-I planner was

involved with creating the Public Financial Management Action Group (PFMAG), and bringing in Grant-Thornton, World Bank, and the UN to help them spend their money better.<sup>348</sup>

Another important non-governmental actor was the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Abu Ghraib had focused their interest on treatment of detainees by Coalition forces. Negative ICRC reporting could adversely impact domestic and global opinions of the Coalition effort in Iraq. An interment facility commander described the process:

One of its functions is to ensure detainees and prisoner are being held in civil conditions, so there was one inspection before I got there and one while I was on leave. I had to get back to them and either refute or fix their reported deficiencies. Anything from cells need to have windows (was not realistic) to detainees need to have more exercise, that kind of stuff. We really did not have a major issue, it was mostly minor issues, nothing of significance.<sup>349</sup>

Anyone who ran a detention facility in Iraq was subject to ICRC inspection.<sup>350</sup> Special Operations was even liable to have the ICRC inspecting their facility. It was a holding facility, not a detention facility, which a Special Forces commander during the Surge said is different in the nuances of law and policy. They generally could not hold anybody for longer than two weeks. According to him, most of the focus in that time was obtaining useful tactical information.<sup>351</sup> Surprisingly little has been written about the interaction between U.S. detention facilities and these international inspection regimes.

The Iranian effect was still strong throughout the Surge. The same Special Forces commander said that most of their casualties in 2007 were a result of Iranian-sponsored actions, Shia militias rather than al-Qaeda. They took fewer casualties against the Sunni insurgent base in 2007 than in 2006, but it also coincided with fighting Shia militias. EFPs from Iran were “really hitting us hard, and that’s where we took our casualties.”<sup>352</sup>

A stability operations commander in Baghdad described the problem using a sports metaphor of two teams clashing on the field:

The referees are involved and engage in the fight, and may trip up a player, deliberately undermine someone, shoot someone, kill someone, and that could be law enforcement officials. The stadium officials who gave you authority to come in in the first place are engaged in their own operations shooting each other in the stands. It is more like that kind of chaos, with many players coming in and conducting pursuit of what they viewed as their own interests.<sup>353</sup>

International interference was never going to be a problem the U.S. elements in Iraq could solve. Their best hope was to interdict the “rat lines” and reduce the violence between factions and hence the opportunity for outside parties to become involved, with the hope that Coalition diplomacy could work to reduce the problems from the outside. An MNF-I planner described the process. By 2009 al-Qaeda could pull off a high-profile attack about every six weeks. On the rat lines toward Syria, they would collect fees from truckers carrying Beiji refinery products up to Mosul. 25<sup>th</sup> INF DIV had this “down pat,” they knew the places where al-Qaeda was running tolling stations to fund their attacks. If the U.S. disrupted those tolling stations, where al-Qaeda would be paid in either money or fuel, then it could disrupt their attacks. The occasional al-Qaeda operative who may have had two other incomes already would go away if al-Qaeda could not pay on time.<sup>354</sup>

## WORKING TOGETHER

Communication is part of smart power. Without it, coercive and attractive power are being employed without effectively playing on the strong points and minimizing the drawbacks of each. Nye expressed concern about overreliance on the military in foreign policy and lack of planning between the elements of U.S. diplomacy and power.<sup>355</sup> In Iraq during the Surge coordination between DoD and DoS improved and cooperation increased, although some challenges remained.

Ambassador Crocker believed that similar to the Army, there may be a lot down on paper, but personalities and personal relationships were crucial.<sup>356</sup> He and General Petraeus set the tone for cooperation and coordination. An MNF-I planner explained that when they met with Prime Minister Maliki weekly, they would talk about hard and soft power activities with the Prime Minister.<sup>357</sup> A Joint Strategic Plans Assessment (JSAT) team leader attended the meeting specifically focused on the Surge. This fell under one of the benchmarks set up to gauge progress in Iraq. He recalled that he or another participant wrote the cable and sent it back via the military side of the Embassy because they could not post cables from their SIPR (Secret Internet Protocol Router), the classified U.S. government information network) computers.<sup>358</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff also emphasized the success of this whole of government approach,<sup>359</sup> with another specifying that the Surge was about General Petraeus and his ability to get everything moving in a coordinated direction, which is different from adding “X#” of additional brigades.<sup>360</sup>

Problems still existed. State Department manning was still low. A Marine Corps MNC-I planner recalled that even in 2008 he would assign coordination meetings to the 12 members of his staff. Sometimes in the morning he went to the Commander’s brief and USAID was represented by Mr. X. Two hours later his major went to the camp brief and USAID was represented by Mr. X. Later a lieutenant colonel went to the PRT coordination brief and USAID was represented by Mr. X. There was one person trying to plug in at 4-5 different levels and he basically got no work done going from meeting to meeting.<sup>361</sup> The planner provided his opinion of other problems regarding coordination:

I can finally get this off my chest. (synchronization with) Department of State (DoS) and USAID generally went very poorly. I think there were culture differences. In peacetime we have to practice with the military middle-majors on up training with USAID and DoS because the cultures are very different. It will not work in reverse. It is almost impossible to get DoS or USAID people to participate in peacetime training with the military because there are so few of them. You can always break free a lieutenant

colonel to participate in a six-week DoS exercise. You cannot break free a mid-level DoS or USAID guy to work with a military exercise.<sup>362</sup> That was a problem: the culture was very different. For example, when we were talking about things we should push economically to the Iraqis, it took me a while to realize we were talking about different things. The military wanted change on the ground, wanted to do something economically that would reduce the unemployment rate of young men in Iraq to reduce the temptation for them to join the insurgency. The State Department had the same general goal. But their purpose was to consult, to advise, to talk to the Iraqi government. There would be an all-day discussion with certain Iraqi government ministers, and the State Department would consider it a success because we spent all day talking about these important issues with the right people in the room. Messages would be sent back to Washington discussing what was discussed. The military side would see it as a failure because there was no commitment to act, and in fact 3-6 months later they did not act.<sup>363</sup>

A Psychological Operations officer had a similar viewpoint, saying the relationship was more State providing the military visibility as to the things they were doing, more information-sharing than coordination. It was neither coordination nor competition. He said he never saw meetings or collaboration that led to actions.<sup>364</sup> The problem was not always physical: a Civil Affairs officer recalled that there were a variety of MNF-I offices located in the old Republican Guard Palace in the Green Zone, it was just a question of walking down the hall to talk to his counterparts.<sup>365</sup> Writers such as Joseph have talked about these types of challenges when linking political and operational concepts.

Despite obstacles, better coordination filtered down in the Coalition. An Information Operations Task Force (IOTF) leader said that their primary coordination was Saturday morning reviews. Their OPTEMPO (Operations Tempo) was developed on a monthly cycle and their polling was monthly, so they would review their Lines of Operations (LOO) at these meetings: they had an anti-Al-Qaeda LOO, an anti-militia LOO, a security story LOO, and then democratization. They did a periodic review in which anyone who wanted to show up could.<sup>366</sup> An MNC-I economics planner was one of the regular attendees at the Saturday review, although he was more focused on messaging to the U.S.<sup>367</sup>

A senior USAID manager agreed that the Embassy PAO had a strong relationship with the military PAO. Multiple people on her staff worked specifically with the Embassy PAO because Public Affairs had become so focused with getting out the right message, particularly as violence and civilian casualties increased, that it was important that there be a coordinated message. She recalled that every morning there was attention given to public affairs. After the BUA (Battle Update Assessment) was an Ambassador's meeting and there was time dedicated to public affairs issues. There was no question in her mind that interagency coordination improved.<sup>368</sup> To an economics planner at the Embassy and his colleagues, the success of the PRTs had nothing to do with electricity or the standard of living or crime. It was based on the colonel running the PRT.<sup>369</sup>

Improved cooperation meant improved ability to work around structural limitations. A senior Public Affairs officer at MNF-I said that the military has a lot more leeway in saying things that the State Department and its Embassy cannot. As soon as an embassy or the State Department says it, its policy, whereas if the four-star is saying it, it could be considered policy, but it is not necessarily viewed that way. Oftentimes they said things that the Embassy may not have been able to, because they operated differently. For example, when they would do a joint press conference, the Councilor for Public Affairs and the MNF-I PAO would co-host it. Many times, the PAO took the lead because he had more assets and did not have to deal with as much bureaucracy as the State Department did.<sup>370</sup> It is ironic that the military found State Department was often a better medium to get information back to senior leadership in Washington, but at the same time the military could do a better job of messaging in Iraq.

A leader on the Joint Strategic Plans Assessment (JSPA) team recalled that the original idea was that the MNF-I strategic planners and his organization would be brought together to

unify Embassy and military planning. That did not happen, but 3-4 times a week he would meet with his military counterparts,<sup>371</sup> approximating Kilcullen's idea previously discussed that collaboration may substitute for formal unity of effort. Another JSPA team leader working economics said that having the right players at the Iraqi Steering Committee meeting allowed him to get his items of issues on the agenda. He could grab General Petraeus before the meeting and ask him to say this or that. He recalled that some of his finer memories were having General Petraeus looking across at him back-benching and signaling, "Should I say it now?"<sup>372</sup>

Some DoS manning and liaison was provided by DoD. An ambassador directing the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) said that his military aide went everywhere he went, in addition to the General who was his Director of Operations. During his visits to all of the 10 PRTs he also interacted with the brigade commander paired with each PRT. He also met regularly with the division commanders, both in Baghdad and at their locations. He believed this face-to-face contact was essential for pursuing US objectives in Iraq.<sup>373</sup> A senior USAID manager had a similar experience. They had three military liaisons: marine, navy and army. They worked at the mission and were involved with advising. When she went to Anbar it was always in the company of the Embassy's Marine attaché.<sup>374</sup> A lot of the travel she undertook was to meet with the military at different locations, usually going with another senior leader or a military member of USAID.<sup>375</sup>

Improved cooperation percolated to the provincial level. Two Civil Affairs officers recalled early problems in their province. One said that the brigade who rotated out early in the Surge would never say anything positive about the State Department people. The other clarified that in fairness to that unit he was given the latitude to operate, but it was on his own and unsynchronized. The example he gave was that if he was starting a big "by, with and through"

initiative the same day the brigade kicked off a major counterterrorism operation and killed 30 people, it was not synchronized and negated what he was doing. The challenge to him was not that they were opposing his unit, but that they operated independently of him.<sup>376</sup>

They further recalled how this changed with a change of brigade and new PRT leadership. One said that the new commander wanted to know what his grand strategy was and what he wanted to do and worked with him and his unit.<sup>377</sup> The other agreed that the new commander asked me what he could do for him. The Civil Affairs officer said that they needed to show the Iraqis that the State Department workers had some influence with the all-powerful US military so they could get Iraqi support. The commander set up a meeting with the governor, brought the Civil Affairs officer with him and “treated me like his long-lost kid brother.” He told the Governor that “the State Department folks have his ear” and that really set them up for success. The power that a brigade commander holds was pretty awesome in Iraqi eyes. According to the Civil Affairs officer, being seen as an adjunct of his gives you *wasta* that is very beneficial. He did not say “I’m going to kill you if you don’t listen to him.” It was that “arm-around-you, this guy I am supporting is not acting in opposition to me” sort of cooperation.<sup>378</sup>

Both also agreed that the change in PRT leadership was also critical to success. One described her as being very professional, not trying to belittle her counterparts or tell them how things were going to go, but simply being outstanding in partnering with DoD.<sup>379</sup> An example provided by the PRT leader herself was that her Governance Officer (a Reserve Civil Affairs officer detailed to the PRT) told her one day that the young guys on the security team did not understand why they were going outside the wire risking harm to themselves and the civilians. The PRT started adding to the daily pre-mission security briefing conducted by the military

transport team by giving their own briefing of why they needed to go out, what they intended to accomplish, and what they hoped to achieve from the engagement. To her the result was fantastic: then the young military guys wanted to come with because they felt that their action was accomplishing something and enriched the PRT's understanding of atmospheric and context by sharing their own observations and insights.<sup>380</sup>

The new brigade commander described some of the changes he implemented:

I developed some battle-rhythm events that allowed us to integrate the PRT into the operations. The team leader, the CA, governance, econ and oil would huddle on Tuesday evenings to conduct strategic planning. I had dinner every Tuesday evening with the PRT leader, mainly because she had a real grasp of what was necessary and what a PRT could do, but she would struggle with leadership issues within the PRT and how to maximize task organization that I take for granted from being a young platoon leader on up. It was a good symbiotic relationship. I could help her with leadership challenges, and she could help me with the gaps I had in the soft power like oil and econ. She did that very well. I had an LNO (liaison officer) linked up with her team, and she had an LNO that I placed into our Fires and Effects Coordination Cell (FECC). At the beginning she was dealing with infrastructure issues that detracted from her mission. My Command Sergeant Major would help them out with the infrastructure issues, which allowed the team to focus on the mission, and it helped us build a great relationship with the PRT. They would invite us over to social events and recognition ceremonies, and we invited them to all our BCT events as well. I also took members of the PRT with me on many occasions to events such as governor's meetings and other key leader events outside the wire. That way she had security, could hear firsthand my interactions, and have her own interaction with the key leaders in the province as well. We were cross-talking right there in real time with the governor/other key leaders and that was valuable.<sup>381</sup>

One of the Civil Affairs officers said that this cooperation paid off in terms of issues like project oversight. According to him the prior brigade thought the Iraqis were stealing money, but from his perspective they gave out money and did not follow up on it. He illustrated that if you just give somebody a million dollars and do not check on his work, he can do whatever he wants with it. Then you may blame him, but it is actually your fault for not following up. He said that following up was the hard job. If they did not enforce it from the brigade, that is their fault. They blamed the Iraqis for stealing, but from his perspective it was their fault for "handing

out all the money like its candy.”<sup>382</sup> Greater participation from the brigades in overseeing attractive activities increased their effectiveness which was necessary as Greene analyzed Iraq and found it to be one of the most corrupt states in the world.<sup>383</sup>

Prior to the Surge, there was confusion about what to measure and how to interpret it. A deputy brigade commander in Iraq both before and during the Surge recalled that despite the miserable statistics they were seeing, MNC-I continued on the same course of action: they never changed until Lieutenant General Odierno came in.<sup>384</sup> An Embassy statistician even felt that the military side wanted to discount some of their own intelligence reporting structures that they had set up for some time. To him, the Embassy side was more data-driven and cared about getting the best data possible.<sup>385</sup> Another Embassy planner stated that once General Petraeus came in and saw that the planners were doing it right, the methodology changed.<sup>386</sup>

General Petraeus immediately began taking steps to change what metrics they were looking at upon taking command. One of his senior staff officers said that previously the leadership in Iraq had been looking at everything. There were dozens and dozens of metrics. He believed that the key metric of ethno-sectarian violence got lost in the “noise.” By focusing on that as the key determinant of whether the Surge was succeeding, he thought that it helped them focus their thinking. Although they kept many of the other metrics, they did not look at them every day. They were instead briefed in the Thursday BUB (Battle Update Brief). Under General Petraeus, the level of ethno-sectarian violence became the key measure of the Surge succeeding, because the assumption was that if the level of ethno-sectarian violence decreased, they could restart the political process, but until the level of ethno-sectarian violence decreased the political process was going to be frozen.<sup>387</sup>

Getting out of the big bases meant improved security for the civilians, which also resulted in an increase in available data. An Embassy stabilization director saw that they were getting metrics constantly, collecting a massive amount of information indicating that after a few months the (violence) numbers starting to go down and after a year it was clear that the Surge had succeeded. The combination of the military and civilian Surge empowering the new government of Iraq and moderates at the local level worked as shown in the data on attacks and violence.<sup>388</sup>

A Joint Strategic Plans Assessment team leader remembered the metric aspect that was interesting was measuring causal issues. General Petraeus wanted to measure markets opening, once he even wanted to measure swimming pools because flying overhead you can get that data. The biggest lesson to him was seeing it through the eyes of capacity development for the locals because the goal was to get them far enough along that the Coalition could go home.<sup>389</sup> Better information-gathering and evaluation are critical elements of counterinsurgency according to Branch and Wood (2010), elements that interviewees felt improved during the Surge.

## CONCLUSION

Interviewees felt that reducing the magnitude of the Executive Branch structural problems helped set the stage for a smarter counterinsurgency effort in Iraq. Increased manning and financial resources provided an expanded capability to apply both coercive and attractive power in Iraq. Working to maximize the value of remaining Coalition partners while attempting to blunt malign external influences steadied the course of the Surge. Better relationships between the Departments of Defense and State resulted in better planning and synergy at the highest levels and set the example for subordinates.

Smarter structure resulted in smarter execution in Iraq. Chapters Seven and Eight detail the smarter execution that resulted from a smarter structure. Soldiers and civilians alike found that they were able to apply more initiative, reach out more to their Executive Branch counterparts, and synergize missions toward common goals.

## CHAPTER VII

### SMARTER COERCION

#### INTRODUCTION

There is a common misperception that the Surge was primarily an attractive or soft power effort. In fact, the reason for bringing in 30,000 additional U.S. troops was to employ them in a coercive and hence largely hard power role. Some of the additional forces were attraction (soft power) specialists, but the bulk of it was the six combat brigades brought in to enable the Coalition to fight and stabilize Iraq along with strengthening attractive efforts. See Plakoudas for the need for a balanced counterinsurgency approach that includes military power.<sup>390</sup> Marston observed that every U.S. unit in Iraq from battalion level on up had a high-value target list of insurgents to get off the battlefield.<sup>391</sup>

According to General Petraeus:

Unless you can achieve security, you do not have a foundation on which to build anything else. You have got to get security. That could only be achieved in some cases by separating the Shia militia and Sunni insurgents. Shia areas had Sunni populations and vice versa, although mostly the former. In many cases there were still mixed neighborhoods. If you can't reduce the violence between Sunni and Shia, you are certainly not going to have a unified Iraq. Ultimately one of the big achievements of the Surge was the reduction of violence by some 80-85%. That was enabled because we brought the Sunni Arabs back into the fabric of society and gave them a sense that they would be better off by supporting the new Iraq rather than by actively or tacitly opposing it.<sup>392</sup>

It was this security that enabled the remainder of the U.S. Surge plan. Reconstruction, reconciliation, and empowerment of the Iraqis were all made possible by the reduction in insurgent as well as sectarian violence. Interviewees continually stressed the importance of

taming the violence as a prelude and accompaniment to moving Iraq forward on a path of national integration and growth.

## COERCIVE POWER

Interviewees continually stressed the bedrock importance of security and that it had to be earned. A Marine Military Training Team (MTT) leader who was there at the cusp of the Anbar Awakening said that the first six months was a “flat-out gunfight.”<sup>393</sup> A squadron commander in Baghdad gave much of the credit to Lieutenant General Odierno, Multi-National Corps-Iraq commander as well as the additional force strength. He said that kinetic ops were back in vogue, with a loosening of ROE (Rules of Engagement) and ending of onerous requirements like a 15-6 (investigation for a U.S. Army incident) for every weapons discharge. To him, the change was achieved through a change of command from (Lieutenant General) Chiarelli to Odierno.<sup>394</sup>

The force increase was important, but an MNF-I planner recalled that they had about as many troops as had been in Iraq at the peak under General Casey, but that they used them differently. They operated shoulder-to-shoulder with the Iraqi Security Forces for the bulk of the Surge.<sup>395</sup> This would prove more successful and reflected the ideas of Pirnie and O’Connell for combined operations with the host nation security forces.

A brigade commander in Baghdad during the Surge said that the force increase meant smaller areas of responsibility, or in essence having a large enough brigade to concentrate their efforts and fight smaller battles.<sup>396</sup> Echoing this ability to concentrate, a squadron commander said that the squadron they took over for had (the Baghdad districts of) Rustimiyah, Karada, and half of Rusafa. That is an impossibly large area of a few million people and dozens of ISF (Iraq

Security Force) units for a squadron of 12 platoons to control. They suffered casualties “just driving around waiting to get blown up” and could never get to understand the human terrain of the area. When his unit arrived, for the better part of a year they just had Rusafa. His unit could live there in the Joint Security Stations, with several SOI (Sons of Iraq) and ISF units that they could actually train with, mentor, and understand, and became intimately familiar with the terrain.<sup>397</sup>

Special Operations forces still focused on high value targeting operations. A Special Forces commander during the Surge period emphasized that they were not just doing kinetic operations: the main focus of their day-to-day activity was developing Iraqi military and police force capabilities to do operations themselves. Training, educating, teaching. Then at night, they would take some of those forces that were capable out to do operations. He said that looking at time spent on Civil Affairs and Information activities vice developing Iraqi forces, developing active intel, targeting and kinetics, during the Surge they were maybe 80/20%, or 70/30%, while acknowledging that it is hard to quantify.<sup>398</sup>

Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) organized one Stryker brigade that was not assigned a specific geography. A commander for stability operations said that it was called an above-ground force. It was not fixed to the ground at all. They would order it to concentrate in a particular area where they wanted to create favorable conditions. As that area was cleared to the point that the unit fixed to that area was able to keep it stable, the above-ground unit would move to another area and partner with a different brigade. To him, consolidation of gains had to be done by continued presence of the coercive military forces.<sup>399</sup>

A senior member of the Embassy said that the biggest difference he saw with the Surge was the ability of the military to support the police in the cities and localities “24/7.” Until then

they would own the streets during the day but retreat to their bases at night and the police stations would get overrun and the troublemakers owned the cities at night. He believed they could not get security in that sort of context.<sup>400</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff agreed that the strategic change was dramatic, particularly once the Joint Security Stations were established and MNF-I and USEMBASSY increased synergizing of their efforts.<sup>401</sup>

U.S. forces also worked to implement General Petraeus' understanding of the need to separate the warring militias. An MNC-I planner said that Lieutenant General Odierno ordered, appropriately, to clear areas out, put up giant T-walls and utilize biometrics to secure a market that had been recently targeted with IEDs so the economic activities could be carried out going forward. The enemy gets a vote as he said, so they needed coercive and attractive power adjusted on a broad spectrum on a daily basis.<sup>402</sup> A commander working in Baghdad during the Surge said that in each area they were investing a force to live in a joint security station or combat outpost with Iraqi police, or along city fault lines where they put up walls to separate different parts of the city. Inside those walls were electricity and a microeconomy. According to him, inside of those places with a microeconomy they had stability.<sup>403</sup> These assets had to come from somewhere. According to a Civil Affairs officer working in the north of Iraq:

I remember being in Salah al-Din and waking up one morning and all our T-walls (protective barriers) were gone. They came in with forklifts and an endless parade of tractor-trailers, picked up every piece of concrete and hauled it all down to Baghdad. We went from endless T-walls to having nothing left.<sup>404</sup>

This would ironically boomerang on the provinces outside Baghdad later. As the battle for Baghdad shifted in favor of the Coalition over 2007, insurgents driven out of Baghdad moved to other areas. Salah al-Din was a Sunni stronghold (Saddam's former home province) and natural gathering place for Sunni insurgents. Another Civil Affairs officer there said that a lot of

insurgents started coming north from Baghdad into the province during the Surge. His brigade started doing a lot of kinetic operations and lost more soldiers than the previous brigade.<sup>405</sup>

There is no clear-cut academic consensus of the “right” ratio of troops to population to perform effective counterinsurgency.<sup>406</sup> *FM 3-24* cited previous studies that estimated that effective pacification required 20 troops for every 1000 inhabitants of a country, or about half a million security forces for Iraq. An MNF-I planner recalled that they had surpassed that point in Iraq during the Surge if the Iraqi Security Forces were included. There were 175,000 U.S. troops, 15,000 from other nations, about 190,000 total. By late 2008 he said they had built Iraqi security forces to 750,000 of all kinds, reaching and improving upon that theoretical required troop density. His criticism was of people who took the theoretical requirement and said, “U.S. troops.” It did not have to be U.S. troops to him.<sup>407</sup>

An MNF-I planner explaining how ISF forces helped get to that number said that during the Surge said there were about 11 Iraqi divisions under some level of manning, although many were immobile because they were recruited locally. From 2007-2008 the ISF grew in numbers and quality and as the Coalition saturated areas with the 20 brigades working alongside the Iraqi forces, the violence began to subside.<sup>408</sup> See Hammes for discussion of the necessity of an adequate conventional military force capability for a counterinsurgency campaign to be successful.<sup>409</sup>

For the formal Iraqi security forces, there was an increase not just in numbers, but capability as well. A stabilization commander in Baghdad said that they had been pushing to get the Iraqis out of the checkpoint mentality throughout 2006, and finally turned that corner with a deliberate offensive operation or campaign beginning around February 2007, *Fard al-Qanoon* (“Enforcing the Law,” an operation designed to protect the Iraqi population).<sup>410</sup>

Some of the increase was obtained through the Sons of Iraq program, an initiative in and around Baghdad to turn Sunnis, many of whom had been previously fighting against the Coalition, into militias aligned with the U.S. As mentioned, Gentile felt co-opting the Sunni militias was in fact the primary factor that made the Surge a success. An MNC-I planner recalled that it meant that 107,000 Iraqis were paid to protect their areas, which was a good way to get them off the battlefield as an adversary.<sup>411</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff also stated that Sons of Iraq was important to providing the force ratio needed to stabilize the country and “keep a lid” on the Sunnis.<sup>412</sup> An Information Operations officer in Baghdad during the Surge recalled the beginning of the Sons of Iraq program:

The Awakening was happening out west: the Sunni tribes were realizing that Al-Qaeda was just no good. They're terrible guests: they're killing us and it's their way or the highway. The enemy of my enemy is my enemy, right? We wanted to get that ink blot to move east. Lieutenant Colonel P.... meets with the sheikh and asks him why I should trust you: you have been shooting at my guys for so long. He said, 'let me take you out back.' They go out back, he swings open the door, and there are about 1000 Sunni men standing there. He says, 'We just need some weapons.' Lieutenant Colonel P.... says 'Let me go talk to my boss.' That was the start of it.<sup>413</sup>

A Marine Corps planner stationed in Baghdad observed the same phenomenon. He said that the Sunni tribal leaders eventually began to turn against al-Qaeda. When al-Qaeda arrived they were welcomed, but they overplayed their hand. They took Iraqi women to be wives, they took young men to be soldiers, they stole. Eventually the tribes turned against them and reached out not to the Iraqis, but to the Coalition forces. He saw this as a sign of trust that the Americans could say “Send your leaders to this point and we will meet them there.” The tribal leaders knew they would not be betrayed: if they made the same offer to the Iraqi officials, they (suspected they) would be arrested or shot when they showed up for the meeting. There was definitely an outreach. He said it created hard feelings between the ISF and MNF-I because MNF-I did not

share with them. They told them about the meetings after, and the ISF were very upset that they did not know about the meetings before.<sup>414</sup>

Part of increasing local security capability was in the form of increased protection for electric plants, oil refineries and other key economic elements. These were things the locals wanted to keep operating, or at least easy for them to disrupt if they did not. A former ambassador directing economic development at the Embassy before and during the Surge said that one initiative they did that stuck out in his mind was building Iraqi infrastructure security, which he thought was a key element of how to do hard and soft power together. It shows it is not one of these things or the other, but how interconnected they are. If you get a refinery back up and running, and you know how important the refineries were in Iraq, but cannot protect it then you have no gasoline at the gas stations. If you get a power generation plant going again and cannot protect it, you are in trouble. There are plenty of ways to criticize all that effort, but at the same time you cannot do without it. You are just wasting money in an insecure environment like that. To him, development without security is not going to get you there.<sup>415</sup>

The inevitable result of more contact with the insurgents would be more casualties among the Coalition and ISF. General Petraeus recalls that:

The casualties did go up, although fairly quickly the Iraqi civilian casualties started to go down, and then over time the sensational attack numbers started to go down. Then sectarian incidents started to go down: all of that was very important. And we did think that as we handed off more and more tasks to ISF and as they shouldered more of the burdens on the front lines that their casualties likely would remain high even as U.S. and coalition casualties began to go down.<sup>416</sup>

His premonition was accurate. According to a Special Forces Commander with experience before and during the Surge, “From our perspective it was a hard fight in 2006 and it was a hard fight in 2007. Our Iraqi counterparts that we were with were suffering more casualties than we were, as a SOF force.”<sup>417</sup> An MNF-I planner said that when you look at the

2007-2008 statistics you see that the violence peaks as they were moving out into the areas they had conceded, then the violence goes way down.<sup>418</sup> A stability operations commander in Baghdad remembered fall of 2007 as what it means to be in the midst of war that is really hot. He said that it was hard to tell whether you are winning or losing. There were indications the Coalition was winning. They were getting greater control of areas and could see weakness, and they had intelligence telling them they were wearing down all their adversaries. But in his mind, “it sure doesn’t feel very good. Winning in combat does not feel very good.” To him, that was the pivot point, late summer 2007.<sup>419</sup>

The ISF suffered heavy casualties during this time. There were several reasons for this. A staff officer at MNF-I pointed out that they had higher casualties simply because they were taking on a greater share of the fighting and had greater numbers; thus they had a much larger increase. He felt that a lot of the casualties could have been because they were less trained.<sup>420</sup> In a similar vein, A Marine Corps MTT leader believed that part of the reason the Iraqis were disproportionately hit was “their armor was for shit and their protection was for garbage. A thing that would for us would have gotten a couple of guys with their bell rung and probably walked away was much more effective against them.”<sup>421</sup> A particularly insightful squadron commander in Baghdad also opined that the increasing ISF casualties had more to do with the fact that the ISF was interfering with the criminal activity in Iraq and not just because they were getting better at doing their jobs or thwarting attacks on the Coalition forces or Shia gathering places by AQI.<sup>422</sup>

From the coercive/attractive power perspective, an interesting element was several interviewees pointing out the use of money to facilitate hard power actions. There were several variants of this. An economics planner at the Embassy talked about how the Provincial

Reconstruction Teams (PRT) were using the “money as a weapon system” paradigm.<sup>423</sup> This was particularly evident with what were known as the “Brigade PRTs.” Due to the continued DoS manning shortfalls, DoD was either manning or creating their own “PRTs” to provide themselves that capability. In this case, the PRTs would utilize CERP money to fund reconstruction initiatives in a local area in exchange for better information about insurgent activity in that area.

A Special Operations commander described another technique of using money as a weapon system that changed during the Surge. He said that that was in fact what they called the manual, “Money as a weapon system.” He said that they did get more authority on how to use money to achieve “soft effects” such as hiring Sons of Iraq as “security guards.” Doing this, they figured out how to use CERP money to achieve the effect they wanted which was to mobilize the tribal populations and civilians to come to the Coalition side versus al-Qaeda.<sup>424</sup> This indicates use of money in an attractive mode, going against much academic thinking that money is hard power.

This was the most reliable technique for mobilizing Sunni militias: the Shia-dominated Iraqi government under Prime Minister Maliki was reluctant to provide funding to Sunni armed groups. Maliki did not want the Sons of Iraq legitimized. A leader of the Information Operations Task Force (IOTF) in Baghdad recalled that some of their early products talked about the Sons of Adamiya or “Colonel so-and-so.” Sons of Iraq branding came out of Maliki’s desire to limit them politically and tie them to the Americans. He wanted to deny them the legitimacy to say, “We are Sunni Iraqis and we are fighting AQ because we are Iraqis and we have a place in Iraq.” Consequently, the IOTF got guidance to do Sons of Iraq branding. That was not a problem with the insurgents: to him it was a problem with the Iraqi government and internal Iraqi

politics. The IOTF leader felt that that problem was far more significant in terms of the fight for Iraq than anything the insurgents on either the Sunni or Shia sides did.<sup>425</sup>

A brigade commander in Baghdad said:

Depending on the timing and JAM (Jayesh Al-Mahdi or Army of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam) organization you were talking about, it was or was not an insurgency. It was a formal infiltration of the Iraqi government structure, and it wielded a host of influence inside the government structure, and inside the Iraqi military. In some cases, this Iraqi private who was actually a senior leader of this Jayesh al-Mahdi who sits at the head of this branch of the Martyr Sadr. Unless you peeled all this back and understood this, you were vulnerable to making bad decisions that would lead you down the wrong avenue. We were not organized going in to understand that culture. It wasn't until we got into it and started living out there and listening and evaluating every personality and their activities that we would see that this guy was actually that guy who works for this guy who works for Maliki. How does that work? This guy who just blew up my soldiers is working for a guy that reports to the Prime Minister. We laid all this out for Lieutenant General Odierno and General Petraeus on the hood of a HUMVEE before they came in and said that this was what we understood to be true. And we were cautioned about how high we could go because I knew that as long as we didn't address these realities through formal penalty or capture and incarceration, we would long suffer the consequences. General Petraeus gave me a formal ceiling of how high we could go and we removed a couple of general officers and field grade officers off the battlefield and put them in Camp Cropper. It's such a complex stew of activity it is sometimes hard to understand.<sup>426</sup>

The same commander described a situation where they were doing reconstruction efforts and got into a running gun battle with JAM who had come up from Sadr City wearing uniforms of the Iraqi Army. What had been a civil reconstruction effort, make work and get streetlights put in turned into a bloody affair. He was actually in direct conversation with a parliamentarian asking him to remove JAM from the battlefield who acquiesced. One day he was driving through Baghdad during heavy fighting and it was relatively quiet, even though there was fighting where he had come from or fighting at the far end. His interpreter was listening in on the Iraqi radios and phone calls and said "Saidi, they are keeping you alive." He asked who was. The interpreter responded "Both sides. Trust me, they know exactly where you are." The militias would report to each other where this commander was on the battlefield.<sup>427</sup>

On another occasion he went to meet with a former assassin who had joined the Baghdad Patriots, taking a senior officer with him. They could meet him but only after nightfall, and they had to walk. The general asked if they were safe. He said, "Boss, they know who I am. If they want me dead, I will die right here. But they respect me enough that they are going to let me travel to meet this guy. If they like what they hear, they'll let us travel back. If they don't, we won't."<sup>428</sup> The Americans could serve as a trusted intermediary between the Shia and Sunni fighting forces in Iraq.

