

**Men, Blood, and Victory:
Force Levels, Insurgency, and Occupation
In American History**

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Abstract:

Due to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the relationship between force levels, casualties, and success in occupations and counterinsurgency operations has become the subject of considerable scholarly and political debate. This paper considers three principle questions: 1) Do low troop levels cause or impede the rise of insurgencies? 2) If an insurgency exists, does the deployment of additional troops increase casualties among the occupying forces? 3) Do additional forces lead to the defeat of insurgencies or produce some measure of political success? This paper compares six American occupations. The first set of cases consists of three of the most costly occupations in American history: the occupation of the Philippines from 1898-1902, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The second set of cases considers the comparatively bloodless occupations of post-WWII Japan, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, and the occupation of Somalia from 1992-1995. A comparative analysis of these cases finds only a weak relationship between initial force levels and the rise of an insurgency. Instead, while there is a positive correlation between force levels and casualties, this effect is largely due to rising troop deployments in response to increased violence or the result of both sides expanding their efforts prior to key political events. Second, this paper finds that the deployment of additional troops is not a sufficient condition for success. Increases in force levels must be accompanied by shifts in counterinsurgency strategy or new political developments to achieve significant results. Finally, it concludes with possible policy implications of these findings.

Introduction: Force Levels, Insurgency, and Occupation

The principal purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between men, blood, and victory in U.S. occupations and counterinsurgency operations. Recent political debates regarding the effectiveness of the Afghan model, the surge in Iraq, and the ongoing surge in Afghanistan are often centered on the relationship between force levels and success in occupations and counterinsurgency operations.¹ This paper attempts to examine the relationship between force levels, casualties, and victory in American occupations. Three critical issues are at stake. First, do low troop levels cause or, at least, permit the rise of an insurgency or other resistance to an occupation? Second, once an insurgency has begun, does the deployment of additional troops increase casualties? And finally, do additional troops allow an occupying force to defeat the insurgents and achieve some measure of political success?

In order to examine these questions, this paper considers six U.S. occupations. The first set of cases examines three of the most costly counterinsurgency campaigns in American history, the Philippines from 1888-1902, the present campaign in Afghanistan, and the post-war occupation of Iraq. The second set of cases consists of significantly less costly, although not always successful, occupations in Japan following World War II, Haiti from 1994-1995, and Somalia from 1992-1995. This paper finds that there is only a weak relationship between force levels and the rise of resistance to an occupation. Instead, the political decisions of an occupier, the motivations of potential opponents of the regime, and the presence or lack of a negotiated peace agreement are far more influential in determining the rise of an insurgency. Second, while there appears to be a correlation between troop levels and casualties, as measured by the number of military deaths, this relationship is the result of increasing deployments in response to

¹ Success is loosely defined as the elimination of the insurgency or, at least, its reduction to negligible levels. This is admittedly a controversial definition; however, later sections of this paper will explore alternate objectives.

increasing violence or both sides increasing their efforts in anticipation of key political events.²

Finally, this paper finds that simply deploying enough troops is not a sufficient condition for success. Other variables, such as shifts in counterinsurgency strategy or new political developments, worked in conjunction with expanded troop deployments to produce success. However, the presence of sufficient troops may be a necessary condition for victory.

Force Levels and Models of Counterinsurgency:

The primary general model of counterinsurgency for the current U.S. military is the “clear, hold, build” counterinsurgency model.³ This model of counterinsurgency argues that the critical determinant of victory is control of the populace rather than the elimination of insurgents.⁴ David Galula writes, “if the insurgent manages to dissociate the population from the counterinsurgent... he will win the war because in final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the populace.⁵ Or as the Army and Marine Corp’s field manual on counterinsurgency states, “long term success in COIN (counterinsurgency) depends on the people taking charge of their own affairs and consenting to the government’s rule.”⁶ Under this model, the counterinsurgent must secure the populace from the insurgent in order to establish the legitimacy of the government, ensure that insurgents cannot coerce the populace, and deny insurgents safe haven or supply. Providing a basic level of security for the

² Casualties are often used to refer to both wounded in action (rendered combat-ineffective) as well as those killed. This analysis will generally use deaths to measure the number of casualties suffered during a conflict although significant numbers of wounded are generally associated with each death.

