

# Part I: The Iraqi Insurgency, 2004-2007

Within months of the Coalition's victory against Iraqi forces and the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, the U.S. forces and their allies suddenly faced a general insurgency that sought to end the foreign occupation of the country. U.S. administrative policies and its military response to the insurgency only exacerbated the movement. The Coalition Provisional Authority focused on empowering Iraq's Shi'a majority at the expense of the formerly dominant Sunni minority. Fearing disenfranchisement and a loss of status in the new Iraqi state, many Sunnis joined the insurgency. The heavy-handed response of U.S. units such as the 4th Infantry Division (USA) to insurgent attacks further inflamed hostility to the U.S. presence in the country.

In the spring of 2004, Marines from the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), commanded by Lieutenant General James T. Conway, redeployed to Iraq where they assumed responsibility for providing security to Iraq's western al-Anbar Province. At this time, the insurgency constituted the single greatest obstacle to stability in Iraq, and the Marines of I MEF soon were engaged in battles with insurgents in the cities of Fallujah and an-Najaf. The insurgency encompassed a hodgepodge of different groups, including former Ba'athists, secular nationalists, religious extremists, and foreign groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq. The insurgency was not entirely a Sunni movement, as Shi'a groups such as those led by religious extremist Muqtada al-Sadr rose up against Coalition troops in Najaf in the summer of 2004. Taking full advantage of their urban environment, insurgents used an array of

tactics against American forces, including remote-activated land mines, rocket-propelled grenades, and suicide bombers. Supply convoys became especially vulnerable. Furthermore, insurgent groups became particularly adept at deploying the mass media to build an anti-American consensus and generate sympathy for their cause.

By 2006, the insurgency had transformed from a general uprising against the Coalition forces into a sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shi'a forces. The Coalition devised and implemented a number of strategies and tactics to combat the threats, ranging from large-scale use of firepower and force to conducting counterinsurgency operations and building local security forces. For a range of reasons, some of these efforts succeeded while others failed. U.S. Marines were involved in several of these operations and played leading roles in a number of critical battles against the Iraqi insurgency, including Najaf, Ramadi, and the two battles for Fallujah.

The following two selections present an overview of the insurgency and conflict that many came to label civil war in Iraq. Carter A. Malkasian's essay, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003-2007," provides an excellent survey of the major events that shaped the insurgency and U.S. efforts to combat the threat between 2003 and 2007. James D. Fearon's article, "Iraq's Civil War," examines how the Iraqi insurgency transformed into a religious civil war, focusing on the complexities of a conflict that involved the United States and its Coalition allies and Iraq's Sunni and Shi'a populations.





# Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003- January 2007

by *Carter A. Malkasian*

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The United States' campaign in Iraq marked its second major counterinsurgency campaign in 40 years. The U.S. military attempted to adapt to the situation it found in Iraq, drawing upon lessons from history and its own operations. However, in the first four years of the conflict, it could not suppress the insurgency, which prompted President George W. Bush to revise his strategy in January 2007.

The reasons behind the lack of progress from May 2003 to January 2007 may not be clear for some time, if at all. To some extent, American attempts to adapt neglected the sectarian divisions in Iraq. The key elements of the U.S. strategy—democratization and the construction of a national (and consequently predominantly Shi'a) army—did nothing to placate the Sunni minority, who backed the insurgency and sought to preserve their political power against both the occupation and the emerging Shi'a government. This strategy did not make success impossible before 2007, but it certainly made it harder to suppress the violence.

## ***The Outbreak of the Insurgency***

The insurgency in Iraq broke out over the summer of 2003, following the Coalition's lightning victory over Saddam Hussein's standing forces in March and April.<sup>1</sup> Sunni Arabs, who lived primarily in Baghdad and western and northern Iraq, represented the overwhelming majority of the insurgents. In general, the insurgents sought to compel the United States, viewed as an occupier, to withdraw from Iraq; and to recapture some of the political power and economic benefits that the Sunnis had lost to the Shi'a Arabs with the demise of Saddam Hussein's

regime.<sup>2</sup> U.S. plans for democracy promised to place the Shi'a, representing 60 percent of the population, in the most powerful political position. The large role played by exiled Shi'a leaders on the newly constructed Iraqi Governing Council (an interim advisory body), the dissolution of the old Iraqi Army (which Sunnis had largely officered), and the prohibition of members of the Ba'ath Party from working in the government (de-Ba'athification) exacerbated the Sunni feeling of marginalization. An extreme element of the insurgency, the al-Qaeda-affiliated network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, wanted to create their own Islamic state within Iraq that might be able to support Al-Qaeda's activities elsewhere in the region. Zarqawi purposefully targeted Shi'a in order to draw reprisals upon the Sunnis and instigate a civil war.<sup>3</sup> Zarqawi's network, later known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), held the allegiance of the foreign fighters and Iraqi terrorists of most concern to the United States.

In the summer of 2003, the United States had 150,000 military personnel (in five divisions) in Iraq, which together with 13,000 personnel from the United Kingdom and other allied countries (in two divisions) formed Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7), under the command of Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez. The allied forces were known as the "Coalition."

Ambassador Paul Bremer controlled the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which was responsible for governing Iraq and guiding its progression toward democracy, a foremost goal of the Bush administration. Many U.S. leaders, including Bremer, believed that democracy represented a natural antidote to the extremism of Zarqawi and other terrorists. Furthermore, the most respected Shi'a religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Sistani, with strong popular Shi'a backing, pressured Bremer to hold direct elections as soon as possible.<sup>4</sup>

The United States and its military were unprepared to confront the insurgency that developed. Since the end of the Vietnam War, both the U.S. Army and Marine Corps had focused on learning rapid maneuver and combined arms in order to fight a conventional war, instead of the

patrolling, bottom-up intelligence collection and minimization of force generally considered necessary for successful counterinsurgency. Training, such as at the Army's National Training Center in the California desert, dealt with defeating conventional mechanized opponents. No comprehensive doctrine existed for counterinsurgency. Expecting to fight a conventional war, the U.S. Army fielded armored and mechanized battalions that were heavy on M1A1/M1A2 Abrams tanks and M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicles, but light on infantry (armored and mechanized battalions contained 500 to 600 personnel). Such organization made it difficult to thoroughly patrol or interact with the population. The Marines were somewhat better off; their battalions contained 900 infantry: every battalion had a team dedicated to human intelligence collection; and there had been intensive training for urban combat since the late 1990s.

Neither Major General Sanchez nor General John Abizaid, commander of Central Command, promulgated a plan to counter the insurgency. When confronted with insurgent attacks, the five U.S. divisions reacted differently, but with a tendency toward conventional-style operations and heavy-handed tactics. Units conducted raids based on scant intelligence and applied firepower loosely. Operating north of Baghdad around Samarra and Tikrit (S'alah-ah-din Province), Major General Raymond Odierno's 4th Infantry Division acquired a reputation for heavy-handedness. Instead of trying to secure the population, his commanders launched large-scale sweeps to roll up insurgents and Ba'athist leaders, fired artillery blindly to interdict insurgent activity ("harassment and interdiction fires"), purposefully detained innocents to blackmail their insurgent relatives, and leveled homes to deter people from supporting the insurgents.<sup>5</sup> Such actions further alienated the Sunni population. Other divisions operated in a similar pattern. In Fallujah, troops from the 82d Airborne Division, feeling threatened, fired into mass gatherings on both April 28 and 30, 2003, killing 13 civilians and wounding 91. In November, Sanchez conducted a series of sweeps and air strikes, such as Operation *Iron Hammer*, meant to crush the

insurgents. Major General Charles Swannack, the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, said: "This is war. . . We're going to use a sledgehammer to crush a walnut."<sup>6</sup>

The operations of Major General David Petraeus' 101st Airborne Division, working in the north of Iraq (Ninewa Province), diverged from this trend. Petraeus considered securing the population to be the key to effective counterinsurgency and concentrated his entire division in Mosul, the largest population center (1.8 million) in the province. Determined to minimize harm to the population, before approving any operations he would ask his commander, "Will this operation take more bad guys off the street than it creates by the way it is conducted?"<sup>7</sup> Rather than undertaking large sweeps, his troopers operated out of outposts in the heart of the city and focused on collecting detailed actionable intelligence for raids against insurgent leadership. Meanwhile, Petraeus interacted with the Sunni elements of society, even holding his own local elections to draw them into the political process. Insurgent attacks stayed low during the division's tenure. Unfortunately, the following unit boasted only a third of the 101st's manpower, and the situation deteriorated.

The one method that characterized all U.S. operations was high-value targeting. Elite special operating forces enjoyed carte blanche to capture and kill insurgent leaders. The conventional forces let the same tactic drive their operations. Every battalion, brigade, and division developed a high-value targeting list detailing the most wanted insurgents in their area of operations. Intelligence collection assets were devoted to finding insurgent leaders.

It is worth noting that the British, who controlled the Coalition forces around Basrah, ai-Amarah, and an-Nasiriyah, adopted a more circumspect approach than the Americans. Applying the lessons of a half-century of counterinsurgency, the British patrolled in small units, rigorously collected intelligence, and used fire-power sparingly. In general, British and other Western European forces tried to maintain a light footprint in cities to avoid upsetting the locals. As early as September 2003, British generals made

the development of local Iraqi forces a priority. For example, in 2004, the entire Argyll & Sutherland Battalion was dedicated to training them. Some of the first effective Iraqi units appeared in the British operating area.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the light approach toward securing the population would later allow militias to gain control of the city, which would have negative side effects in 2007.

### ***The First Battle of Fallujah and the Mahdi Uprising***

For the most part, small-scale roadside bombings, mortar shelling, and fleeting skirmishes characterized insurgent activity in 2003. By early 2004, the insurgency was gaining strength. Poor strategic decisions made it explode.

The I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) took over al-Anbar Province from the 82d Airborne Division in March 2004. On March 31, insurgents and people in Fallujah murdered four American civilian contractors and hung their bodies from a bridge over the Euphrates. Against the advice of Major General James Mattis and Lieutenant General James Conway (the Marine commanders), the Bush administration ordered an offensive to clear Fallujah. Determined to signal their resolve, they made the decision with little consultation with the Iraqi Governing Council and allowed insufficient time (just days) to evacuate civilians, gather intelligence, and construct a public relations campaign to mitigate the negative effects of attacking a Sunni city.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, instructions from Sanchez, Abizaid, and Rumsfeld endorsed harsh military action, thereby de-emphasizing the importance of minimizing civilian casualties.<sup>10</sup> Of the four Iraqi battalions assigned to the assault, only 70 Iraqi soldiers from the 36th Commando Battalion accompanied the 2,000 Marines (two reinforced infantry battalions) that led the offensive, hardly lessening Sunni feelings of oppression.

The ensuing offensive ignited widespread Sunni outrage. Viewing it as an attack on their society, Sunnis poured into Fallujah from other Sunni cities. When the Marines stepped off, they encountered heavy resistance from roughly 2,000

insurgents. Insurgents coordinated mortars, volleys of rocket-propelled grenades, and machine-gun fire in defense of their positions. Marine commanders risked prohibitive casualties unless they reverted to using artillery, air strikes, and tanks as per their conventional combined arms doctrine. Such firepower was applied selectively but, nevertheless, civilians died (the Iraqi Ministry of Health estimated 220 for the first two weeks of fighting).<sup>11</sup> Insurgent propaganda and Arab media exploited these casualties to inflame opposition to the Coalition. The Coalition had no response. The Iraqi Governing Council came under tremendous pressure to stop the fighting. Sunni members threatened to resign if Bremer did not initiate cease-fire negotiations. With the democratization process in jeopardy, on April 9, the U.S. government halted the offensive.<sup>12</sup> Fighting around the Marine bridgehead persisted until April 30, when Conway pulled the Marines out of the city.

At the same time that Fallujah exploded, a Shi'a uprising shook Coalition control over southern Iraq and threatened to ignite a national resistance. The Shi'a did not oppose the Coalition to the same extent that the Sunnis did, largely because their leaders now held power. However, most Shi'a still wanted the occupation to end. Muqtada Sadr, a radical young Shi'a cleric with a widespread following who had not been given a role in the Coalition's political process, tapped into this vein. His militia, Jaysh al-Mahdi, was organized around poor, young Shi'a males throughout the country. On April 4, he called the militia into the streets when Bremer shut down one of his newspapers and arrested one of his lieutenants. Thousands of Jaysh al-Mahdi attacked Coalition and Iraqi compounds in Najaf, an-Nasiriyah, al-Kut, Baghdad, al-Amarah, and even Kirkuk. Fighting spread to Basrah, Karbala, and Hillah. Over the next few months, the Coalition fought to regain control of the southern cities. The only exceptions were in Basrah and al-Amarah, where British patrols and British-advised Iraqi forces quelled the uprising.

As a result of the Mahdi uprising and the first battle of Fallujah, attacks throughout the country jumped from just under 200 per week in the first

three months of 2004 to over 500 per week in the summer.<sup>13</sup> Fallujah grew into an insurgent base of operations and staging ground for attacks elsewhere in the country. Additionally, in Samarra, Ramadi, Baqubah, and Baghdad, insurgents exerted control over the population and massed in groups of 20 or more for attacks on the Coalition. The insurgency enjoyed widespread popular support among the Sunni population. Sunnis perceived that the insurgents had won a great victory in Fallujah, forcing an embarrassing withdrawal upon the United States. A poll in late April 2004 found that 89 percent of Iraqis considered the Coalition to be an occupying force.<sup>14</sup> Fighting with Jaysh al-Mahdi in Najaf (the holiest Shi'a city) and Sadr City (a Shi'a neighborhood in Baghdad) temporarily ended in June, but Sadr and his forces maintained control of the two urban areas.

The breadth of violence made it abundantly clear that the Coalition could not secure Iraq without more numbers. Abizaid and the American commanders had been looking to the Iraqis to supply those numbers, rather than request U.S. reinforcements, which was not considered politically feasible and might deepen the perception of occupation among the Iraqi population. Since the dissolution of the old Iraqi Army, the Coalition had focused on creating locally based forces, known as the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (renamed the Iraqi National Guard after June 2004), to help provide security within Iraq while a new Iraqi Army was built.

Success in developing the Iraqi National Guard and other local forces depended entirely on the attitudes of the local population. National Guard battalions based on the Kurdish militia (*peshmerga*) or Shi'a militias, performed adequately. Battalions based on Sunnis did not. Disaffected from the Iraqi government and angry at the Coalition, at this stage in the war, Sunnis generally sympathized with the insurgency and had no intention of fighting their fellow tribesmen or family members.

There is little doubt that the U.S. military could have done a better job advising and training the Iraqis. Few commanders embedded advisers with local forces. Yet, at this time, even

when Americans did, Sunnis remained reluctant to fight. One of Mattis' most progressive ideas was to adapt the combined action program (CAP) of the Vietnam War to Iraq. A platoon in every Marine battalion was trained to operate within an indigenous unit. Each had received a month of special training in Arabic, Arab culture, and Soviet weapons handling. Three of Mattis' seven Marine infantry battalions embedded their CAP platoons with local forces. U.S. Special Forces also attempted to build local Sunni forces, cultivating a relationship with the warlike Albu Nimr tribe west of Ramadi. All this effort, however, yielded few results. In a quarter of all engagements, Sunni units with advisers fled or even surrendered. For example, during fighting in the town of Hit in October 2004, elements of the 503d Iraqi National Guard Battalion, operating directly alongside Marines, fled from positions defending the city bridge.<sup>15</sup> Most Sunni National Guard and police forces refused to work with advisers at all, let alone contribute to Coalition operations. By the end of October 2004, only two companies of the original seven National Guard battalions established in al-Anbar had not deserted or sided with the insurgency.