Over time the Coalition was able to quell the violence in Iraq at differing paces in differing parts of Iraq. A squadron commander in Baghdad said that all deployed units including his decimated AQI, bled the Shia militias white, and took away their "cash cow," the Jamilla market, until they agreed to a ceasefire. He pointed out that there was a major power struggle going on among the Shia, so it was not necessary to kill or capture them all, just enough to get their leaders worried that their power relative to the other Shia factions could collapse if the fighting went on much longer.<sup>429</sup> The phenomenon of insurgent subgroups battling each other for internal positioning in the midst of civil conflict was observed by Olson Lounsbery and Pearson.<sup>430</sup>

An Information Operations planner in Baghdad said that after April 2007 the security situation improved because they had al-Qaeda on their heels, and they were getting "run out of Dodge." The Sunni insurgents were going away because they became part of getting rid of al-Qaeda. According to him, even the Shia militias had backed off some.<sup>431</sup> A stability operations commander also in Baghdad said that by January 2008 they saw the number of sectarian deaths going down. The number of areas not under central and provincial government control were also going down. He saw an exponential increase in the restoration of services because the process

was working, and many things being handed over. There were still contests in certain areas, especially in areas where insurgents were losing influence, particularly Shia insurgents.<sup>432</sup>

An ambassador leading economic planning at the Embassy said that between September 2007 to March 2008 there was a significant decrease in violence and SIGACTS (Significant Actions) around the country. He noted that the big city-wide conflicts like Fallujah, Ramadi and Baqubah-type struggles were over and things were really quite peaceful. In the north Sunni insurgents launched actions against the Coalition and against the oil pipelines and power grid. By April or May things were quiet and stayed that way through the following summer. He said that there was unhappiness about electricity but there was not much violence. Travel was safer and there were fewer cases of roadside bombings.<sup>433</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff recalled that by late 2008 car bombs had been practically eliminated and TIPS line reporting had increased dramatically.<sup>434</sup>

Outside of Baghdad, a PRT leader observed that her counterpart brigade commander “totally got it.” They were pushing people out to the smaller outposts. She said that they had a phenomenal leadership team and were 100% supportive of the PRT.<sup>435</sup> A USAID representative also saw that the level of violence was pretty extreme upon arriving but would hear that things were improving on the ground when traveling to Mosul or Erbil. She said that the British starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel in Basra, especially economically, and that Anbar had the Anbar Awakening movement.<sup>436</sup> A Marine MTT leader in the west of Iraq said that the last six months were a lot of vacating the al-Qaeda influence out of Ramadi and starting to work with reconstruction and civil order.<sup>437</sup>

Similarly, a brigade commander in Baghdad said that he had patrols whose sole purpose was security for the PRTs or the attractive components like PSYOP or CA. He understood that

often you do not want those guys to go out “kitted up” with helmets and hardware. In many cases they would not have guns. They were working on a project, not defending themselves. He had to give them a safe environment where they could do their job without being harmed: he did not have any problem with doing that.<sup>438</sup> Another brigade commander’s stability efforts improved the Iraqi “circuit court” procedure. He recalled that local judges were afraid they would be killed if they made “the right call” since they had their family right there in the town. His unit provided security for a traveling judge to arrive and conduct court. He found that they were bold in their justice. Once they completed their work, he got them out of the area safely. They “put an Iraqi face on it” by using ISF police and military, but he always had a Quick Reaction Force close by and prepared to assist if needed.<sup>439</sup> This was an effective partnering of U.S. and Iraqi forces along the lines laid out by Pirnie and O’Connell.<sup>440</sup>

A JSPA planner saw that the data showed the death rates and sectarian killings declining, which he felt was part of the overall Surge strategy.<sup>441</sup> The MNC-I planner who developed the metrics chart (he referred to it as the “Virginia Chart” due to its shape) said that when you are there doing it, you do not see that over time you are doing more soft power and less soft power. Over time he saw less casualties, although on a day-to-day basis they were always fluctuating up and down.<sup>442</sup> An MNF-I planner said that by 2008 he saw a shifting from a focus on kinetics to a focus on government. He recalled that in March 2007 when he participated in the first Joint Strategic Assessment, they flew from Victory Base because it was not safe to drive on Route Irish to the Palace. By the next year he could drive along Route Irish and there were ISF troops spaced all along the route.<sup>443</sup>

A Marine MTT leader recalled his departure from Iraq:

During the last convoy I ran across town in Ramadi, I had approval to depart and was told by the commander “You have 5 minutes to depart lines because the Ramadan 5K is about

to start.” Literally from dark and destroyed land to walls painted with murals and pictures. It was funny to see how transforming public art was to the change in feeling there. I’ll never think about art the same way after that. We departed, and there were Marines at the water stations. It had been custom in Ramadi that the day before Ramadi they would do a 5K race. The Marines set up checkpoints with water. I had to depart before the starter’s gun, or I would have had to wait until after the race. That was literally my last view of Ramadi before we redeployed. A 5K run with wall mural art and an operating bank and open markets and people walking around.<sup>444</sup>

## REBUILDING THE ISF

The reconstitution of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) was a monumental task. The army had to be rebuilt from scratch after the Coalition Provisional Authority dismantled the entire armed force of Saddam Hussein. Police forces were not eliminated but needed to be expanded and trained up to a standard reflecting the need for security throughout the country.<sup>445</sup> Politics continued to negatively impact the development of an ISF capable of stabilizing Iraq. Writers such as Olson Lounsbery and Pearson analyzed the security dilemma in terms of an insurgency and said that increasing armed forces itself is perceived as a threat.<sup>446</sup> However, by 2007 the Sunnis in particular were viewing al-Qaeda as the greatest threat to them, hence they were more amenable to an increase in government security forces as a driver of overall stabilization in Iraq.

General Petraeus recalled:

I knew General Babaker Zebari very well because he was my counterpart from the Kurdish region when I was in Mosul in the first year. He took over as essentially the chief of staff of the Iraqi military when I was a three-star doing the mission of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq. We had a very close relationship so there was no challenge in building one. The problem was that he did not truly control Iraqi military actions. He was bypassed a fair amount by the Prime Minister, by other senior Iraqi leaders and so forth. Keep in mind that he was a Kurd and those who were most significant were the Shia leaders and then to a lesser degree the Sunni Arabs.<sup>447</sup>

An advisor at MNC-I said that an advantage the Americans had was that the professionalism of US soldiers made the ISF want to emulate them and look like them.<sup>448</sup> A Civil Affairs officer said that he still has the patches from a number of the units that he worked with and law enforcement such as Hillah SWAT because they did a lot with them.<sup>449</sup> A provincial brigade commander tied this into weaving the fabric of trust between the people and their security forces, especially the police forces, and trying to get them to feel they were protected by the police force as opposed to being exploited.<sup>450</sup> These stories demonstrate that military assets can play an attractive role not commonly captured in counterinsurgency literature.

Sometimes the professionalization could take a humorous form. A brigade commander in Baghdad told an Iraqi general that every time they tried to talk, the general tended to get on the phone. Why? The general said, "I must talk to my commanders." The commander asked why he should believe he was being taken seriously if the general was constantly getting on the phone. The commander also asked him how many of his subordinates were on the phone at his meetings, and said that it was a sign of disrespect. The general promptly put out a policy that no one could have their phones out at his meetings. He would make a big deal out of it when the commander would come to see him. He would put his phone on a tray, his sergeant major would retrieve the tray, and he would say "You see, I am removing the distraction."<sup>451</sup>

Another Civil Affairs officer felt that ultimately the untold story of Iraq and biggest success was taking 150,000 of America's finest and putting them in every town in Iraq. They all interacted with American soldiers and civilians and they liked them. They realized the Americans were "pretty nice people." He recalled being in the desert and pulling into an Iraqi FOB (Forward Operating Base). An American soldier jumped off the front of the truck and an

Iraq soldier came up and they are hugging and swapping cigarettes, two big tough looking guys. Watching, he believed that there is undoubtedly a payoff for that.<sup>452</sup>

As the ISF size and capability increased, they were able to assume a larger role. A stability operations commander in Baghdad credited the Coalition strategy of building the capability of Iraqi security forces and using their greater amount of force availability and using that greater force availability to conduct their own operations, not operations in the shadow of American units which had been the case for a few years before that. He said that they were becoming sufficiently trained, resourced, armed and equipped with personal protection equipment such as HUMVEEs, the same sorts of things the Americans had. As a result of increased contact, the ISF casualties began to rise despite gradual improvement in equipment. American casualties were also rising, but they were generally being done in adjacent areas. He recalled that the ISF might be operating down one main highway going into a particular province and the adjacent community to that main highway might be where the Americans were operating, so there would be adjacent operations frequently. There were American advisors with each of those Iraqi units as well.<sup>453</sup>

A USMC Military Training Team leader recalled that they were doing a lot of transition security activities while the police were being built up inside of Ramadi. He specified 1/1 Brigade specifically as being popular locally because they had a Sunni commander with a heterogeneous brigade. The team leader said that this commander was an old Saddam guy, very secular, in command of Sunnis, Shias and Kurds: it was the American vision for Iraq. Counter to that was the 1/7 Brigade who were all Shias out of southern Baghdad. According to him that unit came in effectively waving banners saying, “Hey Sunnis, you’re about to get yours. Your friends, the Shias.”<sup>454</sup>

Better coordination with these assets increased their role as well. A brigade commander in Baghdad recalled going to the commander of the Multi-National Security Training Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) and telling him that the MTTs and PTTs (Police Training Teams) were in his battlespace and that he had to get the missions aligned, so they needed to report to him.

MNSTC-I concurred experimentally in his sector. Thanks to that, he then had every JSS, MTT and PTT team comprising both ISF and Coalition forces all under the same roof looking at the same map, listening to each other's radio calls, and moving the effort forward. To him it was a balancing act, identifying pathways toward a common end that everyone could subscribe to.<sup>455</sup>

In western Iraq, a USMC MTT leader anticipated change and opportunity as a result of improved Sunni cooperation:

I briefed our Iraqi brigade that if the Awakening went well, we were going to go into reconstruction, and how to remodel the brigade to do that. By April or May we had formed a joint Army-USMC-Iraqi-CA council to go out, do surveys and figure out what the locals wanted for reconstruction or access improvements so we could begin to develop the catalog of products and materials that were needed. I would attend with my team to coordinate and synchronize with the Iraqis properly. Messaging product was discussed. It was such an onerous process trying to get official message products out was eventually we discarded participation in that process for alignment with national messaging and went with the commander's local messages. We did that for circumvention because the commander in his AO could communicate with the population there. We would talk about things like "Support Your Local Gunfighter" and other simple things at a local production level. We would also advertise recruiting drives for the police and army.<sup>456</sup>

Another provincial brigade commander recalled that there were several times where his Iraqi counterpart brigade and division commanders were a bit light on security. They would provide security in a fashion he called "smoke and mirrors." The local citizens would not see it, but it was there and the Iraqi commander knew it was there and could feel emboldened in his engagements and not feel threatened that an attack would sneak up on him in some fashion. Al-Qaeda was very good at showing up in a certain amount of time.<sup>457</sup> His unit would watch the

time and knew the routes in so they could protect the key leader engagement. The Iraqis did not have to look over their shoulder and could do the engagements themselves. Instead of the U.S. doing it, it would be the governor and deputy governor talking to key military leaders.<sup>458</sup>

ISF capabilities improved so dramatically that an MTT leader recalled that when Basra had problems during Fall 2007, the British could not contain it and the Iraqi units there collapsed, so the replacements for his Iraqi units went to Basra. The bottom line is things got so smooth in his location in Ramadi that they could redeploy the Iraqi army assets out of town. He was happy to observe this migration to soft power and regular order.<sup>459</sup> We have previously discussed Hammes and his view that this sort of indirect support to the local security forces as being more likely to be successful in counterinsurgency.

A proving ground for increased ISF capability came in the form of the March 2008 Easter offensive or Charge of the Knights. To the surprise of the Americans, Prime Minister Maliki took a large contingent of his refurbished ISF and led it to Basra to take on the Shia militias that had taken control there. An ambassador working economic development at the Embassy recalled that although they got into some trouble, US airpower was employed to help him out.<sup>460</sup> It was probably motivated more by Maliki's fear that the Shia militias were becoming too powerful than trying to create a secular Iraq, but it dovetailed with Coalition objectives in Iraq of a government that was less blatantly sectarian.

None of this change came without cost. A planner at MNC-I said that in general, Iraqi casualties tended to be about three times the proportion to the U.S. and that that ratio remained broadly consistent.<sup>461</sup> A brigade commander in Baghdad also saw a lot more of the ISF casualties near the end of the Surge, mainly because he was trying to turn operations over to

them and allow them to take on their own fight. The Surge was a difficult time for his unit as well: they lost over 50 people in their area of operations during a 15-month period.<sup>462</sup>

Some of the rebuilding effort may have even been solely the result of the improvement in security. A squadron commander in Baghdad recalled that when he arrived in Rusafa and things were just starting to turn around, whole blocks of Baghdad's business district were "completely vacant, bullet-ridden Orwellian wastelands." Within eight months they were filled with new businesses, and the main complaint was the price of rent, which went up four times because of demand. Not one business owner – and he said he spoke to dozens – had received a microloan or grant, and all credited the improvement in security for the business development.<sup>463</sup> Although the reconstruction effort played a role, a consistent theme of interviewees both military and civilian was the need for stability as a prerequisite for anything else.

## THE CAMP WAR

Failure to adequately address detention facilities can create problems with international ramifications for the facilities owner. Fehrenbach and Foley described the major uprisings that occurred in the Prisoner of War (POW) camps during the Korean Conflict.<sup>464</sup> Although the media will focus on shortcomings in detention facilities, the process of holding and rehabilitating captured insurgents receives less attention in media and academic writing.

The Iraq War had already produced the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. To change the dynamic according to General Petraeus:

We created large rule of law centers which had within them detention facilities, judicial facilities to use, and even billeting for the judicial personnel, so that they didn't have to commute to and from home to these facilities as they would be targets until we established security.<sup>465</sup>

An internment facility commander recalled that “dignity and respect” was the mantra he repeated and emphasized oftentimes to his organization and the Iraqis. For example,

There were only female guards for female detainees. And that was a whole other thing in itself. The reason that was so important was in previous years female detainees were released and when they returned to their villages, the impression was “Oh, you were in an American prison. The guards probably gang-raped you.” They would be dishonored and executed. What we had to do was make sure that we had a point of contact to give them over to. We would find a local sheikh or village leader to sponsor the female detainee who was released. I was the only male who was present at the pledging ceremony. They would pledge to do good, not do anything bad, and we would have a ceremony releasing this person as reformed and no longer a threat and we’re releasing them into your custody ‘Mr Village or Tribal Leader.’ We made a big show of only having female guards there, only female representatives from the Department of State. By having the overwhelming female presence, we developed the idea that this young lady was not gang raped. I had to work with the Iraqi Minister for Women’s Affairs quite a bit, who would check in on the female detainees and make sure everything was good there. We had a couple of parliamentarians visit to check on the conditions also. Having the parliamentarians and others inspecting the facilities and verifying that it wasn’t Abu Ghraib enhances legitimacy.<sup>466</sup>

Combat units had their own brigade detainment internment facilities (BDIF) as well. A brigade commander in the north recalled that they would process the detainees, but we could not hold them more than 72 hours. Because they had limited time with them, they did not have opportunities to do educational, vocational or any of the counter-indoctrination mission. Their task was to complete the paperwork, take care of the detainees, and pass them forward within 72 hours.<sup>467</sup>

For the more permanent holding facilities an MNC-I planner said that they did build vocational training for detainees into the plan. Detainee operations in Iraq (and AFG) were part of the intelligence operation and security function. He recalled that they slightly helped with “hearts and minds” and vocational training types of things. Detainee operations served to extract as much intelligence as they could from detainees while housing them in a humane way and not to have a repeat of “the black eye” of Abu Ghraib.<sup>468</sup> International law regarding treatment of

detainees such as the Geneva Conventions brought limitations. A senior Public Affairs officer at MNF-I remembered that they could not show prisoners, particularly their faces. They were not allowed to be interviewed. Once in a while when the senior leadership would visit those facilities, they would bring reporters as part of “battlefield circulation,” with the understanding that they could take some distant footage, because they also didn’t want to give away the layout of the facility.<sup>469</sup>

By and large the camps did not detract from the Coalition effort during the Surge. The detention facility commander had at worst an occasional hunger strike: he did not have riots. The hunger strikes were not usually coordinated. It was usually an individual or two who thought their case was stagnating and being forgotten about. He coordinated with the brigade Judge Advocate General who was liaison to the Iraqi courts, and they would provide the status of the cases. He would then pass that to the detainees, and a lot of it was explaining that it was a lengthy process: be patient. It was one-on-one interpersonal skills. He did not think that any of the detainee tactics were effective at getting them what they wanted.<sup>470</sup>

As ISF force capabilities increased, their treatment of detainees also had to be addressed. A Marine Corps MTT leader recalled that occasionally they had to supervise the Iraqis with some of the detentions they had, although that mostly fell under the task of his intelligence cell, which had a major and NCOs. There was one experience where there was a person the Iraqis had captured, and his team was supervising. The Iraqis thought he had something, so they were asking, “How about if we bring him up to the roof and douse him with cold water in the middle of winter?” ‘No, you can’t do that.’ “How about if we do this?” ‘No, you can’t do that.’ To him it was adding a moral component to their training effort. He said that as the Awakening progressed there were fewer of those instances.<sup>471</sup>

Better coordination prevented accidental detentions from boiling over into major incidents. A commander in northern Iraq recalled that there was an occasion in Tikrit where Special Operations made a raid on a very influential imam and captured his son without the unit's knowledge.<sup>472</sup> Both he and the PRT leader received multiple frantic calls from virtually every Iraqi of importance in Salah al-Din province to release his son. Protests started in downtown Tikrit. Special Operations ended up releasing the detainee to his unit and they released him to the imam. The commander said that although from then on he had to be careful of any action against this character, at least they now had knowledge of one particularly influential person in their area of operations.<sup>473</sup>

Detention facilities provided another opportunity to practice reconciliation. Most people would probably consider detention facilities as strictly hard power. A senior MNF-I staff officer talked about General Petraeus' intent for the long-term detainees. Some of them had been captured in 2003, and there were about 25,000 of them in Camp Bucca. The biggest thing that General Petraeus did was create a system where military tribunals would hear their cases every six months. This was key because a lot of the prisoners had no idea when and if they were ever going to be released. He took the 5,000 worst offenders and had maximum security facilities built for them to get them out of the general population of prisoners, because they were turning them all into hardened insurgents through violence and intimidation.

Then he would take the other 20,000 and try to rehabilitate them. They would sing the Iraqi national anthem every morning. They would make bricks and on each brick was stamped, "Rebuilding the Nation Brick by Brick." The artists among them could paint. There were a variety of things, but the most important thing was to separate the worst offenders into maximum security facilities and then allow military tribunals to hear the cases of the others. Often the

tribunals would release the people, saying, “There is no evidence that this guy did anything. He got swept up in a cordon-and-search operation that was gathering in all the military age males: that is not a reason to detain anyone.” When they were released, they were released in ceremonies. They would have the local governor, mayor or other political leader. They would have the imam there or the tribal chief, and they would all speak. These released detainees would go through these rehabilitation ceremonies and they were quite effective. Most of them did not return to the insurgency after that. Of the insurgents captured and released after that, fewer than 1% were detained again.<sup>474</sup>

A camp commander added that they did some reeducation from among a population of about 12,000 detainees. They were assisted by imams there who were of the more moderate view that were trying to reeducate the detainees on Islam. He had computer training classes for the females and sewing, and reading classes that some detainees participated in. The idea was that if they could read the Koran for themselves, they would realize that they had been misled by extremist imams, that the Koran did not advocate violence against non-Muslims that the extremist imams had previously led them to believe.<sup>475</sup> An Information Operations officer in Baghdad remembered a Coalition program to work in particular with the youth. One of his translators went there and would try to get the kids to see that this “was not a healthy choice for their futures.”<sup>476</sup>

Systemic analysis of individual detainee cases became a priority. A brigade commander in Baghdad recalled:

My objective was that every detainee be treated in a decent and humane fashion: that wasn't the case when we got there. Privacy needs to be afforded for the humanity of the individual as we sort out what they had done. We realized that some of them did not need to go to (Camp) Cropper. Some of them may have been well-intentioned people that didn't have another course of action. That is very liberal minded of me, which I am not. We had a program where we would reintroduce them back by using the links we had

established between essential services and security. If I had some dudes that I was going to reintroduce back into Qadra (Baghdad district), I would link them up with the local sheikh or NAC and tell them that you need to put these guys to work on the local community service project. Keep them there for a couple of weeks and report back when you decide to release them. Put the onus back on the locals. On one occasion, I had a CODEL (Congressional Delegation) with me and we were in Yarmuk and we were walking the streets. There was a guy in his orange jumpsuit cleaning the streets. That was what they wore, not because he had been a prisoner. He came up to me and said, "Thank you Akeeb \_\_\_\_\_ for letting me go, I am now working for my neighborhood." He was so proud. I ran into that more than once. These guys had been captured and questioned and it had been determined that they had probably done something dumb. As long as they had not committed a capital offense or been involved in a bombing, we normally let them go. We told them that we had our eyes on them, and we were going to put them back to work earning a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. That was called Operation OUR TOWN, where we linked the security apparatus with the essential services with the reintroduction of people back to society from everywhere. It dealt as well with confirming who's actually supposed to be in this house, etc. Operation OUR TOWN was led by the Civil Affairs team that had the city planner, and former ambassador, and some CA and PSYOP dudes. It was wildly successful.<sup>477</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Coercive power had to be applied to stabilize Iraq. This power had to come from Coalition forces. This was a correction to the prior strategy of drawing down the Coalition presence while trying to turn coercive power over to an Iraqi Security Force that was clearly incapable of assuming it. The military forces had a hard initial fight, but once they started to gain control of the situation it enabled them to gradually bring in Iraqi coercive power and stabilize the country. They did this with more joint patrolling, bringing the ISF and U.S. military together which produced attractive benefits while applying coercive power against insurgents.

A detention facility is by its nature coercive. However, the opportunity to practice attractive power even there exists. The Coalition expanded learning and rehabilitation programs in its detention facilities to reduce recidivism of detainees upon release and generate goodwill by

the respectful manner in which the detainees had been treated. This was a prime example of combining coercive and attractive power into smart power.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SMARTER ATTRACTION

#### INTRODUCTION

Smarter coercive power was half of the Surge. Smarter attractive power was employed hand in hand with it to increase the gains from each. The Coalition improved its ability to influence the Iraqi population through better messaging by being faster and bringing communications down from national to more local sourcing and dissemination. A key part of the messaging was reconciliation, a willingness to bring more sectarian and ethnic groups into the conversation and have a voice in determining Iraq's political and economic course.

Interviewees talked about how reconstruction efforts improved as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) were created and funded to work with local level leadership to build and maintain projects the Iraqis actually wanted. The PRTs worked to not only bring more resources to bear at the provincial level, but worked with the leadership to oversee expenditures and decrease problems with corruption, cost overruns and misallocation of funds.

#### MESSAGING

Olson Lounsbury and Pearson discussed the "comfort zone" of shared needs and expectations that people experience that can result in a sense of common fate.<sup>478</sup> Messaging during the Surge thus faced the challenge of trying to promulgate messages that would resonate at the local level without further dividing the country along sectarian and ethnic lines. Metz said

it was unrealistic to expect counterinsurgents to agree on a common messaging strategy.<sup>479</sup>

However, since the Coalition at that point had waning international support, the U.S. was in a good position to develop and implement its own messaging campaign. During the Surge U.S. messaging efforts became more effective and nimble, although significant challenges remained. In addition, progress was made on efforts to restrict and limit enemy messaging.

The senior Surge leadership understood and emphasized the importance of messaging as part of their campaign execution. According to General Petraeus:

We had at least a monthly one-hour session with all those who were engaged in the information operations. We had daily updates on a variety of topics that would come under that particular heading during the daily battlefield update and analysis or BUA.<sup>480</sup>

Ambassador Crocker agreed:

The communications role was tightly controlled by the force commander and myself. Our tightly knitted view was that this needs to be about Iraqis, not about us. Whatever you are doing that is going to have a public affairs dimension, we need to have host country buy-in and host country faces doing the public relations stuff. Not us.<sup>481</sup>

A senior Public Affairs officer at Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) during the Surge described General Petraeus as a “voracious gatherer, consumer of information.” He said that if he needed something new, as long as General Petraeus was somewhere where he was getting email, turnaround time was usually less than five minutes. If he didn’t have a response within 10 minutes that was unusual, and General Petraeus was probably doing some heavy thinking about it or typing out something more specific.<sup>482</sup> An MNF-I planner agreed that General Petraeus “used the media very well.” The Media Operations Center (MOC) was 24 hour and multilingual, run by a two-star general. They tracked everything in the news and social media. This allowed the MNF-I commander to respond quickly and there was a media update every morning in the Battle Update Assessment (BUA). General Petraeus would understand the media was reporting

a rumor or car bombing and get ahead of the message by calling the media or Iraqi leadership. The planner felt that messaging proactivity was very good under General Petraeus.<sup>483</sup>

This proactive approach was emulated by their subordinates. Major General Richard Lynch was in charge of Strategic Effects and according to a Marine Corps planner at MNC-I was “very much into that.” He personally gave a daily press conference trying to influence the perception of what was happening. At the time there was a great deal of cynicism, not just among the Iraqis who had reason to be cynical, but among the American media as well. The planner recalled that General Lynch went through a lot of difficulty to ensure that the message they were coming out with at the press conferences was consistent with the message provided by Psychological Operations and Information Operations, because if there was a contradiction or even seeming contradiction, credibility would be lost.<sup>484</sup> Similarly, the TFBSO conducted weekly press operations out of the Coalition Press Information Center (CPIC) in Baghdad. They would insist on having an official Iraqi counterpart there, ministry of Finance or Agriculture for example. They wanted to do everything with an Iraqi and “spin” as many questions as they could to the Iraqi representative to give it an Iraqi face. A senior official said local media always showed up for their press conferences.<sup>485</sup>

There was a considerable amount of media working in Iraq. An MNF-I Public Affairs officer believed that there were times when the number of interview requests were burdensome to the command. He recalled his media management system:

I kept a roster of every news organization in Baghdad. The day I arrived I started the process and listed every news organization alphabetically. 30 days after we arrived, we arranged and conducted his (General Petraeus) first press conference to baseline all the media and then we started the battlefield circulations. I would send out invites based on seats available, and I always had seats available, that was one of the battle drills that we worked out. I would invite an organization, and if they could not send a reporter, I went to the next organization. I kept it posted behind my desk on a large butcher board, so when the journalists from the various news organizations came to my desk, they could

see that I was trying to keep it as fair and equitable as possible and could see if they had missed a trip because they were not available. Transparency was the key for this, no favorites. We really only did two press conferences in Baghdad, one at the beginning and one at the end. The final tally of interviews both in Iraq and back in the States was 319 according to my tracking sheet.<sup>486</sup>

An ambassador leading economic planning at the Embassy said that there was a lot of media in Baghdad and in the Palace. Most if it was international media, whom he was engaging with the most. He felt that the local media was better handled by the Iraqis.<sup>487</sup> A stability operations commander agreed that by 2007 the number of media outlets had “exploded.” Some were insurgent controlled which he considered very advanced media networks. Some were spinoffs of BBC, SkyNews or al-Jazeera. Fox also had a presence at that point in time. The major networks were still there, particularly during the Surge, so the Coalition worked very closely with them. They moved with U.S forces, and the Coalition embedded them inside of units again (the networks did the despite some insurance underwriting problems due to the risks).<sup>488</sup> A Special Operations commander felt that messaging in local media often got good regional “play.” He learned that when they got something into the local Iraqi media company, it was an opportunity for messaging people in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, across the Gulf, etc. Consequently, he played heavily with the media as best he could within his sphere of control.<sup>489</sup>

Television was the most visible media in Iraq, and great Coalition attention was focused on it. The same Special Operations commander said that his sense was that Iraqi society was even more susceptible to be swayed by media messages (than U.S. society), and electronic media seemed to move people’s opinions. He thought the key element was the speed: it was easy to turn on the TV and something was on TV immediately.<sup>490</sup> Conversely, social media such as Facebook were not engaged during the Surge, partly because of restrictions from Washington and partly because of the problems of maintaining one.<sup>491492</sup>

Radio was a popular media source in Iraq as well. A brigade commander in northern Iraq had his PSYOP teams distributing battery-operated throwaway radios to the populace so they had a means of listening to broadcasts. His unit would broadcast music and messages on those stations. The feedback he got in his Battle Update Brief was that it seemed to be effective in getting information out to the populace.<sup>493</sup>

Printed media was utilized as well. An Information Operations planner in Baghdad said that his division provided the resources for the monthly PRT newspaper. There was some guidance to move it and other print products on-line but there was not trust in their ability to measure the performance of distribution: for example, who is viewing it? He had seen similar issues when the Coalition was distributing *Baghdad Now*. People would criticize it and say the Iraqis knew it was put out by the Americans.<sup>494</sup> However, when he went out on missions and handed out *Baghdad Now* or the PRT newspaper the Iraqis would start reading it. They might think it “sucked,” but they were reading it. To him, that was a benefit of print, it provided the ability to facilitate an information patrol and see what people thought of the products.<sup>495</sup>

A brigade Civil Affairs officer recalled that the PSYOP team did a leaflet drop about every month, although he felt face-to-face communication was better as will be discussed below.<sup>496</sup> A squadron commander in Baghdad agreed, describing leaflet drops as “less than worthless, a complete waste of time.” He said they would periodically get thousands of leaflets from division with “stupid” messages and be directed to distribute them. They would ask the ISF to do that at their static checkpoints, but even they refused. He recalled one particularly “asinine but popular” leaflet as having menacing eyes that said something like, “AQI is bad. Turn them in” in Arabic. “Jundi” (ISF soldiers) would laugh and tell them, “You think people here in East Baghdad don’t know that?” Iraqis would take them without looking and

immediately drop them on the ground. He realized early on that distributing those would cause them to lose credibility, and he did not want to explain to a parent that their son was killed while distributing a worthless leaflet on a corner in Baghdad, so he did not do it. After he redeployed, he met a PSYOP captain who worked in an adjacent unit that had Sadr City in her operational area. She said that she got those leaflets all the time and told him, “Yeah I distributed them...into the burn barrel!” Meanwhile at the weekly division update the PSYOP lead would report on the number of leaflets dropped, including the ones “distributed” into the trash, without any mention of their effectiveness which this commander felt was not measurable.<sup>497</sup>

Improvement in production input improved product quality as well. A PSYOP officer in Iraq before and during the Surge said that it was about 2007 before they realized that they needed to hire from within Iraq. They brought in local Iraqis to be their cultural advisors even though they had lower security clearance levels. Nonetheless, they were still more effective because they had better knowledge of the area.<sup>498499</sup>

Timely, relevant message distribution was a continual roadblock. Preapproved Psychological Operations products and messages were available,<sup>500</sup> and for a brigade commander in the north his preference was to “go with the good enough.” His first course of action was always to dig through the preapproved themes and messages and products to see if those fit the bill before they tried to push something forward to get it approved.<sup>501</sup> The drawback of preapproved products was that were typically generic, reducing their impact on the target audience. A divisional Information Operations officer in Baghdad recalled meeting with brigade leadership who would say to him, “Don’t take this personal, but some of these things suck.” In some cases, he agreed with them.<sup>502</sup>

Getting new products approved resulted in improved relevance, but at the expense of timeliness. According to the same IO officer:

Brigadier General \_\_\_ had great ideas on how to flatten and accelerate the process but the subordinates couldn't adjust. I understood it but could not convey to others on how to work collaboratively on it. He wanted the staff sections not reviewing the product drafts sequentially. It would go to the first person, then the next guy with a college education would bleed all over it, then the next guy would have a Shia dialect. Some ego problems and lack of intellectual maturity. This was the one time I kind of disagreed with the PSYOP team. They seemed put off about altering the approval process. I tried to emphasize that it was the same people looking at it, just in a different way. But with some of the issues with the translators, you just could not get past it. I had a lot of shouting matches with the XO's (Executive Officer) from the brigades. From my perspective, I've got 30 things in the que. You want this approved and you have five things in the que right now. Do you want me to bump this over the other 5 things you have?<sup>503</sup>

Another solution was delegating PSYOP product approval authority to lower-level commanders. A brigade commander in Northern Iraq recalled that when he first arrived at the beginning of the Surge, he did not have PSYOP product approval authority, but that it started to get pushed down to the units in 2007. Products out of the ordinary still had to be approved at division level or higher.<sup>504</sup> As the approval process was moved down to the brigade commanders an IO planner in Baghdad remembered being glad for them, but he also told them that they were "going to get what they deserved." They got their approval process, but now they needed money for printers.<sup>505</sup> Another brigade commander acknowledged that once they could go out and get PSYOP products, he never felt he had enough, although his patrols were always able to go out with something. He noted that this was a big change from 2004-2005. His unit had good interpreters so the message could be understandable in Arabic. Getting good vendors who could do things fast and inexpensively was important to him.<sup>506</sup>

Timeliness was important for Public Affairs releases as well. A Special Operations officer emphasized that every operation had the potential for positives and negatives in the information domain: they wanted to accentuate the positives and mitigate the negatives. As part

of their CONOP (Concept of Operations), they had an information plan for the operation before they launched it. Products as best they could be were already made. The PAO already had a press release, ready to fill in the blanks. The IO officer already had a framework of how he could exploit those operations, successful or not, and accentuate or mitigate. They inculcated that in the force by talking about it all the time, emphasizing that they really had to expand the impact of that tactical, kinetic action in the information domain, because in the end it was really a battle for hearts and minds and will. The vast majority of times, the initial quick look from a team regarding an operation, which was generally within an hour of getting back to base, what was monitored on the net, and what the ground force reported after the event, was already over 90% accuracy most of the time. But if there was anything contentious, they could not get that message out quickly because they just couldn't get it through the wickets of approval. In the balance between speed and accuracy, he felt that they always seem to default to accuracy.<sup>507</sup>

A senior member of the Information Operations Task Force thought that by the time of the Surge they had a robust routine for approval. Periodically there were "hiccups" because of what he saw as a lack of understanding messaging strategy. Depending on the LOO (Line of Operation), they worked on a weekly to monthly cycle. Television commercials were normally produced in about 2 months. Most other products were done on two-week cycles, and sometimes 24 hours. One example of what he felt they did not get right was when the t-walls were put up to control movement in Baghdad. Because no one told them about it, they were "caught flat-footed." Both AQ and Sadr put out messages saying, "they are trying to divide us." He explained that if someone had told them a few weeks ahead, they could have prepared the ground by putting out commercials with a metaphor like "how do you catch a rat? You trap him

in a corner.” The first requirement is to get the operational conceptualization right of how messaging and action work together: that to him is co-creation.<sup>508</sup>

By and large coordination improved. A brigade commander in Baghdad said that before they even lifted a finger to start their Haifa Street and Visible Signs of Change projects (reconstruction efforts), they briefed their intent to local Iraqi leadership and handed out flyers about what they wanted to do. People understood that the Coalition was there to help them and saw this deliberate shift from hard to soft power.<sup>509</sup> To a Civil Affairs officer who worked with Special Operations, there was no single breakthrough: it was a cumulative effort. Rather than something timed well, he thought what was important was what trended well. His unit did things over time that reinforced messages over time that had impacts over time. It was a sustained campaign over time that he felt was more impactful. He provided actions that reinforced the message that PSYOP was scripting. The unit had a non-lethal targeting board to collectively cross-level their efforts.<sup>510</sup>

General Petraeus continued to play a direct role in ensuring unity of message throughout his command. A senior Public Affairs Officer (PAO) described the process:

There were a few cases where subordinate GOs (general officers) didn't necessarily agree with the direction that was being given. They might go off and do their own thing, but it did not happen often. After I brought it to his attention, a correction by the four-star usually stopped it. One glaring incident was made by General \_\_\_\_\_. When we started the Sons of Iraq initiative, he did not necessarily agree with the concept. He periodically did media roundtables, and in one not long after we said we would pay these folks, he mentioned in the roundtable that the only way he was going to work with them was when they were flex cuffed, etc. That went to “above the fold” New York Times: direct counter to what we had been putting out. I let General Petraeus know what he had said. And this was his TTP (tactics, techniques and procedures): I would send him the information, he would reply to me and he would copy several others, such as the offending individual(s), the Chief of Staff, the Deputy Commanding General, the Staff Judge Advocate, whomever else he felt needed to know. He would say something to the effect of “Steve, in this case, don't think General \_\_\_\_\_ got it quite right. Get a hold of him and his folks and let them know what the talking points are and get this corrected. Thanks. DP.” That is kind of how it went: to me, it is a four-star “eyes right.”