³ This model is often referred to as the “hearts and minds” model of counter insurgency.

⁴ The “clear, hold, build” model acknowledges that some “search and destroy” or kinetic operations will be required during a counterinsurgency campaign. However, advocates of the model argue that these operations alone cannot produce victory since it is impossible to kill or capture every insurgent.

“FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency.” *Department of the Army*. December 2006.
<http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>, 1-23.

⁵ David Galula. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 4.

⁶ “FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency.” 1-1.

populace also allows economic development, aid, and reconstruction to continue. These efforts are believed to further enhance the legitimacy of the central government and the occupying power. Throughout this process, the authority of the central government must also be expanded through the establishment of civil authorities and the training of military and police forces.⁷

However, securing the populace is frequently believed to be manpower intensive. Galula claims that a force ratio of ten to twenty counterinsurgents per insurgent is “not uncommon” since the counterinsurgent faces the difficult task of creating order while the insurgent must merely destroy this order.⁸ While this ratio is still frequently cited, most current analyses focus upon the ratio of soldiers to civilians since this ratio is arguably more significant if one is focused on securing the populace.⁹ Conventional assessments of the force levels required under the “clear, hold, build” model of counterinsurgency are often centered on the minimum ratio of 20 soldiers per 1,000 civilian. This ratio is even enshrined in the U.S. Army and Marine Corp’s field manual, although the manual and most scholars recognize that these ratios depend heavily upon the specific situation.¹⁰

While the “clear, hold, build” model remains the dominant paradigm for counterinsurgency operations, there have been significant challenges to this approach. While this paper is principally concerned with a new challenger to the standard model of counterinsurgency, due to this paper’s focus on the Philippines, it must also consider an old challenge to the classic model, the coercive model of counterinsurgency. It advocates “terrible

⁷ Ralph Wipfli and Metz Steven. “COIN of the Realm: U.S. Counterinsurgency Strategy.” *Strategic Studies Institute*. January 10, 2008. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB846.pdf>, 2. Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, and John Nagle. “Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency.” *Military Review*. March/April 2006.

⁸ David Galula. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 6.

⁹Ibid. 6.

Galula acknowledges this to some degree noting that there is “an upper limit to this ratio.” And that by multiplying their efforts insurgents may not force the counterinsurgent to increase its efforts on a similar scale.

¹⁰ “FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency.” 1-13.

reprisals to deter any form of resistance” and argues that success merely requires the willingness to “out-terrorize the insurgents.”¹¹ While this model has generally fallen out of favor in the present day, coercive tactics were practiced on a relatively wide scale during the Philippines campaign at the order of senior officers.¹²

Of critical concern for this paper is the most recent challenger to the “clear, hold, build model, the Afghan model of counterinsurgency.¹³ The principal advocates of the Afghan model, Andres, Wills, and Griffith, argue that the Afghan model can prevent the rise of an insurgency by limiting the number of foreign troops and relying on local allies. In contrast to the classical model, far fewer occupying soldiers are committed to a country and these soldiers are deployed with a limited footprint in order to limit the nationalist reactions of the populace. Moreover, since the occupying forces consist primarily of local allies rather than foreign forces, local troops are expected to be superior at gaining the trust of populace and limiting nationalist reactions to the occupying forces.¹⁴

¹¹Edward Luttwak. “Dead end: Counterinsurgency warfare as military malpractice.” *Harper’s Magazine*. February 2007. <http://harpers.org/archive/2007-/02/0081384>.

Charles Wolf. “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: New Myths and Old Realities.” *RAND Corporation*. July 1965. <http://192.5.14.110/pubs/papers/2005/P3132-1.pdf>.

Michael Shafer. “The Unlearned Lessons of Counterinsurgency.” *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 103: 1. Spring 1988.