The failure of local forces, combined with widespread insurgent activity, caused Coalition commanders to look to the Iraqi Army as the answer to their lack of numbers. Conway said at the end of that hard-fought summer: "The situation will change when Iraqi Army divisions arrive. They will engender people with a sense of nationalism. Together with an elected government, they will create stability."<sup>16</sup>

### ***Stemming the Tide***

On June 28, 2004, the United States granted Iraq sovereignty and created the Iraqi Interim Government under Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Shortly thereafter, General George Casey succeeded Sanchez as the commander of Multi National Forces-Iraq (the new Coalition headquarters). Additionally, Petraeus returned to Iraq to command Multi National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) and oversee the creation of the Iraqi security forces (roughly 300,000

men), including 10 Iraqi Army divisions (roughly 120,000 men).

Casey took immediate steps to give the Coalition strategy a purpose hitherto lacking. He wanted to transition authority over security in each province to the Iraqis. For this to occur, Najaf, Baghdad, Fallujah, and other centers of violence would need to be dealt with one by one. As they went about doing so, Casey and his commanders paid careful attention to the mistakes of the past year, taking much more care to tailor military action to political priorities.

The blueprint for better counterinsurgency, and what would become known as the clear-hold-build approach, took form when Sadr unleashed a second uprising in Najaf on August 6, 2004.<sup>17</sup> Casey and Qasim Dawood, Allawi's national security adviser, carefully balanced military and political measures to coerce Sadr into backing down. While the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (augmented by two U.S. Army battalions, four Iraqi battalions, and scores of elite U.S. snipers) battled Sadr's 1,500 fighters, Dawood negotiated with Sistani with the hope of inducing Sistani to intercede and end the fighting. Political negotiations took precedence over the military offensive, which was repeatedly stopped to placate Sistani and ensure that fighting did not endanger the sacred Imam Ali Mosque. After three weeks, Sistani marched into Najaf with thousands of his followers and Sadr agreed to disperse his militia and surrender the mosque. Allawi and Casey immediately poured \$70 million in reconstruction and compensation funds into the city. Najaf would remain quiet for the next three years, and Sadr started pursuing power through political means instead of violent ones.

Next, Major General Peter Chiarelli's 1st U.S. Cavalry Division cleaned up Jaysh al-Mahdi resistance in Baghdad, and Major General John Batiste's 1st U.S. Infantry Division reasserted presence in Samaria. The big show was Fallujah, though, where 3,000-6,000 insurgents were ensconced. Casey pressed forward only after the full support of the Iraqi Interim Government had been obtained, which took months and meant that the operation could not take place until after

the U.S. presidential elections in early November. Allawi slowed the pace of planning in order to hold extensive discussions with obstinate Fallujah leaders and other Sunni notables. These discussions exhausted all diplomatic options, placing Allawi in a stronger political position to use force.

New Marine generals, Lieutenant General John Sattler and Major General Richard Natonski, listened to Conway and Mattis about the lessons of the first battle. Measures were taken to lessen the political impact of the firepower needed to defeat so many insurgents. All civilians were encouraged through leaflets, radio announcements, and a whisper campaign to leave the city. In the event, the Coalition would find only 5,000 civilians in the city out of a population of 250,000. Additionally, Sattler prepared to preempt insurgent propaganda with his own press releases, enabling him to take the initiative in shaping the news stories. Finally, in order to lessen the image of occupation, Sattler and Natonski, in parallel with Allawi, pressed for Iraqi Army units to accompany American forces in the assault.<sup>18</sup> The 1st Iraqi Intervention Force Brigade and 3d Iraqi Army Brigade joined the 1st Marine Regiment, 7th Marine Regiment, and U.S. Army Blackjack Brigade for the operation.

The offensive, known as Operation al-Fajr, kicked off on November 7, 2004, following months of air strikes on insurgent defenses and command and control nodes. Coalition tactics within Fallujah were those of a straightforward conventional battle. Four Marine infantry battalions methodically cleared out the insurgent defenders in the wake of two U.S. Army armored battalions that spearheaded the assault. As in the first battle, the strength of insurgent defenses compelled the Marines to call in artillery fire or close air support. Marine squads aggressively cleared buildings, making use of grenades, AT-4 rocket launchers with thermobaric warheads, and, most of all, well-drilled urban combat tactics. By the end of December, the insurgent resistance had come to an end. Roughly 2,000 insurgents were killed, wounded, or detained in the course of the battle.<sup>19</sup>

After the battle, the Coalition initiated an

intensive effort to work with the leaders of Fallujah and rebuild the city. The State Department representative, Kael Weston, worked hand in hand with political and religious leaders. They built a city government and motivated the people of Fallujah to participate in the political process. Approximately 65 to 80 percent of the city's population participated in three electoral events of 2005. Over 2005 and 2006, the Iraqi government provided a total of \$180 million in compensation for damage to homes while the Coalition engaged on major water, sewage, health, and power projects. One thousand to two thousand Marines continued to operate in the city, alongside roughly 1,500 soldiers of the Iraqi Army. When sectarian violence broke out in Baghdad in 2006, Sunnis fled to Fallujah because they considered it the safest Sunni city in Iraq.

### ***Counterinsurgency Reforms***

With Baghdad and Fallujah secure, Casey turned to improving the Iraqi security forces. In late 2004, Casey conducted a review of his campaign plan. The review, guided by the counterinsurgency expert Kalev Sepp, concluded that the formation of the Iraqi Army needed to be accelerated. Nowhere was the need for more forces clearer than in Mosul, where security collapsed outright in November 2004 after one Stryker battalion was sent to Fallujah. Insurgents coordinated attacks against police stations and 5,000 police surrendered en masse, forcing the Coalition to reassert its presence in the city. Rather than deploy more U.S. forces to Iraq, the answer was thought to lie with the Iraqi Army. Najaf, Baghdad, Samarra, and Fallujah showed that, when properly advised, the predominantly Shi'a and partly Kurdish Iraqi Army would stand and fight. The planners viewed the Iraqi Army as the linchpin of effective counterinsurgency. From their perspective, the Iraqi Army could both provide vital manpower and gather intelligence better than Coalition forces. Plus, Iraqi soldiers would not be perceived as occupiers, undercutting a major cause of the insurgency. It was thought that the Iraqi Army could eventually shoulder the burden of counterinsurgency



operations, allowing the Coalition to withdraw. Accordingly, Casey directed Coalition forces to shift their focus from fighting insurgents to training Iraqis.

The Coalition and Interim Iraqi Government wanted the Iraqi Army to be a national force that integrated Kurds, Shi'a, and Sunni. Few Sunnis joined, though, and the army became mainly Shi'a. In order to accelerate Iraqi Army development, MNF-I (Casey's headquarters) created the transition team concept—10 to 12 advisers embedded into every Iraqi Army battalion, brigade, and division. Additionally, Marine and Army battalions partnered with Iraqi battalions (roughly 500 soldiers) in order to assist in their operations and training. Eventually, the Iraqi battalion would operate independently, with only its advisers working with it daily.

In parallel to developing the Iraqi Army, General Casey and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad made every effort to ensure that the democratization process took hold. The CPA's transitional administrative law (TAL) scheduled three electoral events for 2005: the election of a transition government in January responsible for drafting the constitution; a referendum on the constitution in October; and the election of a permanent government in December. The establishment of a legitimate democratic government was considered central in cutting support for the insurgents and building cooperation across the sectarian communities.<sup>20</sup>

As the Iraqi Army developed and democratization pressed forward, Casey shifted his attention to securing Iraq's borders. Iraqi politicians considered this essential to stopping the flow of Sunni foreign fighters into the country; plus, according to Sepp and other counterinsurgency experts, blocking foreign assistance was part of effective counterinsurgency. The two major operations that ensued refined the clear-hold-build approach of 2004 and showcased improved U.S. counterinsurgency techniques.

The first was the clearing of Tal Afar in September 2005 (Operation Restoring Rights). Tal Afar, a city of 250,000 people located 40 miles from Syria, had been used by AQI (al-Qaeda in Iraq) as a staging ground for foreign fighters

entering Iraq since early 2005. The 3d Armored Reconnaissance Regiment (3d ACR), under Colonel H. R. McMaster, and two brigades of the 3rd Iraqi Army Division carried out the assault on the city. McMaster had directed that civilians be evacuated from the town in order to allow his forces to use artillery and attack helicopters to overcome insurgent makeshift fortifications. Groups of perhaps hundreds of insurgents massed to counterattack the advancing U.S. and Iraqi forces, but the Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles tore them apart.<sup>21</sup>

After the battle, McMaster positioned his soldiers in 29 outposts throughout the city to hold the cleared areas. From these outposts, his forces saturated Iraqi neighborhoods with patrols. Once civilians had returned to the city, the use of force was minimized. Second Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, killed no civilians at all, which won the appreciation of the locals. Building intelligence on insurgents was made easier through the cooperation of the significant Shi'a minority in Tal Afar.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, McMaster could recruit a police force because the Shi'a were willing to serve, whereas the Sunnis still considered the Iraqi Army and police to be their enemy.<sup>23</sup>

The second operation was the clearing of al-Qa'im (Operation Steel Curtain) in November 2005. After the second battle of Falujah, insurgents affiliated with AQI had fled to al-Qa'im, a city of 200,000 that lies on the Euphrates River at the Syrian border, and turned it into a base of operations. Two reinforced Marine infantry battalions (2,500 Marines) and one Iraqi battalion (roughly 500 soldiers) cleared the city from November 5 to 16, killing roughly 100 insurgents.<sup>24</sup>

Like Tal Afar, the operations after the battle were more important than the battle itself. Lieutenant Colonel Dale Alford, commander of 3d Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, dispersed his Marines into small sub-units, integrating them thoroughly with the Iraqi Army brigade. Every platoon lived and worked with an Iraqi platoon in one of 12 outposts. The platoons conducted intensive satellite patrolling both day and night. Living close to the population generated intelli-

gence and forced the Marines to learn how to interact with them.<sup>25</sup> Even more important was the determination of the Albu Mahal tribe to keep AQI out. AQI had impinged upon their traditional control over the al-Qa'im area, causing the tribe to align itself with the Coalition after having fought as insurgents over the previous two years. Within three months of the completion of Operation Steel Curtain, the Albu Mahal had devoted 700 tribesmen to the resident Iraqi Army brigade and 400 to a newly established police force.<sup>26</sup>

Off the battlefield, Casey took steps to institute the lessons learned since mid-2004. These included setting up a counterinsurgency academy at Taji (just north of Baghdad) that all incoming regimental and battalion commanders had to attend for eight days. Additionally, Casey personally went to every division and brigade to brief them on his strategic vision.

In the United States, the Army and Marine Corps revamped their services training programs. The emphasis of the Marine Corps' combined arms exercise program at Twentynine Palms, California, and the U.S. Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, changed from testing units against a Soviet-style conventional opponent to testing them against insurgents. Furthermore, in 2006, the U.S. Army set up a 60-day training program for its advisers at Fort Riley, Kansas. Finally, Petraeus and Mattis (now both in charge of their respective services' training establishments in the United States) together sponsored a new counterinsurgency manual (Field Manual 3-24) for the Army and Marine Corps that was issued in December 2006.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice contributed to the reforms by transferring the concept of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) from Afghanistan, where they had performed fairly well, to Iraq. Manned by State Department diplomats, workers from USAID (United States Agency for International Development), agricultural experts, and engineers, PRTs focused on providing economic assistance and developing local governmental bodies within each province.

Unfortunately, Tal Afar and al-Qa'im masked problems that still existed in U.S. counterinsur-

gency. At the same time as al-Qa'im was being mopped up, Marines in Haditha killed 24 civilians after being hit with a roadside bomb. Major General Eldon Bargewell, who investigated the incident, reported:

The most remarkable aspect of the follow-on action with regard to the civilian casualties from the [November 19] Haditha incident was the absence of virtually any kind of inquiry at any level of command into the circumstances surrounding the deaths.<sup>27</sup>

While this incident was extreme, the use of air strikes, the detainment of innocent civilians, the occupation of homes, and checkpoints shooting at oncoming vehicles ("escalation of force incidents") were common. A later poll by the U.S. Army Surgeon General cited widespread attitudes within both the Marines and Army that devalued Iraq life. Almost a third of the respondents said officers had not made it clear that harming civilians was unacceptable.<sup>28</sup>

Other problems existed in the counterinsurgency effort as well. Some commanders still focused on mechanized sweeps or air assaults that never held an area after it had been cleared. Some battalions were shifted from actively patrolling urban areas to operating out of large U.S. bases, reducing their ability to work with the people.

The inconsistency, of the U.S. reform effort derived from the decentralized command and control structure developed for conventional war. Part of the doctrine was to delegate as much decision-making authority as possible to prevent any pause in operational tempo. Consequently, brigade and battalion commanders enjoyed a freedom to conduct operations as they saw fit. The system might have worked if commanders had been thoroughly trained in counterinsurgency. Instead, commanders often reverted to their conventional training and conducted operations that were too methodical or heavy-handed. The commanders that instituted real change within their units, such as Petraeus and Alford, were the ones who were more directive with their subordinates.

High-value targeting remained the one tactic

truly consistent throughout the U.S. forces. The detainment or death of a key leader undoubtedly disrupted insurgent operations. However, raids to capture insurgent leaders tended to disturb Iraqi homes and sweep up innocent Iraqis, which only increased local resentment. City council meetings regularly featured complaints about raids. Furthermore, capturing or killing an insurgent leader rarely caused insurgent operations to fall apart, even in a local area. Indeed, the killing of Zarqawi himself in an air strike on June 7, 2006 caused no discernible drop in attack levels or long-term injury to AQI's organizational abilities.

Worst of all, the centerpiece of Casey's strategy was not performing well. The U.S. strategy depended upon the Iraqi Army taking over security duties. By early 2006, the Iraqi Army had grown to 10 divisions that actively participated in operations. Nevertheless, they could not suppress insurgent activity. This was partly because of deficiencies in their advising, training, and equipping. For example, 10 to 12 advisers were shown to be too few to train an Iraqi battalion plus go on tactical operations with them. On top of that, they were often reservists or national guardsmen rather than the most capable active-duty personnel. However, the real problem lay in the army's Shi'a ethnicity. In Sunni areas, the population viewed the Iraqi Army as a Shi'a occupation force and refused to provide the intelligence necessary to eradicate insurgents. Polling in 2006 found that 77 to 90 percent of the respondents in al-Anbar Province considered the government to be illegitimate. A majority considered the Iraqi Army to be a threat.<sup>29</sup> Other polls obtained similar results for the Sunnis overall.<sup>30</sup> In Ramadi, at the height of the sweltering summer, locals refused to take free water offered by Iraqi soldiers (some angrily poured it on the ground) and did not stop insurgents from bombing mobile clinics devised by the resident army brigade to render medical care to the people.

Shi'a ethnicity also posed a problem in Shi'a or mixed areas. Some soldiers and officers had connections to Shi'a militia and many admired Sadr. Consequently, Iraqi Army units often turned a blind eye to militia attacks on Sunnis in

Baghdad and Diyala Provinces, the sectarian battlegrounds. Worse, the special police commandos (later known as the National Police), the paramilitary force of the Ministry of Interior, were heavily influenced by the Badr Corps (a Shi'a militia) and actively participated in ethnic cleansing.

## *Civil War*

The sectarian divide between the Sunni and Shi'a communities widened during 2005 as the new Iraqi government took shape. The October 2005 referendum passed a constitution allowing for federalism, which threatened to deny the Sunnis a share of oil profits, polarizing the two communities. Sunnis voted en masse in December, but as a means of maximizing political representation rather than in support of a system that promised power to the Shi'a majority. The election of a Shi'a majority in the legislative body (the Council of Representatives) left the Sunnis discontented. Polls found that the majority of Sunnis did not consider the new democratic government to be legitimate and preferred that a strong leader take charge of Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

On February 22, 2006, AQI bombed the Askariya (Golden) Mosque in Samarra, a Shi'a holy site. Zarqawi had long been trying to instigate sectarian violence through suicide bombings in Shi'a areas. The Golden Mosque bombing was the spark that caused the Shi'a militia—Jaysh al Mahdi and the Badr Corps—to retaliate against the Sunni community in Baghdad, murdering suspected insurgents and eventually pressing Sunnis out of mixed neighborhoods. Over 30,000 civilians fled their homes in the month after the bombing. In turn, more Sunnis took up arms to defend themselves and their families.