Typically, once that occurred, I could count minutes before I would start getting the first phone call from the subordinate PAO. And that happened in this case, and life gets interesting. For them, not necessarily for me.<sup>511</sup>

An IO planner even described situations where they put hard power on adversarial soft power. The insurgents were assassinating Iraqi reporters on the steps of the town hall and sniping at the PSYOP teams complete with messaging from their propagandists. He went to the lawyers and they said that what the propagandists were doing was illegal. It was against Iraqi law because they were fomenting violence against security forces. The Coalition could lock them up. He was even able to get AQI propagandists onto the high-value target list. The Coalition could go after them, and they knew operational details to assist the intelligence picture of the battlefield as well.<sup>512</sup> A senior MNF-I staff officer agreed, saying that they captured most of the “media emirs” through a combination of good intelligence and raids. It reduced the amount of propaganda the insurgents were able to put out, so they focused a lot of intelligence on finding them and putting them out of business. Then they could put out their own messages to compete with the narrative that the remaining enemy media put out.<sup>513</sup>

A brigade commander in Baghdad described the insurgents as being as good at telling their story and sticking to it as the Coalition. But he felt that they were lying. They would say they U.S. was not good guys, were there to make their lives miserable and would not do what it promised. Because they were living among the people, he felt it was hard to counter. They had to counter it with mass: believable, achievable, deliverable stories. The U.S. could not say one thing and do another.<sup>514</sup> A squadron commander similarly said that particularly in Sadr City, the Shia militias took credit for every project, regardless of funding source, even being so brazen as to cover American projects with posters claiming they were funded by Moqtada al Sadr. Their biggest and most effective claim was that the Americans were the outsiders causing the problems

and needed to leave. They would claim they were the good guys and the Americans were the bad guys but to him, Iraqis knew better. He felt the Coalition did not do a good enough job of advertising their “extortion racket” and making them own it. Every Iraqi he met complained about it. Many of the leaders he worked with corrected him when he called them “insurgents,” as they thought the U.S. was giving too much credit to the thieves and criminals it was facing.<sup>515</sup>

Part of the lesson the U.S. learned was to make its messaging Iraqi-focused, not U.S.-focused. A PSYOP officer said that by the end of the Surge They worked with the elders to tell them that the Americans felt threatened and then they were the ones telling the parents, “Hey, don’t do that. We don’t want any problems.”<sup>516</sup> An MNC-I economics advisor emphasized that this was not always a rapid process. He said that if you wanted your Iraqi colleagues to do something, you had to meet them regularly, drink a lot of tea, and say the same thing every time. Eventually after many times they would get it through.<sup>517</sup> An economics planner on the JSPA team remembered Taseen al-Sheikhly being appointed spokesman for the Baghdad Security Plan. He was a Sunni living in a Shia neighborhood who actually got kidnapped by JAM. He was afraid Taseen might get killed but said that Ahmed Chalabi got him released a few days later. Every week Taseen would be at the table and he would be putting out the messages the Iraqis wanted, and the American PAO officers would coordinate with Taseen.<sup>518</sup>

Many interviewees found that in the end the most effective means of communication was face-to-face. An MNC-I planner said that face-to-face meant yes, you actually meant what you were saying as opposed to written products where they ask who put it up and what is it all about. To him these interactions with local mukhtars and civic leaders, providing them honest and reliable information they could get out to their people, seemed to be the most effective way of doing things.<sup>519</sup> A Baghdad Civil Affairs Team Chief concurred that the bulk of what they did

were face-to-face engagements – both at the local’s location (government building, market, etc.) and on the US military location (JSS, FOB).<sup>520</sup>

Civil Affairs was a valuable inroad to opening these communications. An IO planner in Baghdad said that they were valuable as they had the opportunity and time to form personal relationships with civilian power brokers.<sup>521</sup> A Civil Affairs officer working with Special Operations said 99% of what he did was in person and benefitted from a visual set of outcomes, whether it was a facility or other project. If anything, he felt that the U.S. was not always effective in conveying that it was a U.S.-enabled effort if that was the intent. He felt that they wanted the U.S. seen as an ally there to help, but they did not always do that well.<sup>522</sup> Some initial challenge was logical since introducing a more aggressive Coalition force posture would lead to greater violence in the short term. One of the messages they had to employ was, “It is going to get worse before it gets better.”<sup>523</sup>

A senior staff officer at MNF-I said that a big part of the IO campaign was painting AQI as an enemy of the people of Iraq, the enemy of everyone. If they could create a common enemy, then they would all be working in the same direction at defeating that common enemy, which did happen. They emphasized publicizing a lot of the stuff that AQI did, the atrocities and so forth, and made sure that it got in Western media as well, so that AQI had to react to the Coalition’s IO campaign, not vice versa. He said that General Petraeus made an important point of it and part of it was being first with the truth. They had their own YouTube channel which at one point in time was one of the most subscribed of any YouTube channel.<sup>524</sup>

A brigade commander in the north further explained his three local themes. First was getting dialogue between the provincial leaders and the central government. It was important because they were disenfranchised Sunnis who needed to link in with the Baghdad Shia

population and leadership and feel like there was some trust building there. The second was to drive a wedge between the people and al-Qaeda. The good news story to him was that the Iraqis were a little more secular than 600 AD Sharia law so they would embrace being a little more Westernized. They wanted to be a bit more Westernized, although not Western. He could use that to drive a wedge between the people and al-Qaeda. Third was weaving the fabric of trust between the people and their security forces, especially the police forces, and try to get them to feel they were protected by the police force as opposed to being exploited.<sup>525</sup>

An interesting opportunity to demonstrate the Coalition's desire to bring the Sunnis back into the national dialogue occurred after the execution of Saddam Hussein. His hometown of Tikrit is located in Salah al Din Province. The PRT leader there assisted with the repatriation of Saddam Hussein's remains to Tikrit. That was a big deal. The Sunnis were concerned that his body would be desecrated if buried elsewhere. He said that the willingness of the Coalition to talk to the Sunnis signaled to the Sunni population that the U.S. was willing to make a partner of them, figure out what was important to them and integrate that into what they were doing. He believed it helped sell them on the Coalition's long-term democracy objectives.<sup>526</sup>

Some subordinates were creative in getting what they felt were the right messages out to the populace. A Marine Corps MTT leader felt that most of the national-level leaflets were out of touch with what they needed: regarding inform and influence products, they were largely on their own. Consequently, they stuck to the Coalition message of the advancement of the ISF as Iraq's next protectors.<sup>527</sup> An Information Operations planner said that if he knew the person well, he might say "Look, you have loudspeaker teams. You do not need anyone's approval to use them. If something comes up when you are getting ready to go out the door, you can go

running back to try and get a new handbill, or you can go use your loudspeaker teams and say whatever you want within 30 minutes of it happening.”<sup>528</sup>

A squadron commander in Baghdad remembered:

For a time, my squadron handed out small numbers of leaflets with simple messages that just noted recent attacks on Iraqis and how the Shia militias didn't care (like a storyboard in leaflet form). The intent was to embarrass the Shia militias about their wanton killing of other Shia, such as rocket attacks on the Green Zone that fell short, or an IED that exploded on a bus instead of a CF convoy, and perhaps embarrass them enough to stop. These were local events that were frequently not covered by Iraqi media, so they might have local interest. I did this 3 or 4 times but it was risky, as in order to be timely I couldn't wait for approval from division, which would take days or weeks and who would inevitably ask me to distribute thousands of their stupid vanilla pre-approved messages. We stopped because it was just too time-consuming (we didn't have a high-speed printer) and I had no way of knowing if the effort worked.<sup>529</sup>

The last problem he mentions does illustrate the perils of going outside of the established system. Psychological Operations has the training and experience to develop Measures of Effectiveness to find out if products are working and can also conduct pre- and post-testing of products to measure the reaction of local target audiences to them.

## RECONCILIATION

Maintaining stability required restarting the political process. This meant reengagement with the tribes and regions that had been marginalized in the aftermath of the invasion. The military could not handle this alone: the State Department and its PRTs would be the main driver of this process. Even Iraqis who had participated in the insurgency needed to be given an opportunity to rejoin the mainstream political process to continue to isolate them from al-Qaeda and other malign foreign influences. Ricks saw this as a critical way to turn enemies into allies.<sup>530</sup>

Much of the effort for reconciliation was focused on the Sunnis. The Kurds were largely autonomous and mostly wanted to be left alone outside of regaining control of Kirkuk and Mosul, which Saddam had spent years populating with Sunni Arabs to attempt to drive out the Kurdish population. Stability in Iraq was dependent on tamping down the violence largely initiated by former Saddam loyalists and/or foreign fighters. Some of the challenge would come from starting or restarting contact with the Sunni tribal leaders. An IO officer working in Baghdad recalled that in 2004 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division had a Civil Affairs officer who had been heavily involved with tribal engagements. When he came back, he wanted to reestablish contact with his tribal contacts. The IO officer told him that when he left, they all stopped talking to the Americans.<sup>531</sup>

The Coalition was fortunate that in the case of al-Qaeda, they were proving most effective at enraging the Iraqi Sunnis. A Civil Affairs officer working with Special Operations felt that in Diyala Province the foreign fighter's overviolent approach did not help over time and ultimately hurt the insurgents by alienating themselves.<sup>532</sup> An advisor to MNC-I said that the Coalition got much better at messaging that it was in Iraq to bring down the violence so that the Government of Iraq could move forward with public service delivery and national reconciliation.<sup>533</sup> Schifrin talked about the importance of giving the national government credibility,<sup>534</sup> while Branch and Wood believe that if states are sufficiently informed or concerned about the needs of the nation, the need for military action decreases.<sup>535</sup>

Holding these areas required cooperation from the Iraqi Shia population. A stability operations commander in Baghdad said that as they were doing those clearing operations they had to build and hold at the same time. They began to share a lot more of the techniques for that with the ISF which had been Sunni-driven for many years: their practice was to come in with

only coercive power, not attractive power. Some of their commanders were Shia and understood the model, but the U.S. had to be careful. The stability commander remembered that if they saw some really effective Shia commanders engaged in attractive power, chances were the militia was attached to them. The U.S. had to conduct deliberate analysis of the environment about who they were fighting, why, and how to move in a direction to fulfill the long-term objectives of the Coalition presence in the first place, which he said was a stable, democratic society not at war with itself.<sup>536</sup>

In many cases the initial approach came from the Iraqis. A Marine MTT leader remembered the day he was walking across his compound and one of the “wannabe” sheikhs who had been out there walked up to the gate and said, “I’m here to tell you where they all are and I am ready to organize my guys so we can get rid of al-Qaeda.” It was al-Qaeda who had turned the locals against them. After a while they had stopped paying for food and being “sort of” a contributor to the economy, they started threatening and murdering people who were not backing them, and to him it went south from there.<sup>537</sup>

A Special Operations commander described the complexity involved in reconciliation:

The other significant thing we spent a lot of time in 2007 on that I would classify as soft power was influence operations trying to pull insurgents off the battlefield, probably started about February or May 2007. I remember sitting at our headquarters when the three three-star generals were there: Graham Lamb, Odierno, and McCrystal. One of the keys was a Power Point slide my guys had made, I think out of the IO (Information Operations) cell, that listed all the insurgent groups in Iraq, and where they fell on the spectrum of immovable/reconcilable/friends (already changed sides). And it also discussed what we could do to move the reconcilables (sp) further towards us and separate them from the irreconcilables. A lot of the granularity of that insight was CJSOTF-AP reporting via our unit contacts and networks, because it was not as clean as, ‘The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade is reconcilable, and we can move it to the government side.’ It was, ‘The 1920s Revolutionary Brigade is reconcilable in Diyala Province. It is not reconcilable in Abu Ghraib. In this area we can move a group, but in this area, we just need to target them kinetically.’ Al-Qaeda in Iraq, obviously irreconcilable. For the most part it was how do you get all these splinter organizations and either defeat them on the battlefield or take them off the battlefield using soft power, which was a lot about

promises of money, economic support to those groups that were literally fighting because they wanted to maintain a way of life, or just put food on the table? If you take that into account, maybe the ratio between soft and hard power was more balanced looking at time spent on those kinds of activities.<sup>538</sup>

A brigade commander in Baghdad during the Surge said that the tribal network and ability to disseminate information and change the attitude of the people was phenomenal. He worked very closely with them. He invited them to the neighborhood and district council meetings. That was a bit of a struggle at first, because now they were mixing political with tribal leadership, and they did not always “jive.” In a couple of cases, his unit went out in Humvees, picked up the tribal leaders, and brought them to the meetings. He went to their homes, which could be scary because they did not know how safe it was. They met some guys who claimed there were tribal leaders but were not, or were the wrong tribal leader, but he knew that they had to take some risks. He recalled that that was where the Civil Affairs guys helped because they knew how to get information about people that the average commander or soldier does not have. He described them as very skilled guys who had multiple deployments to “screw it up, get it right, and now knew how to do it.” His unit happily leaned on them for information on the populace and tribal leaders.<sup>539</sup>

Another brigade commander said that they worked with the Baghdad Patriots and the Ghazaliya Guardsmen, who were really an offshoot of the Anbar tribesmen, heavily Sunni. They did not bring their tribalism with them: just the religion. He said that the Amiriyah (Baghdad district) leaders came to him after al-Qaeda entered Amiriyah and kidnapped a prominent citizen’s son for extortion purposes. The leader was a former intelligence officer and likely assassin for Saddam. Most likely he had been shooting at American soldiers. He went to the sheikh in Amiriyah and said “I turn my back on al-Qaeda, they have violated Islam and I am here to support you and kill al-Qaeda. Because the commander had developed relationships with all

the imams, the sheikh's imam called us and asked if we would help. His battalion commander called him and said "Boss, they're looking for support, ammunition and medical supplies and activity coordination." The imam of the mosque opened the door to the blue dome and said, "You can put your command post right here." And he did. That came later in the tour after they had developed these relationships with the imams.

The commander emphasized that they were not being pushovers, nor did they think the locals were 100% right. He started very early on asking why our soldiers were getting blown up in such proximity to Iraqi Security Force checkpoints. Ultimately, he realized that the ISF had been infested by Jayesh al-Madi under Muqtada al-Sadr and downshoots of the office of the Martyr Sadr. His unit was able to do link-and-node analysis to draw a lot of this back to ISF leadership. Then his unit could go in and say "J.R. Reiling, this is the information and proof I have on you. You either knock this off or I'm going to take you to Camp Cropper." Sometimes they would comply, sometimes they would not. If they did not, his unit would go knock on the door about 2 AM. Their guards knew why the Americans were there, and they would generally come peacefully because his unit would tell them "You're coming with us or you are going to die here tonight. We know what you have done, and you will probably go to jail, but you will be tried, and you will not be able to do this any longer." As soon as they started pulling the corrupt Sunni and Shia leadership out of the area of operation, word travelled extremely fast and he recalled that they got a lot of access to the people that wanted to help.<sup>540</sup>

Arming the tribesmen was a tricky initiative. An ambassador working in Iraq during the Surge emphasized that Embassy funds did not go into the Sons of Iraq initiative. They were involved in the meeting discussions, but the money that paid for Sons of Iraq was not reconstruction money. He said that he talked to Lieutenant General Lamb regarding the Sons of

Iraq movement, and that he was very interested in input from the Embassies' PRT people on the ground.<sup>541</sup> An Information Operations Task Force leader felt that the critical aspect of the Surge was the political movement. Once there was the separation (of Sunnis and Shia), the city elements needed to be brought into the government.<sup>542</sup>

The Coalition was fortunate that once the warring factions were separated, it was actually a fairly positive time. An ambassador working economics during the Surge felt that his timing was lucky. Even though there was still violence, he thought it was actually a golden period of time for U.S.-Iraqi relations. The U.S. had made a big commitment to help Iraq and the Awakening had reduced violence in the Sunni areas. There was good Sunni-Shia communication. Not perfect, but he pointed out that it got a lot worse later, so in retrospect it looks pretty good. On the economic side the numbers were getting better. There were less blackouts on the electricity grid. He felt he was fortunate to be there at that time.<sup>543</sup>

Growing trust among the Sunnis was an important sign of change. A provincial PRT leader recalled that in 2007 the head sheikh of the province was abducted by insurgent elements on his return from the Hajj. When he was in Mecca, he had given an interview for Aljazeera and stated that Iran was not the enemy, the enemy was the al-Qaeda/ISIS terrorists. He was abducted by them and killed. Many younger tribe members were agitating for action. They felt that the U.S. had brought the violence into their province. The Deputy Governor General Abdullah (brother of the sheikh) and the Governor came, and she met with them. The deputy in particular was personally saddened by the tragedy. He said he was fighting very hard in the tribe to get them to cooperate with the U.S. and get them to not take up arms or go over to the insurgents. She believed his intervention was critical to keeping them from doing that.<sup>544</sup>

It was important to get the Iraqi government on board with the change in Sunni attitudes. An ambassador working on economic issues said that after violence had declined dramatically in Anbar by midyear 2007, it was apparent that the provincial government needed additional funding for development priorities. The violence of the preceding two years meant that it had not been able to program its development budget allocations, which had expired. Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus appealed to Prime Minister Maliki to allocate a budget supplemental for Anbar to use that fall to demonstrate the value of violence cessation. Maliki approved a supplemental allocation of \$50 million for urgent projects. To him, this was significant because the Shia-led government was recognizing that Sunni-led Anbar had suffered intensely.<sup>545</sup> It also demonstrates the value of the American presence in forcing the Iraqi government to reduce its sectarian tendencies.

A Chief of Staff at the Embassy also recalled working with Maliki's representatives and others to help plan the rebuilding of markets, conducting reconstruction, promoting rule of law, providing benefits proportionately between Sunni and Shia, and thereby synchronizing the kinetic and non-kinetic aspects of the Baghdad Security Plan. To him, once the Coalition got into Anbar and got the tribal chiefs to turn, Al-Qaeda could not adapt.<sup>546</sup> This adaptability was one of the elements of successful counterinsurgency advocated by Gompert.<sup>547</sup>

Payoff came in the form of better intelligence and independent tribal activity. A Psychological Operations leader recalled that what they started to realize when they began engaging with local tribal leaders was that they were receiving information that was very effective instead of using the "shotgun approach," which was just throw a lot of information out there and see what stuck. He said that even though the U.S. took credit for some actions, the local leaders actually implemented them. They took action as well as the U.S.<sup>548</sup>

## RECONSTRUCTION

Academic literature on counterinsurgency varies regarding the importance of rebuilding the local economy. Writers such as Paul, Pirnie and O'Connell, and Plakoudas were writers who looked at economic development as part of a smart-power approach to counterinsurgency. Metz and others were more skeptical or placed a higher priority on political progress.<sup>549</sup> Friis even describes some of the unintended consequences of reconstruction efforts in a foreign country such as loss of relative wealth or influence.<sup>550</sup> Most interviewees saw economic development as an important part of the mission in Iraq during the Surge.

The job of reconstruction was aided by the continued standup of PRTs around the country as well as improving their abilities. This was made possible by the improvement in security. A Special Operations commander stated that particularly when you look at the 2007 period the PRTs could not survive without the military because of the nature of the security environment.<sup>551</sup> A stability operations commander in Baghdad recalled the importance of creating conditions of stability, going after the causes of instability: sectarian violence, education, sewage water, trash, all the things that contribute to instability. He felt that they needed quick wins so the people can see that something can be done to address the Iraqi complaints of "Where is the electricity?" Those were the short-term gains to create a more stable environment so that the long-term mechanisms like USAID or the Department of Commerce could be put in place.<sup>552</sup> Similarly, a Marine MTT leader knew that when IED statistics and ISF casualties began dropping dramatically, everybody who just helped get rid of al-Qaeda would be asking, "We just helped get rid of these guys. Where's my fence and water and power and all those other things I should be benefitting from now that those guys are no longer killing us?"<sup>553</sup>

PRT development was still a work in progress. A Civil Affairs officer detailed to work in the PRTs differentiated between the types of PRTs:

The provincial PRTs were out developing capacity. The e-PRTs, located in the Baghdad belt, were project building teams. The brigade commander would have “X” dollars and they would use that to go around making the sheikhs happy to encourage their support in the military fight. They gave the sheiks what they wanted, a chicken house, a dam, roads. The role of the CA teams was to spend the money. The e-PRT teams didn’t have the governance, rule of law, engineering, and agricultural experts on staff. The provincial PRTs had Dept of Justice advisors, Dept of Agriculture advisors, engineers, and they were really successful in expanding capability in a higher-level CA mission. That was not the focus on the Baghdad e-PRTs. They were smaller and embedded with the BCTs. They didn’t have a separate location. I helped to staff and train the e-PRTs in my third year, but they were not PRTs: it would be a mistake to call them that. They were Surge CA units. They operated with varying levels of success.<sup>554</sup>

However, he recalled that due to the newness of the PRT concept with State Department:

When we rolled into Tikrit there was no instruction on how to operate a PRT. People from State who showed up to talk about our mission did not know any more about operating a PRT than we did. State pulled me out and sent me to Karbala as a senior advisor and we were starting up whole new PRTs through the south and I again had carte blanche on designing our capacity building efforts for our Karbala team. If you acted confident and walked in like you knew what you were doing, everybody said go for it.<sup>555</sup>

The advantage of the PRTs is they would give the Coalition greater ability to impact reconstruction at provincial levels and below. An ambassador leading economic planning at the Embassy felt the small projects were the right way to go. He preferred seeing less “Bechtel-design megaprojects” and more projects selected with local input if not control. While the projects may not be perfect from a technical standpoint, from a political one such an approach to him was much better.<sup>556</sup> A Civil Affairs brigade officer similarly felt that the smaller projects that had better oversight were much more effective than the larger projects. The larger ones were more prone to corruption, graft and outright theft. He said that when the PRT was running projects with U.S. civilian government oversight and talking to the tribal leaders and politicians,

town mayors, etc., there was more of a sense of what they needed than sitting behind the Green Zone walls saying, “I think they need this or that.”<sup>557</sup>

They also served to unify Coalition efforts. An Embassy Chief of Staff felt that previously they had too disjointed of a strategy, too many competing players, limited conditionality, etc. To him it was a free for all and he believed they could have accomplished much more by spending much less.<sup>558</sup> A provincial Civil Affairs officer agreed that as the PRTs were developed in the rest of the country, their mission involved mentoring the Iraqis into developing their own capabilities to operate their own departments of agriculture, their own provincial councils, governors and courts, all of which he thought were very effective.<sup>559</sup> An ambassador working on economic development at the Embassy said that USAID used NGOs for immediate post-kinetic activities very actively to meet immediate needs such as contracts to pick up trash which would also provide jobs.<sup>560</sup> A senior USAID official in Iraq during the Surge described working with the NGOs:

They were integrated into Surge planning at the provincial level. It depended on the work they were doing and whether there was a downside to them being seen with the military, U.S., British, Iraqi or whatever. That planning would take place at the level of the head of the organization or the main person in charge of that area, but not to the extent that it linked directly to the counterinsurgency effort. There were places where it had to be linked because active fighting was going on. We coordinated a lot with commanders on the ground. When they had issues why a certain program was not working better and they wanted to see more, they would come to me with those issues. We would try to set up discussion between the military and the people actually managing the development activities on the ground to try to find the right sweet spot. How would people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of soft power view an active support role with the military. There is a downside to that. Most of the commanders were sensitive to that and understood where we were going. It helped them understand the area better if they did have these inroads. The PRTs became “the place it happened.” It was a formal structure that related to the provincial governments. It was also a place that USAID implementing organizations could be involved. Coordination did improve; it was not perfect everywhere. In some places the situation was very difficult and challenging. On the other hand, some of the best coordinating happened in Anbar, the toughest of all places. For some reason there was a common view of stabilization. When there was that

kind of common view of what stabilization meant and what the civilian piece of it could be and how it would function, it was easier to work together.<sup>561</sup>

Civilian-staffed PRTs tended to be more effective at bringing non-government organizations (NGO) into the effort. An economics planner at the Embassy said that they contracted with the NGOs and used them to carry out assistance projects. The IRI (International Republican Institute) and the NDI (National Democratic Institute) did voter and political training. There were NGOs offering microfinance with U.S. funding. There was a program for training bureaucrats in making the ministries work better which recruited a lot of Iraqi Americans from places like Detroit and had them teach from a provincial compound. He felt that the NGOs had more on-the-ground insight, were in touch with the Iraqis around the country, and were doing good things.<sup>562</sup> A JSPA planner saw the contractors working through USAID as their link to maintaining visibility on reconstruction.<sup>563</sup> All of these benefits would have been much tougher to achieve working from Baghdad.