Alexander B. Downes. “Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy.” *Civil Wars*. Vol. 9:4. December 2007.

¹² It should also be recognized that some level of synthesis between the two theories may be somewhat possible. Austin Long. “On ‘Other War:’ Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research.” *RAND Corporation*. 2006. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG482.pdf, 31.

¹³ The Afghan model of warfare relies upon a combination of indigenous allies, airpower, and special forces to defeat opposing conventional armies at limited risk and cost to American forces. The model operates by using special forces personnel to direct American airpower in support of operations by indigenous troops. For more information on the Afghan model:

Michael O’Hanlon. “A Flawed Masterpiece.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 81:3. May/June 2002.

Stephen Biddle. “Allies, Airpower, and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq.” *International Security*. Vol. 30:3. Winter 2005/2006.

Richard Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas Griffith. “Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model.” *International Security*. Vol. 30:3. Winter 2005/2006.

¹⁴ Andres, Wills, and Griffith, 155-157.

Despite considerable public commentary on the relationship between force levels, casualties, and success in an occupation, there have been relatively few rigorous analyses of this issue. One of the most thorough examinations of this issue conducted by John McGrath argues that 13.26 troops per 1,000 inhabitants is a historically more accurate minimum force level and notes that many operations are successful with fewer soldiers.¹⁵ Another analysis by James Quinlivan supports the traditional assessment of 20 troops per 1,000 inhabitants.¹⁶ Finally, a RAND analysis of American nation-building led by James Dobbins observes that higher casualties tend to occur with lower levels of troops, although the authors acknowledge that this may be the result of a variety of other factors.¹⁷

While the above authors have conducted excellent analyses of the subject, the analyses of Quinlivan and McGrath only consider whether an occupation was generally successful and are principally focused on the minimum force levels required to mount a successful occupation. Many potentially key variables such as the skill of the insurgency, the strength of local grievances, the resolve of the occupier, or the economic development of the occupied state are not considered. Next, while Dobbins considers many of these variables, Dobbins wrote when the occupation of Iraq was barely underway and examined the case of Afghanistan when the occupying forces had suffered only 30 post-conflict deaths.¹⁸ More importantly, these analyses do not compare heavily within cases and assess how fluctuations in force levels influenced

¹⁵ Note that this figure also includes contractors and local police as well.

John McGrath. "Occasional Paper 16: Boots on the Ground: Troop Density in Contingency Operations." *Combat Studies Institute Press*. 2006. http://www-cgsc.army.mil/car1/download/csipubs/mcgrath_boots.pdf, 147.

¹⁶ James Quinlivan. "Force Requirements in Stability Operations." *Parameters*. Winter 1995.

¹⁷ James Dobbins et al., "America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq." *RAND Corporation*. 2003, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1753/, 153.

¹⁸ James Dobbins et al., 152-153.

success and casualties.¹⁹ This paper believes that a process-tracing approach may shed light upon the effect of force levels on counterinsurgency operations.

This paper also considers the effects of six additional variables as they apply to these cases to control for their potential effects on occupations and counterinsurgency campaigns.²⁰ First, any insurgency requires that potential opponents have some grievance, whether greed, ethnic tension, nationalism, or an ideological dispute, that prompts them to question the legitimacy of the occupying government and resist.²¹ A second key variable, which helps to predict the legitimacy of the occupying power, is the existence of a peace agreement with the populace.²² A third critical variable is the skill, supply, organization, and cohesion of potential opponents of regime. Fourth, terrain may play an important role in an occupation with difficult terrain such as mountains, jungles, forests, and urban environment providing insurgents sanctuary. Fifth, the effectiveness of a pre-existing government authority and the level of development of a country may also play a critical role.²³ Sixth, the resolve of the occupying power may also play a critical role in the success of an occupation.²⁴

¹⁹ McGrath does provide a historical background in each of the cases but he does not draw from this analysis to form explicit conclusions beyond basic force levels. For an example of the brevity of these findings see: McGrath, 13.