The U.S. leadership did not recognize that the two pillars of its counterinsurgency strategy—democratization and developing the Iraqi Army—could not circumvent the civil war. Neither Casey nor Abazaid wanted to call for U.S. reinforcements. They firmly believed doing so would only reinforce Iraqi dependency on the United States. Also, according to Casey, American reinforcements could inflame the

insurgency. He noted, "We are the rationale for the resistance and a magnet for the terrorists," and persisted with plans to start withdrawing U.S. brigades by the end of the year.<sup>32</sup> The Bush administration did not object to this decision because it helped avoid domestic criticism of the war.<sup>33</sup>

Accordingly, Casey relied on the Iraqi Army to provide the numbers to quell sectarian violence, especially inside Baghdad. With the Iraqi Army ineffective, the Coalition lost control of the capital. Shi'a militias murdered scores of Sunnis while AQI set off devastating car bombs in Shi'a neighborhoods (over 100 civilians could be killed in a single day). Lieutenant General Chiarelli, now Casey's operational commander, launched two operations to regain control of the city: Operation *Together Forward I* (June 14-July 20, 2006) and Operation *Together Forward II* (August 8-October 24, 2006). In the former, U.S. and Iraqi soldiers set up security checkpoints, established a curfew, and increased their patrolling and high-value targeting efforts. In the latter operation, 15,000 U.S. soldiers cleared disputed neighborhoods block by block. The role of holding the neighborhoods fell to the Iraqi Army. Incapable of gathering intelligence on Sunni insurgents and often unwilling to confront the Shi'a militias, the Iraqi soldiers could not provide security. Indeed, only 1,000 of the 4,000 Iraqi Army reinforcements even showed up.<sup>34</sup> On October 19, Major General William Caldwell, the Coalition spokesman, acknowledged that Operation Together Forward II had failed. During its duration, attacks rose 22 percent.<sup>35</sup> Attacks on civilians by Shi'a militias and Sunni insurgents had quadrupled, with over 1,000 dying each month.<sup>36</sup>

The situation throughout Iraq deteriorated as well. Attacks grew from 70 per day in January 2006 to 180 per day in October. The situation was particularly bad in al-Anbar. The I Marine Expeditionary Force fought for months with hardened AQI cadres to clear Ramadi, the capital of al-Anbar, without any positive results. In Basrah, the hands-off British approach left Shi'a militias (Jaysh al Mahdi, the Badr Corps, and the Fadhila Party) vying for control of the city. The

militias escalated sectarian attacks on the city's sizeable Sunni minority in the wake of the Golden Mosque bombings, largely expelling them.

Sectarian violence undermined attempts at reconciliation between the Sunni and Shi'a communities. Sunni leaders felt even more marginalized from the government. A Fallujah city leader said at a city council meeting:

We want to participate in government but what are the results; What are the benefits? We know the results. It is total failure. We still see the killing in the streets. Baghdad is in chaos. Iran's hands are everywhere.<sup>37</sup>

That summer, Fallujah city leaders told Marine officers that if the United States would not act against the "Iranians," then the Sunnis must be allowed to defend themselves.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, 34 percent of Sunnis considered attacks on Iraqi government forces to be acceptable; only 1 percent of Shi'a felt the same way.<sup>39</sup> Shi'a leaders, including Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki's new government, considered militias merely a form of protection against the real threat to Iraq—the Ba'athists and AQI. The growth of the Iraqi Army (as well as the Badr Corps and Jaysh al-Mahdi) and majority control over the new democratic government gave Shi'a leaders little reason to compromise. Consequently, they rejected serious attempts at political reconciliation or restraining attacks upon the Sunnis.<sup>40</sup>

The most promising event of 2006 was the rise of certain Sunni tribes in al-Anbar against al-Qaeda in Iraq. This had little to do with U.S. counterinsurgency tactics. The Coalition had long been trying to motivate the tribes and traditional Sunni entities, such as the former military, to fight AQI, exemplified by the efforts of Special Forces teams and Mattis' CAP platoons. It was not until it became clear that AQI was taking over the economic and political sources of power within society that tribes, many of which had formerly been part of the insurgency, started to turn. The first had been the Albu Mahal in al-Qa'im in 2005. The tide truly turned in

September 2006, though, when Shaykh Abd al-Sittar Bezia Ftikhan al Rishawi openly announced the formation of a tribal movement, Sahawa al-Anbar, opposed to AQI. Sittar's movement backed local police forces. Because they were Sunni, the local community would give the police intelligence, enabling them to kill or detain more insurgents than the Iraqi Army. The number of police actively involved in operations grew from fewer than 1,000 in early 2006 to over 7,000 in early 2007. By April, the police had managed to suppress insurgent activity in Ramadi and most of the key tribes of al-Anbar had aligned with Sittar's movement.

### ***A New Commander and a New Strategy***

The civil war forced a major change in U.S. strategy. The Republican defeat in the midterm elections, followed by the Iraq Study Group report, made it impossible for Bush to ignore the deteriorating situation. The Iraq Study Group, a team of "prominent former US policy-makers—including former Secretary of State James Baker, former Senator Lee Hamilton, and former Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates—recommended placing greater effort in expanding and training the Iraqi security forces, particularly the Iraqi Army. The group also called for benchmarks to measure the progress of the Iraqi government toward political reconciliation, and negotiating with Iraq's neighboring countries.

Bush announced his new strategy on January 10, 2007. While he acknowledged the main recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, the focus of the new strategy was reinforcing the 140,000 U.S. personnel in Iraq with another 20,000-25,000 in five brigade combat teams and two Marine infantry battalions, known as "the surge."

To execute the surge, Bush replaced Casey, due to leave Iraq in a few months, with Petraeus. Upon taking command on February 10, Petraeus incorporated the best lessons from Tal Afar, al-Qa'im, and the new counterinsurgency manual into the security plan for Baghdad (Operation Fard al-Qanun). More than 50 small outposts

(joint security stations) manned by Iraqi police, Iraqi Army, and U.S. soldiers were emplaced throughout the city. His top priority was protecting the people rather than building the Iraqi Army (although that remained a critical task). In his view, the point of the surge was to create a breathing space in the violence, particularly in Baghdad, in which political reconciliation could take place. Petraeus wrote to his troops on March 19:

Improving security for Iraq's population is . . . the over-riding objective of your strategy. Accomplishing this mission requires carrying out complex military operations and convincing the Iraqi people that we will not just "clear" their neighborhoods of the enemy, we will also stay and help "hold" the neighborhoods so that the "build" phase that many of their communities need can go forward.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Nearly four years of undiminished insurgent activity forced a change in American strategy in Iraq in 2007. The United States had made a serious attempt at adapting—shown by the subordination of military offensives to political priorities, the adoption of the clear-hold-build approach, the establishment of advisory teams, and the creation of provincial reconstruction teams. Yet shortcomings remained, especially in regard to minimizing the use of force and, more importantly, adjusting to the impact of the sectarian divide. The two pillars of U.S. strategy—democratization and the building of a national and integrated Iraqi Army—did not match the sectarian realities of Iraq. The democratization process put the Sunnis in a position in which they stood to gain more by waging war than accepting the outcome of the political process. The election of a legitimate government based on a Shi'a majority actually encouraged Sunnis to fight.

Nor was the Iraqi Army, Casey's main effort, suited to maintaining stability. The sectarian divide meant that Sunnis would not provide the Iraqi Army with the intelligence necessary to suppress insurgent activity. Conversely, the

army's own sectarian sympathies made it a poor instrument for keeping Shi'a militias in line.

Consequently, gaining ground between 2003 and 2007 was a matter of fundamentally reorienting the whole American strategy, not just learning new tactics or making a few wiser political decisions. This is not to say that the U.S. war effort was doomed, but that the failure to structure strategy around the sectarian divide was a major reason for the difficulties experienced before 2007. Whether such a reorientation was a realistic option is a separate question. Abandoning democracy surely would have incurred disapproval from domestic and international political audiences, not to mention the Shi'a majority in Iraq. And placing less reliance on the Iraqi Army may not have been possible, given the small size of the U.S. military presence and the absence of large numbers of locally recruited Sunni forces until 2006. Indeed, even during the surge, the Iraqi Army remained essential to U.S. counterinsurgency efforts.

In terms of the larger history of counterinsurgency, Iraq highlights the effect that social or political constraints, in this case the sectarian divide, have on the success of attempts to adapt and on the kind of strategy that will be most effective. Other factors—such as the presence of a capable commander, an institutional willingness to adapt, or experience in fighting insurgencies—certainly play a role in effective counterinsurgency, but any successful strategy must conform to the social and political environment in which a conflict is ensconced.

## Notes

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#### **About the Author**

Carter A. Malkasian directs the Small Wars Program at the Center for Naval Analyses. Prior to his current job, he was assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force as an advisor on counterinsurgency. He deployed with I MEF to Iraq from February to May 2003, February 2004 to February 2005, and February to August 2006.





# Iraq's Civil War

by James D. Fearon

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## **No Graceful Exit**

As sectarian violence spiked in Baghdad around last Thanksgiving [2006], Bush administration spokespeople found themselves engaged in a strange semantic fight with American journalists over whether the conflict in Iraq is appropriately described as a civil war. It is not hard to understand why the administration strongly resists the label. For one thing, the U.S. media would interpret a change in the White House's position on this question as a major concession, an open acknowledgment of dashed hopes and failed policy. For another, the administration worries that if the U.S. public comes to see the violence in Iraq as a civil war, it will be even less willing to tolerate continued U.S. military engagement. "If it's a civil war, what are we doing there, mixed up in someone else's fight?" Americans may ask.

But if semantics could matter a lot, it is less obvious whether they should influence U.S. policy. Is it just a matter of domestic political games and public perceptions, or does the existence of civil war in Iraq have implications for what can be achieved there and what strategy Washington should pursue?

In fact, there is a civil war in progress in Iraq, one comparable in important respects to other civil wars that have occurred in postcolonial states with weak political institutions. Those cases suggest that the Bush administration's political objective in Iraq—creating a stable, peaceful, somewhat democratic regime that can survive the departure of U.S. troops—is unrealistic. Given this unrealistic political objective, military strategy of any sort is doomed to fail almost regardless of whether the administration goes with the "surge" option, as President George W.

Bush has proposed, or shifts toward a pure training mission, as advised by the Iraq Study Group.

Even if an increase in the number of U.S. combat troops reduces violence in Baghdad and so buys time for negotiations on power sharing in the current Iraqi government, there is no good reason to expect that subsequent reductions would not revive the violent power struggle. Civil wars are rarely ended by stable power-sharing agreements. When they are, it typically takes combatants who are not highly factionalized and years of fighting to clarify the balance of power. Neither condition is satisfied by Iraq at present. Factionalism among the Sunnis and the Shiites approaches levels seen in Somalia, and multiple armed groups on both sides appear to believe that they could wrest control of the government if U.S. forces left. Such beliefs will not change quickly while large numbers of U.S. troops remain.

As the ethnic cleansing of Baghdad proceeds, the weak Shiite-dominated government is inevitably becoming an open partisan in a nasty civil war between Sunni and Shiite Arabs. As a result, President Bush's commitment to making a "success" of the current government will increasingly amount to siding with the Shiites, a position that is morally dubious and probably not in the interest of either the United States or long-term regional peace and stability. A decisive military victory by a Shiite-dominated government is not possible anytime soon given the favorable conditions for insurgency fought from the Sunni-dominated provinces. Furthermore, this course encourages Sunni nationalists to turn to al-Qaeda in Iraq for support against Shiite militias and the Iraqi army. It also essentially aligns Washington with Tehran against the Sunni-dominated states to the west.

As long as the Bush administration remains absolutely committed to propping up the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki or a

similarly configured successor, the U.S. government will have limited leverage with almost all of the relevant parties. By contrast, moving away from absolute commitment—for example, by beginning to shift U.S. combat troops out of the central theaters—would increase U.S. diplomatic and military leverage on almost all fronts. Doing so would not allow the current or the next U.S. administration to bring a quick end to the civil war, which most likely will last for some time. But it would allow the United States to play a balancing role between the combatants that would be more conducive to reaching, in the long run, a stable resolution in which Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish interests are well represented in a decent Iraqi government. If the Iraqis ever manage to settle on the power-sharing agreement that is the objective of current U.S. policy, it will come only after bitter fighting in the civil war that is already under way.

### ***War Records***

A civil war is a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies. Everyday usage of the term “civil war” does not entail a clear threshold for how much violence is necessary to qualify a conflict as a civil war, as opposed to terrorism or low-level political strife. Political scientists sometimes use a threshold of at least 1,000 killed over the course of a conflict. Based on this arguably rather low figure, there have been around 125 civil wars since the end of World War II, and there are roughly 20 ongoing today. If that threshold is increased to an average of 1,000 people killed per year, there have still been over 90 civil wars since 1945. (It is often assumed that the prevalence of civil wars is a post-Cold War phenomenon, but in fact the number of ongoing civil wars increased steadily from 1945 to the early 1990s, before receding somewhat to late-1970s levels.) The rate of killing in Iraq—easily more than 60,000 in the last three years—puts the conflict in the company of many recent ones that are routinely described as civil wars (for example, those in Algeria, Colombia, Guatemala,

Peru, and Sri Lanka). Indeed, even the conservative estimate of 60,000 deaths would make Iraq the ninth-deadliest civil war since 1945 in terms of annual casualties.

A major reason for the prevalence of civil wars is that they have been hard to end. Their average duration since 1945 has been about 10 years, with half lasting more than seven years. Their long duration seems to result from the way in which most of these conflicts have been fought: namely, by rebel groups using guerrilla tactics, usually operating in rural regions of postcolonial countries with weak administrative, police, and military capabilities. Civil wars like that of the United States, featuring conventional armies facing off along well-defined fronts, have been highly unusual. Far more typical have been conflicts such as those in Algeria, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and southern and western Sudan. As these cases illustrate, rural guerrilla warfare can be an extremely robust tactic, allowing relatively small numbers of rebels to gain partial control of large amounts of territory for years despite expensive and brutal military campaigns against them.

The civil war in Iraq began in 2004 as a primarily urban guerrilla struggle by Sunni insurgent groups hoping to drive out the United States and to regain the power held by Sunnis under Saddam Hussein. It escalated in 2006 with the proliferation and intensification of violence by Shiite militias, who ostensibly seek to defend Shiites from the Sunni insurgents and who have pursued this end with “ethnic cleansing” and a great deal of gang violence and thuggery.

This sort of urban guerrilla warfare and militia-based conflict differs from the typical post-1945 civil war, but there are analogues. One little-discussed but useful comparison is the violent conflict that wracked Turkish cities between 1977 and 1980. According to standard estimates, fighting among local militias and paramilitaries aligning themselves with “the left” or “the right” killed more than 20 people per day in thousands of attacks and counterattacks, assassinations, and death-squad campaigns. Beginning with a massacre by rightists in the city of Kahramanmaraş in December 1978, the left-right conflicts spiraled

into ethnic violence, pitting Sunnis against Alawites against Kurds against Shiites in various cities.