There were large funds available to finance the activities of NGOs throughout the country. As part of the PRTs, there were NGO experts to support those initiatives and national level programs to strengthen NGO development. There were also 5 regional NGO centers to target those local initiatives. Another Embassy economics planner emphasized that this effort began pre-Surge but flowered during the Surge.<sup>564</sup>

A senior USAID official pointed out that one advantage of working in Iraq was how advanced it was. She had never worked in a “middle-class” country with things like well-paved roads, recalling that Iraq had very good roads. USAID does not normally work in countries that modern.<sup>565</sup> This was an ironic benefit, as an Embassy Chief of Staff pointed out that there was usually no long-term funding for project maintenance such as roads.<sup>566</sup> What the USAID official did say was a disadvantage was the precarious security environment. During the Surge it was

important to consider what was possible for the NGOs and civilian contractors to do and not do. The range of risk-taking varied tremendously across organizations. Never in her career had she worked with such a large budget with so few organizations implementing the projects. Many of the most well-known USAID contractors had simply decided they could not work there any longer. A normal USAID contract for a \$150M bid would have any number of bidders. By that time in Iraq, she might have 2-3 bidders: many NGOs were simply not willing to take on that level of risk.<sup>567</sup>

The military side was still heavily dependent on embedded PRTs or e-PRTs, although they improved their process of incorporating them into the overall strategy. A brigade commander in Baghdad turned the soft power/Civil Affairs activities into enabling operations that were synchronized via operations orders and FRAGOs (Fragmentary Orders). To him, in the past it seems like they had all been done indiscriminate of each other. His intent was to link the essential services effort formally to the security apparatus, and in so doing best ensure the success of those essential service activities by 1) auditing them to make sure that what they were doing was within the scope of the contract they had been awarded and 2) to ensure that whatever efforts were ongoing were not disrupted by people who did not want those contracts to be completed.<sup>568</sup>

Another brigade commander emphasized “What’s the story?” with his unit, the story they were trying to make sure was emphasized on patrol. The soldiers knew that the Coalition was working to improve sewage, electricity and trash. But these things cannot be done if there is not security in the area. They would emphasize that the U.S, had money that can help with opening markets, area beautification and general improvements. But they could not do those things if they had to fight; they could do both, but not in the same area. He believed his unit could be

fixing things in one area while fighting in another: they were that “bipolar.” But they could not fix and fight in the same place. Security was always the first element of his campaigns. Once security was established, cooperation was established and rules were understood, then they could go in and start distributing money for business, helping with power and sewer and water, etc.<sup>569</sup>

High value targeting of insurgents continued to utilize Civil Affairs to provide short-term tactical support. A Special Operations commander said that they often used soft power, particularly small impact products, as a way to generate good will with leadership that then turned into an ability to better understand that piece of geography. Whoever he is, tribal sheikh or mayor, if they brought some sort of beneficial economic development project to his region, and he was more likely to want to keep that relationship going, and more likely to provide information on enemy activity and social dynamics in his area. It was a quid pro quo; attractive power was a way of delivering something seen as beneficial by the local leaders and they would then respond with things his unit needed to successfully conduct coercive activities as needed.<sup>570</sup>

The differences in civilian and military approaches to reconstruction could create conflict between DoD and DoS. An Embassy Chief of Staff recalled that the military’s CERP funding could be disruptive if not properly coordinated.<sup>571</sup> A JSPA team leader agreed, saying that CERP funds could be like “crack.” He specified that a new division commander rotated in and wanted to spend a lot of money. The Iraqis were not cleaning up the streets, so the commander wanted to go outside the Iraqi government to hire and get the streets cleaned. The Embassy felt that at that point in the war the Iraqis needed to be doing things like that so instead they would bring it up at the Friday meeting, and Prime Minister Maliki would yell at the responsible minister.<sup>572</sup>

The greatest cooperative value was achieved when the Coalition worked together with the Iraqis. A brigade commander in Baghdad recalled that there was a contract for \$120,000 the U.S. was paying an organization to clean up the streets of Shula. However, if you ever drove through Shula, rarely would you find anybody cleaning up the streets of Shula. Once he found out who the contractors were by tying the process to the security apparatus, his unit could link up at the combat outposts strategically placed throughout the city and say, “Hey contractor, here is Mr. Company Commander, and you are going to leave tomorrow morning from this location, and you will be cleaning blocks A, B and C in accordance with your contract, and you will be working starting at 0630.”<sup>573</sup>

He was also able to employ attractive power to enable coercive power. He recalled that if they could demonstrate that secular female business owners had opened women’s dress shops in Yarmuk for the first time in 5 years, were thriving, and the Coalition could protect it from people that wanted to shut it down, that information moved furiously, to the point that people in say Qadra would come to his forces and say, “How can we open up a shop?” His unit would respond that information on insurgents in their area was necessary. He believed that they could not have had that relationship if they had not been living in the cities and fighting alongside the ISF and their volunteers. A permanent presence was required for casual conversations to unfold naturally. No meeting ever starts off with business, as he remembered it had to start with “the cups of tea and casual conversation.”<sup>574</sup>

According to a stability operations commander in Baghdad, the continued presence associated with build efforts was the U.S.-led structure of military soft power. PRTs would deploy to those areas as the U.S. got some degree of security in them. The number of PRTs multiplied exponentially during 2007-2008 for that reason. As they were gaining control, they

needed more continuous presence and commitment of other US government agencies beyond DoD. The partnership with USAID and the Iraqi government began to kick in, even in areas where the Iraqis were in charge. He remembered one example of the road heading out to the west toward Ramadi that was primarily cleared by ISF. Alongside of it was the famous Gulf War “baby milk factory.” The Coalition wanted to get that factory back to producing actual baby milk. He was part of reconstructing it, getting new equipment and getting the baby milk factory started inside an ISF-controlled area.<sup>575</sup>

Local challenges could hinder the process. A Marine Corps MTT leader in the west told a story about a glass factory that needed a spool of copper wire to restart production in Iraq. It was a big deal for a long time. The last thing they needed was copper wire of a thick enough gauge to run from the main power line to the power plant. The Civil Affairs (CA) guys had rolled it to a fence to keep it in a safe area. The fence line they rolled it to was adjacent to the compound of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army division. They got bolt cutters, unspooled the entire wire, cut it into segments, melted it into ingots, and got it out of there before anyone knew anything. That lesson learned early on about how pilferable supplies were put the CA teams on alert and forced them to develop a robust tracking and reception methodology. He said that it ruined nearly a whole year’s worth of work when that copper wire was stolen.<sup>576</sup>

One of the most controversial reconstruction organizations was the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO) described in Chapter Four. It was a DoD organization with a large budget that did not have to operate under many of the restrictions that handicapped the Embassy. A Marine Corps economics planner at MNC-I recalled the push by the TFBSO, also known as the Brinkley Group after its leader Paul Brinkley, to revive the state-owned enterprises and make that the source of employment. He thought it failed because there is

a difference between the effect of a private or public sector job on willingness to join the insurgency. If you are working in the private sector it builds a limited kind of loyalty. He was surprised that during the ethnic cleansing of Baghdad employees came to defend their employer's light machine or retail shop because they realized that if the shop was closed or burned out, they would be out of a job. However, if you work for a state-owned enterprise or a ministry, you know that even if the ministry is burned out or the factory is destroyed, you are still going to get a paycheck. Second, he believed that in the public sector your loyalty is not to Iraq, but it is to whomever got you that job: uncle, religious or tribal leader, perhaps even a member of the insurgency. Interrogations indicated that a significant number of the insurgents were receiving a government paycheck. They were working for SoEs (state-owned enterprises) or the ministries Monday through Friday and planting IEDs on the weekend, or there were ghost workers who showed up once a month to get paid and give half to whomever got them the job.<sup>577</sup>

On the other hand, TFBSO efforts did reopen many businesses in Iraq. To a senior member of the TFBSO, they were coming in and opening factories, giving people back their jobs. The local media would "go nuts," because it was a big story. "They're reopening the Beiji fertilizer factory finally!" They tried very much to let the local Iraqi leadership like the Deputy Governor be "the face."<sup>578</sup> A stability operations commander in Baghdad remembered going with Mr. Brinkley and some U.S. Congressmen on a trip to reactivate a rug-weaving factory. It was using old-fashioned hand-weaving making beautiful, brilliant rugs in the ancient Sumerian tradition of rugmaking. The factory was intact and in perfect condition, but they did not feel secure enough and lacked the monetary resources to get started. What he saw was the Iraqi system begin to come back to life as, along with the Brinkley Group, the military helped to reactivate supply chains, internal and external.<sup>579</sup>

One of the leaders of the Brinkley Group gave his opinion on the situation in Iraq:

It was an irony because we were all actual people who had worked in capitalism. We were not communists. We had people who had never worked in the private sector in their lives attacking us like we were some sort of Stalinist reinforcement of the Ba'athist socialist regime. It was so absurd. Our whole point was that these factories employed thousands of people. They want their jobs back. They wanted to privatize these things. The way to privatize any industry is to have it up and running and efficient and operating, and then you bring people in who will buy it. No one buys an empty factory full of dust-covered equipment that has been sitting idle for three years. We made that clear every step of the way when we were opening these operations. At the end of the day, we did not care about selling. Our top priority was counterinsurgency. We needed to get local communities back to normal. Store is secured, I am going back to work. Kids are going back to school. Life is back to normal. Three years out of work, we had to get people back to a normal life and show them that America has not come to make their lives a living hell because that was what they thought. We were clear that our strategy was to transition these operations and privatize them over time. We did that. A lot of the most compelling ones such as cement operations and some metal processing plants were privatized and are still in operation. The process was underway and accelerating when we were shut down in 2011. A lot of these operations we were able to privatize early were in safe areas, not high risk. Companies like Lafarge (now LafargeHolcim) bought two of the big cement plants. There was a big phosphate plant that was purchased. We helped propel the tenders out publicly for that.<sup>580</sup>

He felt that the TFBSO worked well with USAID. What he thought devastated them was moving USAID from being a separate agency to being under the State Department, right in the middle of the Surge. Over time State put them into the DSS model for security and they were moved inside the Embassy compound and that compound they built was abandoned. When that happened, he felt the USAID mission collapsed. NGO engagements collapsed with it because all of that was through USAID. He thought that the TFBSO relationship with USAID was OK for a year and then new USAID people came in and joined the chorus of those saying, "Who are these assholes from DoD out there doing this?"<sup>581</sup>

An MNF-I planner felt that a particularly valuable TFBSO contribution was bringing in a consulting firm. The firm would ask where the experts were and were told in the ministries. When they went to the ministries, they found that they were primarily junior officials because

most of the senior ones took their pensions and left so they would not become a target. Grant-Thornton employed them as consultants. They understood the Iraqi system of governance under the still-existing ministries and became worth their weight in gold. It was a \$14M contract. An issue in 2007-2008 was getting a ministry in the Iraqi government that had \$20B to spend to pick up the \$14M contract because it was proving to be worthwhile. That was “in competition” with the typical State Department and USAID processes. But they learned to make use of it. He said that the Buy Iraqi First program of the TFBSO cost in the single-digit billions, which to him was a bargain compared to the cost of 200,000 Americans and contractors that were supported in Iraq.<sup>582</sup>

As the security situation in Iraq improved, more progress toward returning society to routine functioning could be made. Improvement would not be linear: there were fits and starts as opportunities to engage in non-insurgent crime and other issues became available. Nonetheless many interviewees felt a change in the local environment for the better.

Signs of progress began to be seen. A stabilization operations commander in Baghdad said that the build phase had to begin when the clearing is beginning, or even before, so that the humans that live there can feel that change is coming and happening right now. They can now come out and talk about the few insurgents remaining in the neighborhood. The walls come up, their kids can come back out. The sounds of children playing inside those areas again was to him the sound of progress, as well as the sound of construction material and equipment being put into place. All those things were the sound of progress, that is what it would look like to him. The build would begin early and be sustained throughout.<sup>583</sup>

A JSPA team leader talked about chlorine delivery which had slowed down in late 2006 but was required for clean water. Street cleaning and opening markets were seen as a big deal.

It was stressful all along, but he remembered feeling a sense of progress. Things such as street openings, whether the T-walls would come down and if it was safe to do that. Cooking oil deliveries and foodstuffs were important in early 2008.<sup>584</sup> An MNF-I planner recalled that Iraqi oil production was ticking up. He said that the number of satellite antennas on rooftops in what had been a police state a year before was stunning. By 2007-2008 he remembered seeing a shopping bazaar in Erbil where there were so many satellite dishes on the roof it made him worry for the roof.<sup>585</sup>

Little things mattered. A stability operations commander said that in some places they were buying paint, which would seem like a very minor element of rebuilding. Someone had once said to him, “Never underestimate the power of paint.” He thought it was a funny tongue-in-cheek point until they began to deliberately plan for where they wanted painting to occur.<sup>586</sup> Routine improvements were found to help restore a sense of normalcy to the population.

A Marine Corps MTT leader talked about the “palpable” differences between pre and post-Awakening Ramadi and on the east side of the city. It had been largely walled off before then with long lines at the checkpoints so people could get to the smallest markets to do any trading, but now it was a much more open city. They could not bulldoze their way through the streets anymore: they had to be attentive to traffic and politely find their way through. Markets were open, shops were reopening. On patrol with their Iraqi counterparts they could dismount, change dollars to dinars and have lunch at the local bazaar. That was the presence that was there, almost the kind of community policing he had hoped for in the end. By the time he left, the team he turned over to had “nothing to do in Ramadi but build the force.”<sup>587</sup>

## LEVEL OF INFLUENCE

Metz talked about the U.S. problem of assuming that the normal state of affairs is for a country to control all of its territory.<sup>588</sup> This construct hurt the U.S. during the early stages of Iraq because it tried to implement centralized control over Iraq, sparking the Sunni insurgency and setting off the sectarian conflict whose spike in violence led the U.S. to initiate the Surge. Along with Metz, writers such as Marston, Plakoudas, Branch and Wood, and Paul advocate the importance of conducting counterinsurgency at the lowest levels of the population possible.

An important smart power element of the Surge was trying to wean Iraq off of the centralized leadership that had dominated it since its inception. Chapter Seven will explore the paradox that Afghanistan had the opposite problem, not enough central government control. The key asset for this was the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). Ambassador Crocker talked about some of the nuances of the PRTs:

Some PRTs had excellent relations with the governor's office and used those relationships to bring Iraqis into the process. I would have to say that when you make that kind of civilian Surge with PRTs in a lot of different places around the case, often staffed with folks who didn't really know much about Iraq, it is essentially a foreign element. It is not organically part of an Iraqi process. Think small and think modest. Try to figure out where you can make a lasting difference, and that means doing a lot more listening than talking to figure out where we might have a sustainable, positive effect for the long term.<sup>589</sup>

An ambassador leading economic development during the Surge agreed. To him, it really was not about the reconstruction programs they did, but about how they picked them: which bridge to rebuild, which road to pave, which buildings in a community to fix. Was it the district bigwig saying "I want my mayor's office fixed" or was it a community-based organization that came together to develop a solution.<sup>590</sup> An advisor to the stability program at the Embassy and a PRT leader in the north both described the \$500 million local governance

program to help provincial leaders do planning, budgeting and execution of programs supporting the delivery of essential services at the local level to prepare them for the eventuality of provincial budgets drawn from Iraq's oil revenues, which took place soon after, and coordinate with the capital budgets of the national ministries.<sup>591</sup>

An MNF-I planner described the PRTs as helpful to lower levels of governance in helping them understand how to hold a council, how to nominate projects, how to make sure they were not too corrupt, that the money gets paid on time, etc.<sup>592</sup> A commander in the north agreed, saying they used the district advisory council to provide them with the list of potential projects. Microgrant applicants were sent to the district council building to request and collect the money. The idea was to get the locals to believe that their local government was working for them, train the officials on how to do their jobs, and hopefully provide some economic benefit. Corruption was still an issue: he heard that some district council members received kickbacks for guiding the U.S. to their favored projects.<sup>593</sup>

Similarly, a Treasury official working in Diyala Province believed that the military people working with the government did not understand enough of how the banking system and finance worked to know if they were being honestly dealt with. There had been a big battle in Baqubah, and the issue was timing. The local bank had received the cash for payment to farmers and for social services. This had happened right before the battle, so the bank could not get to the money, even though the money was secure. They wanted another batch of cash to make their payments, and the central bank said no. When she went there, she recalled that the bank was pretty torn up, including a pile of rubble in front of the safe that kept them from opening it. Eventually they got the additional money with the help of the civilian experts.<sup>594</sup>

Some local areas adapted faster than others. The PRT leader in Salah al-Din Province told people Salah al-Din was a special place because it had a strong insurgent contingent because most of the former regime leadership was from Salah al-Din as well as al-Qaeda/ISIS. Salah al-Din was more violent than Anbar or Baghdad, according to her roughly half the attacks with only a fifth of the population. But once stability was reestablished, they had a wealth of expertise available to put to work because Salah al-Din was where most of the Saddam-era national level government officials had been drawn from.<sup>595</sup> Another bridging piece provided by the PRTs was bringing the provincial governors, particularly from the Sunni provinces, to Baghdad to meet with the Iraqi leadership and U.S. government officials. The local PRT leader would accompany the governor down to Baghdad and go through the meetings with him. That created a connection between the province and central government that he believed had never really existed before.<sup>596</sup>

Better military cooperation enabled better PRT efforts. A brigade Civil Affairs officer in the north recalled that the local U.S. commander pushed a lot more soft power, in-person partnering with the PRT and his element, meeting with the governor and local leaders in the province to talk. To him, they were very supportive of the projects that were going on.<sup>597</sup> At the same time, one brigade commander felt that the tribal leadership was not as influential as he hoped as a positive enabler to our operations. An example he gave was when one of the Special Operations raids killed a woman and her daughter and maimed a young boy when a flash-bang was thrown into the room. The post-event interaction between the commander and the tribal leaders was able to defuse the situation. The Coalition did the condolence payments and the tragic event never surfaced again. The tribal leaders were effective in that sense. As far as denouncing violence and getting toward a theme of nationalism, he believed that that was more difficult with the tribal leaders.<sup>598</sup>

A stability operations commander in Baghdad remembered that all of the districts had councils and he would meet with them. The Coalition would provide them with paint and brushes, and they would begin to beautify key streets. One that was perhaps most significant to him was Haifa Street in central Baghdad, which had seen tremendous fighting. The fighting had been stabilized by Coalition and ISF and they were now doing the “hold and build” parts of the counterinsurgency strategy of “clear, hold and build.” He believed that “build” must begin while “clear” is ongoing and sustained through “hold” and then becomes the primary effort if stability is achieved. They needed a combat force that was equipped and organized to help the locals begin to do things like paint Haifa Street, put plants back into the street, put up playgrounds again, let children play, and reopen markets.<sup>599</sup>

A PRT team leader in the north described her experience:

I was very close to the deputy governor and governor and worked with them all the time. The very first meeting I had with the Iraqis was with the deputy governor. I tell people it was like they picked him out of central casting: former brigadier general, devout Muslim, Ba’athist. Here I am, former Peace Corps, I am not touching any weapons, I am a pacifist. At that first meeting he was very direct and said, ‘You are military occupiers, we want you out of our country.’ I said, ‘we want to go too, so let’s work together so we can get out of here faster.’ He and I became very close, and I worked with him all the time.

A financial advisor working with the TFBSO said that you can do the grand gestures, building bridges or giving every woman in the village a goat, but teaching people how to do their jobs better was what made the Surge effective, and was a lot of what it was about.<sup>600</sup>

Big projects attract big headlines. They also attract mismanagement, corruption and insurgent attacks. Robinson and de Tray both believed that smaller level projects and assistance are more effective. Interacting with Iraqis on a personal level often had the most lasting and positive impact.<sup>601</sup>

One true success was the work done by the TFBSO in cooperation with the Treasury Department to modernize the Iraqi financial system. A contractor with extensive experience as a banking supervisor working with the Brinkley Group was there working on payment systems. U.S. Treasury wanted an electronic payment system with a company that would not come into the country, so she ended up being the person intervening between them and the central bank and facilitated their bringing their equipment.<sup>602</sup> She found both Christian and Muslim females working at the bank. They had 500 women in their employ who did nothing but count money. They had some of the machines that could count 100 bills, but these were inadequate for the task. On the positive side, it was a way for women to be employed safely and could provide for their families because most of their husbands, fathers or brothers were dead. The Central Bank was interesting to her because 80-85% of the employees were female. Men could not sit in the room with the women alone, but she could sit anywhere she wanted to.<sup>603</sup>

The system in question was known as an RTGS (Real-Time Gross Settlements) system. The Brinkley Group in coordination with the Treasury Department, which was paying for it, sourced the Iraqi who put the system in. It was put in while she was there, and according to her it ran great. RTGS usually works with high-dollar items, not settlements. The ultimate object was to reduce the amount of cash payment and dollarization in the economy. She believes it is still in place.<sup>604</sup>

With her work she saw a lot of people being able to conduct commerce and do the things they needed to do, making that part of the Surge a positive to her. Many of the women she worked with at the Central Bank had been deeply affected by the war. As things economically improved, that effect was reduced. She stated that Iraq is a rich country and if the Central Bank were still operating in the same place they would be doing better, but it burned down three times.

Part of the problem was a distribution issue. There might be “tons” of money sitting in the Central Bank but if you can’t get it out, it is no good. Being able to support financial mediation was good. She recalled them as a very conservative central bank in comparison to some of the central banks she had worked with. It was all new leadership because anyone who had had leadership in the old bank was Ba’athist. When she went into the Central Bank in 2004 the women did not know how to use Excel. She was amazed that she was being paid a lot of money to teach people how to use Excel to their advantage. You cannot sell treasury bills without Excel, you cannot manage a reserve requirement without Excel, you cannot do any of that. However, they all had high school educations, and some had college.<sup>605</sup>

Similar systems upgrading occurred in other areas as well. A PRT leader in the north recalled that there were people working on the budget that were still using hand-written ledgers. Her team put in a simple Excel spreadsheet that revolutionized the process of tracking where the money went and how projects were distributed by type (such as education, water, health, etc) and location.<sup>606</sup>

## EMPOWERMENT

As discussed earlier, Schifrin felt that the Surge itself increased Iraqi belief that the Americans were serious about stabilizing Iraq and willing to commit resources to make that happen. Bringing Iraqis at all levels back into the process had to happen for long-term Coalition goals to be achievable. Plakoudas believed that neither insurgents nor counterinsurgents can succeed without local support.<sup>607</sup> Olson Lounsbery and Pearson went into extensive detail about

the need for agreements acceptable to all parties in the conflict in order to achieve success in “peacebuilding.”<sup>608</sup>

Multiple interviewees stated that creating a stable security environment was a means to the end of putting the Iraqis back in charge of their country and enabling normalization of the political, economic, and cultural functions the country possessed. As will be discussed in Chapter Nine, Iraq was different from Afghanistan which had little national governance structure. Iraq had infrastructure and people trained in employing it. The challenge was putting them back to work and getting them to perform their jobs in an efficient, non-sectarian manner. An MNF-I planner bluntly said that in the end it is their country: they “do not get to leave after a year.”<sup>609</sup>

A PRT team leader described the situation in more detail:

I went to Iraq in September 2003 for a long weekend as an effort by State Department to assist the Iraqis. I took a group of current and former foreign ministers and ministers of finance from the former Soviet Union. People like the Serbian Finance Minister, the former Russian Foreign Minister. I took them to Iraq for a three-day conference to meet with Iraqi officials. At the time we thought the biggest problem was going to be transitioning Iraq to a market economy. It was fascinating what the conversations were about. Two things stood out. An Iraqi gentleman who had been head of the Customs Union before the sanctions said that their customs union procedures were the envy of the region. They had been destroyed partly by Saddam Hussein and partly by the sanctions. Another participant said that Iraq and Italy had the same GDP in 1971. He said that people will say, ‘That is terrible, what happened?’ Instead, they should be saying, ‘They were the same in 1971: they were capable of achieving that and could have done much more.’<sup>610</sup>

A brigade Civil Affairs officer had learned that counterinsurgency or not, when the U.S. is the occupying country, it needed to treat people as humans.<sup>611</sup> At the same time, a PRT leader felt that Foreign Service training in the U.S. tends to mistake politeness with respect. The leader felt that although interactions must be polite and civil, you can still respectfully disagree with

people.<sup>612</sup> A planner at MNC-I said it was hard to tie everything together because it had to be an Iraqi plan, but it was easier to do it through the U.S. chain of authority.<sup>613</sup>

The Surge helped foster the conditions needed to rebuild Iraq. Interviewees talked about the psychological impact the Surge had on the Iraqis, changing their strategic calculus as they began to truly believe that the U.S. wanted to put them first and let them “take the lead.” As a result they became more willing to engage with the U.S. and pursue mutual objectives. It was as much as anything the evolution of a relationship.<sup>614</sup>

Many senior members of the Coalition regularly interacted with the Iraqi leadership. An MNF-I planner was part of the group including General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker who met weekly with Prime Minister Maliki, the Iraqi National Security Advisor and other senior officials. He recalled that they would talk about both hard and soft power issues.<sup>615</sup> Similarly, an Ambassador who was a senior economic planner met 2-3 times per week with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister for Economics, as well as the Finance Minister and other ministers. His role and seniority allowed him to talk about budget execution, ideas to propose or people from Washington to introduce.<sup>616</sup> A senior USAID official met with her primary liaisons 2-3 times a week as well as leaders from many ministries, sometimes accompanied by the Ambassador if the Ambassador had an issue with a minister.<sup>617</sup>

A JSAT planner recalled meeting several times a week with the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, the Iraqi National Security Council, some with the Ministry of Oil or the Ministry of Education. There were two objectives. One was trying to find out what the Iraqis wanted to do and were doing. The other was to attempt some persuasion to get them to do what the U.S. wanted them to do. That was a continuous problem throughout the effort. The key issue was to build capacity, but to him it was never well-defined if capacity was what they wanted to

do or what the U.S. wanted them to do.<sup>618</sup> An MNF-I planner recalled that the Deputy Prime Minister in the Maliki government was Barham Salih, who later became the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government. He was a U.K. citizen with a PhD in economics from a U.K. university. He became the “go-to guy” for the Coalition because he did not have the Sunni Arab/Shia concerns.<sup>619</sup>

A Civil Affairs officer working in a PRT described his growing relationship with the brother of a key advisor to Grand Ayatollah Sistani. He recalled that they even invited him to visit the mosques, but there was a formal agreement that the U.S. would not go anywhere near the mosques. He had to go to the Embassy to get the Ambassador’s permission, who agreed that he could go. The biggest concern was that he would be taken hostage. He joked that the rule was that if he died that was OK, but they did not want to have an American hostage.<sup>620</sup> A JSAT planner for the Embassy remembered that he learned a few words of Arabic and benefited. He recalled meeting with the Deputy Commander of the Badr Corps. He said he used his “3 or 4” words of Arabic, and the commander said, “Oh it’s so good that you know Arabic.” At the meeting, was a diplomat with a PhD from an Arabic University, he is a 5/5 speaker,<sup>621</sup> and “no one cares.” The fact that he was even trying gets more credit than someone who is accomplished at it. He said that like the three cups of tea in Afghanistan, he had to take a more circuitous route to get to his point and get cooperation.<sup>622</sup>

Surprising insights sometimes came from closer cooperation. A PRT leader recalled an interesting interaction with the principal sheikh for Saddam Hussein’s tribe. Their meeting ran into prayer time. The PRT leader told him there was a prayer room in the back if he wanted to go pray. The “sheikh” said no but asked if he had a whisky. Even though he was wearing the

traditional clothing of a religious leader, the PRT leader learned that it was about listening and figuring out where the Iraqis were coming from.<sup>623</sup>

Coalition members also gained greater fidelity in their areas of interest. A stability operations commander remembered that as they began to listen to the tribal and district councils and became much more precise in the help they were providing they were able to use intelligence to know if we were going into an area where the council was influenced by militias or Sunni extremist tribes versus someone who was really trying to get the situation stabilized.<sup>624</sup> To an Embassy Chief of Staff, soft power included getting Iraqis to spend funds in a non-sectarian manner.<sup>625</sup>

Several interviewees worked with the surprising challenge of getting the Iraqis to spend their money. An ambassador working economics at the Embassy said that the whole budget execution effort was about helping the Iraqis spend their own money, which was why he went so often to see the Finance Minister. Part of the budget execution problem was the shortcomings of the Iraqi bureaucracy. The U.S. wanted them to spend \$2B a year on infrastructure projects but they had no capacity to move that much money that quickly. He remembered a colleague saying that the war was really a series of three-month wars in which the U.S. was always looking to turn things around in the next quarter.<sup>626</sup> Another ambassador at the Embassy agreed, saying that many times the problem was not lack of resources, it was getting the Iraqis to execute. Their experience under an authoritarian regime meant that it was hard to get people to make decisions below the top. Officials less than a minister did not want to sign any piece of paper, which he said does not work when the goal is a functioning structure of government.<sup>627</sup> An MNF-I planner said that the 2003 Iraqi reconstruction fund was appropriated a total \$18.3 billion, and there were economic support funds managed through State Department and CERP totaling about

\$22 billion. Most of this had already been spent by the time of the Surge. By 2007 the oil money the Iraqis had to spend was around \$20 billion per year and growing.<sup>628</sup> Iraqi income at that point far outstripped U.S. contributions.

Trying to ensure proper funding allocation was also an education issue in Iraq. A Treasury representative working at the Embassy described trying to get the Iraqi budget passed on time, a Treasury Department policy priority. A member of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) told her that she needed to stop the budget. She sent him away. The next day someone else from that office showed up from that office and repeated the request: she told him to get out of her office. Then a third, even more senior person showed up, so she figured this was important to them and asked what they wanted to do. MNSTC-I wanted to take money out of the non-security side of the budget and add it to the defense budget to create a housing program and a make work program to discourage young men from joining the bad guys. She asked if this was buying security. He said yes. She told him it had to come out of their budget because it did not meet any of Treasury's policy priorities: further, they had not asked the other ministries if they wanted to give this much money up. Later the Treasury Attaché showed her a letter from MNSTC-I he received informing the Embassy and Treasury office that Generals Dempsey and Petraeus had met with the Prime Minister and they had changed the Defense Ministry budget to fund their items. She did not feel it met the security objective, but they were able to get the budget passed on time.<sup>629</sup>

Various forms of Iraqi mismanagement remained an issue. A PRT leader talked about the TFBSO providing a mechanism for bringing important business representatives of the U.S. to Iraq, but absent the Iraqis themselves making the reforms that draw investment, and absent Iraq efforts to stem corruption, he was skeptical that it had the desired effect, which he felt was

ultimately to blame on the Iraqis.<sup>630</sup> An MNF-I planner would be asked why this province had 18 hours of power per day and Baghdad only had 12? He recalled that when he flew over the country at night in helicopters there was no lack of electricity because they were leaving their outside lights on. He said that it wasn't until about 2008-2009 before they got better at asking questions of the Iraqi people rather than asking the ministry about the hours of power in Basra. They learned to ask how much electricity they had and where they got it? Were they getting it from the grid, or a neighborhood generator, or a personal one? There were thousands of small generators in Iraq: what they needed was diesel. These were different questions from asking if they were satisfied with the free electricity they were supposed to be getting: the answer of course was no. As another example, a CERP project would give a factory a generator which they said would get them to work. The Coalition bought one for them, then the factory still wasn't working. He would ask why, and the owner would say that the ministry was not providing them the raw materials they needed. It really was not the generator, although he knew it was being used. He took pictures of Iraqi wiring in the streets running from local generators to nearby houses. It was the same with gasoline. SOMO was the state oil marketing organization, whose job was to sell the oil Iraq was to produce, and they were the marketing arm. Gas was a penny a gallon. By 2004-2005 the Coalition was still reporting there was no gasoline, but since liberation a million cars had been imported. With an artificial price comes a black market. He said that 600-700 trucks pulled up every day at the Beiji refinery. The SOMO stations were not getting oil, but the black-market price for gas in Iraq was the same as it was in Turkey and Kuwait. Thus the trucks were selling the gas behind a building somewhere. He humorously recalled that in 2006 the people who had drawing rights to the fuel all had the same first name, Sheikh.<sup>631</sup>

Sometimes the Americans simply had to adjust to the Iraqi way of doing things. An ambassador leading economic planning recalled that about 2-3 weeks after the “Charge of the Knights,” Prime Minister Maliki and many of the ministers were still in Basra. The ambassador was sent down along with a military counterpart to ask the Prime Minister if they needed the Coalition to do any re-tasking of our assistance projects in Basra as a result of events. There were a large number of sheikhs also in the palace at the time. Maliki talked to them first. As he was being escorted to see the PM, he saw that every one of the Sheikhs was carrying a brand-new briefcase on the way out that they did not seem to have had on the way in. That was how the Iraqi government did tribal engagement. It was a benefit to the sheikhs for having met with the Prime Minister.<sup>632</sup>

Some of the Iraqis appreciated the value of the American presence in their country and anticipated it would be ephemeral. A Civil Affairs officer working in a PRT described the following scene:

I was in Tikrit in the governance building and I had an awesome translator. He says, ‘come with me.’ We went to the big theater in the government center and its packed with sheikhs. It looks like an Indiana Jones movie: the room was full of them. I stepped in being the only American and dressed in BDUs (Battle Dress Uniform) and armed. The deputy prime minister is at the front of the room. My guy is translating for me. The deputy prime minister is giving them hell. His lecture was awesome. He was saying, ‘You better recognize that the Americans are not your enemy. They aren’t staying: they are going to leave. You need to take advantage of their presence to get the best deal we can before they’re gone because they’re your best friends.’ He said that he knows that the sheiks were thinking that these infidels, we don’t need them. ‘Let me tell you about Islamic piety.’ He reached in his pocket and pulled out a piece of paper and said, ‘Do you know what this is? There was the Islamic Conference (somewhere in the Near East) last month. We paid the whole bill for the Iraqis in attendance, including this one. You know what this one is? This is a liquor bill! Don’t tell me about Muslim piety. You’re just the same as them: you love your booze; you just won’t show it. You better carry the ball now because when these guys are gone, things aren’t going to be so good.’<sup>633</sup>

A stability operations commander in Baghdad recalled the change from American to Iraqi leadership. At one of the last reconstruction meetings he chaired there had been a new Deputy Minister for Reconstruction position created. With it several members of provinces with whom the U.S. worked now had a presence at the table. It had gone from being a purely military meeting with a couple of Iraqis in the room to primarily Iraqi with the Americans off to the sides. He thought this was a phenomenal morphing in only several months. There was now a deputy minister who was essentially his counterpart and sat right beside him. The last thing he did was to hand full control over to the minister.<sup>634</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Interviewees saw security as a prerequisite for the attractive power activities needed to put Iraq back on a track toward growth. They could actually travel about the country and work more closely with Iraqi leadership to explain to the citizens what was being done and why. Growth was important as stability was restored, because Iraqis being convinced to cease sectarian militia activities needed to have an alternative way to make a living. Jobs and a political voice were seen as an important part of that alternative.

PRTs played a major role in weaning Iraq off the centralized decision-making style that had characterized the Saddam regime. Decision-making was pushed down to more local levels and gave Iraqis a greater voice in determining the direction they wanted their province or city to take. This enabled reconstruction projects that better reflected what the Iraqis wanted rather than what the Americans thought they needed. Increased oil revenues helped make more funds available, to the point that the challenge was occasionally getting the Iraqis to spend it. Overall

the trend moved toward increased employment and growth throughout the economic sector of Iraq.

## CHAPTER IX

### SURGE INTERVIEWEE RETROSPECTIVE

#### INTRODUCTION

Interviewees were asked several retrospective questions regarding the Surge, providing them an open-ended opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and the potential learning value. Some of the interviewees answered one or more of the questions in great detail, often relating them to personal experiences after the Surge. Both military and civilian interviewees had a number of interesting insights they had learned, with many shared opinions regarding their experiences.

Interviewees were asked if they believed the Surge produced long-term benefits, and why or why not. Almost all felt it produced benefits for the Iraqis, although some felt the benefits were short-term in nature. Many of the short-term responses felt that the benefits of the Surge had the potential to be long term but offered several reasons why this did not turn out to be the case. For some, regardless of how subsequent events in Iraq played out the world is still a better place for having done the Surge. Interestingly, Iraq Surge participants who went to Afghanistan for the subsequent surge there were far more likely to consider the Iraqi Surge successful than those who did not go to Afghanistan.