²⁰ Due to the breadth of the literature on occupations, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, civil wars, and other related subjects, the following is by no means a complete list of potential variables; however, the principal explanations for success, failure, and the rise of insurgencies in the following operations have generally been included.

²¹ "FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency." 1-5.

²² Nora Bensahel. "Preventing Insurgencies After Major Combat Operations." *Defense Studies*. Vol. 6:3. September 2006. https://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2007/RAND_RP1242.pdf, 279.

²³ Dobbins et al. "America's Role in Nation-Building," 149-160.

²⁴ David Edelstein. "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail." *International Security*. Vol. 29:1. 2004.

The methodological approach adopted in this paper is a comparative case study method.²⁵ The occupations of the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Iraq represent, with the exception of Vietnam, the universe of counterinsurgency operations in the American experience.²⁶ The paper attempts to trace the rise and decline of the insurgency in each of these cases with a particular emphasis on the level and patterns of troop deployments of the occupier. Admittedly, determining the overall success of the operations in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult due to the ongoing nature of the conflicts; however, some trends and patterns are still apparent even if the final outcome of the case has not been determined. The second set of cases examines comparatively inexpensive American occupations. First, the occupation of Japan was considered as an ideal example of an American occupation. Next, the case of Haiti was chosen to consider a generally successful U.S. occupation conducted in a less developed society. Finally, the case of Somalia was included to provide an example of a failed occupation and examine the influence of resolve on success and casualties in an occupation.²⁷ These mini case studies will be much briefer than the first set of analyses since these occupations did not degenerate into insurgencies and are therefore less subject to process-tracing analyses.

²⁵ The limitation of the universe of cases to the American experiences with occupation and counter-insurgency has both advantages and disadvantages. In addition, by considering cases from exclusively one nation means that a state's affinity or lack of affinity for counterinsurgency and stabilization operations will not influence the outcome of these occupations. (e.g. European states were sometimes considered to have a comparative if not an absolute advantage in stabilization operations while the American military was believed to have had an advantage in traditional military operations). Moreover, the use of the two American cases in Iraq and Afghanistan keeps the mechanization and the technological support of the occupying state relatively constant. Finally, the author's greater familiarity with the current cases and the American military also played a role in this choice.

²⁶ Unfortunately, Vietnam is unsuitable for examining the costs and strength of insurgency due to the large conventional aspects of the conflict, which proceeded concurrent to the insurgency activities of the Viet Cong. This is the principal point of: Harry Summers. *On Strategy*. (New York, NY: Random House Publishing, 1982).

²⁷ While Mohammad Farah Aidid's resistance to the UN mission to Somalia is often not considered an insurgency, it comes reasonably close to the United States military's loose definition of an insurgency, an "organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority." Although admittedly, Aidid was incorporated back into the political process before his resistance became protracted.

"FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency." *Department of the Army*. December 2006. <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>, 1-1.

Counter-Insurgency Cases in American History

The following story seems well known to most Americans. The American military is victorious on the conventional battlefield. However, during the final phases of the battle, U.S. forces miss a critical opportunity to capture a key enemy leader and eliminate the remainder of his forces before they can flee to safety. From his mountain hideaway, this leader, although largely absent from day to day decisions, becomes a powerful symbol for a growing insurgency. The year is 1899, and the man is Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the Philippine insurrection.

On August 13, 1898, the Spanish forces occupying Manila surrendered to the United States under threat from the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, a 12,000 strong American expeditionary force, and local forces under Emilio Aguinaldo. Following the capture of Manila, the United States signed the Treaty of Paris and acquired the Philippines and its 7 million inhabitants from the Spanish government at the price of \$20 million. However, the policy of “benevolent assimilation” was not well received by many Filipinos who had not been given any say on the status of the archipelago. Following the Spanish surrender, Aguinaldo’s forces surrounding Manila entered a tense standoff with the American force occupying Manila. This standoff would not last. On February 4, 1899, a U.S. soldier opened fire on a group of armed Filipinos in disputed territory. The shooting escalated into a general engagement; however, superior American training and equipment allowed U.S. forces to defeat the numerically superior Filipino troops. Despite their initial success and the arrival of reinforcements, the U.S. force of 30,000 soldiers had difficulty garrisoning the islands and would often retreat back to Manila after defeating but not destroying Filipino forces in the field.²⁸ Even in the face of these difficulties,