As in Iraq today, the organization of the Turkish combatants was highly local and factionalized, especially on the left; the fighting often looked like urban gang violence. But, also as in Iraq, the gangs and militias had shady ties to the political parties controlling the democratically elected national parliament as well. (Indeed, one might describe the civil conflicts in Turkey then and in Iraq now as “militarized party politics.”) Intense political rivalries between the leading Turkish politicians, along with their politically useful ties to the paramilitaries, prevented the democratic regime from moving decisively to end the violence. Much as in Iraq today, the elected politicians fiddled while the cities burned. Fearing that the lower ranks of the military were becoming infected with the violent factionalism of the society at large, military leaders undertook a coup in September 1980, after which they unleashed a major wave of repression against militias and gang members of both the left and the right. At the price of military rule (for what turned out to be three years), the urban terror was ended.

Especially if the United States withdraws from Iraq, the odds are good that a military coup in which some subset of the Iraqi army leadership declares that the elected government is not working and that a strong hand is necessary to impose order will result. It is unlikely, however, that a military regime in Iraq would be able to follow the example of the one in Turkey in the early 1980s. The Turkish military was a strong institution with enough autonomy and enough loyalty to the Kemalist national ideal that it could act independently of the divisions tearing the country apart. Although the army favored the right more than the left, Turkish citizens saw it as largely standing apart from the factional fighting—and thus as a credible intervenor. By contrast, the Iraqi army and, even more, the Iraqi police force appear to have little autonomy from society and politics. The police look like militia members in different uniforms, sometimes with some U.S. training. The army has somewhat more institu-

tional coherence and autonomy, but it is Shiite-dominated and has few functional mixed units. Some evidence suggests that high-level figures in the army are facilitating, if not actively pursuing, ethnic cleansing. Accordingly, a power grab by a subset of the army leadership would be widely interpreted as a power grab by a particular Shiite faction—and could lead the army to break up along sectarian and, possibly, factional lines.

What happened in Lebanon in 1975-76 may offer better insights into what is likely to happen in Iraq. As violence between Christian militias and Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] factions started to escalate in 1975, the Lebanese army leadership initially stayed out of the conflict, realizing that the army would splinter if it tried to intervene. But as the violence escalated, the army eventually did intervene—and broke apart. Lebanon then entered a long period of conflict during which an array of Christian, Sunni, Shiite, and PLO militias fought one another off and on (as much within sectarian groups as between them). Syrian and Israeli military involvement sometimes reduced and sometimes escalated the violence. Alliances shifted, often in surprising ways. The Syrians, for example, initially sided with the Christians against the PLO.

A similar scenario is already playing out in Iraq. Whether U.S. forces stay or go, Iraq south of the Kurdish areas will probably look more and more like Lebanon during its long civil war. Effective political authority will devolve to regions, cities, and even neighborhoods. After a period of ethnic cleansing and fighting to draw lines, an equilibrium with lower-level, more intermittent sectarian violence will set in, punctuated by larger campaigns financed and aided by foreign powers. Violence and exploitation within sects will most likely worsen, as the neighborhood militias and gangs that carried out the ethnic cleansing increasingly fight among themselves over turf, protection rackets, and trade. As in Lebanon, there will probably be a good deal of intervention by neighboring states—especially Iran—but it will not necessarily bring them great strategic gains. To the contrary, it may bring them a great deal of grief, just as it has the United States.

## ***Learning to Share?***

When they do finally end, civil wars typically conclude with a decisive military victory for one side. Of the roughly 55 civil wars fought for control of a central government (as opposed to for secession or regional autonomy) since 1955, fully 75 percent ended with a clear victory for one side. The government ultimately crushed the rebels in at least 40 percent of the 55 cases, whereas the rebels won control of the center in 35 percent. Power-sharing agreements that divide up control of a central government among the combatants have been far less common. By my reckoning, at best, 9 of the 55 cases, or about 16 percent, ended this way. Examples include El Salvador in 1992, South Africa in 1994, and Tajikistan in 1997.

If successful power-sharing agreements rarely end civil wars, it is not for lack of effort. Negotiations on power sharing are common in the midst of civil wars, as are failed attempts, often with the help of outside intervention by states or international institutions, to implement such agreements. The point of departure for both the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the rebel attack that ended it, for example, was the failure of an extensive power-sharing agreement between the Rwandan government, Hutu opposition parties, and the Tutsi insurgents.

Power-sharing agreements rarely work in large part because civil wars cause combatants to be organized in a way that produces mutually reinforcing fears and temptations: combatants are afraid that the other side will use force to grab power and at the same time are tempted to use force to grab power themselves. If one militia fears that another will try to use force to win control of the army or a city, then it has a strong incentive to use force to prevent this. The other militia understands this incentive, which gives it a good reason to act exactly as the first militia feared. In the face of these mutual, self-fulfilling fears, agreements on paper about dividing up or sharing control of political offices, the military, or, say, oil revenues are often just that—paper. They may survive while a powerful third party implicitly threatens to prevent violent power

grabs (as the United States has done in Iraq), but they are likely to disintegrate otherwise.

The Bush administration has attempted to help put in place an Iraqi government based on a power-sharing agreement among Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders, but it has done so in the midst of an escalating civil war. The historical evidence suggests that this is a Sisyphean task. The effective provision of security by an intervening power may even undermine the belief that the government could stand on its own without the third party's backing. U.S. military intervention in Iraq is thus unlikely to produce a government that can survive by itself whether the troops stay 10 more months or 10 more years.

Could Iraq in 2007 be one of the rare cases in which power sharing successfully ends a civil war? Examining earlier such cases suggests that they have two distinctive features that make power sharing feasible. First, a stable agreement is typically reached only after a period of fighting has clarified the relative military capabilities of the various sides. Each side needs to come to the conclusion that it cannot get everything it wants by violence. For example, the Dayton agreement that divided power among the parties to the Bosnian war required not only NATO intervention to get them to the table and enforce the deal but also more than three years of intense fighting, which had brought the combatants essentially to a stalemate by the summer of 1995. (Even then, the agreement would not have held, and the government would surely have collapsed, if not for a continued third-party guarantee from NATO and effective sovereign control by the Office of the High Representative created under Dayton.)

Second, a power-sharing deal tends to hold only when every side is relatively cohesive. How can one party expect that another will live up to its obligations if it has no effective control over its own members? Attempts to construct power-sharing deals to end civil wars in Burundi and Somalia, for example, have been frustrated for years by factionalism within rebel groups. Conversely, the consolidation of power by one rebel faction can sometimes enable a peace agreement—as occurred prior to the deal that

ended the first war between Khartoum and southern Sudanese rebels in 1972.

Neither of these conditions holds for Iraq. First, there are many significant (and well-armed) Sunni groups that seem to believe that without U.S. troops present, they could win back control of Baghdad and the rest of the country. And there are many Shiites, including many with guns, who believe that as the majority group they can and will maintain political domination of Iraq. Moreover, among the Shiites, Muqtada al-Sadr seems to believe that he could wrest control from his rivals if the United States left. Indeed, if the United States withdraws, violence between Shiite militias will likely escalate further. Open fighting between Shiite militias might, in turn, reaffirm the Sunni insurgents' belief that they will be able to retake power.

Second, both the Sunnis and the Shiites are highly factionalized, at the national political level and at the level of neighborhood militias and gangs. Shiite politicians are divided into at least four major parties, and one of these, Dawa (the party of Prime Minister Maliki), has historically been divided into three major factions. Sadr is constantly described in the U.S. media as the leader of the largest and most aggressive Shiite militia in Iraq, but it has never been clear if he can control what the militias who praise his name actually do. The Iraqi Sunnis are similarly divided among tribes outside of Baghdad, and the organizational anarchy of Sunni Islam seems to make group-wide coordination extremely difficult.

If Maliki had the authority of a Nelson Mandela, and a party organization with the (relative) coherence and dominance of the African National Congress in the anti-apartheid struggle, he would be able to move more effectively to incorporate and co-opt various Sunni leaders into the government without fear of undermining his own power relative to that of his various Shiite political adversaries. He would also be better able to make credible commitments to deliver on promises made to Sunni leaders. As it is, intra-Shiite political rivalries render the new government almost completely dysfunctional. Its ministers see their best option as cultivating mili-

tias (or ties to militias) for current and coming fights, extortion rackets, and smuggling operations.

Tragically, more civil war may be the only way to reach a point where power sharing could become a feasible solution to the problem of governing Iraq. More fighting holds the prospect of clarifying the balance of forces and creating pressures for internal consolidation on one or both sides, thereby providing stronger grounds for either a victory by one side or a stable negotiated settlement. Should the latter eventually come into view, some sort of regional or international peacekeeping force will almost surely be required to help bring it into being. The Iraq Study Group report is quite right that Washington should be setting up diplomatic mechanisms for such eventualities, sooner rather than later.

### ***Balancing Act***

Hopefully, this analysis is too pessimistic. Perhaps Iraq's elected politicians will muddle through, and perhaps the Iraqi army will, with U.S. support, develop the capability and motivation to act effectively and evenhandedly against insurgents and militias on all sides. The optimistic scenario is so unlikely, however, that policy makers must consider the implications if civil war in Iraq continues and escalates.

Suppose that the ethnic cleansing of Baghdad continues and Sunni insurgent groups and Shiite militias continue to fight one another, U.S. troops, and civilians. If the Bush administration sticks to its "stay the course toward victory" approach, of which the surge option is the latest incarnation, it will become increasingly apparent that this policy amounts to siding with the Shiites in an extremely vicious Sunni-Shiite war. U.S. troops may play some positive role in preventing human rights abuses by Iraqi army units and slowing down violence and ethnic cleansing. But as long as the United States remains committed to trying to make this Iraqi government "succeed" on the terms President Bush has laid out, there is no escaping the fact that the central function of U.S. troops will be to backstop Maliki's government or its successor. That security gives

Maliki and his coalition the ability to tacitly pursue (or acquiesce in) a dirty war against actual and imagined Sunni antagonists while publicly supporting “national reconciliation.”

This policy is hard to defend on the grounds of either morality or national interest. Even if Shiite thugs and their facilitators in the government could succeed in ridding Baghdad of Sunnis, it is highly unlikely that they would be able to suppress the insurgency in the Sunni-majority provinces in western Iraq or to prevent attacks in Baghdad and other places where Shiites live. In other words, the current U.S. policy probably will not lead to a decisive military victory anytime soon, if ever. And even if it did, would Washington want it to? The rise of a brutal, ethnically exclusivist, Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad would further the perception of Iran as the ascendant regional power. Moreover, U.S. backing for such a government would give Iraqi Sunnis and the Sunni-dominated countries in the Middle East no reason not to support al-Qaeda as an ally in Iraq. By spurring these states to support Sunni forces fighting the Shiite government, such backing would ultimately pit the United States against those states in a proxy war.

To avail itself of more attractive policy options, the Bush administration (or its successor) must break off its unconditional military support for the Shiite-dominated government that it helped bring to power in Baghdad. Washington’s commitment to Maliki’s government undermines U.S. diplomatic and military leverage with almost every relevant party in the country and the region. Starting to move away from this commitment by shifting combat troops out of the central theaters could, accordingly, increase U.S. leverage with almost all parties. The current Shiite political leadership would then have incentives to try to gain back U.S. military support by, for example, making more genuine efforts to incorporate Sunnis into the government or reining in Shiite militias. (Admittedly, whether it has the capacity to do either is unclear.) As U.S. troops departed, Sunni insurgent groups would begin to see the United States less as a committed ally of the “Persians” and more as a potential

source of financial or even military backing. Washington would also have more leverage with Iran and Syria, because the U.S. military would not be completely bogged down in Baghdad and Anbar Province—and because both of those countries have a direct interest in avoiding increased chaos in Iraq.

Again, none of this would make for a quick end to the civil war, which will probably last for some time in any event. But it would allow the United States to move toward a balancing role that would be more conducive to ultimately gaining a stable resolution in which Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish interests are represented in a decent Iraqi government.

Despite the horrific violence currently tearing Iraq apart, in the long run there is hope for the return of a viable Iraqi state based on a political bargain among Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish leaders. Indeed, they may end up cooperating on terms set by a constitution similar to the current one—although only after a significant period of fighting. The basis for an Iraqi state is the common interest of all parties, especially the elites, in the efficient exploitation of oil resources. Continued civil war could persuade Shiite leaders that they cannot fully enjoy oil profits and political control without adequately buying off Sunni groups, who can maintain a costly insurgency. And civil war could persuade the Sunnis that a return to Sunni dominance and Shiite quiescence is impossible. Kurdish leaders have an interest in the autonomy they have already secured but with access to functioning oil pipelines leading south.

There are, of course, other possible outcomes of continued civil war in Iraq, including a formal breakup of the country or a decisive victory south of the Kurdish areas by a Sunni- or Shiite-dominated military organization that would impose a harsh dictatorship. Insofar as the United States can influence the ultimate outcome, neither of these is as good a long-term policy objective as a power-sharing agreement. As the Iraq Study Group has argued, attempting to impose some kind of partition would probably increase the killing. In addition, there are no obvious defensible borders to separate Sunnis

from Shiites; the Sunnis would not rest content with an oil-poor patch of western Iraq; it is not clear that new Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish states would be much more peaceful than Iraq is at present; and there would be considerable economic inefficiencies from making three states from one in this area. It is conceivable that civil war will someday lead the combatants in Iraq to agree on Iraq's partition anyway, but this is a decision for Iraqis rather than outsiders to make.

Most civil wars end with a decisive military victory—and this one may as well—but a decisive military victory and political dictatorship for some Sunni or Shiite group is even less appealing as a long-term U.S. policy objective. A decisive military victory for a Shiite-dominated faction would favor both Iran and al-Qaeda, and a decisive victory for Sunni insurgents would amount to restoring oppressive minority rule, a major reason for the current mess.

Two less extreme outcomes would be much better for most Iraqis, for regional peace and stability, and for U.S. interests in the region. The first would be a power-sharing agreement among a small number of Iraqi actors who actually commanded a military force and controlled territory, to be stabilized at least initially by an international peacekeeping operation. The second would be the rise of a dominant military force whose leader had both the inclination and the ability to cut deals with local “warlords” or political bosses from all other groups. Neither outcome can be imposed at this point by the United States. Both could be reached only through fighting and bargaining carried out primarily by Iraqis.

To facilitate either outcome, the U.S. government would have to pursue a policy of balancing, using diplomatic, financial, and possibly some military tools to encourage the perception that no one group or faction can win without sharing power and resources. A balancing policy might be pursued from “offshore,” implemented mainly by supplying monetary and material sup-

port to tactical allies, or “onshore,” possibly drawing on air strikes or other forms of U.S. military intervention originating from bases in Iraq or close by. The mechanics would necessarily depend on a complicated set of diplomatic, political, and military contingencies. The important point is that the only alternative to some form of balancing policy would be to support decisive victory by one side or the other, which would probably be undesirable even in the unlikely event that victory came soon.

Even if the coming “surge” in U.S. combat troops manages to lower the rate of killing in Baghdad, very little in relevant historical experience or the facts of this case suggests that U.S. troops would not be stuck in Iraq for decades, keeping sectarian and factional power struggles at bay while fending off jihadist and nationalist attacks. The more likely scenario is that the Bush administration’s commitment to the “success” of the Maliki government will make the United States passively complicit in a massive campaign of ethnic cleansing. Standing back to adopt a more evenhanded policy in the civil war already in progress is a more sensible and defensible course. To pursue it, the Bush administration or its successor would first have to give up on the idea that a few more U.S. brigades or a change in U.S. tactics will make for an Iraq that can, in President Bush’s words, “govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself” once U.S. troops are gone.

## **Notes**

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## **About the Author**

James D. Fearon is Theodore and Frances Geballe Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences and professor of political science at Stanford University. He is also an affiliated faculty member with the Center for International Security and Cooperation.