Interviewees were asked what soft power lessons they learned from the Surge. The most common answer would fall into the category of the need to do smart power. Both military and civilians by and large agreed that reconstruction and political progress were impossible to achieve in an unsettled security environment. They also emphasized the importance of working

with and listening to the local population. They talked about the importance of personalities and working to overcome structural shortcomings which remained even after the change to a more cooperative posture.

Interviewees were asked if the lessons of the Surge were applicable to other or future conflicts. Most said yes, many caveated it with the good schoolhouse answer “it depends.” Many believed small wars are going to be more prevalent in the future than large ones. Afghanistan provided an instant opportunity for many Surge veterans from both Defense and State to employ their lessons learned, which they found had degrees of success less than they had hoped for.

#### IN-PROGRESS REVIEW

In-progress review (IPR) is a military term for regularly analyzing how events unfold during the course of an operation and making necessary changes to future operations. It allows leadership to adjust original planning and expectations to achieve desired objectives.

In July of 2008 MNF-I published a document titled “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance.”<sup>635</sup> The three-page non-classified document is signed by General Petraeus. It serves as an interesting opportunity to see how MNF-I evaluated its actions and made appropriate adjustments.

In some ways it is a condensed version of *FM 3-24*. It contains many of the ideas captured in the field manual. Coercive power is important. It talks about utilizing all assets to defeat the insurgency to provide security and protect the population. Unity of effort and

cooperation are important, along with spending and reconstruction. Initiative and adaptability are emphasized. All these are similar to ideas addressed in *FM 3-24*.

One interesting difference is that Sons of Iraq are mentioned three different times in the MNF-I guidance. As has been seen, Sons of Iraq was an initiative developed by the Coalition to put Sunni militias on the counterinsurgency payroll to fight against al-Qaeda and other extremist insurgent elements. It was not welcomed by the Maliki government and often bypassed them with payment going directly to the militia elements being led by local Sunni sheikhs. This was a source of friction between the Coalition and the Shia-dominated Iraqi government that delegitimized the government.

*FM 3-24* devotes a full chapter to developing host nation security forces. It does recognize the possible existence of sectarian divisions within the security forces, and correctly observes that most host nation governments will resist recruiting disaffected ethnic groups into their security forces. It even cautions that ethnic discrimination by security forces can occur against the population. However, it does not advocate for recruiting and maintaining security utilizing host nation elements not under governmental control. It lists security elements as including military, police, corrections personnel and border guards, not militias. Thus, it would not be expected to incorporate Shia or Sunni militias in Iraq into the government security effort.

A theme continually emphasized throughout *FM 3-24* is the need for operations to enhance host nation government legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens. It says that success requires the government to be accepted as legitimate by most of “that uncommitted middle.” It says that the counterinsurgency forces must work with host nation ministries responsible for national and internal security. It advocates for establishing “Home Guard” units but defines them as local security forces under host nation governmental control.

Sons of Iraq was considered so critical to success in Iraq that it is mentioned no less than three times in the MNF-I guidance, even though it goes against the grain of *FM 3-24*'s advice regarding host nation control of the use of force and fostering their legitimacy. Why the major change?

*FM 3-24* acknowledges that a country may suffer from sectarian differences so severe that it can impact efforts to establish stability. However, it still seems to carry a degree of assumption that the host nation government will make some effort toward cooperation with opposing religious or ethnic groups. After it states that host nation governments will probably resist recruiting disaffected minorities into the security forces, it then holds out the hope that even moderate efforts to do so will provide enormous payoffs. There seems to be an element of wishful thinking that perseverance will produce success, a failure to recognize that there are some governments that are simply not amenable to cooperation with minority groups they may have battled with for decades or even centuries.

This had become a substantial problem by 2007. The Maliki government continually dragged its feet on bringing Sunnis into the armed forces. Interviewees have talked about the proclivity for the Iraqi government to replace competent Sunni leaders with Shia loyalists, further alienating the Sunnis. There was little effort to create a sense of unity among Iraqi security forces. At that point there was no realistic expectation that they could stabilize the country other than through severe repression in Sunni-held areas. Because the Kurds had an established and capable security force in the peshmerga, they were more insulated from Shia efforts to marginalize non-Shia Iraqis.

On the other hand one can say that MNF-I was following the guidance of *FM 3-24*. It does say that successful counterinsurgents need to be adaptable. General Petraeus saw the

success of the Anbar Awakening in western Iraq and believed it could be replicated in and around Baghdad. He needed to separate the warring factions and give the Sunnis some form of security. Since the Iraqi government refused to provide it to the Sunnis, he likely felt he had little choice but to circumvent official channels and work directly with the Sunnis to meet their security needs.

Ironically, the end result closely resembled the warning of *FM 3-24* that a desired end state for security forces is that they be sustainable by the host nation after U.S. and multinational forces depart. Although the capability to do so existed, the willingness of the Maliki government to do so did not. This caused a break between the Sunnis and the central government that contributed to the rise of ISIS in western Iraq and Syria after 2011 when U.S. ground forces departed Iraq by agreement with the Iraqi government.

#### DID THE SURGE PRODUCE BENEFITS?

General Petraeus was asked how much of a breathing space he had hoped to accomplish during the Surge, to which he responded:

We hoped to accomplish at least a few years and I think that we did. If you say that the Surge ended in the summer of 2008, then it was not until mid-December 2011, after our last combat forces and the four-star general departed, that Prime Minister Maliki launched the actions to target, for legal reasons, the Iraqi Vice-President, the senior Sunni Arabs in government, the Iraqi Minister of Finance who is not a Sunni Arab, and then a senior parliamentarian for Anbar Province. Peaceful demonstrations were put down fairly violently. Leaders that we had insisted be fired during the Surge were restored to command positions in the police and the army. A variety of other actions were taken that ultimately, once again alienated the Sunni Arabs from Iraqi society and tore it apart again, something that we had worked hard to bring back together. We really had a good 3 ½ years during which time the security situation and various other situations improved and did improve further beyond the Surge, but beyond which the underlying struggle for power and resources was never completely resolved, nor was the progress cemented by the implementation of laws that were passed by the Parliament by the Prime Minister.

The reality is that he undid a fair amount of what we did together and that was what alienated the Sunni population and allowed the al-Qaeda in Iraq remnants to reconstitute as the Islamic State and move into Syria, gather additional resources, and swing back into Iraq. And because of the changes he made in leadership and the way that he had undermined the chain of command and then a variety of other actions, at a time that those forces needed to be most capable of counter-offensive operations they were incapable of doing that.<sup>636</sup>

Most interviewees for this work were asked the following question: “Did you see the Surge as providing long-term solutions and how?” Interestingly, this was the most likely question for interviewees to not directly answer. Many chose to discuss short-term benefits of the Surge without providing a response to the question as asked.

Five of the 36 respondents were uncertain. A Civil Affairs officer did say that he did not feel that the security environment was any less dangerous when he flew into Baghdad in 2006 than when he left in 2008. The mortaring was still about the same, everything was about the same. He did not remember having a sense of safety during the time he was there.<sup>637</sup> Another officer felt that he could not tell from his “small-picture” perspective.<sup>638</sup> A USAID official felt that outside of some pockets of assistance it would be more appropriate to err on the side of humility.<sup>639</sup> Some of the “pockets” included the Ministry of Social Welfare and building the Iraqi defense capability, which she did feel are in a better place today than they were. She compared the effort to other parts of the world where USAID worked until the U.S. left because they did not need assistance anymore, which took decades to achieve.<sup>640</sup>

One respondent felt the Surge produced short term benefits that must be weighed against problems it also created. An ambassador who worked economic issues during the Surge felt it demonstrated the limits of what the U.S. can do for a long-term occupation effort. Short term success may have been achieved in terms of security and restarting the political process, but it was not realistic to think America could keep mobilizing Guardsmen every two or three years for

two decades. He felt that the Surge also gave external agents such as Iran or al-Qaeda the opportunity to push their narrative of the U.S. occupation, and they “came back with a vengeance” after the Coalition departed.<sup>641</sup>

Thirty-one of the 36 answered in the affirmative at some level. However, many qualified their answers in several ways.

Many of the interviewee answers coincided with the literature discussed earlier. Interviewees would agree with Buchanan and Gentile that the Anbar Awakening and Sons of Iraq were primary reasons for Surge success. Similarly, the idea of Olson Lounsbery and Pearson that the Sunnis in particular were desperate enough that even partnering with the Americans seemed a preferable alternative to continuing to host al-Qaeda. Pirnie and O’Connell and Schifrin showed the need for partnering with the indigenous security forces and making population protection the top mission priority. Although Hammes talked about enabling local forces rather than directly engaging the enemy, interviewees indicated that the early part of the Surge in particular required more Coalition direct action against insurgents, and Special Operations maintained eliminating key figures from the battlefield throughout the Surge. There was recognition like Fitzsimmons that ethnic and religious identities would be difficult to subsume in a “greater Iraq,” and political and resource constraints limiting Surge success as discussed by Friis.<sup>642</sup>

Responses can be placed into three broad categories:

- 1) The Surge produced short term benefits.
- 2) The Surge could have produced long term benefits, but circumstances intervened.
- 3) The Surge produced long term benefits.

## Short Term Benefits

Almost all interviewees felt that the Surge at least provided some form of benefits. A JSAT team leader had a unique view that the greatest benefit of the Surge was to the American military and people. Rather than following the Iraq Study Group recommendation to leave, the U.S. intelligently applied American and military and civilian efforts in such a way that to him it made a difference.<sup>643</sup> His opinion indirectly shows up in the pride many Surge participants felt for their role and perceived impact in Iraq. A brigade commander during the Surge said that he was proud of what they did even though they lost a lot of soldiers. They knew they were increasing risk when they left the FOB, but he saw that as the only pathway forward. He felt that they had to be willing to show faith toward the common end with the Iraqis.<sup>644</sup>

Some interviewees felt it was the change in method that was effective. An ambassador leading economic planning said that the Surge was not a solution in and of itself. The Surge to him was a change in tactics resourcing. He felt that it did demonstrate that you could put a whole-of-government approach together with resources and far-sighted management of them.<sup>645</sup> A Treasury Department official agreed that the Surge had people with subject matter expertise looking at making things work holistically. She felt that because of the Surge there is an underlying foundation for government moving forward.<sup>646</sup> A Psychological Operations officer felt that in some ways it was not anything different, just a shift in paradigm. For example, the Sunni Awakening was already taking place as early as September 2006. To him the Surge was really capturing those events, putting them in an umbrella plan and then sprinkling in a few more actions.<sup>647</sup> A Civil Affairs officer said that they could not have had the soft power without the hard power. To him, everybody had their role.<sup>648</sup>

Some emphasized positive short-term effects of the Surge. A JSPA planner observed that from the point of view of population security metrics, the Surge was effective, but it could not be done forever. Long-term there had to be a handover to reestablish a sovereign government of Iraq.<sup>649</sup> A provincial brigade commander agreed, saying that the Iraqis did not really embrace and capitalize on their successes. He saw them stealing copper out of generators and soldiers selling their weapons. Battalion commanders had to pay for their positions to their brigade commanders. Troops would get one meal a day, but the commander received enough money for three and pocketed the rest. There was deep hatred due to the cultural and religious differences between Kurds, Sunnis, and Shia. He definitely saw short-term success, but to him it did not materialize into long term benefits.<sup>650</sup> Along those lines, an ambassador working economics believed that the Surge gave the Iraqis a security pause, and time to build a political consensus. It gave them a security window of opportunity to forge a political consensus which in the end they did not do.<sup>651</sup>

A USAID contractor working with the banking system said the Surge provided medium-term solutions. To her, nothing works long-term if you are talking 20-25 years. When she was in Iraq, they were working on short-term solutions except for the payment system.<sup>652</sup> An Embassy planner felt that they laid an effective foundation, posturing the Iraqis for success as best we could.<sup>653</sup>

### Potentially Long Term

There were interviewees who felt that the gains of the Surge had the potential to be long term. A brigade commander in Baghdad said that the Surge reduced the number of follow-on

battles because of the higher concentration of soldiers during the Surge. To him, asking whether the effects were long-term or transitory is a loaded question. He said that the effects have a shelf life and that is where the question arises of how much presence you have left over to keep things under control. He learned the hard way that you can't give people a capability they can't sustain themselves. For example, they put in large generators ("Mother Of All Generators") that needed the street cleared to pass. He returned to Iraq many times since the Surge and the generators are all gone: he said they just don't exist.<sup>654</sup> A PRT leader agreed that the Surge bought time, but that progress is not linear and the time bought must be used effectively.<sup>655</sup>

A Special Forces commander criticized what he saw as a failure to work more broadly. He believed the Iraqi Special Operations Forces performed well after the U.S. departure, but other Iraqi military and police capabilities were not as well-developed by the Coalition. He said that at the time he joked that the Coalition was creating a "plastic chair army." They were good enough to sit in a plastic chair and check IDs at a checkpoint and run population security measures across the country. What was not created was an army that could withstand a little contact with the enemy. When ISIS came across the north in the 2012 timeframe, he said that most of those conventional forces threw down their equipment and ran.<sup>656</sup>

A stability operations commander in Baghdad went into detail about the issue of sustainable effectiveness:

The benefits produced had the potential to be long term. Long term also means they are attended to over the long term. In other words, the gains are consolidated and not lost: they must be attended to. This is why you see something like Japan or Germany or South Korea looking very different than Iraq. The cultures are different, but so are they among those three countries. What is very different is the presence. There was a large, continuous presence that had generational effects on professionalism and the conduct of government. A very senior counterpart who could put direct pressure on the senior military officials and the president. It was one more arm that did not have to be entirely diplomatic. The Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, Commander of U.S. Army and Air Forces in Europe, we had very senior structures there that could put direct pressure on

German leadership. General McArthur as he established conditions of occupation in Japan created a constitution and other sorts of things. Is that military? No, that's governance. He just happened to have the legitimate authority to do that. We have gotten away from that since the 1950s, there is a belief that the military should not be involved in that. But in places where the military has been involved in that and has led it, it has always worked well. You can use Secretary Marshall with the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Germany, or the continuous presence of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea that has led to everything from a highly professional military to a democracy that can undergo an impeachment without the military being involved. All these things I have witnessed myself in just the last few years. That came from us being present. Our desire to reduce presence quickly in Iraq occurred before any of that had set in. It would have been like withdrawing our U.S. force presence from Germany in 1950. It was not ready: the systems of government weren't ready. The military stabilized the emergence of governance over the next three generations: we did not do that in Iraq. There are many lessons to be drawn from this. The potential is always long term. The work that we did was indeed a long-term effect: the gains were not consolidated as a matter of policy.<sup>657</sup>

Several interviewees felt that the Surge achieved positive effects that proved transient.

An Embassy planner said that it provided a solution for a couple of years, but a lot of those accomplishments were lost when the government became more blatantly sectarian. In theory, it was going to provide political space to facilitate compromise between Shia and Sunni actors, but he did not see that happen.<sup>658</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff said the U.S. subsequently got away from its successes which to him needed one leader developing a comprehensive, persistent strategy with conditions.<sup>659</sup> To an MNC-I planner, the benefits were transitory because the fundamental politics of Prime Minister Maliki had not changed. He believed that the Coalition could have achieved more long-term success had it persevered or had Maliki evolved politically and been less under Iranian influence. With the departure of the military, the U.S. did not have enough influence on him to prevent his "bad behavior."<sup>660</sup>

## Long Term Benefits

Other interviewees were confident that the Surge had positive long-term ramifications. An IO Task Force leader said that the data on polling, violence and Iraqi confidence all show it. He said that these gains continued to reflect progress through 2011, years beyond the end of the Surge.<sup>661</sup> An MNC-I planner said that it essentially stabilized Iraq so that from 2009-2011 ISF acting in a generally politically-neutral way could control the insurgency.<sup>662</sup> A JSPA planner helped author a white paper in summer 2006 that said the U.S. was failing in all 5 lines of operation. He believed that without the Surge Iraq was lost, so it was a positive long-term result.<sup>663</sup> A Special Forces commander recalled that they dramatically dropped the level of violence and changed the dynamic. When he was there in 2010, he recalled Iraq had relative peace, security, and the beginnings of economic stability, particularly as the oil market and infrastructure really started to come online, which to him was bought by the Surge in 2007.<sup>664</sup>

Similarly, an MNF-I planner focused on economics said that from a high of 3200-3300 civilian deaths per month, by 2010 there were days when there were no reported war-caused deaths. Markets were open and oil companies were coming in.<sup>665</sup> A Marine Corps MTT leader said that the desired effect was achieved but said that the fact that it was coincidental/planned with the Anbar Awakening was the only way it would have been achieved.<sup>666</sup> A Civil Affairs officer who believes the benefits were “strong and long term” points to the struggle Iraq is having in its relationship with Iran, desiring an Iraqi future independent of an Iranian theocracy. A lot of 18–19-year-old Iraqi lives were transformed by their relationships and interactions with Americans according to him. There was a plaque on the wall at the U.S. Army National Training Center that he said read, “Every soldier is an ambassador.”<sup>667</sup>

## Policy Criticism

Many of the interviewees were critical of the decision by the Obama Administration to pull combat forces out of Iraq entirely. An IO Task Force leader did feel that invading Iraq was not necessary and “atrociously planned.” He recalled sitting in the living room of a friend prior to the invasion when the friend got a call from Jay Garner saying, “Can you help me with a political-military plan?” Apparently, they did not have a plan three months before they went in. To him, President Obama made a strategic choice in 2011 that was constrained by what President Bush had done, so the fact that President Obama made a decision that resulted in an undercutting of sustaining the effort after 2011 was not just Obama’s fault.<sup>668</sup>

He also felt that State Department lacked conceptualization that they were going to be in charge of running a peace process and a continuing political-military struggle after 2011. He was astounded at the number of times he heard, “we need to be a normal embassy,” even in CPA days. Another time he was walking through the Embassy talking with the Deputy Public Affairs Officer about the IOTF’s campaign to counterbalance Iranian interests. The officer said, “Well, isn’t that really the Iraqis’ problem now?” To him, overall State Department employees are not doers. They worry that conducting a controversial messaging campaign might get them PNGd (Persona Non-Grata).<sup>669</sup>

Other critics of policy included an ambassador who worked economics at the Embassy said that putting an end date on the U.S. military presence was a huge mistake.<sup>670</sup> Another ambassador said that under President Obama the focus shifted to the Iraqis doing more for themselves, then oil prices crashed and Al-Qaeda in Iraq recovered.<sup>671</sup> A staff officer at MNF-I thought that the change to the Obama Administration hurt badly because they were myopic.<sup>672</sup>

An Information Operations officer believed that the benefits were tied to political gains. Then it tailed off, the U.S. pulled out, and he felt that everything that had been achieved was gone.<sup>673</sup> An Embassy official working stabilization and transition felt that when the Obama Administration decided to pull the troops out, Iraqi leaders lost their insurance policy to take the difficult steps of transition that would inevitably be a threat to his own life and that of his ministers.<sup>674</sup>

A Special Operations commander put a certain amount of responsibility on the Iraqis and the sectarian nature of how they moved leadership around. He said that the inclination to act in a sectarian manner was always within the system and the thing that stopped it was the US military or the Embassy's ability to go to the Iraqis and say "Uh-uh, why are you moving the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division commander? Major General Ali had done a phenomenal job: why are you changing him out? This is not normal rotation, and the guy you're putting in sucks, we know he sucks. He's been here, here and here, we know he's incompetent, corrupt, etc." When the Coalition left in 2011, he believed that the U.S. lost that leverage and ability to protect the Iraqis from their darker nature.<sup>675</sup>

An MNF-I planner similarly blamed the pullout for preventing the Surge effects from being long term. It allowed Prime Minister Maliki to renege on his pledge to bring the Sons of Iraq into the formal security structure. It also allowed him to replace competent military leadership with ones loyal to him. When Mosul fell to ISIS, the colonels got in helicopters and flew back to Baghdad. The captains and lieutenants got into jeeps and hit the road. He had expected that the Americans wanted about 10,000 to stay to provide the combined arms skills, secure communications, the honest broker, the things we can do very well. He was surprised that the negotiated agreement was all the Americans out by December. Without U.S. redundancy, Baghdad was back to its old ways of ignoring everything it did not want to hear from the field.<sup>676</sup>

A TFBSO manager pointed out the international ramification of the U.S. pullout. He felt that leaving about 5,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq would not have been for them to conduct combat operations. He saw their role as the presence of a senior commander in Baghdad. When Kassam Soleimani (Iranian Quds Force Commander) would try to strong-arm Prime Minister Maliki into doing things against the interest of the Iraqi people, the U.S. soldiers would give Maliki the ability to say, “Of course I would do this for you, but I have the Americans here, what do you want me to do?” He believed that presence would even have forestalled the emergence of ISIS and destabilization of Syria.<sup>677</sup>

## STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN

Table 8 summarizes interviewee responses to the benefits question and subdivides them by various categories:

CATEGORY	YES	LONG TERM Potential	SHORT TERM	UNCERTAIN
Army	4	5	3	3
USMC	1	1	*	*
DoS	4	5	4	2
USG	2	*	1	*
Foreign	1	*	*	*
Career	6	10	4	3
Temporary	6	1	4	2
Soft Power Spec	12	9	6	5
Hard Power Spe	*	2	2	*
Prior Iraq Exp	10	7	6	5

CATEGORY	YES	LONG TERM Potential	SHORT TERM	UNCERTAIN
No Prior Iraq Ex	2	4	2	*
Leader	4	5	2	4
Staffer	8	6	6	1
BN-	1	*	*	1
BDE+	11	12	8	4
Conventional	11	11	8	4
Spec Ops	1	*	*	1
Baghdad	9	9	7	3
Iraq Other	3	2	1	2
Left the Base	9	8	4	4
Did not Leave	3	3	4	1
Met with Iraqis	11	10	7	5
Did not MWI	1	1	1	*
Detainee Work	4	3	2	1
No Detaine Wrk	9	8	6	2
AFG Surge	9	2	2	1
Not AFG Surge	2	6	6	3
Soft power app	11	11	6	3
SP N/A	*	1	4	1

Table 8: Interviewee Responses to Surge Benefits Question by Categories

Note that not all subgroups will add up to 36. Responses are displayed roughly in a best to worst manner from left to right in terms of positive impact. No interviewee said the Surge had a negative effect, hence “uncertain” is designated as the right end of the scale. In some cases, subgroupings are too small to draw theoretical conclusions. Subgroupings of note are highlighted in yellow and are discussed below.

## Afghanistan “Surge” Participants

By far the most interesting category was Iraq Surge participants who subsequently participated in the 2009 Surge in Afghanistan, which was not even an initial interview question. 14 Surge participants or 38.8% of those surveyed were in Afghanistan in 2009. This is a high percentage when viewed as conducting consecutive year combat tours. Normally a servicemember or civilian who is deployed into a combat zone is expected to have recovery time before being sent back into combat, particularly in another country. It demonstrates the ability of General Petraeus to exercise his ability to get the people he wanted into key positions. Ambassador Crocker would become Ambassador to Afghanistan, but not until 2011 or after the Afghanistan Surge had ended.

Of the 14 Surge participants who went to Afghanistan in 2009, nine can be categorized as saying the Iraq Surge produced long-term benefits or 64.2%. Of the 36 total interviewees for this work, 12 indicated that the Iraq Surge produced long-term benefits or 33.3%. 75% of those responses came from the 38.8% of respondents who went to Afghanistan. By comparison, only two of the 17 respondents who did not go to Afghanistan in 2009 felt that the Iraq Surge produced lasting results, or 11.8% (one long term benefit respondent did not indicate service in Afghanistan either way). Interviewees who went to Afghanistan in 2009 were over five times as likely to say the Surge in Iraq produced lasting benefits as those who did not.

The nine respondents who went to Afghanistan and said the Iraq Surge produced long term benefits can be further delineated as follows:

3 Army, 1 USMC, 2 DoS, 2 US Government, 1 foreign  
6 career, 3 temporary

All 9 were soft power specialists

7 had prior experience in Iraq

4 were leaders, 5 were staffers

8 served at brigade level or higher

1 was special operations

7 worked in Baghdad, 2 were in outer provinces

7 traveled outside the wire

8 met with Iraqis

3 worked with detainees

7 felt the lessons of the Iraq Surge were applicable to other/future conflicts

None of these subcategories were significantly different from their percentages relative to all interviewees. Only three were Army, so the response is not simply being made by close confidants of General Petraeus. Interviewees who went to Afghanistan and believed the Iraq Surge produced long term benefits were statistically representative cross-sections of all other sub-categories developed for this study. In other words, it was not responses of military members or careerists or staff members that truly explains the disparity. Interviewees who subsequently went to Afghanistan were far more likely to view the Iraq Surge as successful independent of who they worked for, what they did or where they did it in Iraq.

It is beyond the author's knowledge of cognitive psychology to explore in-depth the reasons why people who were in Afghanistan in 2009 were more than five times as likely to say the Iraq Surge was successful as those who did not go to Afghanistan. Theories regarding cognitive relativism can provide potential insight. Cognitive relativism has a number of competing definitions in the field of psychological study, but does make two primary claims:

- 1) The truth-value of any statement is always relative to some particular standpoint;
- 2) No standpoint is metaphysically privileged over all others.<sup>678</sup>

Immanuel Kant said that the concept of objective reality is not valid if taken independent of human experience because it is only because of human experience that thought and classification becomes possible.<sup>679</sup> Modern relativist philosophers such as Richard Rorty and Kuhn argue that differing experiences can result in differing paradigms or viewpoints of events and thus different “truths,” although they dismiss the idea that each viewpoint is necessarily of equal worth.<sup>680</sup> Another possible explanation is the self-affirmation theory of Claude Steele which postulates that individuals will attempt to protect their self-integrity when confronted with information that contradicts their sense of self, in this case seeking a positive Iraq Surge outcome as reaffirming their sense of self-value.

The Afghanistan Surge was ordered by President Obama in response to what was seen as a deteriorating security situation there, combined with his campaign opinion that more U.S. focus should be placed there rather than Iraq. It consisted of 17,000 U.S. troops supplementing 68,000 NATO forces already in Afghanistan.<sup>681</sup> Both numbers are about half of the comparable figures for Iraq in 2007. About half of the PRTs in Afghanistan were staffed by non-U.S. participants, so there was also less of a civilian “surge.” Consequently, it was sardonically referred to as the “mini-Surge” or “half-Surge.” It did not receive the media publicity of the effort in Iraq, nor did it produce results approximating the dramatic change seen in Iraq.

It is reasonable to suppose that a person who experienced two different events may be more favorably inclined to pick one as the better of the two and even overestimate its success. Everyone wants to see their life’s work as successful. Having participated in both Surges begins to accumulate a substantial portion of one’s working life. No one wants to say they wasted a

substantial portion of their life, so having two different experiences gives them an opportunity to believe that at least one worked. This would contrast with Vietnam, which was the primary U.S. effort of its time so that even a person who worked multiple tours of duty “at the front” did them all in Vietnam and would lack the opportunity to create a perception of “good” and “bad” wars.

This viewpoint shift should not be dismissed as entirely imaginary. Even “short term” results can be expected to produce gains. A year or two without violence in a stretch of many years is certainly better than none at all. Less expenditure of lives and treasure will resonate through the subsequent years. Modernization and infrastructure improvements will remain. Interaction with Coalition members changes the perspective of the Iraqis toward Westerners. Many interviewees both military and civilian gave examples of Iraqis emulating their good habits and continuing to see these changes on subsequent trips to Iraq. Nations contemplating future partnering with the U.S. would probably be less inclined to do so had it pulled out of a failing Iraq in 2007 versus a stable Iraq in 2011. Possibly, viewing Iraq from the paradigm of Afghanistan experience changes the focus of its group members and permits them to develop a more nuanced or pragmatic viewpoint of the outcome in Iraq.

Conversely, people who did not go to Afghanistan may have a greater degree of idealism and judge the effort in Iraq by a more stringent standard compared to those who were members of a different effort that did not produce a noticeable change, even in the short run. To the Iraq-only interviewees there may be more of a perception that since Iraq is not currently a stable, prosperous nation where all sects and cultures are equally represented and thriving, the U.S. intervention there and the Surge in particular were not a success. The ambitious Coalition goals laid out at the beginning of the effort in Iraq were not fully achieved. This does not mean that good things did not happen, although whether they were worth the price paid is a normative

judgement. An Iraq Surge participant who did not see the level of change they hoped for but had no other experience to compare results could be inclined to a harsher perception of the outcome in Iraq.

### Leaders

Six of the 15 leaders provided low end responses of benefits being short-term or uncertain, for a rate of 40%. By comparison, seven of 21 staffers provided low end responses, or 33%. It could be a statistical anomaly: one less low-end response by the leaders would equate their answer rate with the staffer's low-end rate.

The lower enthusiasm rate of the leaders for the Surge outcome could be explained by a keener awareness of the costs of the Surge. These were the people who had to write condolence letters home to grieving American families. This could potentially incline them to view Surge success through a darker lens, injecting a degree of normative opinion beyond that of staff and support personnel.

### First-Time Iraq Participants

All of the interviewees who did their first tour of duty in Iraq during the Surge indicated some level of positive value to the Surge. None were among the five "uncertain" responses, which all came from people with prior Iraq experience at a rate of 17.9%. A single "uncertain" response would have increased the eight first-time Iraq participants "uncertain" response rate to 12.5%, still interestingly below the rate of people with prior experience in Iraq.

This outcome is the most difficult to explain since it would seem to run counter to the logic of the Afghanistan participants previously described for whom more counterinsurgency experience correlated with a more generous view of the Iraq Surge's success. Perhaps the first-timer's lack of prior experience in Iraq during times when the situation did not seem as dire would incline them to think of the high level of violence as more typical than someone who had been in Iraq during more stable times, thus leaving them even more impressed by the post-Surge stabilization of Iraq.

#### Participants Who Did Not Travel Outside The Wire

Five of the 11 interviewees who did not regularly travel outside the wire rated the Surge results as low end, or 45.5%. By comparison, only 8 of the 25 interviewees who did regularly leave the compound, or 32%, rated the Surge results as low end. In this case, changing a single response for the interviewees who did not travel outside the wire brings them to 36.4%, still interestingly above the rate of interviewees who did leave the compound.

A case can be made that going outside the wire and seeing Iraq could alter a person's perception of the effort there. Seeing markets reopening, projects completed and getting first-hand feedback from the Iraqi general population could leave participants with a more positive feeling regarding Surge results than someone who only learned about these changes on briefing slides or cables written for higher headquarters. Someone who never left the compound might miss that firsthand opportunity to see change, possibly made worse since the bases were all regular targets for indirect fire attacks from the insurgents.

## Proportions Difference Testing

The following table depicts proportions testing of data points of interest among interviewees to the question of whether the Surge produced benefits:

Subgroup 1	Proportion in Group 1	Comparison Group 2	Proportion in Group 2	T-Statistic
AFG participants who thought the Iraq Surge was successful	.642	Non-AFG participants who thought the Iraq Surge was successful	.118	3.49*
Leaders who thought Surge benefits were short term or were uncertain	.40	Staffers who thought Surge benefits were short term or were uncertain	.32	1.48
First-Time Iraq participants who thought the Surge benefits to be short term or were uncertain	0.0	Returning Iraq participants who thought the Surge benefits were short term or were uncertain	.179	2.76
Did not travel outside the wire and thought Iraq Surge benefits were short term or uncertain	.46	Traveled outside the wire and thought Iraq Surge benefits were short term or uncertain	.32	.76

\*  $p < 0.05$

Table 9: Significance Testing

The category of significance, as described previously, proved to be Iraq Surge participants who subsequently went to Afghanistan. Hypotheses were as follows:

A1: Iraq Surge participants who subsequently went to Afghanistan were significantly more likely to consider the Iraq Surge a success than Iraq Surge participants who did not subsequently go to Afghanistan.

Proportions testing demonstrated a t-statistic for the difference of 3.49, a result well beyond a 95% confidence level and disproving the null hypothesis.

The other categories tested did not demonstrate a sufficient deviation from the null hypothesis to prove significance.

L1: Leaders were more likely than support personnel to consider the Surge to have had only short term or uncertain benefits.

Proportions testing demonstrated a difference of 1.48, a response rate that does not disprove the null hypothesis.

F1: First time personnel deployed to Iraq were less likely to consider the Surge a success than personnel who had previously deployed to Iraq.

Proportions testing demonstrated a t-statistic for the difference of 2.76, however given the small number of responses, this is insufficient to disprove the null hypothesis at the  $p < 0.05$  level – we cannot be confident that there is a difference between the groups.

T1: Personnel who travelled outside the wire were more likely to consider the Surge a success than those who did not travel outside the wire.

Proportions testing demonstrated a t-statistic for the difference of .76, a value that does not disprove the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups.

## **SURGE LESSONS LEARNED**

Interviewees were asked what soft power lessons they had learned from Iraq. As an open-ended question, there were a range of answers given covering a number of important topics. There was no discrete categorization of answers lending themselves to statistical analysis akin to that provided by the query of whether the Surge produced benefits.