²⁸Max Boot. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), 108.

the U.S. commander, Major General Elwell Otis believed the war was all but won and chose not to request additional troops. By autumn 1899, Washington was growing impatient and Secretary of War Elihu Root expressed his preference for “sending too many troops rather than too few.”²⁹ In September 1899, Otis had received a force of over 45,000 and with a new offensive, managed to drive the Filipino forces underground. Unfortunately, the U.S. forces had not destroyed Aguinaldo’s main force and, although they managed to capture his mother and sister, missed a potentially decisive opportunity to capture Aguinaldo before he and his forces escaped to the mountains of the north.³⁰

Following these defeats, Aguinaldo and his leadership made a conscious decision to turn to guerrilla warfare. And while Aguinaldo was unable to retain direct command due to distance and the nature of the fighting, he “remained a powerful symbol for patriots throughout the archipelago.”³¹ The shift to guerilla warfare appears to have dramatically increased costs to U.S. forces. In the last four months of 1899 and the end of organized resistance, the 69 Americans were killed in 229 engagements. In contrast, during the first four months of 1900 and the beginning of the guerilla war, 139 soldiers were killed in 442 encounters. The situation continued to deteriorate in the following months with company-strength forces being defeated or captured.³² The increasing violence appears to have been part of a conscious strategy by Aguinaldo to engineer President McKinley’s defeat in the 1900 election in favor of the anti-imperialist William Jennings Bryant.³³ The growing violence appears to have prompted an

²⁹ John Tierney. *Chasing Ghosts: Unconventional Warfare in American History*. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2006), 108-110.

³⁰ John Tierney. *Chasing Ghosts: Unconventional Warfare in American History*. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books Inc., 2006), 110- 111.

³¹ Brian McAllister Linn. *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 16.

³² Tierney, 113-114.

³³ Timothy Deady. “Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899-1902.” *Parameters*. Vol. 35. Spring 2005, 55.

increase in U.S. troops to their highest levels during the campaign. At their peak, approximately 70,000 troops were deployed to the Philippines by the winter of 1900.³⁴ The scope of U.S. deployments also appears to have greatly expanded during this period as U.S. forces were deployed across much of the archipelago although the majority of U.S. troops remained on the main island of Luzon. In November 1899, the U.S. had 53 U.S. posts all in Luzon; however, by September 1900, this number had increased to 413 across the archipelago.³⁵

The months before the 1900 elections proved to be the high water mark of the insurgency. McKinley's victory weakened the motivation of many insurgents who pinned their hopes on his defeat in 1900. In December 1900, the new U.S. commander in the Philippines, General Arthur MacArthur announced martial law and instituted a series of more rigorous policies.³⁶ MacArthur also cut local support for guerillas by ensuring that people who assisted the guerillas after accepting American support would be punished. Mass arrests and imprisonments were carried out with seventy-nine important captives convicted of war crimes and executed. U.S. forces also destroyed crops and seized food supplies to deny guerillas supplies.³⁷ However, the United States' policy was by no means exclusively punitive. MacArthur moved to bolster the Federal party, a local political party, which campaigned for and organized support of American rule.³⁸ MacArthur also reversed Otis' prior policies and allowed the formation of indigenous scouts, police, and auxiliaries.³⁹ Soldiers also built schools, ran sanitation and vaccination campaigns, and supervised local elections. A thousand U.S. civilians also traveled to the Philippines to teach the populace. These efforts ensured that relations

³⁴There are minor discrepancies among the authors with regard to the highest number of soldiers and when exactly they were deployed; however, a general estimate is sufficient. The extreme values are from 68,000 to 74,000 from McGrath, 9 and Deady, 66-67 respectively.