## Part II: Counterinsurgency and Irregular Warfare—Observations and Principles

The first part of America's war with Iraq was characterized by large-scale maneuver operations as U.S. combat units sped across the Iraqi desert to unseat Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime. This phase was relatively brief, lasting only a few weeks. The general insurgency against the U.S. presence in Iraq has lasted significantly longer.

The need to defeat the Iraq insurgency and bring order and stability to the country provoked a debate within the U.S. military about the best and most effective means to conduct counterinsurgency operations. While the U.S. armed services, and the Marine Corps in particular, had a long tradition of conducting such operations, the transition from maneuver combat to irregular warfare was nevertheless a difficult one that required radical changes in how to assess and confront enemy forces. The initial reaction of many units was to make liberal use of heavy firepower to destroy the insurgent forces. However, this tactic endangered Iraqi civilians and threatened to provoke even more opposition to the U.S. presence in the country. Other American commanders championed tactics that focused on protecting the civilian population and building local infrastructures and civic institutions. Other leaders, such as Multi National Force-Iraq commander General George W. Casey Jr., USA, favored building local Iraqi forces to prosecute counterinsurgency operations, thus permitting a drastic reduction of U.S. forces.

The period from 2004 to 2008 saw the production of a number of works aimed at developing new strategies and tactics for combating insurgencies. These works presented broad principles and strategies that drew on century's old concepts about the nature of irregular warfare and the best way of battling insurgencies. David Kilcullen's "Twenty-Eight Articles," for example, made a conscious decision to draw upon one of the first modern theorists of insurgencies in the Middle East, British Colonel T. E. Lawrence. Kilcullen's article, modeled after Lawrence's own article, "Twenty-Seven Articles"<sup>1</sup> aims to demonstrate the critical differences between irregular warfare and maneuver warfare, while also stressing the need to understand the culture and

circumstances of the area of operations.

In 2006, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps published a new doctrine, *Counterinsurgency* (Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Publication 3-33.5). The commanders who directed the creation of the manual, Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, USA, Lieutenant General James N. Mattis, and Lieutenant General James F. Amos, were all division commanders during Operation Iraqi Freedom II who advocated counterinsurgency tactics based on respecting local culture and customs, engaging and protecting the population, building local institutions, and using highly mobile patrols to hunt down and kill insurgents without resorting to large-scale use of firepower. General Petraeus's 2006 article, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," draws on his experience as the commander of the 101st Airborne Division in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. The article outlines a number of principles that would help shape the new counterinsurgency manual. Kilcullen's and Petraeus's articles are reprinted below.

As military thinkers developed new approaches to counterinsurgency doctrine, the question of air power was often overlooked. With insurgents operating out of often densely populated urban centers, aerial bombardment, no matter how accurate, often threatened killing civilians and causing excessive damage. As a consequence, many commanders perceived the use of airpower as an unnecessary risk that would cause a rift between the local population and U.S. forces and enflame the insurgency. In "Making Revolutionary Change: Airpower in COIN Today," Major General Charles A. Dunlap Jr., USAF, nevertheless argues that airpower can and should play a role in effective counterinsurgency operations. Focusing on unmanned aerial vehicles and the logistical support airpower can provide to the combat zone, Dunlap makes the argument that airpower constitutes a critically overlooked component of irregular warfare.

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1. T.E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles," *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917 (online at <http://www.bu.edu/mzank/Jerusalem/tx/lawrence.htm>).



# Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency

by David Kilcullen

*Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2006

Your company has just been warned for deployment on counterinsurgency operations in Iraq or Afghanistan. You have read David Galula, T. E. Lawrence, and Sir Robert Thompson. You have studied Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, and now understand the history, philosophy, and theory of counterinsurgency. You watched *Black Hawk Down* and *The Battle of Algiers*, and you know this will be the most difficult challenge of your life. But what does all of the theory mean at the company level? How do the principles translate into action—at night, with the global positioning system down, the media criticizing you, the locals complaining in a language you don't understand, and an unseen enemy killing your people by ones and twos? How does counterinsurgency actually happen?

There are no universal answers, and insurgents are among the most adaptive opponents you will ever face. Countering them will demand every ounce of your intellect. But be comforted; you are not the first to feel this way. There are tactical fundamentals you can apply to link the theory with the techniques and procedures you already know.

## ***What is Counterinsurgency?***

If you have not studied counterinsurgency theory, here it is in a nutshell. It is a competition with the insurgent for the right and the ability to win the hearts, minds, and acquiescence of the population. You are being sent in because the insurgents, at their strongest, can defeat anything weaker than you. But you have more combat power than you can or should use in most situations. Injudicious use of firepower creates blood feuds, homeless people, and societal disruption that fuels and perpetuates the insurgency. The most beneficial actions are often local politics, civic action,

and beat-cop behaviors. For your side to win, the people do not have to like you, but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security. In this battlefield, popular perceptions and rumor are more influential than the facts and more powerful than 100 tanks.

Within this context, what follows are observations from collective experience—the distilled essence of what those who went before you learned. They are expressed as commandments, for clarity, but are really more like folklore. Apply them judiciously and skeptically.

## ***Preparation***

Time is short during predeployment, but you will never have more time to think than you have now. Now is your chance to prepare yourself and your command.

**Article 1. Know your turf.** Know the people, topography, economy, history, religion, and culture. Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader, and ancient grievance. Your task is to become the world expert on your district. If you don't know precisely where you will be operating, study the general area. Read the map like a book; study it every night before sleep, and redraw it from memory every morning until you understand its patterns intuitively. Develop a mental model of your area—a framework in which to fit every new piece of knowledge you acquire. Study handover notes from predecessors; better still, get in touch with the unit in-theater and pick their brains. In an ideal world, intelligence officers and area experts would brief you. This rarely happens. Even if it does, there is no substitute for personal mastery. Understand the broader "area of influence." This can be a wide area, particularly when insurgents draw on "global" grievances. Share aspects of the operational area among pla-

toon leaders and noncommissioned officers; have each individual develop a personal specialization and brief the others. Neglect this knowledge and it will kill you.

**Article 2. Diagnose the problem.** Once you know your area and its people, you can begin to diagnose the problem. Who are the insurgents? What drives them? What makes local leaders tick? Counterinsurgency is fundamentally a competition between many groups, each seeking to mobilize the population in support of their agenda. Counterinsurgency is always more than two sided, so you must understand what motivates the people and how to mobilize them. You need to know why and how the insurgents are getting followers. This means you need to know your real enemy, not a cardboard cutout. The enemy is adaptive, resourceful, and probably grew up in the region where you will operate. The locals have known him since he was a boy. How long have they known you? Your worst opponent is not the psychopathic terrorist of Hollywood; it is the charismatic “follow me” warrior who would make your best platoon leader. His followers are not misled or naïve. Much of his success is due to bad government policies or security forces that alienate the population. Work this problem collectively with your platoon and squad leaders. Discuss ideas, explore the problem, understand what you are facing, and seek a consensus. If this sounds “unmilitary,” get over it. Once you are in-theater, situations will arise too quickly for orders or even commander’s intent. Corporals and privates will have to make snap judgments with strategic impact. The only way to help them is to give them a shared understanding, then trust them to think for themselves on the day.

**Article 3. Organize for intelligence.** In counterinsurgency, killing the enemy is easy. Finding him is often nearly impossible. Intelligence and operations are complementary. Your operations will be intelligence driven, but intelligence will come mostly from your own operations, not as a “product” prepared and served up by higher headquarters. So you must organize for intelligence. You will need a company S-2 intelligence section—including analysts. You may need platoon S-2s and S-3s (operations), and you will need a

reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) element. You will not have enough linguists—you never do—but consider carefully where best to employ them. Linguists are battle-winning assets, but like any other scarce resource, you must have a prioritized “hump plan” in case you lose them. Often during predeployment preparations the best use of linguists is to train your command in basic language skills. You will probably not get augmentation for all of this, but you must still do it. Put the smartest Marines in the S-2 section and the R&S squad. You will have one less rifle squad, but the intelligence section will pay for itself in lives and effort saved.

**Article 4. Organize for interagency operations.** Almost everything in counterinsurgency is interagency. And everything important—from policing to intelligence to civil-military operations to trash collection—will involve your company working with civilian actors and local indigenous partners you cannot control but whose success is essential for yours. Train the company in interagency operations. Get briefings from the State Department, aid agencies, and the local police or fire brigade. Train point men in each squad to deal with the interagency. Realize that civilians find rifles, helmets, and body armor intimidating. Learn how not to scare them. Ask others who come from that country or culture about your ideas. See it through the eyes of a civilian who knows nothing about the military. How would you react if foreigners came to your neighborhood and conducted the operations you planned? What if somebody came to your mother’s house and did that? Most importantly, know that your operations will create temporary breathing space, but long-term development and stabilization by civilian agencies will ultimately win the war.

**Article 5. Travel light and harden your combat service support (CSS).** You will be weighed clown with body armor, rations, extra ammunition, communications gear, and 1,000 other things. The enemy will carry a rifle or rocket propelled grenade, a *shemagh* (a traditional Arab head scarf worn as protection from bright sunlight, sun glare, and blowing sand in the desert), and a water bottle if he is lucky. Unless you ruthlessly lighten your load and enforce a culture of speed and mobility,

the insurgents will consistently outrun and outmaneuver you. But in lightening your load, make sure you can always “reach back” to call for firepower or heavy support if needed. Also, remember to harden your CSS. The enemy will attack your weakest points. Most attacks on coalition forces in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, outside of pre-planned combat actions like the two battles of Fallujah or Operation Iron Horse, were against CSS installations and convoys. You do the math. Ensure that your CSS assets are hardened, have communications, and are trained in combat operations. They may do more fighting than your rifle squads.

**Article 6. Find a political/cultural adviser.** In a force optimized for counterinsurgency, you might receive a political/cultural adviser at company level—a diplomat or military foreign area officer who is able to speak the language and navigate the intricacies of local politics. Back on planet Earth, the division commander will get a political/cultural advisor. You will not, so you must improvise. Find a political/cultural adviser from among your people, perhaps an officer, perhaps not. (See Article 8.) Someone with people skills and a “feel” for the environment will do better than a political science graduate. Don’t try to be your own cultural adviser. You must be fully aware of the political and cultural dimension, but this is a different task. Also, don’t give one of your intelligence people this role. They can help, but their task is to understand the environment. The political adviser’s job is to help shape it.

**Article 7. Train the squad leaders and then trust them.** Counterinsurgency is a squad and platoon leader’s war, and often a private Marine’s war. Battles are won or lost in moments. Whoever can bring combat power to bear in seconds on a street corner will win. The commander on the spot controls the fight. You must train the squad leaders to act intelligently and independently without orders. If your squad leaders are competent, you can get away with average company or platoon staffs. The reverse is not the case. Training should focus on basic skills—marksmanship, patrolling, security on the move and at the halt, and basic drills. When in doubt, spend less time on company and platoon training and more time on squad

training. Ruthlessly replace leaders who do not make the grade. But once people are trained, and you have a shared operational “diagnosis,” you must trust them. We talk about this, but few company or platoon leaders really trust their people. In counterinsurgency, you have no choice.

**Article 8. Rank is nothing; talent is everything.** Not everyone is good at counterinsurgency. Many people don’t understand the concept, and some who do can’t execute it. It is difficult, and in a conventional force only a few people will master it. Anyone can learn the basics, but a few “naturals” do exist. Learn how to spot these people and put them in positions where they can make a difference. Rank matters far less than talent; a few good men under a smart junior noncommissioned officer can succeed in counterinsurgency where hundreds of well-armed Marines under a mediocre senior officer will fail.

**Article 9. Have a game plan.** The final preparation task is to develop a game plan—a mental picture of how you see the operation developing. You will be tempted to try to do this too early. But wait. As your knowledge improves, you will get a better idea of what needs to be done and of your own limitations. Like any plan, this plan will change once you hit the ground and may need to be scrapped if there is a major shift in the environment. But you still need a plan, and the process of planning will give you a simple, robust idea of what to achieve, even if the methods change. This is sometimes called “operational design.” One approach is to identify basic stages in your operation. For example, establish dominance, build local networks, and marginalize the enemy. Make sure you can easily transition between phases, both forward and backward in case of setbacks. Just as the insurgent can adapt his activity to yours, you must have a simple enough plan to survive setbacks without collapsing. This plan is the “solution” that matches the shared “diagnosis” you developed earlier. It must be simple and known to everyone.

## ***The Golden Hour***

You have deployed, completed reception and staging, and (if you are lucky) attended the in-

country counterinsurgency school. Now it is time to enter your sector and start your tour. This is the golden hour. Mistakes made now will haunt you for the rest of the tour, while early successes will set the tone for victory. You will look back on your early actions and cringe at your clumsiness. So be it, but you must act.

**Article 10. Be there.** The first rule of deployment in counterinsurgency is to be there. You can almost never outrun the enemy. If you are not present when an incident happens, there is usually little you can do about it. So your first order of business is to establish presence. If you cannot do this throughout your sector, then do it wherever you can. Establishing presence demands a residential approach—living in your sector, in close proximity to the population, rather than raiding into the area from remote, secure bases. Movement on foot, sleeping in local villages, night patrolling, all of these seem more dangerous than they are. These actions establish links with the locals who see you as real people they can trust and do business with, not as aliens who descend from an armored box. Driving around in an armored convoy—day-tripping like a tourist in hell—degrades situational awareness, makes you a target, and is ultimately more dangerous.

**Article 11. Avoid knee-jerk responses to first impressions.** Don't act rashly; get the facts first. The violence you see may be part of the insurgent strategy, it may be various interest groups fighting it out, or it may be people settling personal vendettas. Or, it may just be daily life. "Normality" in Kandahar is not the same as in Kansas. So you need time to learn what normality looks like. The insurgent commander also wants to goad you into lashing out at the population or making a mistake. Unless you happen to be on the spot when an incident occurs, you will have only secondhand reports and may misunderstand the local context or interpretation. This fragmentation and "disaggregation" of the battlefield—particularly in urban areas—means that first impressions are often highly misleading. Of course, you cannot avoid making judgments. But if possible, check them with an older hand or a trusted local. If you can, keep one or two officers from your predecessor unit for the first part of the tour. Try to avoid a rush to judgment.

**Article 12. Prepare for handover from day one.** Believe it or not, you will not resolve the insurgency on your watch. Your tour will end, and your successors will need your corporate knowledge. Start handover folders, in every platoon and specialist squad, from day one. Ideally, you would have inherited these from your predecessors, but if not, you must start them. The folders should include lessons learned, details about the population, village and patrol reports, updated maps, photographs—anything that will help newcomers master the environment. Computerized databases are fine, but keep good backups and ensure that you have a hard copy of key artifacts and documents. This is boring, tedious, and essential. Over time you will create a corporate memory that keeps your people alive.

**Article 13. Build trusted networks.** Once you have settled into your sector, your next task is to build trusted networks. This is the true meaning of the phrase "hearts and minds," which comprises two separate components. "Hearts" means persuading people that their best interests are served by your success; "minds" means convincing them that you can protect them and that resisting you is pointless. Note that neither concept has to do with whether people like you. Calculated self-interest, not emotion, is what counts. Over time, if you successfully build networks of trust, these will grow like roots into the population, displacing the enemy's networks, bringing him out into the open to fight you, and seizing the initiative. These networks include local allies, community leaders, local security forces, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other friendly or neutral non-state actors in your area, and the media. Conduct village and neighborhood surveys to identify needs in the community and then follow through to meet them, build common interests, and mobilize popular support. This is your true main effort; everything else is secondary. Actions that help build trusted networks serve your cause. Actions—even killing high-profile targets—that undermine trust or disrupt your networks help the enemy.