This work focuses on the important ones that consistently came up. Many talked about systemic problems that in some cases still persist, feeding into a concern about internalizing the lessons learned. Working together was deemed important, both in terms of interagency cooperation and individual personalities. The importance of empowering host nation leadership with soft power tools such as messaging were also emphasized by interviewees.

### Systemic Problems

A short-term hire working economics for the Embassy found that the U.S. was still trying to overcome organizational and structural issues. He said that when he went back to the Embassy in Baghdad six months later, he did not know a single person there. Leaders like Petraeus and Crocker bring with them core staffers that had worked with them before, so they did not have to worry about whether the team would work. He felt that these teams were an important part of what made the Surge successful.<sup>682</sup> An ambassador who worked at the Embassy early in the Surge returned to Washington and responsibility for managing the manning effort in Iraq. He gives credit to Secretary of State Rice for implementing some level of reform to the system to get the best and brightest into Iraq. He said that diplomatic service is not about going to war zones. The military is an organization designed and trained for that, and if you want your military career to succeed you need to go there from the beginning.<sup>683</sup>

Many interviewees talked about the importance of a concerted effort. Several officers said there need to be multiple integrated things happening at length: there is no silver bullet.<sup>684</sup> An MNC-I planner said that coordination between the senior decision-makers within the government are needed so it can be implemented. The spectrum between hard and soft power is not a switch:

to him it is a continuum.<sup>685</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff said that unity of effort does not have to be a Surge, but rather a coordinated versus ad hoc effort that takes a whole of government approach.<sup>686</sup> An ambassador who worked on economic issues said he was a big fan of close integration of military and civilian efforts, particularly the PRTs. Joint campaign planning and integration to him will be very important if the U.S. is ever in a similar situation.<sup>687</sup>

A Civil Affairs team chief described the sometimes-discordant nature of the U.S. effort in Iraq as “everyone and their mother was trying to execute ‘soft power.’”<sup>688</sup> Similarly, an Embassy planner said that the civilian and military sides do not understand how to work together, and they do not fit together very well. He feels they will not be successful unless they come up with a common planning schema to understand what their differences are and how to fit together.<sup>689</sup> An MNC-I planner said that the integration has to start early. Joint exercises to practice soft power would be effective to him.<sup>690</sup> A PRT team leader felt that soft power was not resourced in Iraq. Even with the Surge he saw it as still the military in the lead and taking on soft power activities by pushing themselves out to the grassroots rather than integrating soft power experts into what the military was doing at the lower levels.<sup>691</sup>

An MNF-I planner went into some detail on some of the limits facing the Executive Branch. He said that people may talk about increasing the number of Foreign Service Officers from 6,000 to 9,000, but what are the extra people going to do? To him, State Department is great at being able to deliver a message. But when they were thrown into a conflict environment and had to create the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq, they discovered that they did not have the right kind of people. They had leaders to do engagement and people to do messaging and public diplomacy: what they did not have were farmers who knew how to increase crop yields or raise better chickens. Even USAID is composed of more managers than front-line

workers, so the U.S. ends up hiring expertise from the outside on short-term contracts. His concern was that it can become a grant-distributing agency handing out money and hoping the results obtain. The original concept behind the PRTs was that the mission would provide security. But that became the enormous Blackwater or Triple Canopy operations instead of operating with the local military forces.<sup>692</sup>

## PERSONALITIES

Multiple interviewees commented on the human element of success. A Civil Affairs officer said that there were many things that were personality driven. To him it is not a particular technique that was effective, it was how those skills were integrated, and the leadership has to do that.<sup>693</sup> A provincial brigade commander recalled two basic types of State Department officers. The first PRT commander he worked with wanted to make a difference and gain experience in Iraq even though disagreeing with the U.S. policy to be there. He believed that others saw deployment as a way to have a last adventure before retirement whether they agreed with the U.S. policy to be there or not. He found it more difficult to cooperate with the latter even if they had a lot of experience and the potential to be very effective.<sup>694</sup> An advisor at MNC-I summed it up as “Honesty. Relationships. Trust.”<sup>695</sup> A Treasury official felt it important to approach the task with some level of humility, not to go in and say you have the answers to all their problems. To her it is not a bad thing to take a couple of days before you start “spouting off.”<sup>696</sup> Similarly, a USAID manager said, “Never promise what you can’t deliver.” She believed that if you overpromise and underdeliver you are making a bad name for everybody.<sup>697</sup>

## Empowerment

Interviewees talked about the importance of interacting with Iraqis below the national level. An ambassador leading economic planning felt that local engagement is important. He thought it was important to have a few things they did really well and pay attention to what was happening at the local level.<sup>698</sup> Another ambassador agreed, saying that empowerment must occur down to the local level: otherwise, you end up with no loyalty, and corruption.<sup>699</sup> A stability operations commander in Baghdad said that soft power has to happen from the bottom up and be resourced from the top down.<sup>700</sup> Even a detention facility commander felt that part of his success came from building relationships with local leaders, tribal leaders and sheikhs.<sup>701</sup>

Interviewees discussed standards as well. A brigade commander in Baghdad said that when improving things like electricity, and sewage, it had to be to their standards, not yours. Painting the curbs, having flowers in the islands, giving them money to open the stores, may be satisfying, but can they sustain it? Is it important to them? Otherwise, it is just good for us.<sup>702</sup> A JSAT planner at the Embassy expressed a similar viewpoint on progress. Do you pick up the trash yourself or do you get the Iraqis to pick up the trash?<sup>703</sup>

Related to this, an economics officer at the Embassy felt that the most important lesson was making the host government as accountable as possible. He felt that there must be better synchronization to ensure that the host nation actually implements the reforms that they promised to execute that are the basis for so much international support, both economic and security.<sup>704</sup> An IO Task Force leader believed that the only truly national interest the U.S. has is the production of a functional social order: everything else is subordinate to that.<sup>705</sup> A planner at the Embassy believed that here is only so much you can do for someone. If they do not want it

themselves then it does not matter how much soft power you put into an area, it is not going to be effective.<sup>706</sup> A PRT leader said that sometimes it felt like trying to teach a high school council how to run a meeting. He said they did not have minute or rules of order, things that Americans take for granted as the way you run a transparent process.<sup>707</sup>

To a stability operations commander in Baghdad, security and prosperity are twin sisters. Long term presence mattered to him, including military presence so there is a handmaiden to the diplomatic arm that if necessary, can create conditions by force to consolidate gains. He was disappointed to see the Maliki government institute secular oppression that was the reverse of Saddam's: marginalizing the Sunni elements by failing to give them roles in government and withholding oil revenues. He felt that the growth of ISIS was a function of the limit of military power to create the conditions of government. Even with the world's largest U.S. embassy, that was not enough. He thought it must be coupled with the true soft power which is diplomacy and political pressure applied very directly.<sup>708</sup>

## MESSAGING

There were also lessons learned about messaging. A Psychological Operations officer emphasized that words have to be perceived from the receiver's point of view, not the senders. Also, to be proactive, not reacting to adversaries. He felt that USIA should be pulled from under State Department and restored to a more independent status.<sup>709</sup> A brigade commander emphasized that soft power is critical in all operations and must be integrated. Sometimes soft power is in the lead, sometimes in support, but they must be integrated.<sup>710</sup> An Information

Operations planner believed that there had to be effective actions to message. To him, if there is not effective action, it does not matter what is said.<sup>711</sup>

### Internalization

Interviewees had concerns of whether the lessons of Iraq would remain “learned.” A Special Operations commander believes there is a reason that nations have insurgencies: social, political, economic, there are root causes, and those root causes have to be addressed by the host nation. However, the U.S. entered Iraq with a leadership that had been educated to fight “Krasnovians,” a.k.a. Soviets, in their training and education base, even long after the Krasnovian, aka Soviet, threat had faded from the woodwork.<sup>712</sup> He recalled that even in 1994-95 all the tactical problems were still being conducted against a Soviet-based threat, long after the Soviet Union had collapsed. He felt that the U.S. paid the price in the early years in Iraq.<sup>713</sup> A deputy brigade commander was concerned about conclusions that soft power efforts such as CERP worked. He said that studies reaching that conclusion received their input from the Iraq Reconstruction Management System which by its own admission was at least 15% inaccurate: he thinks it may be twice that. If projects were being done in an area and it was quiet, it would be treated as a “good” area even if it was a staging area for attacks into other areas. His concern is that the U.S. did not have a strategic AAR (After Action Report) of what worked during the Surge.<sup>714</sup>

A TFBSO manager saw one of the greatest benefits of the Surge as the increased interaction with Iraqis itself. To him, the victory is in the micro, not the macro. A million different Americans walked the streets of Iraq from 2003-2012. The vast majority of their

interactions with Iraqis were positive and helpful and created a better situation at the most local level. He believes that those things endured and have value. For example, the TFSBO created a lot of jobs. Maybe because an Iraqi got his job back, his kids got to go to school, he got to feed his family, and perhaps his son did not join the insurgency. He said that since you do not know what the downstream effects are, let the macro go and have faith.<sup>715</sup> A Civil Affairs Reserve officer fell back on his experience as a customer service representative at several U.S. stores including Home Depot, learning to not immediately say no to the Iraqis when they made a request. If the answer would be no, he would explain why. For him it worked so well that when comparing his experiences there with irate Home Depot customers (the ones the manager always has to deal with), he said that “That was madder than anyone in Iraq got at me.”<sup>716</sup>

One respondent who worked banking issues said she did not learn any lessons during the Surge. For her, what worked during the Surge were the same things that had worked for her in other countries: sitting down with people, showing them how to collect the data and money they needed.<sup>717</sup> A JSPA planner believed that soft power was useful but not decisive in Iraq. To him it was about which sect or sub-sect was going to control Iraq’s future and wealth. He said that the military assumed causation for providing jobs and decreasing violence. To him that was exactly backwards. When the violence went down, people could go to jobs. There was strong correlation between violence and jobs, but to him the causation was almost certainly the other way round.<sup>718</sup>

A PRT leader saw the military learning a lot of soft power and trying to adjust but believes there is still no substitution for having a USAID or other expert there.<sup>719</sup> Another PRT leader talked about the difference in how the military and civilian sides reintegrated people returning from Iraq:

For a lot of us when we came back, the Department of State was doing nothing for us. It was like, “Oh you’re back, there’s your desk: get back to work.” It was a big issue for the State Department because there was a concern that if you go to talk to someone about depression or whatever it may be this will have an effect on your security clearance. I went to someone in the department and told him that we needed to do something because people were suffering. If the issue was the security clearance, let’s do what the military does and make a mandatory session for everyone that comes back because then it does not impact your clearance and think of the resources we have. Unfortunately, the State Department medical team was not up to dealing with it. The first mandatory session the State Department medical people were not addressing the real suffering of colleagues who had been in the field but asking us to help them develop a list of things people should pack. Crazy stuff like that. I finally said that we could help with that, but we were all here because we were broken and needed to be fixed. We had none of the resources that the regular military had. We were more like the Reserves in that our experiences were not universal: of course now about 25% of the department has served in Iraq or Afghanistan. If you were in the military and went to Iraq or Afghanistan that was your job and you were given credit for doing your duty. That was not the perception in the State Department at the time. The policy was anathema to most people in State Department. I had only gone because I thought that it was the biggest screwup we had ever done and I wanted to go help fix it. For the Department it was very difficult: people were coming back seriously distressed and with no support whatsoever.<sup>720</sup>

## FUTURE CONFLICTS

The final question of most interviews was whether the interviewee felt that the soft power lessons of Iraq were applicable to other or future conflicts. In response, many interviewees echoed sentiments from the literature regarding the future. They reflected the ideas of Malkasian and Plakoudas that a sound counterinsurgency strategy must conform to the local social and political environment utilizing a range of policies employed in different combinations as the situation dictates. Many remarks echoed Olson Lounsbury and Pearson that analysis of a conflict should examine a gradation of causes from background to proximate.<sup>721</sup> Because of the limitations of the U.S. Executive Branch, there was less consensus with Dixon that the politicians should be in charge.<sup>722</sup>

Almost all interviewees responded with some level of positivity to the question. A Civil Affairs officer felt it is a difficult question to answer, knowing that many people contributed in Iraq.<sup>723</sup> A USAID contractor said that what she did in Afghanistan was not different from what she had done in the past. Delivering technical assistance is a process: what worked before for her still worked.<sup>724</sup> Otherwise interviewees believed that the lessons of Iraq would be applicable to other conflicts.

### Lessons Mislabeled

An Embassy Chief of Staff was concerned that some mislabeled lessons were brought to Afghanistan, like increasing CERP funding versus utilizing Department of State and local government managed funding.<sup>725</sup> An ambassador working economic issues at the Embassy feared that the lesson most people will take from Iraq is not to do nation-building. He believes their issue is not that the lesson should be how to do it better, but that this is not a very profitable activity for a government.<sup>726</sup> An IO Task Force leader had concerns for what he called “the big gap” between the military and civilian sides, which he blamed on the Army for calling counterinsurgency “not our real job.” To him, change needs to be framed based on resistors saying, “We aren’t going to do anything that stupid” even though they will.<sup>727</sup> An Embassy Chief of Staff agreed there are lessons to be learned from Iraq: the question is did we learn them?<sup>728</sup> Another Embassy executive pointed out that 95% of U.S. deployments the last several decades have not been for major combat operations, so it needs to figure out how to take soft-power, civilian types and integrate them. He does not believe we are doing very well at that.<sup>729</sup> An MNC-I planner believes that the simple fact is the U.S. is going to face this again and again.

He said that using military force to establish stability “seems a lot like war,” but it sounds a lot better when you call it a humanitarian corridor or a no-fly zone.<sup>730</sup>

## Cooperation

Two different PRT leaders drew similar lessons learned. One believed abstract lessons such as trust-building are certainly there, but that each situation is unique because of ethnic makeup, history of centralized governance, and external influences (e.g. in Iraq from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Syria).<sup>731</sup> The other believed that soft and hard power elements must be at the table equally from the beginning. She described an occasion where she was a participant in a war games exercise the military was running. The premise was that the U.S. military goes in for two years to prop up an unpopular leader. She said that that does not make sense: why go in to prop up an unpopular leader? What if it is going to take 5 years, or 10? The 2-star participating in the exercise was very frustrated when she was asking these questions, because they had all these plans about what they were going to do. He finally looked at her and said, “Ma’am, there’s going to be a war: don’t stop us.” While she understood the comment in the context of an exercise in process, it pointed to the crux of the matter – inadequate analysis of objectives and methods, coupled with a belief that ‘hard power’ was the solution to all problems.<sup>732</sup>

A common response was similar to an ambassador who said that it depends on the conflict. To him, that determines what soft power elements you want to look at most strongly and back most vigorously.<sup>733</sup> An Embassy planner pointed out the “problem” of fighting the last war. Each area is going to be different, with its own dynamics, so he said that you can take a few lessons and apply them, but it must be tempered with understanding the new landscape. He

worked in Afghanistan and said it was remarkable how little they could apply the lessons of Iraq there.<sup>734</sup>

## Afghanistan

In the process of doing the interviews, the author discovered that many of the interviewees had participated in the 2009 Surge in Afghanistan. In many cases the same person was working the same type of jobs within a year of each other, only changing the country. This provided a ready-made compare-and-contrast opportunity to explore how well the lessons of Iraq carried over into Afghanistan. It has already been demonstrated that these individuals were far more likely to see the Iraqi Surge as successful than people who did not subsequently go to Afghanistan. Their responses to this question below corroborate with their view of Iraq as the more successful Surge.

A JSPA planner believed that trying to apply the Iraq template in Afghanistan was not successful, although there were certainly lessons to be learned.<sup>735</sup> An ambassador who worked in both places said that the big difference was elite Afghans do not think elections are the way to pick their leadership, so they cheat. He said they were particularly weak on the developmental aspects of generating support for a national effort to govern, and to show results to the population that would create the kind of loyalty the U.S. hoped to see happen.<sup>736</sup> An MNC-I planner who subsequently went to Afghanistan saw that Iraq had a lot more capability, national connectivity, and unity than Afghanistan which tended to be tribal and regional. In Afghanistan there was less reliance on the local to provincial to national connections because they were not as significant as they were in Iraq.<sup>737</sup>

An IO Task Force leader who was in Afghanistan in 2010-2011 said that one of the issues was U.S. people already in Afghanistan showing some resistance, with an air of “Oh, you are the Iraq people coming in telling us how to do it.” They were also hamstrung with resourcing. According to him in Afghanistan the bid was for “lowest cost, technically acceptable” as opposed to “technically superior” in Iraq.”<sup>738</sup> A PRT leader felt that “we” (the US military and the US population in general) have by-and-large already forgotten the lessons of Iraq and will have to re-learn them again (and again and again) during every future conflict.<sup>739</sup>

A stabilization advisor at the State Department who participated in a USAID contract to build up the provincial governments in Afghanistan said the effort failed due to the massive level of corruption.<sup>740</sup> An ambassador leading economic development in Baghdad thought bringing the PRT concept from Afghanistan to Iraq was helpful but cautions about trying to push too many lessons between Iran and Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a completely different level of development in terms of education of the population, structure of the country, history and so forth. He believes that when President Obama came into power and said we were going to get out of Iraq and focus on Afghanistan, there was a broad feeling that Afghanistan has not been tamed in 200 years although there are a lot of others who have tried.<sup>741</sup>

Transformation is not fast. A USAID manager learned that when you spend a lot of money planning for something you should not cut it short after one year, a mistake she felt they repeated in Afghanistan. She pointed out that Afghanistan is at the bottom of the list of every economic and social indicator. Planners there expected to have at least 5-6 years to carry out their plans. She felt that in Afghanistan you really needed that time to work on development: Getting more people in schools, getting them healthier. She saw an almost toxic mix of local and U.S. elections and saw how that could impact the U.S. willingness to impact an effort like that.<sup>742</sup>

An Embassy Chief of Staff saw similar shortfalls in Afghanistan in terms of lack of capability and financial resources. He also believed that the tribal issues were more complex than Iraqi sectarianism. U.S. efforts were still ad hoc, and too much aid was being given out without conditions. He thinks a coordinated strategy would probably have been as effective spending 15-20% of what was spent on financial aid in both Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>743</sup> A JSAT team leader at the Embassy said that it is almost as if Iraq and AFG should have switched constitutions because Afghanistan is a decentralized country with a centralized constitution and vice versa.<sup>744</sup>

A Marine Corps MTT leader who had served in Anbar Province said that Afghanistan demonstrated utilization of the ink spot theory developed by David Galula. They realized that ink spots were not forming in Afghanistan because the enclaves were too isolated. When they did start to see that the locals were putting pressure on the Taliban not to bomb finished roads because that is how they kept their commerce alive, the Marines initiated some gravel-improved road building. They watched prices in the bazaars drop 50-75% because the cost of transportation and bribe networks had ceased to exist. He said that they turned the engineers into the main effort force. That logic worked, and the effect was tangible once the roads were completed.<sup>745</sup>

An Embassy JSAT planner saw some of the same security issues again in Afghanistan. There was a situation where they had a first-time bidder who did not know what they were doing and were skimping on the contract. Then the State Dept put a 25-year-old in charge of the project in DC. When she came out, the State Department did not like the project and said it was not secure enough to visit. He was amazed: State Department personnel could not even visit their own project. He was a “3161” hire who found that many of the best people he worked with in Iraq applied with the Trump Administration in 2016, but the woman in charge of hiring for

State Department had no idea what the 3161 program was. He believes the modern skill set needs more of the imperial diplomat similar to the British civil service in the Raj system. He wonders why there is not a “Civilian Readiness Corps” roster.<sup>746</sup>

A senior TFBSO manager saw positives and negatives in Afghanistan:

In some cases life did get better there because to him their needs were so basic. It wasn't an industrial society. Clean water, life expectancy, a lot of the humanitarian problems that USAID did really well with. He believes that where it started to break down was things they saw. The Soviets were much better at this. There are factories in Afghanistan in the north and west that the Soviets built that are still in operation. He does not recall a single industrial thing that has been built since the U.S. has been there. Not a food processing plant, even the most innocuous things. You had a bit of the shut down the state-owned stuff. Flour mills from southern AFG that were state-owned had been closed. So you're brow-beating the local farmers not to grow poppy, but there is no place to sell wheat. They don't have a supply chain to sell to. There's no place to sell wheat, but we'll give them a massive amount of free seed so they can create a massive glut of wheat at harvest season that no one will pay for and you can't export because there is so much on the market that the price collapses. There was a lack of business thinking for creating an end-value chain for those early -stage economic commodities such as crops and minerals. There was a need, but mostly just to show a vision for Afghanistan that was positive and advancing as opposed to a horrifically corrupt government structure. The AFG government structure cannot work. It would be like the President appointing every governor in the U.S., every city mayor. Imagine how corrupt that would be: that's the Afghan government. That is how it works. It makes it horrifically corrupt with a structural brokenness. Had we been able to stay on we were beginning to hit our stride. Things like socially responsible mineral asset development, which completely went off the rails when we were shut down. It is heartbreaking because minerals are being developed, but in a way that is completely non-transparent and socially and environmentally irresponsible.<sup>747</sup>

## Soft Power

Many of the interviewees would have agreed with Byman that aid cannot create a healthy economy where preconditions of rule of law and social stability do not exist.<sup>748</sup> Adaptability and opportunism as discussed by Gompert come through in most interviews. Similar to De Tray, interviewees emphasized working with locals to strengthen ties with the government structure.

The effort remained one of cooperation, which Kilcullen said was more important than formal unity of effort. Many would dispute Metz and his belief that the causal linkage between economic growth and lowering the need to join an insurgency is overestimated.<sup>749</sup>

Other interviewees were more assertive in the applicability of the lessons of the Surge. A brigade commander in Baghdad believed that soft power is here to stay. It is the way to get your message across, it is the way to win hearts and minds. He believes that using CA, PSYOP and IO to win, change or fool hearts and minds is invaluable in all environments and can help people without having to fight.<sup>750</sup> A Civil Affairs officer believes that any environment you look at globally has that civil/soft power dynamic. There are very few pure kinetic types to be had. To him, learning from the Surge in Iraq is not just the tactics and techniques, but the visualization of every entity being at the ready to handle a variety of problems that has to be ready to go.<sup>751</sup> A detention facility commander agreed, saying that progress cannot be achieved solely by using bullets and guns. For him, it takes the pen and the scroll, it takes mentoring, it takes vision, it takes training, it takes communication.<sup>752</sup> A Psychological Operations officer believes the response to ISIS was a perfect example of that. Instead of using ground forces to fight them, the U.S. does everything we can to get a force that fights them and let them do the fighting. The U.S. should just enable them as best it can, otherwise according to him it creates too many problems with the local population.<sup>753</sup> A staffer at MNF-I believes we will see far fewer conflicts of state-vs-state, and they will be much more insurgency-based, Syria and ISIS and AQ types of threats.<sup>754</sup> A brigade commander recognized that soft power is one of the tools a commander has to use to effectively accomplish the mission. Important to him is making sure that in train up and pre-deployment training there is an opportunity to practice not only with role

players, but ideally to work with the individuals that will be performing soft power during the fight.<sup>755</sup>

An economics planner understood the importance of reform from within. The international community can come in and help stabilize and transition countries, but he feels that the countries have to make the difficult reforms in order to get their economies going. Aid is not a substitute for economic growth: good policies are. Stopping corruption, delivering resources, and instituting and implementing the real legal reforms are what he says will attract investment.<sup>756</sup>

A stability operations commander believes that there was a belief that the use of the military instrument is a last resort, that the U.S. should use diplomacy until there is no alternative, then sequentially moving into the use of the military. It cannot be sequential to him: that does not work. Another wrong lesson the U.S. drew from Panama was trying to militarize the entire process. He said that this is a difficult policy question: what is the end point of an extensive military commitment? Who is going to stand up as an elected official and say “I’m signing up for 50 years?” How do you stabilize a region that has gone into such chaos that it has called your interests into play?<sup>757</sup>

A Special Operations commander answered the question of the applicability of Iraq’s lessons to the future as follows:

*You think? Look at the two global power-level adversaries we have today, the Chinese and the Russians. Great power competition is all about soft power. With maybe a little kinetics thrown in here and there which both sides try to avoid. We don’t want to go to war with the Russians, and more importantly the Russians don’t want to go to war with us. But they still want to achieve their objectives. It is a concept we try to put out from USASOC and SOCOM of the idea of the gray zone – the area of competition between “peace” and “war.”. We have a US government structure that’s binary: we’re either at peace or we’re at war. If it’s peacetime, the State Department is in charge. If it is a war, it’s a military-led effort until we establish peace, then we go back to the State Department. We’re all soft power or hard power. But the reality is, and the whole Cold*

*War was that way as well, the competition most of time is this gray zone: it isn't peace, but it isn't war either. We aren't fielding tank-on-tank in Eastern Europe right now, and we're not fighting fleet-against-fleet in the South China Sea. All of these various soft-power tools are what we have as levers to compete with against China or against Russia. They know at this point in time that they don't want to fight us in a conventional war. The Russians know they'll lose, and the Chinese know they're not ready. So they are trying build that conventional capability, but between now and that point they're still trying to achieve their objectives and set conditions. And how are they doing it? They're doing it through a variety of soft-power tools. The Chinese philosophy of the "three warfares" (public opinion, psychological, and legal warfare) is all about how to wield soft power at the strategic level. Our challenge as a nation is that our structure isn't unified until you get to the President, and our interagency process for wielding soft power in a holistic, synergized way is really hard. Nobody owns information, although State Department will tell you they do. They don't really: despite various attempts such as the Global Engagement Center (GEC) to synchronize messaging, we have not achieved that. You still hear people talking about getting back to the US Information Agency days, at least we would be a little bit more coherent. But the reality is no one owns messaging, everybody does it. All the different tools that we wield are in different Executive departments, and the interagency process to do that coherently is pretty hard in our democracy. The answer is to say we're in a cognitive fight with adversaries that want to compete with us for real stakes in a world environment of players who are choosing sides or will eventually have to choose sides, and we better figure out how to get our act together and compete in that space with soft power at the tactical level. I think we have good, integrated soft power at the tactical level. We haven't integrated at the operational and strategic level with real success against an adversary that is a bit more advanced than a bunch of guys with AK-47s, cell phones and computers.*

*When the threat reemerged, the Iraqi army that existed at that point wasn't necessarily at the level of capability than it had been in the past. We always talked about bringing the enemy's capability down and bringing the friendly capability up, and when you get to that crossover point where the Iraqi capability is more than the insurgents, you can leave. But they didn't account for what I as a good Special Forces guy call "FID (Foreign Internal Defense) entropy." You could just as easily call it Security Force Entropy. Like thermodynamics, systems tend to randomness without energy coming in to keep the system organized. The other part of the crossover is that you can't just get the host nation forces better, you have to get them to the point that their energy into the system prevents entropy from taking place. For many years we were the energy that kept the Iraqi capability high enough, but we didn't get to that crossover point where Iraqi energy kept their forces ready and capable, having their own processes to train and evaluate themselves. We did that with the ISOF (Iraqi Special Operations Forces). They were more advanced. When we left in 2011, they had sufficient internal process to maintain readiness, and by the way we kept two ODAs (Operational Detachment) with them assigned to the Embassy manning structure, so we still had contact with the ISOF all the way up until ISIS returned, and then we came back with additional advisors and trainers. They had better internal energy, but the reality was we never left them. The rest of the Iraqi army didn't have that. They were left to their own means and they hadn't*

*reached that crossover point between US energy to maintain capability to Iraqi energy to maintain capability.*<sup>758</sup>

A State Department manager at the Embassy during the Surge believed that if you set the right scenarios and structure and most importantly get the right people it will work better, which he feels is the responsibility of senior decision-makers in Washington knowing who their best people are and sending them. His concern is that history has shown that Congress will stop funding programs or renege on commitments just as it did in Vietnam. He does not want to get in a situation where the U.S. gets people to trust it and the only way to help them is getting them back to the States.<sup>759</sup> An economics manager at the Embassy said that a lot of what the Surge incorporated was based on action at the Embassy. To him, DoS sent the “A” team. At one point there were 5 or 6 ambassadors in Iraq. He saw it as a testament to what America can do when it brings all elements of national power.<sup>760</sup>

A brigade Civil Affairs officer believed that his most important lesson to apply in the future was that counterinsurgency or not, especially when the U.S. is the occupying country, it needs to treat people as humans. Sitting down man-to-man (there were only a couple of women he talked to in a year), treat them as another human being and things go better. He feels that you will make a lot of enemies if you don’t treat people as human beings, no matter what they believe.<sup>761</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Interviewees provided a number of thoughtful reflections regarding the ramifications of the Surge in Iraq. Common themes emerged around coordination, personalities, smart power and the importance of close cooperation with the Iraqis.

Almost all interviewees believed that the Surge produced benefits, although many considered them to be short term or truncated by the withdrawal of Coalition forces from Iraq in 2011. Many considered the local-level benefits to be the longest-lasting, with national changes proving more ephemeral. Improvements in security, economics and politics around the country were highlighted by participants as being made possible by the Surge. Both military and civilians saw the Surge as creating the “breathing space” hoped for by the political leadership in Washington. People who subsequently went to Afghanistan were much more likely to view the Surge as successful than those who did not whether military or civilian, careerists versus short-term hires or working in Baghdad or an outer province.

A wide variety of lessons were learned by the Surge participants. Variations of the use of smart power were prevalent throughout the interviews. They found that combinations of coercive and attractive power produced the best results. Because of the nature of their respective sizes, the military ended up with an outsized portion of the attractive power mission as well as their traditional coercive power role.

Interviewees saw the value of their lessons for other conflicts as well. In some cases, they would immediately get an opportunity to apply them, particularly in Afghanistan during the Surge there ordered by President Obama. They found that general principles tended to carry over better than specific techniques, particularly in Afghanistan. Others talked more expansively about using Surge lessons to better prepare at a national level for future counterinsurgency situations.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

#### INTRODUCTION

In the end, the Surge worked. The U.S. was willing to give General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker the opportunity and resources to try a new strategy in Iraq. They would take a smarter power approach utilizing closer cooperation and integration of their military and civilian assets to better mix coercive and attractive power to stabilize Iraq.

The gamble by the Bush administration paid off in the form of a dramatic drop in violence in Iraq to levels not seen since the CPA days. Fortuitous circumstances meant that the Surge coincided with the Anbar Awakening by the Sunni tribes and a rise in oil prices. The synergy of these events resulted in a stable environment that allowed a restart of stalled political and economic development which continued years after U.S. troop levels were drawn back down at the end of the Surge in 2008.

This work utilized the database provided by interviewees to develop a chronological retelling of the Surge and the role of smart power in Iraq. Chapter Two served as a literature review on power, counterinsurgency and the Surge. Chapter Three describes the decision to utilize grounded theory and referral sampling of interviews to develop a data base of perspectives on the Surge across a variety of executive agencies and other personal experience and mission criteria.

Chapter Four laid out some of the problems that had plagued previous Coalition operations starting with poor cooperation between the various Federal agencies. It went into

detail about domestic support for the effort dropping as well as international backing for U.S. efforts in Iraq. Interviewees described problems with trying to unite the competing ethnic and sectarian factions in Iraq even while trying to develop an adequate security force and proceed with unsecured and unviewed reconstruction projects.

Chapter Five began by analyzing *U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24*, developed at Fort Leavenworth in 2006 under General Petraeus' personal oversight. It signaled a change in strategy as well as in support from the U.S. senior leadership. Interviewees talked about how they and their counterparts would work to change their method of operation to get closer in line with smart counterinsurgency doctrine, utilizing coercive and attractive power to stabilize and rebuild Iraq.

Chapter Six demonstrated how General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were able to implement their strategy change and the effect it had in stabilizing Iraq. The military moved off its large compounds and established Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts shared with its Iraqi counterparts. Oversight of Iraqi appointment of military leadership was maintained to prevent capable commanders from being replaced by political flunkies. The civilian effort was strengthened thanks in large part to the expansion of the Provincial Reconstruction Team concept throughout Iraq. It provided the first real opportunity for the State Department to work below the national level and build capacity that had been stymied under the top-down rule of Saddam Hussein.

Chapter Seven detailed the interviewees perspectives regarding the Surge. It presented several interesting findings regarding interviewee opinions of the effectiveness of the Surge. It provided the opportunities for interviewees to detail lessons they personally learned about soft power during the Surge. It also examined opinions on how well the lessons of the Surge

translate to potential future conflicts. This final chapter is focused on a series of lessons learned, grouped into three categories: lessons reinforcing the previous literature on counterinsurgency and the Surge, lessons different from or even at odds with the literature, and new lessons.