³⁵ Tierney, 113.

³⁶ Deady, 55.

³⁷ Tierney, 129.

³⁸ Linn, 24.

³⁹ Deady, 60.

between most soldiers and local civilians were “civil, even cordial.”⁴⁰ The institution of these policies heralded the slow decline of the insurgency and allowed the military to turn many regions over to civil authorities. During this period, the U.S. presence continued to expand with the number of military posts increasing to over 500 by March 1901.⁴¹ The decline of the insurgency was also greatly hastened by the capture of Aguinaldo and his subsequent proclamation accepting U.S. sovereignty over the Philippines. The next few months would see the surrender of 4,000 insurgents and would prompt General MacArthur to proclaim that the insurgency had been defeated.⁴²

However, while the worst of the insurrection was over, the final phase of the campaign would see particularly high levels of brutality. Following the massacre of 48 American soldiers in Samar in September 1901, General Jacob Smith initiated a campaign to make Samar “a howling wilderness” and succeeded in quelling the insurgency albeit by making Samar “quiet as a cemetery.”⁴³ Similarly, American operations under General Franklin Bell used highly coercive strategies to pacify his region. Bell’s concentrated the local populace into designated areas and those found outside the zones could be killed. Furthermore, he instituted punitive policies that replied to the destruction of army property with the destruction of Filipino houses and the death of Americans with the execution of prisoners.⁴⁴ These policies were to be the height of American brutality in the Philippines; however, they appear to have ended resistance in the areas that had not been pacified by earlier efforts.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Boot, 115.

⁴¹ Tierney, 113.

⁴² Boot, 119.

⁴³ Tierney, 132.

⁴⁴ Tierney, 132.

⁴⁵ One should note that success did occur in other areas, which practiced much less violent measures. This suggests that, while highly coercive measures can work, they are not the only successful counterinsurgency strategy.

A number of other factors may also have influenced the U.S counterinsurgency campaign. While the terrain with mountains, jungles, and tropical climates were not ideal for a counterinsurgency, the United States did have the advantage of sea control in a country of islands. This made movement and supply for the insurgents inherently more difficult and allowed the United States to concentrate its efforts on critical areas more easily.⁴⁶ While Aguinaldo's forces were generally unskilled and poorly equipped, they did have a pre-existing organization, the *Katipunan*, from their campaign against the Spanish.⁴⁷ However, there were significant divisions with the ranks of the insurgency and the *Katipunan* did not possess a cellular organization or rigid discipline. Finally, as a former Spanish colony, the Philippines had a limited economy and did not possess a significant civilian apparatus that could be easily converted to the occupier's use.⁴⁸

In the end, the United States occupation of the Philippines from 1898 to 1902 was a costly success with 4,234 American soldiers and very approximately, 200,000 Filipinos dead due to disease, starvation, and direct action by both sides.⁴⁹ However although the deployment of additional troops may have helped quell the insurgency, there does not appear to be a substantial relationship between a large or small number of U.S. troops and the rise of the insurgency. Instead, the rise of opposition to U.S. rule appears to have been largely decided by McKinley's decision to acquire the Philippines without arranging a suitable settlement for Aguinaldo and his forces.⁵⁰ At first glance, the U.S. operations in the Philippines suggest a

⁴⁶ Boot, 128.

⁴⁷ Tierney, 118.

⁴⁸ Boot, 109 and Linn, 4.

⁴⁹ Boot, 125.

⁵⁰ While the rise of the insurgency was not apparently caused by a large American footprint, it is difficult to assess the counterfactual claim that a large American footprint would have deterred Aguinaldo from initiating a military confrontation with American forces in Manila. Although such counterfactual claims are inherently difficult to assess, the initial decision by Aguinaldo to confront the United States may have been based partially on the numerical advantage Aguinaldo possessed. However, even if the military confrontation did not occur, the author