**Article 14. Start easy.** If you were trained in maneuver warfare you know about surfaces and gaps. This theory applies to counterinsurgency as

much as any other form of maneuver. Don't try to crack the hardest nut first. Don't go straight for the main insurgent stronghold, try to provoke a decisive showdown, or focus efforts on villages that support the insurgents. Instead, start from secure areas and work gradually outward. Do this by extending your influence through the locals' own networks. Go with, not against, the grain of local society. First win the confidence of a few villages and then see with whom they trade, intermarry, or do business. Now win these people over. Soon enough the showdown with the insurgents will come. But now you have local allies, a mobilized population, and a trusted network at your back. Do it the other way around and no one will mourn your failure.

**Article 15. Seek early victories.** In this early phase your aim is to stamp your dominance in your sector. Do this by seeking an early victory. This will probably not translate into a combat victory over the enemy. Looking for such a victory can be overly aggressive and create collateral damage, especially since you really do not yet understand your sector. Also, such a combat victory depends on the enemy being stupid enough to present you with a clear-cut target, a rare wind-fall in counterinsurgency. Instead, you may achieve a victory by resolving long-standing issues your predecessors have failed to address or co-opting a key local leader who has resisted cooperation with your forces. Like any other form of armed propaganda, achieving even a small victory early in the tour sets the tone for what comes later and helps seize the initiative, which you have probably lost due to the inevitable hiatus entailed by the handover/takeover with your predecessor.

**Article 16. Practice deterrent patrolling.** Establish patrolling methods that deter the enemy from attacking you. Often our patrolling approach seems designed to provoke, then defeat, enemy attacks. This strategy is counterproductive; it leads to a raiding, day-tripping mindset or, worse, a bunker mentality. Instead, practice deterrent patrolling. There are many methods for deterrent patrolling, including "multiple" patrolling where you flood an area with numerous small patrols working together. Each is too small to be a worth-

while target, and the insurgents never know where all of the patrols are, making an attack on any one patrol extremely risky. Other methods include so-called "blue-green" patrolling where you mount daylight overt humanitarian patrols that go covert at night and hunt specific targets. Again, the aim is to keep the enemy off balance and the population reassured through constant and unpredictable activity that, over time, deters attacks and creates a more permissive environment. A reasonable rule of thumb is that one- to two-thirds of your force should be on patrol at any time, day or night.

**Article 17. Be prepared for setbacks.** Setbacks are normal in counterinsurgency, as in every other form of war. You will make mistakes, lose people, or occasionally kill or detain the wrong person. You may fail in building or expanding networks. If this happens, don't lose heart. Simply drop back to the previous phase of your game plan and recover your balance. It is normal in company counterinsurgency operations for some platoons to be doing well, while others do badly. This is not necessarily evidence of failure. Give local commanders the freedom to adjust their posture to local conditions. This freedom creates elasticity that helps you survive setbacks.

**Article 18. Remember the global audience.** One of the biggest differences between the counterinsurgencies our fathers fought and those we face today is the omnipresence of globalized media. Most houses in Iraq have one or more satellite dishes. Web bloggers; print, radio, and television reporters; and others are monitoring and commenting on your every move. When the insurgents ambush your patrols or set off a car bomb, they do so not to destroy one more track, but because they want graphic images of a burning vehicle and dead bodies for the evening news. Beware of the "scripted enemy" who plays to a global audience and seeks to defeat you in the court of global public opinion. You counter this tactic by training people to always bear in mind the global audience, assume that everything they say or do will be publicized, and befriend the media. Document everything you do. Have a video or photographic record, or an independent witness, wherever possible. This documentation

makes it harder for the enemy to put negative “spin” on your actions with disinformation. Get the press on your side, help them get their story, and trade information with them. Good relationships with nonembedded media—especially indigenous media—dramatically increase your situational awareness and help get your message across to the global and local audience.

**Article 19. Engage the women; beware of the children.** Most insurgent fighters are men. But in traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that insurgents use for support. Co-opting neutral or friendly women through targeted social and economic programs builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually undermine the insurgents. You need your own female counterinsurgents, including interagency people, to do this effectively. Win the women and you own the family unit. Own the family and you take a big step forward in mobilizing the population. Conversely, though, stop your people from fraternizing with local children. Your troops are homesick; they want to drop their guard with the kids. But children are sharp-eyed, lacking in empathy, and willing to commit atrocities that their elders would shrink from. The insurgents are watching. They will notice a growing friendship between one of your people and a local child and either harm the child as punishment or use him against you. Similarly, stop throwing candies or presents to children. It attracts them to your vehicles, creates crowds the enemy can exploit, and leads to children being run over. Harden your heart and keep the children at arm’s length.

**Article 20. Take stock regularly.** You probably already know that a “body count” tells you little, because you usually cannot know how many insurgents there were to start with, how many moved into the area, how many transferred from supporter to combatant status, or how many new fighters the conflict has created. But you still need to develop metrics early in the tour and refine them as the operation progresses. They should cover a range of social, informational, military, and economic issues. Use metrics intelligently to form an overall impression of progress—not in a mechanical “traffic light” fashion. Typical metrics

include percentage of engagements initiated by our forces versus those initiated by insurgents, longevity of friendly local leaders in positions of authority, number and quality of tip-offs on insurgent activity that originate spontaneously from the population, and economic activity at markets and shops. These mean virtually nothing as a snapshot. Trends over time are the true indicators of progress in your sector.

## **Groundhog Day**

Now you are in “steady state.” You are established in your sector, and people are settling into that “groundhog day” mentality that hits every unit at some stage during every tour. It will probably take people at least the first third of the tour to become effective in the environment, if not longer. Then in the last period you will struggle against the short-timer mentality. So this middle part of the tour is the most productive. But keeping the flame alive and bringing the local population along with you takes immense leadership.

**Article 21. Exploit a “single narrative.”** Since counterinsurgency is a competition to mobilize popular support, it pays to know how people are mobilized. In most societies there are opinion makers—local leaders, pillars of the community, religious figures, media personalities, and others who set trends and influence public perceptions. This influence—including the pernicious influence of the insurgents—often takes the form of a single narrative—a simple, unifying, easily expressed story or explanation that organizes people’s experience and provides a framework for understanding events. Nationalist and ethnic historical myths, or sectarian creeds, provide such a narrative. The Iraqi insurgents have one, as do al-Qaeda and the Taliban. To undercut their influence you must exploit an alternative narrative, or better yet, tap into an existing narrative that excludes the insurgents. This narrative is often worked out for you by higher headquarters, but only you have the detailed knowledge to tailor the narrative to local conditions and generate leverage from it. For example, you might use a nationalist narrative to marginalize foreign fighters in your area, or a narrative of national redemption



to undermine former regime elements that have been terrorizing the population. At the company level you do this in baby steps by getting to know local opinion makers, winning their trust, learning what motivates them, and building on this trust to find a single narrative that emphasizes the inevitability and rightness of your ultimate success. This is art, not science.

**Article 22. Local forces should mirror the enemy, not ourselves.** By this stage you will be working closely with local forces, training or supporting them, and building indigenous capability. The natural tendency is to build forces in our own image with the aim of eventually handing our role over to them. This is a mistake. Instead, local indigenous forces need to mirror the enemy's capabilities and seek to supplant the insurgent's role. This does not mean they should be "irregular" in the sense of being brutal or outside proper control. Rather, they should move, equip, and organize like the insurgents but have access to your support and be under the firm control of their parent societies. Combined with a mobilized population and trusted networks, this allows local forces to "hardwire" the enemy out of the environment, under top cover from you. At the company level, this means that raising, training, and employing local indigenous auxiliary forces (police and military) are valid tasks. These tasks require high-level clearance, of course, but if support is given, you should establish a company training cell. Platoons should aim to train one local squad and then use that squad as a nucleus for a partner platoon. Company headquarters should train an indigenous leadership team. This mirrors the "growth" process of other trusted networks and tends to emerge naturally as you win local allies who want to take up arms in their own defense.

**Article 23. Practice armed civil affairs.** Counterinsurgency is armed social work, an attempt to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at. This situation makes civil affairs a central counterinsurgency activity, not an afterthought. It is how you restructure the environment to displace the enemy from it. In your company sector, civil affairs must focus on meeting basic needs first and then progress up

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs as each successive need is met. A series of village or neighborhood surveys, regularly updated, is an invaluable tool to help understand the population's needs and track progress in meeting them over time. You need intimate cooperation with interagency partners here—national, international, and local. You will not be able to control these partners. Many NGOs, for example, do not want to be too closely associated with you because they need to preserve their perceived neutrality. Instead, you need to work on a shared diagnosis of the problem, building a consensus that helps you self-synchronize. Your role is to provide protection, identify needs, facilitate civil affairs, and use improvements in social conditions as leverage to build networks and mobilize the population. Thus, there is no such thing as impartial humanitarian assistance or civil affairs in counterinsurgency. Every time you help someone, you hurt someone else—not the least the insurgents. So civil and humanitarian assistance personnel will be targeted. Protecting them is a matter not only of close-in defense, but also of creating a permissive operating environment by co-opting the beneficiaries of aid—local communities and leaders—to help you help them.

**Article 24. Small is beautiful.** Another natural tendency is to go for large-scale, mass programs. In particular, we have a tendency to template ideas that succeed in one area and transplant them into another, and we tend to take small programs that work and try to replicate them on a larger scale. Again, this strategy is usually a mistake. Often programs succeed because of specific local conditions of which we are unaware, or because their very smallness kept them below the enemy's radar and helped them flourish unmolested. At the company level, programs that succeed in one district often also succeed in another (because the overall company sector is small), but small-scale projects rarely proceed smoothly into large programs. Keep programs small. Small scale makes them cheap, sustainable, low key, and (importantly) recoverable if they fail. You can add new programs—also small, cheap, and tailored to local conditions—as the situation allows.

**Article 25. Fight the enemy's strategy, not his**

*forces*. At this stage, if things are proceeding well, the insurgents will go over to the offensive. Yes, the offensive because you have created a situation so dangerous to the insurgents, by threatening to displace them from the environment, that they have to attack you and the population to get back into the game. Thus it is normal, even in the most successful operations, to have spikes of offensive insurgent activity late in the campaign. This activity does not necessarily mean you have done something wrong (though it may—it depends on whether you have successfully mobilized the population). At this point the tendency is to go for the jugular and seek to destroy the enemy's forces in open battle. This strategy is rarely the best choice at the company level, because provoking major combat usually plays into the enemy's hands by undermining the population's confidence. Instead, attack the enemy's strategy. If he is seeking to recapture the allegiance of a segment of the local population, then co-opt them against him. If he is trying to provoke a sectarian conflict, go over to "peace enforcement mode." The permutations are endless, but the principle is the same—fight the enemy's strategy, not his forces.

**Article 26. Build your own solution—only attack the enemy when he gets in the way.** Try not to be distracted or forced into a series of reactive moves by a desire to kill or capture the insurgents. Your aim should be to implement your own solution—the game plan you developed early in the campaign and then refined through interaction with local partners. Your approach must be environment-centric (based on dominating the whole district and implementing a solution to its systemic problems) rather than enemy centric. This means that, particularly late in the campaign, you may need to learn to negotiate with the enemy. Members of the population that support you also know the enemy's leaders (they may have grown up together in the small district that is now your company sector), and valid negotiating partners sometimes emerge as the campaign progresses. Again, you need close inter-agency relationships to exploit opportunities to co-opt segments of the enemy. This helps you wind down the insurgency without alienating potential local allies who have relatives or friends

in the insurgent movement. At this stage, a defection is better than a surrender, a surrender is better than a capture, and a capture is better than a kill.

## ***Getting Short***

Time is short, and the tour is drawing to a close. The key problem now is keeping your people focused, preventing them from dropping their guard, and maintaining the rage on all of the multifarious programs, projects, and operations that you have started. In this final phase, the previous articles still stand, but there is an important new one.

**Article 27. Keep your extraction plan secret.** The temptation to talk about home becomes almost unbearable toward the end of a tour. The locals know you are leaving and probably have a better idea than you of the generic extraction plan. Remember, they have seen units come and go. But you must protect the specific details of the extraction plan, or the enemy will use this time as an opportunity to score a high-profile hit, recapture the population's allegiance by scare tactics that convince them they will not be protected once you leave, or persuade them that your successor unit will be oppressive or incompetent. Keep the details secret, within a tightly controlled compartment in your headquarters. And resist the temptation to say goodbye to local allies. You can always send a postcard from home.

## ***Four 'What Ifs'***

The articles above describe what should happen, but we all know that things go wrong. Here are some "what ifs" to consider.

**What if you get moved to a different area?** You prepared for Ramadi and studied Dulaim tribal structures and Sunni beliefs. Now you are going to Najaf and will be surrounded by al-Hassan and Unizzah tribes and Shi'a communities. But that work was not wasted. In mastering your first area, you learned techniques you can apply—how to "case" an operational area or how to decide what matters in the local societal structure. Do the same again. This time the

process is easier and faster. You have an existing mental structure and can focus on what is different. The same applies if you get moved frequently within a battalion or brigade area.

*What if higher headquarters doesn't "get" counterinsurgency?* Higher headquarters is telling you that the mission is to "kill terrorists" or is pushing for high-speed armored patrols and a base camp mentality. They just do not seem to understand counterinsurgency. This is not uncommon since company grade officers today often have more combat experience than senior officers. In this case, just do what you can. Try not to create expectations that higher headquarters will not let you meet. Apply the adage "first do no harm." Over time you will find ways to do what you have to do. But never lie to higher headquarters about your locations or activities. They own the indirect fires.

*What if you have no resources?* Yours is a low-priority sector. You have no linguists, the aid agencies have no money for projects in your area, and you have a low priority for funding. You can still get things done, but you need to focus on self-reliance, keeping things small and sustainable, and ruthlessly prioritize effort. Local community leaders are your allies. They know what matters to them more than you do. Be honest with them, discuss possible projects and options with community leaders, and get them to choose what their priorities are. Often they will find the translators, building supplies, or expertise that you need and will only expect your support and protection in making their projects work. And the process of negotiation and consultation will help mobilize their support and strengthen their social cohesion. If you set your sights on what is achievable, the situation can still work.

*What if the theater situation shifts under your feet?* It is your worst nightmare. Everything has gone well in your sector, but the whole theater situation has changed and invalidates your efforts. Think of the first battle of Fallujah, the al-Askariya shrine bombing, or the Sadr uprising. What do you do? Here is where having a flexible, adaptive game plan comes in. Just as the insurgents drop down to a lower posture when things go wrong, now is the time to drop back a

stage, consolidate, regain your balance, and prepare to expand again when the situation allows. But, see Article 28. If you cede the initiative, you must regain it as soon as the situation allows, or you will eventually lose.

## **Conclusion**

This then is the tribal wisdom, the folklore that those who went before you have learned. Like any folklore it needs interpretation and contains seemingly contradictory advice. Over time, as you apply unremitting intellectual effort to study your sector, you will learn to apply these ideas in your own way and will add to this store of wisdom from your own observations and experience. So only one article remains. If you remember nothing else, remember this one.

*Article 28. Whatever else you do, keep the initiative.* In counterinsurgency, the initiative is everything. If the enemy is reacting to you, you control the environment. Provided you mobilize the population, you will win. If you are reacting to the enemy—even if you are killing or capturing him in large numbers—then he is controlling the environment, and you will eventually lose. In counterinsurgency, the enemy initiates most attacks, targets you unexpectedly, and withdraws too fast for you to react. Do not be drawn into purely reactive operations. Focus on the population, build your own solution, further your game plan, and fight the enemy only when he gets in the way. This strategy gains and keeps the initiative.

## **Notes**

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## **About the Author**

David Kilcullen is a partner at the Crumpton Group, a Washington-based strategic advisory firm, and author of *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (2009). A former Australian infantry officer with 22 years' service, including operational deployments in East Timor, Bougainville, and the Middle East, he was a senior counterinsurgency advisor to General David H. Petraeus, USA, in Iraq in 2007 and a special advisor for counterinsurgency to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2008.



# Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq

by *Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, USA*  
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The Army has learned a great deal in Iraq and Afghanistan about the conduct of counterinsurgency operations, and we must continue to learn all that we can from our experiences in those countries.

The insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan were not, in truth, the wars for which we were best prepared in 2001; however, they are the wars we are fighting and they clearly are the kind of wars we must master. America's overwhelming conventional military superiority makes it unlikely that future enemies will confront us head on. Rather, they will attack us asymmetrically, avoiding our strengths—firepower, maneuver, technology—and come at us and our partners the way the insurgents do in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is imperative, therefore, that we continue to learn from our experiences in those countries, both to succeed in those endeavors and to prepare for the future.

## ***Soldiers and Observations***

Writing down observations and lessons learned is a time-honored tradition of Soldiers. Most of us have done this to varying degrees, and we then reflect on and share what we've jotted down after returning from the latest training exercise, mission, or deployment. Such activities are of obvious importance in helping us learn from our own experiences and from those of others.

In an effort to foster learning as an organization, the Army institutionalized the process of collection, evaluation, and dissemination of observations, insights, and lessons some 20 years ago with the formation of the Center for Army Lessons Learned.<sup>1</sup> In subsequent years, the other military services and the Joint Forces Command followed suit, forming their own lessons learned centers. More recently, the Internet and other knowledge-management tools have sped the processes of col-

lection, evaluation, and dissemination enormously. Numerous products have already been issued since the beginning of our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and most of us have found these products of considerable value as we've prepared for deployments and reviewed how different units grappled with challenges our elements were about to face.

For all their considerable worth, the institutional structures for capturing lessons are still dependent on soldiers' thoughts and reflections. And soldiers have continued to record their own observations, particularly in recent years as we have engaged in so many important operations. Indeed, my own pen and notebook were always handy while soldiering in Iraq, where I commanded the 101st Airborne Division during our first year there (during the fight to Baghdad and the division's subsequent operations in Iraq's four northern provinces), and where, during most of the subsequent year-and-a-half, I helped with the so-called "train and equip" mission, conducting an assessment in the spring of 2004 of the Iraqi security forces after their poor performance in early April 2004, and then serving as the first commander of the Multi National Security Transition Command-Iraq and the NATO Training Mission-Iraq.

What follows is the distillation of a number of observations jotted down during that time. Some of these observations are specific to soldiering in Iraq, but the rest speak to the broader challenge of conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture than our own. I offer 14 of those observations here in the hope that others will find them of assistance as they prepare to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan or in similar missions in the years ahead.

## ***Fourteen Observations***

Observation Number 1 is "*Do not try to do too much with your own hands.*" T. E. Lawrence offered this wise counsel in an article published

in *The Arab Bulletin* in August 1917. Continuing, he wrote: "Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is. It may take them longer and it may not be as good as you think, but if it is theirs, it will be better."<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence's guidance is as relevant in the 21st century as it was in his own time in the Middle East during World War I. Like much good advice, however, it is sometimes easier to put forward than it is to follow. Our Army is blessed with highly motivated soldiers who pride themselves on being action oriented. We celebrate a "can do" spirit, believe in taking the initiative, and want to get on with business. Yet, despite the discomfort in trying to follow Lawrence's advice by not doing too much with our own hands, such an approach is absolutely critical to success in a situation like that in Iraq. Indeed, many of our units recognized early on that it was important that we not just perform tasks for the Iraqis, but that we help our Iraqi partners, over time enabling them to accomplish tasks on their own with less and less assistance from us.

Empowering Iraqis to do the job themselves has, in fact, become the essence of our strategy—and such an approach is particularly applicable in Iraq. Despite suffering for decades under Saddam, Iraq still has considerable human capital, with the remnants of an educated middle class, a number of budding entrepreneurs, and many talented leaders. Moreover, the Iraqis, of course, know the situation and people far better than we ever can, and unleashing their productivity is essential to rebuilding infrastructure and institutions. Our experience, for example, in helping the Iraqi military reestablish its staff colleges and branch-specific schools has been that, once a good Iraqi leader is established as the head of the school, he can take it from there, albeit with some degree of continued Coalition assistance. The same has been true in many other areas, including in helping establish certain Army units (such as the Iraqi Army's 9th Division (Mechanized), based north of Baghdad at Taji,

and the 8th Division, which has units in five provinces south of Baghdad) and police academies (such as the one in Hillah, run completely by Iraqis for well over six months). Indeed, our ability to assist rather than do has evolved considerably since the transition of sovereignty at the end of late June 2004 and even more so since the elections of 30 January 2005. I do not, to be sure, want to downplay in the least the amount of work still to be done or the daunting challenges that lie ahead; rather, I simply want to emphasize the importance of empowering, enabling, and assisting the Iraqis, an approach that figures prominently in our strategy in that country.

**Observation Number 2** is that, in a situation like Iraq, the liberating force must *act quickly, because every army of liberation has a half-life* beyond which it turns into an army of occupation. The length of this half-life is tied to the perceptions of the populace about the impact of the liberating force's activities. From the moment a force enters a country, its leaders must keep this in mind, striving to meet the expectations of the liberated in what becomes a race against the clock.

This race against the clock in Iraq has been complicated by the extremely high expectations of the Iraqi people, their pride in their own abilities, and their reluctant admission that they needed help from Americans, in particular.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing this, those of us on the ground at the outset did all that we could with the resources available early on to help the people, to repair the damage done by military operations and looting, to rebuild infrastructure, and to restore basic services as quickly as possible—in effect, helping extend the half-life of the army of liberation. Even while carrying out such activities, however, we were keenly aware that sooner or later, the people would begin to view us as an army of occupation. Over time, the local citizenry would feel that we were not doing enough or were not moving as quickly as desired, would see us damage property and hurt innocent civilians in the course of operations, and would resent the inconveniences and intrusion of checkpoints, low helicopter flights, and other

military activities. The accumulation of these perceptions, coupled with the natural pride of Iraqis and resentment that their country, so blessed in natural resources, had to rely on outsiders, would eventually result in us being seen less as liberators and more as occupiers. That has, of course, been the case to varying degrees in much of Iraq.

The obvious implication of this is that such endeavors—especially in situations like those in Iraq—are a race against the clock to achieve as quickly as possible the expectations of those liberated. And, again, those expectations, in the case of Iraqi citizens, have always been very high indeed.<sup>4</sup>

**Observation Number 3** is that, in an endeavor like that in Iraq, *money is ammunition*. In fact, depending on the situation, money can be more important than real ammunition—and that has often been the case in Iraq since early April 2003 when Saddam's regime collapsed and the focus rapidly shifted to reconstruction, economic revival, and restoration of basic services. Once money is available, the challenge is to spend it effectively and quickly to rapidly achieve measurable results. This leads to a related observation that the money needs to be provided as soon as possible to the organizations that have the capability and capacity to spend it in such a manner.

So-called CERP (Commander's Emergency Reconstruction Program) funds—funds created by the Coalition Provisional Authority with captured Iraqi money in response to requests from units for funds that could be put to use quickly and with minimal red tape—proved very important in Iraq in the late spring and summer of 2003. These funds enabled units on the ground to complete thousands of small projects that were, despite their low cost, of enormous importance to local citizens.<sup>5</sup> Village schools, for example, could be repaired and refurbished by less than \$10,000 at that time, and units like the 101st Airborne Division carried out hundreds of school repairs alone. Other projects funded by CERP in our area included refurbishment of Mosul University, repairs to the Justice Center, numerous road projects, countless water projects, refurbishment of cement and asphalt facto-

ries, repair of a massive irrigation system, support for local elections, digging of dozens of wells, repair of police stations, repair of an oil refinery, purchase of uniforms and equipment for Iraqi forces, construction of small Iraqi Army training and operating bases, repairs to parks and swimming pools, support for youth soccer teams, creation of employment programs, refurbishment of medical facilities, creation of a central Iraqi detention facility, establishment of a small business loan program, and countless other small initiatives that made big differences in the lives of the Iraqis we were trying to help.

The success of the CERP concept led Congress to appropriate additional CERP dollars in the fall of 2003, and additional appropriations have continued ever since. Most commanders would agree, in fact, that CERP dollars have been of enormous value to the effort in Iraq (and in Afghanistan, to which the concept migrated in 2003 as well).

Beyond being provided money, those organizations with the capacity and capability to put it to use must also be given reasonable flexibility in how they spend at least a portion of the money, so that it can be used to address emerging needs—which are inevitable. This is particularly important in the case of appropriated funds. The recognition of this need guided our requests for resources for the Iraqi security forces “train and equip” mission, and the result was a substantial amount of flexibility in the 2005 supplemental funding measure that has served that mission very well, especially as our new organization achieved the capability and capacity needed to rapidly put to use the resources allocated to it.<sup>6</sup>

**Observation Number 4** reminds us that *increasing the number of stakeholders is critical to success*. This insight emerged several months into our time in Iraq as we began to realize that more important than our winning Iraqi hearts and minds was doing all that we could to ensure that as many Iraqis as possible felt a stake in the success of the new Iraq. Now, I do not want to downplay the importance of winning hearts and minds for the Coalition, as that extends the half-life I described earlier, something that is of obvious desirability. But more important was the idea

of Iraqis wanting the new Iraq to succeed. Over time, in fact, we began asking, when considering new initiatives, projects, or programs, whether they would help increase the number of Iraqis who felt they had a stake in the country's success. This guided us well during the time that the 101st Airborne Division was in northern Iraq and again during a variety of initiatives pursued as part of the effort to help Iraq reestablish its security forces. And it is this concept, of course, that undoubtedly is behind the reported efforts of the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq to encourage Shi'a and Kurdish political leaders in Iraq to reach out to Sunni Arab leaders and to encourage them to help the new Iraq succeed.

The essence of **Observation Number 5**—that we should *analyze costs and benefits of operations before each operation*—is captured in a question we developed over time and used to ask before the conduct of operations: "Will this operation," we asked, "take more bad guys off the street than it creates by the way it is conducted?" If the answer to that question was, "No," then we took a very hard look at the operation before proceeding.

In 1986, General John Galvin, then Commander in Chief of the U.S. Southern Command (which was supporting the counterinsurgency effort in El Salvador), described the challenge captured in this observation very effectively: "The . . . burden on the military institution is large. Not only must it subdue an armed adversary while attempting to provide security to the civilian population, it must also avoid furthering the insurgents' cause. If, for example, the military's actions in killing 50 guerrillas cause 200 previously uncommitted citizens to join the insurgent cause, the use of force will have been counterproductive."<sup>7</sup>

To be sure, there are occasions when one should be willing to take more risk relative to this question. One example was the 101st Airborne Division operation to capture or kill Uday and Qusay. In that case, we ended up firing well over a dozen antitank missiles into the house they were occupying (knowing that all the family members were safely out of it) after Uday and Qusay refused our call to surrender and

wounded three of our soldiers during two attempts to capture them.<sup>8</sup>

In the main, however, we sought to carry out operations in a way that minimized the chances of creating more enemies than we captured or killed. The idea was to try to end each day with fewer enemies than we had when it started. Thus we preferred targeted operations rather than sweeps, and as soon as possible after completion of an operation, we explained to the citizens in the affected areas what we'd done and why we did it.

This should not be taken to indicate that we were the least bit reluctant about going after the Saddamists, terrorists, or insurgents; in fact, the opposite was the case. In one night in Mosul alone, for example, we hit 35 targets simultaneously, getting 23 of those we were after, with only one or two shots fired and most of the operations requiring only a knock on a door, vice blowing it down. Such operations obviously depended on a sophisticated intelligence structure, one largely based on human intelligence sources and very similar to the Joint Interagency Task Forces for Counter-Terrorism that were established in various locations after 9/11.

That, logically, leads to **Observation Number 6**, which holds that *intelligence is the key to success*. It is, after all, detailed, actionable intelligence that enables "cordon and knock" operations and precludes large sweeps that often prove counterproductive. Developing such intelligence, however, is not easy. Substantial assets at the local (i.e., division or brigade) level are required to develop human intelligence networks and gather sufficiently precise information to allow targeted operations. For us, precise information generally meant a 10-digit grid for the target's location, a photo of the entry point, a reasonable description of the target, and directions to the target's location, as well as other information on the neighborhood, the target site, and the target himself. Gathering this information is hard; considerable intelligence and operational assets are required, all of which must be pulled together to focus (and deconflict) the collection, analytical, and operational efforts. But it is precisely this type of approach that is essential to



preventing terrorists and insurgents from putting down roots in an area and starting the process of intimidation and disruption that can result in a catastrophic downward spiral.

**Observation Number 7**, which springs from the fact that civil affairs are not enough when undertaking huge reconstruction and nation-building efforts, is that *everyone must do nation-building*. This should not be taken to indicate that I have anything but the greatest of respect for our civil affairs personnel, because I hold them in very high regard. I have personally watched them work wonders in Central America, Haiti, the Balkans, and, of course, Iraq. Rather, my point is that when undertaking industrial-strength reconstruction on the scale of that in Iraq, civil affairs forces alone will not suffice; every unit must be involved.

Reopening the University of Mosul brought this home to those of us in the 101st Airborne Division in the spring of 2003. A symbol of considerable national pride, the university had graduated well over a hundred thousand students since its establishment in 1967. Shortly after the seating of the interim governor and province council in Nineveh Province in early May 2003, the council's members established completion of the school year at the university as among their top priorities. We thus took a quick trip through the university to assess the extent of the damage and to discuss reopening with the chancellor. We then huddled with our civil affairs battalion commander to chart a way ahead, but we quickly found that, although the talent inherent in the battalion's education team was impressive, its members were relatively junior in rank and its size (numbering less than an infantry squad) was simply not enough to help the Iraqis repair and reopen a heavily-looted institution of over 75 buildings, some 4,500 staff and faculty, and approximately 30-35,000 students. The mission, and the education team, therefore, went to one of the two aviation brigades of the 101st Airborne Division, a brigade that clearly did not have "Rebuild Foreign Academic Institutions" in its mission essential task list. What the brigade did have, however, was a senior commander and staff, as well as numerous subordinate units with

commanders and staffs, who collectively added up to considerable organizational capacity and capability.

Seeing this approach work with Mosul University, we quickly adopted the same approach in virtually every area—assigning a unit or element the responsibility for assisting each of the Iraqi Ministries' activities in northern Iraq and also for linking with key Iraqi leaders. For example, our signal battalion incorporated the civil affairs battalion's communications team and worked with the Ministry of Telecommunications element in northern Iraq, helping reestablish the local telecommunications structure, including assisting with a deal that brought a satellite downlink to the central switch and linked Mosul with the international phone system, producing a profit for the province (subscribers bore all the costs). Our chaplain and his team linked with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the engineer battalion with the Ministry of Public Works, the division support command with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the corps support group with the Ministry of Education, the military police battalion with the Ministry of Interior (Police), our surgeon and his team with the Ministry of Health, our staff judge advocate with Ministry of Justice officials, our fire support element with the Ministry of Oil, and so on. In fact, we lined up a unit or staff section with every ministry element and with all the key leaders and officials in our AOR, and our subordinate units did the same in their areas of responsibility. By the time we were done, everyone and every element, not just civil affairs units, was engaged in nation-building.