## THESIS RESTATEMENT AND RESEARCH LESSONS

### Thesis

Smart power was an important element of the Iraq Surge, effectively marshalling and combining attractive and coercive power resources to achieve success. Surge lessons can be utilized in current or future counterinsurgency environments concerning strategies for effectively marshalling soft and hard, attractive and coercive, power resources to achieve a counterinsurgency goal. Almost all of the key lessons and take-aways from this project involve how to combine these sources of power to address the challenges of a counterinsurgency environment. This is no matter of mere ratio-setting (e.g. 52 percent hard, 48 percent soft) but a matter of intelligently combining sources of power to achieve intended results and minimize unintended results.

This section sums up a number of lessons in counterinsurgency that were drawn from the interviews and grouped into three categories in terms of whether they reinforce, differ from, or are new relative to the existing literature on counterinsurgency and the Iraq Surge. Lessons are summarized sectionally and then expanded below.

## Lessons Reinforcing the Literature

In many cases the interviewees shared lessons that are reflected in the literature on counterinsurgency. Naturally, these are not new lessons. Prior counterinsurgents had understood and documented them in the course of their own campaigns. This section discusses the following items:

- 1) Broad counterinsurgency lessons do not change, but have to be relearned
- 2) Counterinsurgency environments are complex
- 3) Cultural and religious differences are difficult to reconcile
- 4) The government is often the cause of the insurgency, otherwise there would be no insurgency
- 5) Domestic issues complicate foreign counterinsurgency, particularly in democracies
- 6) Isolating a counterinsurgency environment is difficult
- 7) Modern transportation/communications make counter insurgency difficult
- 8) Counterinsurgency is more effective the lower the level at which it is executed
- 9) Smart power is normative
- 10) Coercive or attractive power are rarely effective singly
- 11) Adaptability is critical
- 12) Working with the host nation is harder, but in the long run more successful

Broad counterinsurgency lessons do not change, but have to be relearned

Counterinsurgency is hard. Many of its lessons require effort, which may cause them to be “unlearned” in the interregnum between conflicts. Interviewees talked about the need for

getting off the large compounds, letting the Iraqis take the lead in reconstruction efforts while maintaining oversight, and improving cooperation between the military and civilian efforts. All these things can be found in successful counterinsurgency summaries and lessons learned published by U.S. and other military forces after their experience in prior conflicts. But they are hard to do. They are also usually seen as moving a nation's military away from its "core mission" of fighting conventional warfare and are typically resisted by the senior military leadership.

It is easier and safer (in the short run) to stay on big bases, do things one's own way, and assume contracted work is getting done. But it is less effective and eventually counterinsurgents become forced by circumstances to adapt or fail in their counterinsurgency effort. Hoffman saw *FM 3-24* as a first step that required a continual effort to revive and update the old lessons to apply to modern counterinsurgency.<sup>762</sup>

Counterinsurgency environments are complex

An insurgency is normally going to be the result of irreconcilable differences between parties of interest within a country. Ethnicity, religion, economics and political repression (or belief of same) reach a point where one or more groups no longer feels that they formal process meets their needs and rebels. External actors can be expected to further complicate matters in pursuit of their own interests. Writers such as Olson Lounsbery and Pearson and Metz described a number of these issues in their work.

Interviewees in different parts of Iraq and performing different mission recounted a variety of issues which complicated the U.S. goal of taming the insurgency under a unified,

representative Iraqi government. They described problems with equitable wealth distribution, political representation and appointing military leadership with the intent of fairly representing all ethnic and sectarian groups.

Cultural and religious differences are difficult to reconcile

Antagonisms between differing cultures and religious sects have typically built up over centuries and seen varying levels of dislike, repression and even outright warfare and massacre. Most academicians understood even before the 2003 invasion that reconciling Sunnis, Shia and Kurds would be a difficult task even if the U.S. would be willing to consciously collaborate with the differing ethnic and sectarian groups. Ahmed and Allawi captured many of the ethnic and sectarian problems that plagued Iraq, and Fitzsimmons described the difficulties of reconciling these at a national level.<sup>763</sup>

The U.S. principle of separation of church and state tends to carry over into its international relations. Most American government officials are reluctant to get directly involved with the religious aspects of foreign countries. Almost every interviewee was asked whether they or their unit interacted with religious figures. Some said yes, but only one went into detail. General Petraeus said there was a plan for engagement with religious figures and that he and Ambassador Crocker met regularly with them but did not expand further on his answer.<sup>764</sup> It seemed to be a case where the “right” answer is to say yes so interviewees said yes, but the reality was there was little systematic effort by the Coalition as a whole.

This may have been a missed opportunity for the U.S. in Iraq. The imams are an important and influential part of the leadership in the Middle East. They have large weekly

audiences and people listen to them. Some also share influential leadership positions within the tribal structure. The U.S. Constitution does not say government officials cannot interact with foreign religious leaders. The reluctance to partner with foreign religious elements likely reduces the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East where Islam plays a critical role.

The government is often the cause of the insurgency, otherwise there would be no insurgency

Shia control of the Iraqi government created an opportunity for them to avenge themselves against the Sunnis who had ruled them for decades and they promptly took advantage of it. Sunnis were excluded from political participation, although Sunni electoral boycotting made some of the damage self-inflicted. Dixon and Gentile described these problems and how they specifically applied to Iraq.

Interviewees talked about how oil revenue streams flowed the slowest toward the Sunni provinces. Competent Sunni military commanders were replaced with government loyalists. Shia death squads operated wearing Iraqi military and police uniforms. U.S. planners had failed to envision that cutting the Sunnis out of the political process beginning with CPA orders for de-Ba'athification and eliminating the Iraqi Army would lead to a Shia takeover to a degree the Sunnis would perceive as unfair and lead to a sectarian insurrection. Insurgency literature commonly understands that dissatisfaction with the government is normally responsible to some degree for insurgencies.

Domestic issues complicate foreign counterinsurgency, particularly in democracies

Iraq demonstrated the difficulties that emerge as a counterinsurgency effort becomes less popular with the citizens of the occupying country over time. General Petraeus and his key leaders understood that they were not just buying time in Iraq, but in the U.S. as well. Kaplan described his invitation to academicians and other outside experts to the initial conference laying out the groundwork for publication of *FM 3-24*.<sup>765</sup> He and Ambassador Crocker also spent a great amount of time preparing for their Congressional testimony per Mansoor and made a conscious effort to be available to U.S. media.

The inclusive nature of General Petraeus' domestic strategy maintained the spirit of the concordance theory of Schiff. He identified his key target audiences in the U.S. and made sure that he influenced their perception of the Surge. He also worked to create and maintain allies in both the Legislative and Executive branches and get their agreement to his new strategy.

Isolating a counterinsurgency environment is difficult

The literature is familiar with the idea that international organizations both governmental and non-governmental are going to have interests in a country experiencing insurgency. It is only to be expected that other groups such as neighboring countries or coreligionists will be even more concerned about the outcome in a country than the foreign counterinsurgent. Ricks talked about external actors and their efforts to achieve goals at variance with the Coalition effort in Iraq.<sup>766</sup>

Interviewees talked about turning the Sunnis in Iraq away from al-Qaeda as being a key element of the success of the Surge and its timing. They talked about efforts by neighboring states such as Iran to exercise their own influence in Iraq, but even nominal U.S. partners such as Saudi Arabia were often perceived as attempting to push events in Iraq in directions inimical to U.S. goals, particularly their efforts to subvert Iraqi unity and spread Wahabi jurisprudence and practice.

Modern transportation/communications make counter insurgency difficult

In line with the above, it is easier for insurgent elements to maintain contact with each other and with the outside world. In colonial days occupying powers could conduct brutal suppression campaigns with few details leaking out. Even if they did, there was no United Nations to act as a focal point for criticism of their activities to center on. The Internet in particular makes it difficult for governments to isolate insurgent areas and activities from the attention of the outside world. Kilcullen described the challenges of trying to isolate an insurgent environment.<sup>767</sup>

However, the gate swings both ways. When reviewing the lessons learned for this work, one interviewee pointed out that in this case, “When we took full and creative advantage of advances in transport and communication, we were able to leverage them effectively.”<sup>768</sup> He is absolutely correct: the trick of course is being able and willing to leverage these capabilities better than the insurgents.

Counterinsurgency is more effective the lower the level at which it is executed

History demonstrates that as counterinsurgents conduct operations at smaller and smaller levels they become more effective. U.S. cordon-and-search operations in Vietnam proved to be of limited value, whereas working to establish regional and provincial Vietnamese defense forces inflicted 40% of all casualties on the insurgent forces despite receiving less than 2% of the military funding. The Soviet Union entered Afghanistan in 1979 with a military doctrine that did not call for employment of artillery below divisional level: within a few years they were operating smaller detachments coordinating with fire control officers at company or even platoon level.<sup>769</sup>

One of the key Surge elements in urban areas was getting Coalition forces off their big bases and establishing Joint Security Stations or Combat Outposts coinhabited by Iraqi security forces. Additionally, approval authority for Psychological Operations messaging was delegated to lower-level units to allow for quicker approval and publication of messages that would better resonate with the local target audience. PRTs were also stood up to increase interaction with the provincial governments in Iraq. Interviewees talked about how these initiatives at local levels increased trust and decreased the ability of insurgents to isolate and control portions of Iraq.

Smart power is normative

This work and others have demonstrated that hard and soft power can be quantified to an extent. Smart power is a normative term: there is no single correct admixture of coercive and attractive power guaranteed to produce the desired end state in an insurgency. Keohane, Nye

and other writers have understood that smart power is a moving target, a concept rather than a destination. Interviewees for this work continually emphasized the need to use coercive and attractive power in differing combinations.

Brigade commanders interviewed for this work particularly described the granularity of their operations. In one sector they might be fighting while in another sector they were rebuilding. Or they might find themselves fighting today in a sector they were rebuilding yesterday. They might even find themselves fighting off attacks in a sector while trying to rebuild it. They had to constantly adjust their power distribution to match the fluid nature of the environment.

The Civil Affairs teams were usually provided with security elements, demonstrating the binary nature of the operational environment. In a similar manner, the State Department and other civilian workers found that establishing stability and providing security for attractive power personnel was necessary to carry out the mission. Many interviewee statements demonstrated that progress was not linear and constant adjustments to the security and development inputs had to be made. Proper use of smart power was very dependent on the decision-maker on the ground who best understood the situation in their area of operations.

Coercive or attractive power are rarely effective singly

Multiple interviewees talked along the lines of “You can’t kill your way out of an insurgency, but you can’t buy your way out of one either.” The smart power concept is certainly necessary to be successful in any counterinsurgency environment, even if the subcomponents vary. Elements of coercive and attractive power must be present. Friis wrote about the Western

tendency to focus on attractive power activities without coordinating with a strong security component,<sup>770</sup> while Plakoudas talked about the importance of coordinating a wide range of response policies.<sup>771</sup>

Interviewees talked about the situation prior to the Surge as the U.S. was drawing back to the large bases. Not only was the soft power failing to eliminate insurgent elements, but it also became less effective as there was no security for State Department to safely get out and conduct its projects. The leadership wanted to turn the country over to the Iraqis, but they were clearly unable to effectively take over. Soft power by itself was not going to be the solution no matter how much the U.S. wanted it to be.

Adaptability is critical

*FM 3-24* paved the way for the Surge effort to give commanders more flexibility and freedom to seize opportunities presented to them by circumstances in their area of operations. It drew on historical examples of counterinsurgency campaigns that were willing to change their procedures to better match what needed to be done. *FM 3-24* was doctrine, but it was not doctrinaire. This contrasted with Gompert and his criticism that the typical U.S. response to problems is to create more bureaucracy.<sup>772</sup>

Russell (2013) described the beginning of the U.S. interaction with Sunni tribes in western Iraq. Interviewees talked in particular about the Anbar Awakening and the Sons of Iraq as developments previous Coalition leadership had avoided but General Petraeus eagerly integrated into his stabilization plan with great success. Cooperation between DoD and DoS moved down to provincial and local levels with interviewees talking about the great success they

had when they began working together at all levels. Messaging worked faster to exploit Coalition successes and insurgent failures.

Working with the host nation is harder, but in the long run more successful

The U.S. likes to go it alone. Even the “Coalition of the Willing” put together for Iraq was overwhelmingly U.S. in makeup. Most countries would prefer to do things themselves if possible. As discussed previously, then they can do what they think is best, not have to reconcile planning with a partner who probably does not share the same goals. This includes the host nation. It is quicker not to bring in local leaders to shape the planning process and who will not want to do things the way the Americans do. West described problems the U.S. had by not partnering with the Iraqis and attempting to moderate their behavior prior to the Surge, while Pirnie and O’Connell previously described the importance of preparing U.S. military forces to partner with indigenous security.

As multiple interviewee statements attest, the problem with cutting out the host nation is that resources and activities expended in the host nation are less likely to be effective. Multiple stories indicated that if the locals do not care about a project, they are not going to care if corruption, incompetence or theft keep the project from being completed. During the Surge, more effort was made to involve the Iraqis in the decision process and continue oversight to make sure things were being done in the agreed-upon manner.

## Lessons Different Than the Literature

A number of interesting commonalities came from the interviews that share a perspective different than what is commonly found in the literature on counterinsurgency. In some cases the literature does not seem to fully recognize the importance of the item under consideration. In some cases the interviews follow a different tack than that found in the literature. This section discusses the following items:

- 1) Foreign counterinsurgency becomes less popular with the local population with time
- 2) Counterinsurgency falls into a gray area neither DoD nor DoS are enthusiastic about entering
- 3) There are many ways to incorrectly apply power
- 4) The importance of *FM 3-24* was in its existence as much as what was in it
- 5) Coercive and attractive power can be differentiated
- 6) Power elements are both more and less fungible than commonly understood Iraq has little concept of a national will
- 7) Someone will be unhappy about any change made
- 8) Adaptability can apply to higher level guidance
- 9) Part of the fight occurs in detention facilities

Foreign counterinsurgency becomes less popular with the local population with time

Couch observed that when we invade a foreign land, the clock starts ticking.<sup>773</sup>

Regardless of the circumstances under which we arrived or how we carry out the occupation, our presence will be resented. The literature in general understands this concept but does not seem

to appreciate how fast and hard the resentment builds up. People barely tolerate their own nation's leaders telling them what to do, let alone those of another country.

Americans in Iraq had a difficult time understanding why they were never as popular as they expected. After all, the Coalition had gotten rid of Saddam Hussein and his family! Americans understood that that gratitude would fade over time. The problem was that the Americans and Iraqis viewed two different starting points for their relationship. To the Americans in Iraq and to an extent the decision-makers in Washington it began in March 2003 when American invaded Iraq. To them, overthrowing Saddam should have immediately given them a large boost into positive perception and the slide down would commence from there.

Iraqis saw the relationship differently. They would date the U.S.-Iraqi relationship from 1990. Not because of being evicted from Kuwait, but from the post-conflict sanctions imposed on them by the U.S. via the United Nations. The sanctions built up a great deal of resentment among many Iraqis for more than a decade before the 2003 invasion. Even for Iraqis glad Saddam was gone his removal only brought them back to a neutral feeling about the Americans, not a positive one, thus they were soon back to a negative perception of the Americans. The Americans might be proud of themselves for repairing a power generator, but the reason it was not working was often because the sanctions had prevented the Iraqis from being able to obtain parts for it or it had been bombed during the invasion. There was a continual disconnect between Americans who expected more appreciation from Iraqis for what they did and Iraqis who did not see why the Americans should be proud of fixing something that was not working because of them.

Counterinsurgency falls into a gray area neither DOD nor DOS are enthusiastic about entering

In a world with infinite resources, it would be easy to allocate the right force to counterinsurgency. After the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Corps conquered an area, it would be replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> Reconstruction Corps. This organization would report to the President, not DoS or DoD. It would have a security division, a reconstruction division, a civic development division and other elements intended to stabilize a recovering nation. It would not need much artillery, but neither would it incorporate Peace Corps volunteers. At some point the Reconstruction Corps would be able to depart leaving the U.S. Embassy as the senior national authority in a "normal" country.

We do not live in a world with infinite resources. The cost of maintaining a Reconstruction Corps would be closer to DoD costs than DoS costs. Even if the bulk of the members were in a callup role as opposed to being full-time government employees, they would still get pulled from their normal jobs for a crisis. Every time Guard or Reserve members get activated, that is time they are not spending making their fellow Americans healthier, wealthier, or wiser.

For the foreseeable future there is little choice but to continue leaving the military in a foreign country longer than they want and bringing in civilians earlier than they want. Consequently, getting the right resources in place and determining who is in charge will persist as problems the U.S. deals with in a counterinsurgency environment. Both DoD and DoS will say the right things about participating in a counterinsurgency environment, but in reality, both wish the problem would just go away.

There are many ways to incorrectly apply power

The literature talking about smart power will usually talk about developing the right “ratio” of hard and soft power. Nye goes into this in detail and acknowledges that it is not simply “Soft Power 2.0.” What does not seem to be deeply explored is that you can get the ratio right but still not get the result you want if you apply the wrong type of hard or soft power. This issue was discussed in detail in Chapter Three and highlighted by Table 3.1.

The operationalized concepts of coercive and attractive power help understand the nuances. Shutting the Sunni tribes in western Iraq out of the political process was a coercive action that drove them closer to al-Qaeda. It was not until the U.S. began working with those tribes after the Anbar Awakening and through the Sons of Iraq that the right coercive power was being applied against the threat in Anbar Province. Likewise, messages to the Iraqi people to support the local government lacked the attractive power that combining those messages with efforts to make the government more accountable to Iraqis produced.

Just because soft power is being applied in a situation calling for attractive power does not mean it is being effective. The “Lion Fountain” story detailed in Chapter Four perfectly illustrates this point. The Americans spent a considerable amount of money with the best of intentions to try to do something nice for the local populace. Because they had not bothered to ask the locals what they wanted, it ended up being money largely wasted and thus was an ineffective initiative. It demonstrates the difference between soft power and this work’s definition of attractive power. The project was soft, but since the Iraqis probably would not want it repeated (mostly because they did not care), it was not attractive. Spending the money on a

project the Iraqis wanted done would have had a better chance of achieving the desired attractive power effect.

The importance of *FM 3-24* was in its existence as much as what was in it

*Field Manual 3-24* provided a number of tactics, techniques and procedures for more effectively waging counterinsurgency in Iraq. It revitalized a number of ideas that had proven successful in past conflicts and integrated them into a more pragmatic approach to combatting violence in Iraq. Kagan described it as not just about non-kinetics, but the synergy between kinetics and non-kinetics.<sup>774</sup> Writers such as Hoffman focus on the content of *FM 3-24* and its applicability to conflict.<sup>775</sup>

The ideas in *FM 3-24* were important. Just as important, if not more so, was the publication of the field manual itself. It signaled higher level support for the new style of counterinsurgency warfare. It meant that General Petraeus and his subordinates in Iraq were able to carry out their strategy without having to look over their shoulders or justify their new tactics to higher headquarters. Doctrine does not just tell soldiers how to do things: it gives them permission to do it.

Coercive and attractive power can be differentiated

Some theorists postulate that power is power and can all be put into a category of altering behavior, getting people to do something they were not going to do or refrain from doing something they were going to do. For example, Boulding and his “smaller” concept of power as

discussed previously. By this standard there is no difference between types of power as they will all induce changes that would not have happened without the application of power.

This work set out operational definitions for coercive and attractive power and provided examples of each one. Even if both have a goal of behavior change, they each approach it differently. This was seen as potentially impacting the length and depth of their impact. Interviewees talked at length about the mix of power during the Surge in Iraq and that each had a role.

Power elements are both more and less fungible than commonly understood

People are fungible. This work has demonstrated that military people found themselves thrust into roles better suited for civilians such as manning the State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). Interviewees talked about doing jobs different than what they anticipated or trained for prior to arrival in Iraq. Nevertheless, they were largely able to adapt to circumstance and be a suitable, even if not always ideal, substitute.

The tools available to counterinsurgents have varying degrees of fungibility. Cash is probably the most fungible. A bulldozer can be utilized to dig an entrenchment for a defensive military force or clear a field for agricultural use: it can even be used to create a road that serves both military and civilian purposes. An artillery piece or guided missile has little application other than death and destruction.

Iraq has little concept of a national will

Strategic level U.S. planners placed a lot of faith in the idea of forging a single identity amongst large blocs of Sunnis, Shia and Kurds, in addition to other smaller but distinct groups such as Christians or Marsh Arabs. Attempts were made to generate a sense of common purpose through political participation and development of a fair system of government spending, particularly from oil revenues. There were some elements of common purpose: for example, Americans probably failed to appreciate and emphasize the unifying nature of the Iran-Iraq War, where all Iraqis were proud of the role they played in preventing an Iranian takeover of their territory.

However, theorists from Marx forward have shown a desire to assume unity where it probably does not exist. The idea of thousands or millions of people sharing common opinions on a range of political, economic and social issues is probably unrealistic even if they share an ethnic identity or language. In a country such as Iraq pretensions of a broad sense of common identity simply led to efforts unlikely to produce the desired results.

Interviewees continually stressed the fragmented nature of the Iraqi body politic. There were a few instances of Iraqis such as military commanders trying to forge a truly national unit. However most Iraqi military and civilian leaders the interviewees saw were more concerned with maintaining or furthering ethnic, sectarian, tribal or family power and influence. Many were in fact using the levers of government in a manner coldly calculated to further the cause of their own narrow identity groups.

Someone will be unhappy about any change made

Political theory seems to assume that intervening nations will be bringing “good” changes. What it may fail to appreciate is that there will always be someone who benefits from the current system. Lifting the pre-invasion sanctions may be seen as an unalloyed good, but that viewpoint was not shared by the tribes who had been making a good living smuggling into Iraq. Particularly in Anbar Province, it was a factor that led them to support Al-Qaeda infiltration efforts and serve as their supply and fighter conduit.

Likewise, the requirement placed in the Iraqi Constitution that 25% of the representation in the 329-member Parliament had to be women. Laudable in its intent, nonetheless it must be viewed in terms of opportunity cost that 83 men who would have been part of the Parliament are now shut out of the power structure. This does not say that Iraq would be better off with those men in the Parliament, simply that they are going to be unhappy with the new system and serve as a potential source for other malcontents to rally around.

Adaptability can apply to higher level guidance

Napoleon reportedly said that commanders have the right to disobey an order not given to them by a superior standing next to them. A friend of the author always used to emphasize the need to provide “Scooby Snacks” to our bosses. They expect certain things to be done, and we have to meet those needs to keep them happy. After that we could use our remaining time to do the things we knew needed to be done. Writers may assume that subordinates in executive

branch agencies are conscientiously attempting to carry out the letter of higher headquarters directives as well as their spirit.

Several interviewees talked about modifying or disregarding higher level requirements they believed did not meet the situation in Iraq or their part of Iraq. Messaging in particular was often designed for the chimeric national audience rather than local populations commanders lived and worked with. Their concerns were recognized by the continual effort to push message approval authority to lower levels. Cooperation with the Anbar Awakening began as a series of lower-level initiatives by subordinate commanders acting without formal authority or guidance, although the change in strategy brought higher headquarters around to supporting these initiatives.

Part of the fight occurs in detention facilities

Detention facilities should be thought of as the holding area for people most likely to become future insurgents upon release. The ability to decrease the recidivism rate of prisoners can directly and immediately reduce the effectiveness of the insurgent effort. The positive image that can accrue from released prisoners telling friends and loved ones that they were treated with respect is a valuable component of counterinsurgency legitimacy.

Press reporting on prison facilities focuses on scandals such as Abu Ghraib and rarely seems to cover day-to-day details of detention and rehabilitation. Academic writing on the topic is also sparse. Perhaps it is simply an uncomfortable subject people do not care to explore and discuss in detail. Or it could be that to researchers there is a mental shift that seals those people off from the insurgent body once they become detainees.

## New Lessons

Interviewee themes emerged that are covered in sparse detail in academic literature or are not understood. Interesting findings include:

- 1) Capabilities are not inherently hard or soft
- 2) The importance of personalities is often underestimated
- 3) Surge participants thought their effort made a difference in Iraq
- 4) Surge participants thought the lessons learned are applicable to other conflicts

Capabilities are not inherently hard or soft

Academic writing on power generally inclines to placing national capabilities into categories of either hard or soft.

Interviewees bore out the idea that State Department was capable of conducting coercive power just as the military could conduct attractive power. Part of the role of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) was keeping their Iraqi contacts exercising power and spending their budgets responsibly. The implied threat was the loss of future funding or support if they failed to do so. They were also willing to hire security teams, although this was intended to provide security for attractive power operations.

The military was also put into a number of attractive roles because they had the bulk of the assets available in Iraq. Most or in some cases all of the PRT manning consisted of military personnel. Interviewees ended up being part of the attractive power mission of the Surge, if not by choice then by availability. A military person conducting attractive power was considered

better than no attractive power at all being conducted. They were also largely responsible for training the Iraqi Security Forces. As a salaried position, there was never a shortage of recruits. The training was intended to instill pride and professionalism in the Iraqis, making them want to emulate the U.S. forces through their personal example.

Counterinsurgents who are willing to employ assets in nontraditional roles find that they have more options available to them than those who do not. Even an imperfect solution helps advance national security objectives and takes better advantage of the resources available. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker both demonstrated the ability to employ the resources available to them innovatively.

The importance of personalities is often underestimated

Numerous psychological studies exist regarding the role personalities play in relationships. Literature discussing the importance of personalities abounds when discussing private enterprise. Interviewees for this work who came from a business background consistently spoke about establishing and maintaining good relationships as being key to effectively doing their jobs in the private sector as well as Iraq. Careerists as well agreed that in many cases replacing one person could have a dramatic effect on cooperation and accomplishing U.S. goals in Iraq.

The issue has been discussed earlier in this work. It is certainly easier to assume that replacing one colonel or foreign service officer with another person of the same grade will not alter performance of the mission. Compiling data and analyzing it is less afflicted with subjective valuations that can make statistical calculations much more problematic.

Counterinsurgency literature reviewed for this work talks about changes brought about by changing personnel but did not seem to reflect the contention of interviewees that such changes could be the difference between success and failure in performing one's job. It does not seem that experience or competence mattered as much as simply having someone in the position who genuinely tried to work with their counterparts from other organizations. In many cases a willing if inexperienced leader can be supported by their own experienced subordinates who understand that the organization is expected to act in a cooperative manner by the example set by the leader. As organizations get to know each other they develop trust which will further deepen coordination and cooperation.

Surge participants thought their effort made a difference in Iraq

As detailed in the previous chapter, 31 of 36 interviewees felt that the Surge produced some form of positive benefit. Positive responses were spread across all subgroups interviewed: military and civilian, staff and leaders, those who worked in Baghdad versus outer provinces, etc.

To most the benefits were long-term or had the potential to be so. They pointed to the decrease in violence as the primary indicator of success. The Shia militias reduced their level of violence and the Sunni tribes turned against al-Qaeda. This return of a secure environment allowed the Iraqis to restart the political process and begin to rebuild the economy and return to a sense of normalcy.

The coercive effort was a combination of the increase in size and posture of U.S. military forces in combination with improvements in Iraqi Security Force capabilities. Partnering together at Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts, they brought the levels of violence

down to the point that one interviewee recalled that there were days with no war-related deaths in Iraq.

The attractive effort was aided by the expansion of Provincial Reconstruction Teams to allow the Americans to have capabilities to practice attractive power below the national level of government during the Surge. Interviewees felt that the efforts they made working with regional governors and mayors were part of trying to change the top-down leadership of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athists.

Surge participants thought the lessons learned are applicable to other conflicts

Surge participants almost all felt that what they learned in Iraq during the Surge was applicable to other and/or future conflicts. There was concern that the lesson would not be learned or even mislearned. They believed that better cooperation among the various agencies produced a more effective counterinsurgency effort. They also appreciated the importance of soft power and saw it as part of an integrated strategy.

As has been discussed, many of the interviewees subsequently participated in the surge in Afghanistan. They believed that some of the Iraq lessons did not transfer over to Afghanistan, but many did, particularly the need for adequate security and the necessity of cooperation among the U.S. participants.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

This work has multiple possibilities for further research. Obviously more of the same types of interviews could further solidify data sets and bring in other job specialties or regions of the country. Other potential research avenues include further study of the perceptions of people who participated in multiple counterinsurgency efforts and closing research gaps left by this work.

### Multiple Insurgencies

The finding regarding Iraq participants who subsequently went to Afghanistan would be interesting to explore in more detail. Because this work focused on Iraq, perceptions on Afghanistan were not explored. Interviewees were not asked if they thought the Afghanistan Surge produced results. Such a question would require a control group of people who participated in the Afghan Surge but not the Iraq Surge.

Another research option might be other instances of being able to compare and contrast viewpoints of people who participated in counterinsurgent efforts in different countries. Some historical examples might include:

- 1) France 40s-60s: Vietnam and Algeria (possibly WWII as an insurgent)
- 2) U.S.: 1900s-30s: China, Philippines, Central America
- 3) British 1890s-1910s: S Africa, AFG, Zulu, Egypt
- 4) British 1940s-1960s: Palestine, Malaysia
- 5) Russia: 50s-90s: Baltics, Czech, Hungary, AFG, Chechnya

- 6) Israel 60s-present: West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon
- 7) China 50s-present: Tibet, Uyghurs

Some would have to rely on records as the individuals involved have passed. Interesting differences could be explored. Some cases might not have an effort that was distinctly more successful. Some may not have occurred in close chronographic proximity like the Iraq and Afghan Surges, which might impact the subject's perception (insurgency might look different when one is a colonel rather than a lieutenant).

Attempting to find insurgents who participated in multiple efforts would be more difficult but not impossible. Most insurgents will tend to operate in their own country until they gain control of it. People like Che Guevara who participated in the successful Cuban insurgency but subsequently went to a different insurgent effort, in his case Bolivia, are unusual. Vietnamese who fought against the French and subsequently the U.S. could also be considered. Islamists who fought in multiple insurgencies would also provide a wealth of experience, if difficult to find and interview.

### Research Gaps

In the course of this study two particular gaps were of note. One was dealing with access to material which is in many cases still classified and not likely to be released in the next few years. The other was shortfalls in the pool of interviewees gathered for this study. Although a credible number of U.S. military and civilian personnel participated, there are other groups whose perceptions could bring a different perspective to similar future studies.

## Classification

During research the author contacted the Historian's Office of Central Command (the major command responsible for Iraq) and was told that they were still in the mid-1990s for document declassification and release. Much of the information regarding messages is classified. Although the document itself becomes unclassified upon release, the staff work of selecting target audiences and intended effects are classified. The same problem exists with reconstruction and development projects. Future access to these types of information will help provide researchers insight into the thought process behind product development.

## Interviewees

Studying the effects of soft power during the Surge would benefit from including the following categories of people in Iraq during the Surge:

Iraqis – Snowballing proved difficult. Some of the interviewees had maintained contact with Iraqis they worked with during the Surge but were reluctant to pass along their contact information. This was usually due to concerns that it could open the Iraqis to retribution, particularly the ones still living in Iraq. Broader perspective on the effects of soft power in Iraq would be obtained by soliciting information from the intended target audiences and Iraqi decision-makers.

Coalition Partners – Many of the Coalition of the Willing partner states had reduced their role in Afghanistan by 2007. In the case of NATO members, some had shifted their focus of effort to Afghanistan which they saw as the greater national security threat due to the increase in

heroin importation. Attempts to contact individuals proved largely unsuccessful. Information from Coalition partners might have demonstrated different approaches and goals to soft power efforts during the Surge.

Junior Participants – Snowballing tended to roll sideways and up. Interviewees were more likely to recommend a peer or supervisor as a follow-on interview rather than a subordinate. The 13 Department of State interviewees included 5 ambassadors. Non-commissioned officers, junior officers and younger foreign service officers might have a different perspective than that of colonels, generals, and chiefs of mission. In the interest of brevity, such research could encompass an ordinal-scaled questionnaire versus the more open-ended questions used for this work.

#### AUTHOR THOUGHTS

What do I believe were the important elements brought out by the interviews? Certainly, none are unimportant. Whether already commonly understood or brought out in a new light in this work, all play a role in successful counterinsurgency. As this work has tried to show, there is no single magic element. The best strategies integrate a complex and adaptable series of capabilities working together. Nonetheless, three areas stood out as reminiscent of my own experiences on active-duty service: cooperation, delegation and learning.

## Cooperation

When everyone cooperates, it is amazing what can be done. When they do not cooperate, it is amazing what cannot be done. I served as an installation Protocol Officer in Saudi Arabia in 1998. As such I was responsible for the tents where we quartered our Distinguished Visitors (DV). The nearest bathroom facilities were located about 100 feet from their tents. The installation had poor outdoor lighting, creating a hazard for any personnel making head calls in the middle of the night. I asked the installation supply officer if we could get some flashlights for the tents. She told me to put in a requisition request and they would consider it at the next budget meeting. I asked if I could sign some out temporarily, that we had appointed service and defense secretaries tripping over tent ropes at 2 AM. She refused. She was not being mean or vindictive, she just could not see the issue as a problem that needed prompt attention.

She rotated out before I had to make it a general officer issue or just go to the PX and buy \$10 worth of flashlights myself. After her successor arrived, I brought up the issue with him: an hour later the DV tents had flashlights in them. Steve continued to be a “can do” officer for the remainder of the time we served together. To me, the frustrating part of that experience (and a thousand like it in my military career) was that the time I was spending on a trivial issue like half a dozen flashlights was time I was not spending tackling bigger problems. All it took was a change in personnel and the problem was solved!

## Delegation

This ties together two concepts brought out by the interviewees:

- 1) Counterinsurgency is more effective the lower the level at which it is executed
- 2) Iraq has little concept of a national will

I was a staff officer at the Defense Language Institute at the time that smoking was in the process of being driven out of the military workplace. There was a point where the installation smoking policy changed three times in two days. It was a frantic two days for us at headquarters. We were drafting revisions, running them through the necessary staff at breakneck speed, then burning out the copier trying to get the most current version down to the different schools and service units. After all, we cannot have our servicemembers comporting themselves based on a superseded policy, right?

Several months after this I was reassigned to one of the schools for language training. As I was lounging around the school's main office looking at their bulletin board, I saw that the version of the installation smoking policy posted there was one older than the three we had promulgated. I would bet that half the people stationed there did not even know there was an installation smoking policy. All the effort we had put in at headquarters was invisible outside our building.

The farther up the chain policy is trying to be made, the less likely it is to connect with individuals. Particularly with messaging, the idea of developing a message of any depth that will appeal to all of Iraq is unrealistic. A boss of mine once said that when a new contingency operation comes up, you have to get the first PSYOP product right because it is going to the front page of the *New York Times*. After that you can develop products that will resonate better with the locals. The Coalition learned that the best way to do this was pushing message approval down to the lowest levels.

Along the same lines, the large-scale reconstruction projects in Iraq tended to not do well. Smaller ones were more successful. Getting the local factory up and running, fixing the roads, and expanding the ISF brought local leadership and desires into play and ensured there was not a magnet for corruption and theft being created. PRTs played a big role in making this happen and were a great smart power concept.

If you leave your people alone and let them do their jobs, they will usually make you look good.

## Learning

If we do not learn the lessons of the past, we are doomed to repeat them (although a wag has observed that those who do learn from history are doomed to make the opposite mistakes). Most of the basic principles properly applied during the Surge were not new. Technology may change, political systems may change, economies may change, but people and their core beliefs and behaviors do not.

It can be frustrating to go through a relearning process. Among the duties of my first assignment was serving as the unit Awards and Decorations Monitor, tracking and processing award submissions for the unit. I was given the current tracking log that had about two dozen status columns in it. I decided this was too many and developed a new tracking log that just told when notification of award eligibility went to the subordinate unit and when we sent the completed package up the chain for approval.

I immediately began having problems with packages not getting done, not getting corrections done in a timely manner, or just getting lost and I did not know where they were. As

each stage of failure reared its ugly head, I modified my tracking log to prevent it from happening again. Things eventually calmed down. After about a year I happened to come across the previous tracking log. To my chagrin it looked almost identical to what I had built after 12 months of mistakes I could have avoided by simply following the recipe my predecessor had left for me. After that I avoided making major changes to the job for the first 30 days after I assumed a new role.

Listening to experienced individuals is a good idea: there is a reason they are experienced. I used to tell my IO classes that if experience was the sum of my mistakes that were not quite bad enough to get me fired or killed, then I had a ton of experience to share with them. Once the U.S. was willing to acknowledge there was an insurgency in Iraq and started paying attention to experienced people past and present on how to deal with one, the situation began to change. But it is hard. How many times did I hear “This time is different” when it is really just old wine in new bottles? The coercive lessons of counterinsurgency are particularly hard to accept: people would prefer not to use them. But in the meantime, people are dying.

## CONCLUSION

During a progress review for this work one of the committee members asked me what I hoped this study would contribute. My response was that my hope is that if the U.S. or any nation finds itself in a similar situation in the future, this work might reduce the number of deaths and level of destruction before the counterinsurgents become smarter in their application of power.

The challenge with grounded theory work is it does not readily lend itself to statistical analysis. We cannot take ten lab rats, inject them with CERP money, and study the results. Isolating an independent variable in a counterinsurgency filled with a mosaic of actors each operating with their own set of goals is an enormous task. Every one of their stories is unique. Every project each interviewee pursued was unique. Every day of pursuing the same project was unique. The interview questions were deliberately designed to be as open-ended as possible to allow the interviewee to take the answer in a direction they felt was of interest. It can be risky to take a datum and try to draw a larger conclusion from it: it may be an outlier.

This does not mean that their words should be dismissed. The value of these interviews is that they are real-world experience. There are no artificial laboratory conditions. They are not the outcome of a computer simulation. They are not training exercises. In fact, multiple interviewees talked about training they did prior to deploying, in some cases training developed by Iraq veterans and designed specifically for their upcoming mission. They commented that it was better than no training, but usually they found a different situation on the ground and had to quickly adapt. In many cases I would be hard-pressed to debate their insight based on a statistical print-out.

Fortunately, many of their experiences had shared commonalities. Many of these commonalities were close enough to be grouped together. Some permitted broader conclusions to be drawn tying together the situations addressed by the interviewees. The goal of this work was to sift through these interviewees and search for those commonalities with the objective of developing a set of lessons to be learned from their experiences. Open-ended questions meant not all the commonalities are equally sized. Some lumps are bigger and richer than others.

The Iraq war was a difficult time for everyone involved. The Iraqis had their country torn apart with conflict and economic dislocation raging for years. Coalition members found themselves conducting lengthy tours apart from their families. If you came into the office early you often had to listen to one of your coworkers in an argument with their spouse back home. Both were probably nothing more than good people in a difficult situation. Not all my friends made it home. Not all of the ones who did were able to comfortably readjust to their old lives. Physical and mental illness are an expected byproduct of living in a stressful environment.

The cost to America was immense and the bill continues to mount with each disability pension or too-early funeral service. Perhaps a “smarter” strategy implemented sooner with high-level support could have reduced the costs to everyone. Perhaps a stable Iraq could have been achieved earlier, with all the U.S., Iraqi and international ramifications that would have entailed. Perhaps less violence would have resulted in less bitterness among the warring factions and more willingness to work together.

It is my sincerest wish that U.S. forces never become involved in another counterinsurgency effort. However, if or when the next such conflict arises, it is my great wish that the lessons of the past can be a guide to the future.

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- <sup>72</sup> In a similar vein, one of the best Civil Affairs officers the author ever worked for sardonically referred to the black market as "a form of distribution."
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 Temporary: People who do not primarily work for the referenced agency (contractors, Reservists, etc)  
 SPS: Soft Power Specialist or background  
 HPS: Hard Power Specialist  
 PEII: Prior Experience in Iraq  
 Leader: Decision Authority (commander, team leader)  
 Staff: Implementing decisions of others  
 BDE+: Organization of brigade level or higher  
 Conventional: All organizations not reporting to Special Operations Command  
 Special Ops: Organization reporting to Special Operations Command  
 Baghdad: People whose primary job location was Baghdad  
 TOTW: Traveled outside the wire  
 MWI: Met with Iraqis

Detainees: Worked with detainee operations, not necessarily primarily

AFG SP: Participated in the 2009 Afghanistan Surge

SPB: Interviewee felt the Surge produced benefits (normative)

SPA: Soft power lessons are applicable to other conflicts (normative)

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with the author 22 May 2020.

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<sup>97</sup> Metz 2017, p 25.

<sup>98</sup> Plakoudas 2015, p 132-145.

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<sup>100</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.

<sup>102</sup> Crocker, Ambassador Ryan, interview with the author 17 August 2020.

<sup>103</sup> The author had a similar issue as the PSYOP staff officer for a Special Forces Group. Prior to deployment a PSYOP detachment from the 4<sup>th</sup> PSYOP Group (POG) at Fort Bragg would be attached to the unit (known as Operational Control or OPCON) for the length of the rotation. The author was careful to caution these typically young and enthusiastic captains about "going native," and that the Special Forces Group would not be able to provide them top cover once they returned home. The best result for everyone would be working to meet our goals in a manner that would satisfy 4<sup>th</sup> POG as well.

<sup>104</sup> Dixon, Paul. 2009. "'Hearts and Minds'?: British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq". *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32 no 3 (2009): 353-381.

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- <sup>129</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>130</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>131</sup> Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- <sup>132</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020. When reviewing his excerpts for this work, the interviewee humorously suggested that this should be changed to "If AQI is using PowerPoint, it means we are going to win."
- <sup>133</sup> Byman 2006, pp 79-115.
- <sup>134</sup> Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- <sup>135</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>136</sup> Pirnie and O'Connell, 2008.
- <sup>137</sup> Reservists can be activated in a voluntary or involuntary status. They can only be involuntarily activated for one year every five years. Voluntary activations are not limited. The author found that the same small group of unit members tend to raise their hands every time a new manning need comes up. One member of the unit may have gone to Gulf War I, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq while others were activated once or even not at all, and not voluntarily. Total strength is an important higher headquarters measurement of a Reserve unit's efficiency. Individuals have a lot of flexibility to change units, hence commanders are reluctant to try and force unit members into taking voluntary assignments, the preferred method of filling vacancies, because they may change units instead. A member who sits in a corner of the drill hall one weekend a month is statistically more valuable than no one at all.
- <sup>138</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- <sup>139</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>140</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>141</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>142</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>143</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.

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- <sup>144</sup> Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
- <sup>145</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>146</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>147</sup> Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- <sup>148</sup> Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- <sup>149</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>150</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>151</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>152</sup> Downes 2007, pp 420-444.
- <sup>153</sup> Easton and Gade 2018, pp 384-407.
- <sup>154</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>155</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>156</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- <sup>157</sup> Baldwin 2007.
- <sup>158</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>159</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>160</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>161</sup> Gompert 2007, and Byman 2006, 79-115.
- <sup>162</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>163</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>164</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>165</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>166</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>167</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>168</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>169</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>170</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>171</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>172</sup> Interview with the author 26 May 2020.
- <sup>173</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>174</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>175</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>176</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>177</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>178</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- <sup>179</sup> Greene, Samuel R., "Pathological Counterinsurgency: The Failure of Imposing Legitimacy in El Salvador, Afghanistan, and Iraq". *Third World Quarterly*, 38 no 3 (2017): 563-579.
- <sup>180</sup> Interview with the author 22 June 2020.
- <sup>181</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>182</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>183</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>184</sup> Interviews with the author 8 June, 9 June and 22 June 2020.
- <sup>185</sup> Branch, Daniel and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Revisiting Counterinsurgency". *Politics & Society*, 38 no 1 (2010): 3-14.
- <sup>186</sup> Marston, Daniel, 2010, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, pp 243-259.
- <sup>187</sup> Fitzsimmons, Michael, "Hard Hearts and Open Minds? Governance, Identity and the Intellectual Foundations of Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31 no 3 (2008): 337-365.
- <sup>188</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>189</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.

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- <sup>190</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>191</sup> Viewers of regular media coverage of Iraq would have noticed that the journalists frequently did their wrap-up story segment with an attractive blue mosque in the background. Most journalists in Iraq stayed at the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, which was located directly behind the camera shooting those segments with what is the Haydar-Khana Mosque in the background of the camera shot.
- <sup>192</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>193</sup> Marston 2010, 243-259 and Fitzsimmons 2008, pp 337-365.
- <sup>194</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>195</sup> Interview with the author 22 June 2020.
- <sup>196</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- <sup>197</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>198</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>199</sup> Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- <sup>200</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>201</sup> Johnson, Haynes, "Lessons From the Gulf War," *The Washington Post*, 17 January 1992, accessed 9 February 2021 at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/01/17/lessons-from-the-gulf-war/bad0ef92-4339-4b47-a589-10e24de23265/>
- <sup>202</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>203</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2020.
- <sup>204</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- <sup>205</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>206</sup> Metz 2017, pp 13-23.
- <sup>207</sup> "Troop-to-task" is official terminology for the quantity of resources required to accomplish a given mission.
- <sup>208</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>209</sup> Easton and Gade 2018, pp 384-407.
- <sup>210</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>211</sup> De Tray 2008.
- <sup>212</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>213</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>214</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>215</sup> Gentile 2013, and Metz 2017, pp 13-23.
- <sup>216</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- <sup>217</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>218</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>219</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- <sup>220</sup> Schifrin 2018, 617-631.
- <sup>221</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>222</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- <sup>223</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>224</sup> Kaplan, Fred M. 2014, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*. pp 147-148.
- <sup>225</sup> Kagan 2009, pp 33-35, and Ricks pp 64-72.
- <sup>226</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>227</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>228</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>229</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>230</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>231</sup> Kilcullen 2007, pp 283-297.
- <sup>232</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>233</sup> Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- <sup>234</sup> When the author taught at the Joint IO Planner's Course in Virginia, a point of emphasis to students was commander involvement in the IO plan. He taught that there were commanders who would sign off on the plan

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brought into their office by their IO chief. With General Petraeus, he would tell the IO chief what the IO plan was: the job of the IO chief was to execute it.

<sup>235</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.

<sup>236</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.

<sup>237</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.

<sup>238</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.

<sup>239</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.

<sup>240</sup> Dixon 2009, pp 353-381.

<sup>241</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.

<sup>242</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.

<sup>243</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.

<sup>244</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.

<sup>245</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.

<sup>246</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.

<sup>247</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.

<sup>248</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.

<sup>249</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.

<sup>250</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.

<sup>252</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.

<sup>253</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.

<sup>254</sup> Interview with the author 11 May 2020.

<sup>255</sup> Interview with the author 2 September 2020.

<sup>256</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.

<sup>257</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.

<sup>258</sup> Dixon 2009, pp 353-381.

<sup>259</sup> Ambassador Crocker interview with the author 17 August 2020.

<sup>260</sup> Interview with the author 22 May 2020.

<sup>261</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.

<sup>262</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.

<sup>263</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.

<sup>264</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.

<sup>265</sup> Gentile 2013, pp 1-208.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.

<sup>267</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.

<sup>268</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.

<sup>269</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.

<sup>270</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.

<sup>271</sup> Wasta is an Arab word meaning informal influence or clout. You might be my boss, but if I was a childhood friend of the Crown Prince, I have wasta.

<sup>272</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.

<sup>273</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.

<sup>275</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.

<sup>276</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.

<sup>277</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.

<sup>278</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.

<sup>279</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.

<sup>280</sup> Interview with the author 2 September 2020.

<sup>281</sup> Gentile 2013, pp 1-208.

<sup>282</sup> Biddle, Stephen, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *International Security* 37, no 1 (2012): 7-40.

<sup>283</sup> Metz 2017, pp 13-23.

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- 284 Interview with the author 28 April 2020.
- 285 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 286 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 287 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 288 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 289 Lounsbery, Marie Olson, and Fred Pearson. 2020. *Civil Wars: Internal Struggles, Global Consequences*. P 2178.
- 290 De Tray 2008,
- 291 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 292 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 293 Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- 294 Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- 295 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 296 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 297 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 298 Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- 299 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 300 Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- 301 Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- 302 Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- 303 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 304 Joseph 2014, pp 1-110.
- 305 Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- 306 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- 307 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 308 Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- 309 Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- 310 Lounsbery Olson and Pearson 2009, pp 1012, 1290.
- 311 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 312 Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- 313 Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- 314 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 315 Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- 316 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 317 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 318 Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- 319 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 320 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 321 Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- 322 Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- 323 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- 324 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 325 Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- 326 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 327 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 328 The author taught the same concept to students in the Joint Information Operations Planner's Course. Civil Affairs gives PSYOP good stories to talk about, and PSYOP makes sure the effect of the CA project reverberates beyond the village where it is conducted. You want the chief in the next village over to hear about it so he will say to himself, "I want a well dug in my village too: maybe I should cooperate with the Americans."
- 329 Written response to author questions 31 July 2020.
- 330 Joseph 2016, pp 1-110.
- 331 General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- 332 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 333 Interview with the author 19 March 2018.

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- <sup>334</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>335</sup> Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- <sup>336</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>337</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>338</sup> 10% matters. The author recalls working at CENTCOM after 9-11 when humanitarian assistance into Afghanistan was an important issue. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) might request assistance with flying relief supplies into Kabul. If we could locate a Coalition partner willing to take on the job, that meant U.S. airframes did not have to be devoted to the task and were now available to carry out other missions.
- <sup>339</sup> Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- <sup>340</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>341</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>342</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- <sup>343</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>344</sup> Data taken from U.S. Energy Information Administration chart accessed 15 January 2021 at: [OilProduction.Iraq1990-2015 - Petroleum industry in Iraq - Wikipedia](#)
- <sup>345</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- <sup>346</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>347</sup> Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
- <sup>348</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>349</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>350</sup> While at CENTCOM, the author served as recorder for an ICRC feedback session with the senior leadership regarding the facility at Guantanamo Bay. The ICRC representative was very cordial and most of the points were minor, but it is his job to point out violations of international law to the country running the facility.
- <sup>351</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>352</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>353</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>354</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>355</sup> Nye, Joseph S. 2012, *The Future of Power*.
- <sup>356</sup> Crocker, Ambassador Ryan, interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>357</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>358</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>359</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>360</sup> Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- <sup>361</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>362</sup> The author remembers being at a conference listening to a smart man, possibly John Mersheimer, explaining that DoD is the only agency of the Executive Branch that can fill all its positions at 90% manning. In other words, there is "float" built in to allow for overlap when a person takes an assignment, goes to school, or to help stand up a new task force.
- <sup>363</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>364</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- <sup>365</sup> Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- <sup>366</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- <sup>367</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>368</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>369</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>370</sup> Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- <sup>371</sup> Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- <sup>372</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>373</sup> Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- <sup>374</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>375</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>376</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>377</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.

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- <sup>378</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>379</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>380</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>381</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>382</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>383</sup> Greene 2017, 563–579.
- <sup>384</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>385</sup> Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- <sup>386</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>387</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- <sup>388</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- <sup>389</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>390</sup> Plakoudas 2015, pp 132–145.
- <sup>391</sup> Marston 2010.
- <sup>392</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>393</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>394</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>395</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>396</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>397</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>398</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>399</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>400</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>401</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>402</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>403</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>404</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>405</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>406</sup> Woodford, Shawn, “Force Ratios and Counterinsurgency,” *Mystics and Statistics, Dupuy Institute*, accessed 18 January 2021 at: <http://www.dupuyinstitute.org/blog/2016/01/04/force-ratios-and-counterinsurgency/#:~:text=Seeking%20a%20way%20of%20projecting,needed%20per%201%2C000%20local%20inhabitants>
- <sup>407</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>408</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>409</sup> Hammes 2006.
- <sup>410</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>411</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>412</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>413</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>414</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>415</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>416</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>417</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>418</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>419</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>420</sup> Interview with the author 28 April 2020.
- <sup>421</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>422</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>423</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>424</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>425</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.

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- <sup>426</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>427</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>428</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>429</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>430</sup> Lounsbury Olson and Pearson 2009, p 192.
- <sup>431</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>432</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>433</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>434</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>435</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>436</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>437</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>438</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>439</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>440</sup> Pirnie and O'Connell 2008.
- <sup>441</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>442</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>443</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>444</sup> Interview with the author ( August 2020).
- <sup>445</sup> For example, the author was amazed to discover that prior to 2003 Iraqi police did not do patrolling and were not even open after dark.
- <sup>446</sup> Lounsbury Olson and Pearson 2009, p 967.
- <sup>447</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>448</sup> Response to author question via email 22 May 2021.
- <sup>449</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- <sup>450</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>451</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>452</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>453</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>454</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>455</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>456</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>457</sup> The author vividly remembers this phenomenon during his time in both Iraq and Afghanistan. You would be meeting with a village chief or provincial leader, having a pleasant lunch and discussing issues when they would say "You need to leave now."
- <sup>458</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>459</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>460</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>461</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>462</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>463</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>464</sup> Fehrenbach, T. R., and Kevin Foley. 2011. *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History*.
- <sup>465</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>466</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>467</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>468</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>469</sup> Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- <sup>470</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>471</sup> Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- <sup>472</sup> Because Special Operations worked under a separate chain of command from conventional forces in Iraq, it was common for conventional forces not to know about Special Operations missions before they occurred. In fairness to Special Operations, many of their targets were transient.
- <sup>473</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.

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- <sup>474</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- <sup>475</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>476</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>477</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>478</sup> Lounsbery Olson and Pearson 2009, p 849.
- <sup>479</sup> Metz 2017, pp 13-23.
- <sup>480</sup> Petraeus, General David, interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>481</sup> Crocker, Ambassador Ryan, interview with the author 17 August 2020.
- <sup>482</sup> Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- <sup>483</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>484</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>485</sup> Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- <sup>486</sup> Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- <sup>487</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>488</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>489</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>490</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>491</sup> Interviews with the author 19 March 2018 and 7 August 2020.
- <sup>492</sup> The author's personal opinion is that the restrictions on messaging by the Department of Defense stemmed from misinterpretation of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which was specifically intended to apply to the Department of State due to widespread belief in Congress at that time that DoS was infiltrated by Communists. The Act was amended in 2012 to remove messaging limitations.
- <sup>493</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>494</sup> The author's experience was that almost all Psychological Operations products distributed in Iraq and Afghanistan were clearly marked as U.S. or Coalition products. Products where the source was unclear ("Gray PSYOP") or deliberately misattributed ("Black PSYOP") were rare, usually small-scale and designed for a select target audience.
- <sup>495</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>496</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>497</sup> Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- <sup>498</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- <sup>499</sup> The author saw this problem repeatedly. There was a security-cleared translator/cultural advisor who had been at Ft. Bragg prior to the invasion. She was Lebanese and had not lived in the Middle East for over a decade. She was invaluable in North Carolina in 2002. After the invasion, the insights of our local hires seemed much more valuable than her recommendations after she arrived in Baghdad. Unfortunately, she was the only one with a security clearance, so she ended up having an outsized influence on the planning and development process.
- <sup>500</sup> The author recalls something on the order of 2,000 pre-approved PSYOP products being available in Iraq.
- <sup>501</sup> Interviews with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>502</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>503</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>504</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>505</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>506</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>507</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>508</sup> Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- <sup>509</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>510</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- <sup>511</sup> Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- <sup>512</sup> Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- <sup>513</sup> Interview with the author 26 January 2018.

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- 514 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 515 Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- 516 Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- 517 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 518 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 519 Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- 520 Written response to author questions 31 July 2020.
- 521 Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- 522 Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- 523 Interview with the author 19 March 2018.
- 524 Interview with the author 26 January 2018.
- 525 Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- 526 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- 527 Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- 528 Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- 529 Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
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- 532 Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- 533 Response to author question via email 22 May 2020.
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- 536 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 537 Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- 538 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 539 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 540 Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- 541 Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- 542 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- 543 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 544 Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- 545 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
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- 554 Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- 555 Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- 556 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 557 Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- 558 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- 559 Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- 560 Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- 561 Interview with the author 23 June 2020.

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- 562 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 563 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 564 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 565 Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- 566 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- 567 Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- 568 Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- 569 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 570 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 571 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- 572 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 573 Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- 574 Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- 575 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 576 Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- 577 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 578 Interview with the author 8 July 2020. Two interviews were conducted on 8 July 2020.
- 579 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 580 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 581 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 582 Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- 583 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 584 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 585 Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- 586 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 587 Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- 588 Metz 2017, pp 13-23.
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- 590 Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- 591 Interviews with the author 19 May and 2 September 2020.
- 592 Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- 593 Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- 594 Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- 595 Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- 596 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- 597 Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- 598 Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- 599 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 600 Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
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- 603 Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
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- 605 Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
- 606 Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
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- 608 Lounsbery Olson and Pearson 2009, pp 3025-3287.
- 609 Interview with the author 2 June 2020.

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- <sup>610</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>611</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>612</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>613</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>614</sup> Interviews with the author 18 April, 22 May, 27 May and 2 September 2020.
- <sup>615</sup> Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- <sup>616</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>617</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>618</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>619</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>620</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>621</sup> Reference is to the U.S. government rating system for foreign language expertise on a 0-5 scale with 5 being the highest possible.
- <sup>622</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>623</sup> Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- <sup>624</sup> Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- <sup>625</sup> Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- <sup>626</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>627</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>628</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>629</sup> Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- <sup>630</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- <sup>631</sup> Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- <sup>632</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>633</sup> Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- <sup>634</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>635</sup> Document copy provided by one of the interviewees for this work.
- <sup>636</sup> General Petraeus interview with the author 22 February 2018.
- <sup>637</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- <sup>638</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>639</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>640</sup> Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- <sup>641</sup> Interview with the author 9 June 2020.
- <sup>642</sup> Friis 2020, pp 199-220.
- <sup>643</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>644</sup> Interview with the author 16 June 2020.
- <sup>645</sup> Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- <sup>646</sup> Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- <sup>647</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- <sup>648</sup> Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- <sup>649</sup> Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- <sup>650</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>651</sup> Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- <sup>652</sup> Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
- <sup>653</sup> Interview with the author 28 April 2020.
- <sup>654</sup> Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- <sup>655</sup> Interview with the author 12 June 2020.
- <sup>656</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.

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- 657 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 658 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 659 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- 660 Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- 661 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
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- 663 Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- 664 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 665 Interview with the author 2 June 2020.
- 666 Interview with the author 9 August 2020.
- 667 Interview with the author 22 July 2020.
- 668 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- 669 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- 670 Interview with the author 22 June 2020.
- 671 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 672 Interview with the author 28 April 2020.
- 673 Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
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- 685 Interview with the author 18 June 2020.
- 686 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
- 687 Interview with the author 22 May 2020.
- 688 Interview with the author 21 July 2020.
- 689 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 690 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 691 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- 692 Interview with the author 26 May 2020.
- 693 Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- 694 Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- 695 Written response to author questions 22 May 2021.
- 696 Interview with the author 3 June 2020.
- 697 Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- 698 Interview with the author 8 June 2020.
- 699 Interview with the author 22 June 2020.
- 700 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.

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- 701 Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- 702 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 703 Interview with the author 20 May 2020 (Two interviews were conducted on 20 May 2020).
- 704 Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- 705 Interview with the author 7 August 2020.
- 706 Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
- 707 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
- 708 Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- 709 Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- 710 Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- 711 Interview with the author 30 April 2020.
- 712 U.S. military exercises will normally feature a fictitious opponent very similar to a current adversary nation.
- 713 Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- 714 Interview with the author 28 August 2020.
- 715 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 716 Interview with the author 31 August 2020.
- 717 Interview with the author 15 June 2020.
- 718 Interview with the author 28 May 2020.
- 719 Interview with the author 2 September 2020.
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- 725 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
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- 728 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
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- 733 Interview with the author 22 June 2020.
- 734 Interview with the author 11 May 2020.
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- 742 Interview with the author 23 June 2020.
- 743 Interview with the author 15 May 2020.
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- 746 Interview with the author 20 May 2020.
- 747 Interview with the author 8 July 2020.
- 748 Byman 2006, pp 79-115.

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- <sup>749</sup> Metz 2017, pp 13-23.
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- <sup>751</sup> Interview with the author 14 May 2020.
- <sup>752</sup> Interview with the author 24 April 2020.
- <sup>753</sup> Interview with the author 18 April 2020.
- <sup>754</sup> Interview with the author 28 April 2020.
- <sup>755</sup> Interview with the author 23 July 2020.
- <sup>756</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
- <sup>757</sup> Interview with the author 29 June 2020.
- <sup>758</sup> Interview with the author 4 May 2020.
- <sup>759</sup> Interview with the author 21 May 2020.
- <sup>760</sup> Interview with the author 19 May 2020.
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## APPENDIX

MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-IRAQ COMMANDER'S COUNTERINSURGENCY  
GUIDANCE



**HEADQUARTERS**  
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE – IRAQ  
BAGHDAD, IRAQ  
APO AE 09342-1400

16 September 2008

**Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance**

We serve during a pivotal period in the campaign for a secure, stable, and prosperous Iraq. Our Coalition Forces and Iraqi partners have sacrificed much, and together we have achieved remarkable gains. Today, the Iraqi people enjoy greater freedoms than at any point in several generations, and there is tremendous hope for the future in this ancient land. As we look ahead, we continue to see an evolution of progress in Iraq. As Iraqi Security Forces stand on their own, Coalition Forces will increasingly *"Enable from Overwatch."*

Together, Coalition and Iraqi forces will continue to protect the populace while fostering reconciliation, promoting good governance, and encouraging Iraqi men and women to build upon their newly-won hope by investing in their communities. Given Iraq's changing environment, accomplishing this will require a subtle shift in "how we think" about our mission, "how we operate" to accomplish that mission, and the principles that define "who we are."

**"How We Think"**

- **Protect and serve the population.** The Iraqi people are the decisive "terrain." Enable our Iraqi partners to provide security and help the people of Iraq to invest and take pride in their communities. Foster local governance, provision of basic services, maintenance of infrastructure, and economic revitalization.
- **Understand the complexity of the conflict.** The environment in which we operate is complex and demands that we employ every weapon in our arsenal, both kinetic and non-kinetic. To fully utilize all approaches, we must understand the local culture and history. Learn about the tribes, formal and informal leaders, governmental and religious structures, and local security forces. We must understand how the society functions so we can enable Iraqis to build a stable, self-reliant nation.
- **Give the people justice and honor.** We want the hands that bring security to be the hands that help bring justice and honor as well. In this complex struggle, strive to be the "honest broker." Ensure that complaints and abuses are dealt with quickly and publicly. Provide an environment that creates honorable work, rewards honorable behavior, and emphasizes honorable treatment for all.
- **Foster Gol legitimacy – Make it easy for the people to choose.** Exemplify professionalism in all your actions and promote the same in our Iraqi partners. Continually develop the capability and legitimacy of the ISF, and give the Iraqi people hope by showing them that loyalty to the national government is the best way to improve the lives of their families.
- **Promote reconciliation.** Separate those who promote and practice violence from those now willing to reconcile and become productive members of Iraqi society. Encourage and enable the Iraqi government to reintegrate those committed to peaceful coexistence with their neighbors.

**"How We Operate"**

- **Conduct operations by, with, or through our Iraqi partners – "Enable from Overwatch."** Understand Iraqi systems and capabilities, and help Iraqis make them work – always look for sustainable solutions. Coalition and Iraqi units must live, work, and fight together, with the Iraqis more and more in the lead. Ultimately, the legitimacy of the ISF in the eyes of the Iraqi people is essential to long-term success.
- **Walk.** Move mounted, work dismounted. Patrol on foot and engage the population – with the ISF in front whenever possible. Situational awareness can only be gained by interacting with the

people face-to-face. Every patrol should have tasks designed to augment understanding of the area and the enemy.

- **Defeat the network, not just the attack.** Defeat enemy attacks before they happen by identifying the network behind attack preparations -- pursue and take apart the network's leaders, bomb makers, financiers, suppliers, and operators. Use both lethal and non-lethal means to destroy the network and prevent it from regenerating.
- **Share intelligence.** Establish collection systems, and promptly and regularly share information up and down the chain of command and with our Iraqi partners. Know that small pieces of information paint the big picture.
- **Integrate civilian and military efforts.** As we move closer to sustainable security, civilian and governmental agencies will naturally take on more responsibility as we reduce our military presence. Coordinate operations and initiatives with our embassy and interagency partners, our Iraqi counterparts, local civilian leaders, and non-governmental organizations to ensure all are working to achieve a common purpose. At all levels, continue to build Iraqi capacity to independently execute governance functions.
- **Transfer security responsibility.** Enable Iraqi units to accept security responsibility as local conditions permit. Don't rush to failure -- closely supervise deliberate, well-coordinated transitions that preserve security gains and maintain momentum. "Thin" our presence in sector, but stay engaged, and maintain situational awareness and vigilance in protecting our force.

**"Who We Are"**

- **Be first with the truth.** Communicate accurate information -- good or bad -- to the chain of command, to Iraqi leaders, and to the public as soon as possible. Pre-empt rumors and beat the insurgents, extremists, and criminals to the headlines. Hold the press (and ourselves) accountable for accuracy and context. Challenge enemy disinformation. Turn our enemies' extremist ideologies, oppressive practices, and indiscriminate violence against them.
- **Have realistic expectations.** We have made great gains, but much remains to be done. The enemy still has a vote, and progress may sometimes be slow. Make no premature declarations of victory, but identify and share successes and champion their cause.
- **Live our values.** Stay true to the values we hold dear and that distinguish us from our enemies. This endeavor is often brutal, physically demanding, and frustrating. We all experience moments of anger, but we can neither submit to dark impulses nor tolerate unethical actions by others.
- **Leaders make the difference.** Warfare has never been more complex and never has it required more imaginative leadership. Empower subordinates and push decisions, resources, and authorities to the lowest level possible. Provide appropriate right and left limits for our leaders and give them the flexibility necessary to be imaginative and adaptive. Communicate with your subordinates daily to ensure awareness. Leaders are the barometer for their unit. Do what's right and trust your fellow troopers to do the same.

Many challenges still lie ahead. I salute your professionalism, your skill, and your extraordinary dedication in this complex environment. The world watches our progress with great anticipation. You are the authors of one of our era's proudest chapters of military history, and I am honored to lead MNF-I as we put to practice these tenets of counterinsurgency.



RAYMOND T. ODIERNO  
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