**Observation Number 8**, recognition of the need to *help build institutions, not just units*, came from the Coalition mission of helping Iraq reestablish its security forces. We initially focused primarily on developing combat units—army and police battalions and brigade headquarters—as well as individual police. While those are what Iraq desperately needed to help in the achievement of security, for the long term there was also a critical need to help rebuild the institutions that support the units and police in the field—the ministries, the admin and logistical support units,

the professional military education systems, admin policies and procedures, and the training organizations. In fact, lack of ministry capability and capacity can undermine the development of the battalions, brigades, and divisions, if the ministries, for example, don't pay the soldiers or police on time, use political rather than professional criteria in picking leaders, or fail to pay contractors as required for services provided. This lesson underscored for us the importance of providing sufficient advisors and mentors to assist with the development of the security ministries and their elements, just as we provided advisor teams with each battalion and each brigade and division headquarters.<sup>9</sup>

Observation Number 9, *cultural awareness is a force multiplier*, reflects our recognition that knowledge of the cultural "terrain" can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, knowledge of the geographic terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain.

Working in another culture is enormously difficult if one doesn't understand the ethnic groups, tribes, religious elements, political parties, and other social groupings—and their respective viewpoints; the relationships among the various groups; governmental structures and processes; local and regional history; and, of course, local and national leaders. Understanding of such cultural aspects is essential if one is to help the people build stable political, social, and economic institutions. Indeed, this is as much a matter of common sense as operational necessity. Beyond the intellectual need for the specific knowledge about the environment in which one is working, it is also clear that people, in general, are more likely to cooperate if those who have power over them respect the culture that gives them a sense of identity and self-worth.

In truth, many of us did a lot of "discovery learning" about such features of Iraq in the early months of our time there. And those who learned the quickest—and who also mastered some "survival Arabic"—were, not surprisingly,

the most effective in developing productive relationships with local leaders and citizens and achieved the most progress in helping establish security, local governance, economic activity, and basic services. The importance of cultural awareness has, in fact, been widely recognized in the U.S. Army and the other services, and it is critical that we continue the progress that has been made in this area in our exercises, military schools, doctrine, and so on.<sup>10</sup>

Observation Number 10 is a statement of the obvious, fully recognized by those operating in Iraq, but it is one worth recalling nonetheless. It is that *success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations*. Counterinsurgency strategies must also include, above all, efforts to establish a political environment that helps reduce support for the insurgents and undermines the attraction of whatever ideology they may espouse.<sup>11</sup> In certain Sunni Arab regions of Iraq, establishing such a political environment is likely of greater importance than military operations, since the right political initiatives might undermine the sanctuary and assistance provided to the insurgents. Beyond the political arena, other important factors are economic recovery (which reduces unemployment, a serious challenge in Iraq that leads some out-of-work Iraqis to be guns for hire), education (which opens up employment possibilities and access to information from outside one's normal circles), diplomatic initiatives (in particular, working with neighboring states through which foreign fighters transit), improvement in the provision of basic services, and so on. In fact, the campaign plan developed in 2005 by the Multi National Force-Iraq and the U.S. embassy with Iraqi and Coalition leaders addresses each of these issues.

Observation Number 11—*ultimate success depends on local leaders*—is a natural reflection of Iraqi sovereignty and acknowledges that success in Iraq is, as time passes, increasingly dependent on Iraqi leaders—at four levels:

- ❖ Leaders at the national level working together, reaching across party and sectarian lines to keep the country unified, rejecting short-term expedi-

ent solutions such as the use of militias, and pursuing initiatives to give more of a stake in the success of the new Iraq to those who feel left out;

- ❖ Leaders in the ministries building the capability and capacity necessary to use the tremendous resources Iraq has efficiently, transparently, honestly, and effectively;

- ❖ Leaders at the province level resisting temptations to pursue winner-take-all politics and resisting the urge to politicize the local police and other security forces, and;

- ❖ Leaders in the security forces staying out of politics, providing courageous, competent leadership to their units, implementing policies that are fair to all members of their forces, and fostering loyalty to their army or police band of brothers rather than to specific tribes, ethnic groups, political parties, or local militias.

Iraqi leaders are, in short, the real key to the new Iraq, and we thus need to continue to do all that we can to enable them.

**Observation Number 12** is the admonition to *remember the strategic corporals and strategic lieutenants*, the relatively junior commissioned or noncommissioned officers who often have to make huge decisions, sometimes with life-or-death as well as strategic consequences, in the blink of an eye.

Commanders have two major obligations to these junior leaders: first, to do everything possible to train them before deployment for the various situations they will face, particularly for the most challenging and ambiguous ones; and, second, once deployed, to try to shape situations to minimize the cases in which they have to make those hugely important decisions extremely quickly.

The best example of the latter is what we do to help ensure that, when establishing hasty checkpoints, our strategic corporals are provided sufficient training and adequate means to stop a vehicle speeding toward them without having to put a bullet through the windshield. This is, in

truth, easier said than it is done in the often chaotic situations that arise during a fast-moving operation in such a challenging security environment. But there are some actions we can take to try to ensure that our young leaders have adequate time to make the toughest of calls—decisions that, if not right, again, can have strategic consequences.

My next-to-last observation, **Number 13**, is that *there is no substitute for flexible, adaptable leaders*. The key to many of our successes in Iraq, in fact, has been leaders—especially young leaders—who have risen to the occasion and taken on tasks for which they'd had little or no training,<sup>12</sup> and who have demonstrated enormous initiative, innovativeness, determination, and courage.<sup>13</sup> Such leaders have repeatedly been the essential ingredient in many of the achievements in Iraq. And fostering the development of others like them clearly is critical to the further development of our Army and our military.<sup>14</sup>

My final observation, **Number 14**, underscores that, especially in counterinsurgency operations, *a leader's most important task is to set the right tone*. This is, admittedly, another statement of the obvious, but one that nonetheless needs to be highlighted given its tremendous importance. Setting the right tone and communicating that tone to his subordinate leaders and troopers are absolutely critical for every leader at every level, especially in an endeavor like that in Iraq.

If, for example, a commander clearly emphasizes so-called kinetic operations over non-kinetic operations, his subordinates will do likewise. As a result, they may thus be less inclined to seize opportunities for the nation-building aspects of the campaign. In fact, even in the 101st Airborne Division, which prided itself on its attention to nation-building, there were a few mid-level commanders early on whose hearts really weren't into performing civil affairs tasks, assisting with reconstruction, developing relationships with local citizens, or helping establish local governance. To use the jargon of Iraq at that time, they didn't "get it." In such cases, the commanders above them quickly established that nation-building activities were not optional and

would be pursued with equal enthusiasm to raids and other offensive operations.

Setting the right tone ethically is another hugely important task. If leaders fail to get this right, winking at the mistreatment of detainees or at manhandling of citizens, for example, the result can be a sense in the unit that “anything goes.” Nothing can be more destructive in an element than such a sense.

In truth, regardless of the leader’s tone, most units in Iraq have had to deal with cases in which mistakes have been made in these areas, where young leaders in very frustrating situations, often after having suffered very tough casualties, took missteps. The key in these situations is for leaders to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the wake of such incidents, that standards are clearly articulated and reinforced, that remedial training is conducted, and that supervision is exercised to try to preclude recurrences.

It is hard to imagine a tougher environment than that in some of the areas in Iraq. Frustrations, anger, and resentment can run high in such situations. That recognition underscores, again, the importance of commanders at every level working hard to get the tone right and to communicate it throughout their units.

## ***Implications***

These are, again, 14 observations from soldiering in Iraq for most of the first two and a half years of our involvement there. Although I presented them as discrete lessons, many are inextricably related. These observations carry with them a number of implications for our effort in Iraq (and for our Army as well, as I have noted in some of the footnotes).<sup>15</sup>

It goes without saying that success in Iraq—which clearly is important not just for Iraq, but for the entire Middle East region and for our own country—will require continued military operations and support for the ongoing development of Iraqi security forces.

Success will also require continued assistance and resources for the development of the emerging political, economic, and social institutions in

Iraq—efforts in which Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey and their teams have been engaged with their Iraqi counterparts and have been working very hard.

Lastly, success will require time, determination, and resilience, keeping in mind that following the elections held in mid-December 2005, several months will likely be required for the new government—the fourth in an 18-month period—to be established and functional. The insurgents and extremists did all that they could to derail the preparations for the constitutional referendum in mid-October and the elections in mid-December. Although they were ineffective in each case, they undoubtedly will try to disrupt the establishment of the new government—and the upcoming provincial elections—as well. As Generals John Abizaid and George Casey made clear in their testimony on Capitol Hill in September 2005, however, there is a strategy—developed in close coordination with those in the U.S. embassy in Baghdad and with our inter-agency, Coalition, and Iraqi partners—that addresses the insurgency, Iraqi security forces, and the other relevant areas. And there has been substantial progress in a number of areas. Nonetheless, nothing is ever easy in Iraq and a great deal of hard work and many challenges clearly lie ahead.<sup>16</sup>

The first six months of 2006 thus will be of enormous importance, with the efforts of Iraqi leaders being especially significant during this period as a new government is seated and the new constitution enters into force. It will be essential that we do all that we can to support Iraq’s leaders as they endeavor to make the most of the opportunity our soldiers have given them.

## ***Conclusion***

In a 1986 article titled “Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm,” General John R. Galvin observed that “an officer’s effectiveness and chance for success, now and in the future, depend not only on his character, knowledge, and skills, but also, and more than ever before, on his ability to understand the changing environment of conflict.”<sup>17</sup> General Galvin’s words

were relevant then, but they are even more applicable today. Conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture is exceedingly complex.

Later, in the same article, noting that we in the military typically have our noses to the grindstone and that we often live a somewhat cloistered existence, General Galvin counseled: "Let us get our young leaders away from the grindstone now and then, and encourage them to reflect on developments outside the fortress-cloister. Only then will they develop into leaders capable of adapting to the changed environment of warfare and able to fashion a new paradigm that addresses all the dimensions of the conflicts that may lie ahead."<sup>18</sup>

Given the current situation, General Galvin's advice again appears very wise indeed. And it is my hope that, as we all take time to lift our noses from the grindstone and look beyond the confines of our current assignments, the observations provided here will help foster useful discussion on our ongoing endeavors and on how we should approach similar conflicts in the future—conflicts that are likely to be the norm, rather than the exception, in the 21st century.

## Notes

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1. The Center for Army Lessons Learned website can be found at <<http://call.army.mil/>>.
2. T. E. Lawrence. "Twenty-Seven Articles," *Arab Bulletin* (20 August 1917). Known popularly as "Lawrence of Arabia," T. E. Lawrence developed an incomparable degree of what we now call "cultural awareness" during his time working with Arab tribes and armies, and many of his 27 articles ring as true today as they did in his day. A website with the articles can be found at <[www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/warfare4.html](http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/warfare4.html)>. A good overview of Lawrence's thinking, including his six fundamental principles of insurgency, can be found in "T. E. Lawrence and the Mind of an Insurgent," *Army* (July 2005): 31-37.
3. I should note that this has been much less the case

in Afghanistan where, because the expectations of the people were so low and the abhorrence of the Taliban and further civil war was so great, the Afghan people remain grateful to Coalition forces and other organizations for all that is done for them. Needless to say, the relative permissiveness of the security situation in Afghanistan has also helped a great deal and made it possible for nongovernmental organizations to operate on a much wider and freer basis than is possible in Iraq. In short, the different context in Afghanistan has meant that the half-life of the Army of liberation there has been considerably longer than that in Iraq.

4. In fact, we often contended with what came to be known as the "Man on the Moon Challenge"—i.e., the expectation of ordinary Iraqis that soldiers from a country that could put a man on the moon and overthrow Saddam in a matter of weeks should also be able, with considerable ease, to provide each Iraqi a job, 24-hour electrical service, and so on.

5. The military units on the ground in Iraq have generally had considerable capability to carry out reconstruction and nation-building tasks. During its time in northern Iraq, for example, the 101st Airborne Division had four engineer battalions (including, for a period, even a well-drilling detachment), an engineer group headquarters (which is designed to carry out assessment, design, contracting, and quality assurance tasks), two civil affairs battalions, nine infantry battalions, four artillery battalions (most of which were "out of battery" and performed reconstruction tasks), a sizable logistical support command (generally about 6 battalions, including transportation, fuel storage, supply, maintenance, food service, movement control, warehousing, and even water purification units), a military police battalion (with attached police and corrections training detachments), a signal battalion, an air defense battalion (which helped train Iraqi forces), a field hospital, a number of contracting officers and officers authorized to carry large sums of money, an air traffic control element, some nine aviation battalions (with approximately 250 helicopters), a number of chaplain teams, and more than 25 military lawyers (who can be of enormous assistance in resolving a host of problems when conducting nation-building). Except in the area of aviation assets, the 4th Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division, the two other major Army units in Iraq in the summer of 2003, had even more assets than the 101st.

6. The FY 2005 Defense Budget and Supplemental Funding Measures approved by Congress provided some \$5.2 billion for the Iraqi security force's train, equip, advise, and rebuild effort. Just as significant, it was appropriated in just three categories—Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and Quick Reaction Funds—thereby minimizing substantially the need for reprogramming actions.

7. General John R. Galvin, "Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm," *Parameters*, 16, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 6.

8. As soon as the "kinetic" part of that operation was complete, we moved into the neighborhood with engineers, civil affairs teams, lawyers, officers with money, and security elements. We subsequently repaired any damage that might conceivably have been caused by the operation, and completely removed all traces of the house in which Uday and Qusay were located, as the missiles had rendered it structurally unsound and we didn't want any reminders left of the two brothers.

9. Over time, and as the effort to train and equip Iraqi combat units gathered momentum, the Multi National Security Transition Command-Iraq placed greater and greater emphasis on helping with the development of the Ministries of Defense and Interior, especially after the mission to advise the ministries' leaders was shifted to the command from the embassy's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office in the fall of 2005. It is now one of the command's top priorities.

10. The Army, for example, has incorporated scenarios that place a premium on cultural awareness into its major exercises at the National Training Center and Joint Readiness Training Center. It has stressed the importance of cultural awareness throughout the process of preparing units for deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and in a comprehensive approach adopted by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. As part of this effort, language tools have been developed: e.g., the Rosetta Stone program available through Army Knowledge Online, and language training will be required; e.g., of Command and General Staff College students during their 2d and 3d semesters. Doctrinal manuals are being modified to recognize the importance of cultural awareness, and instruction in various commissioned and noncommissioned officer courses has been added as well. The Center for Army Lessons Learned has published a number of

documents to assist as well. The U.S. Marine Corps has pursued similar initiatives and is, in fact, partnering with the Army in the development of a new Counterinsurgency Field Manual.

11. David Galula's classic work, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Mailer Publishing, 2005) is particularly instructive on this point. See, for example, his discussion on pages 88-89.

12. As I noted in a previous footnote, preparation of leaders and units for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan now typically includes extensive preparation for the kind of "non-kinetic" operations our leaders are called on to perform, with the preparation period culminating in a brigade combat team mission rehearsal exercise at either the National Training Center or the Joint Readiness Training Center. At each Center, units conduct missions similar to those they'll perform when deployed and do so in an environment that includes villages, Iraqi-American role players, "suicide bombers," "insurgents," the need to work with local leaders and local security forces, etc. At the next higher level, the preparation of division and corps headquarters culminates in the conduct of a mission rehearsal exercise conducted jointly by the Battle Command Training Program and Joint Warfighting Center. This exercise also strives to replicate in a command post exercise format driven by a computer simulation the missions, challenges, and context the unit will find once deployed.

13. A great piece that highlights the work being done by young leaders in Iraq is Robert Kaplan's "The Future of America in Iraq," *latimes.com*, 24 December 2005. Another is the video presentation used by Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker, "Pentathlete Leader: 1LT Ted Wiley," which recounts Lieutenant Wiley's fascinating experiences in the first Stryker unit to operate in Iraq as they fought and conducted nation-building operations throughout much of the country, often transitioning from one to the other very rapidly, changing missions and reorganizing while on the move, and covering considerable distances in short periods of time.

14. In fact, the U.S. Army is currently in the final stages of an important study of the education and training of leaders, one objective of which is to identify additional programs and initiatives that can help produce the kind of flexible, adaptable leaders who have done