positive link between force levels and overall success, which in this case, entailed the defeat of the insurgency and the extension of American rule in the Philippines. The decline of the insurgency began only after the number of U.S. troops increased to 70,000 men or approximately 10 soldiers per a thousand civilians. However, a number of potential variables complicate this relationship. The decline of the insurgency was also preceded by the U.S. election and the institution of a more aggressive counterinsurgency policy. As such, it is difficult to determine from this case alone whether increases in troop strength had an independent effect. However, this case is a clear strike against the contrary hypothesis that more visible and greater deployments of foreign troops are likely to prompt a significant counter-reaction and increased casualties. While the bloodiest periods of the conflict were associated with high force levels, the rise in violence appears to have prompted by a conscious decision by Aguinaldo to intensify his efforts prior to the U.S. elections rather than as a reaction to foreign troop deployments. Furthermore, the number of military posts actually increased, even as the insurgency began to decline. Finally, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that a lack of U.S. troops had a negative rather than positive effect on both casualties and success. For instance, Colonel Walter Howe complained that “towns captured on one day were of necessity evacuated the next; and any native who gave information or in any way showed friendship for the Americans was killed by revolutionaries, who immediately returned... and a district which could have been kept in comparative peace if more troops had been furnished, was repeatedly fought over.”⁵¹

Testing the Afghan Model of Counterinsurgency:

believes that this would have merely shortened the period of conventional engagement and would simply have initiated a shift to unconventional warfare earlier in the conflict.

⁵¹ Linn, 95.

Following the defeat of the Taliban through the combined use of U.S. airpower, special operations personnel, and the forces of the Northern Alliance, the United States and its NATO allies found themselves faced with a growing insurgency as Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and other forces continued their resistance. While the initial invasion had forced the Taliban from power, a coalition presence was required to continue the destruction of Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces and ensure that the government of Hamid Karzai remained in power. During the early stages of the occupation of Afghanistan from 2002-2005, the U.S. and its NATO allies did not commit large numbers of troops to the occupation and were deployed primarily in Kabul. In 2002, only 5,000 International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) troops were deployed to Kabul with another 5,000 U.S. troops conducting combat operations elsewhere.⁵² By February 2005, these numbers had risen to 9,000 ISAF troops and 18,000 American troops with force levels reaching a maximum of 30,000 ISAF and American troops in October 2004. The size of the Afghan army also increased during this period rising from a mere 390 soldiers to approximately 18,000 by the beginning of 2005.⁵³ During this three year period, coalition losses were relatively low totaling 185 deaths with coalition forces suffering fewer than 70 deaths per year.⁵⁴ However, between 2005 and 2006, coalition deaths more than doubled and have increased every year since.⁵⁵

⁵² Note that the figures presented in this paper do not include the presence of private military contractors in Afghanistan and it is difficult to find reliable figures on the number of contractors in the country.

⁵³Michael O'Hanlon and Adriana Lins de Albuquerque. "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Taliban Afghanistan." *The Brookings Institution*. February 23, 2005. <http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/faqs/Afghanistan%20Index.pdf>, 2, 4.

⁵⁴Note that the year with the highest number of deaths was 2002 and a high number of casualties occurred during the opening months when Operation Anaconda and direct combat involving U.S. troops was taking place. "i:Casualties.org: Operation Enduring Freedom." *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/oef/>. Accessed April 15, 2010. This source has been cited by the Washington Post and Reuters see:

Trejos, Nancy. "U.S. Toll in Iraq Reaches 3,000." *The Washington Post*. January 1, 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/31/AR2006123100430_pf.html.

⁵⁵"i:Casualties.org: Operation Enduring Freedom."

Civilian casualties per year also more than doubled between 2006 and 2009.⁵⁶ Throughout this period, force levels have generally increased as well with approximately 126,000 coalition troops deployed as of March 30, 2010.⁵⁷ IASF force increases have come primarily in southern and, to a lesser degree, eastern Afghanistan while IASF troop levels in the north, west, and capital have generally remained constant.⁵⁸ Finally, Afghan security forces have also expanded with the deployment of 195,089 personnel as of December 2009. Admittedly, not all of these new security forces are adequately trained or capable of independent operations. However, the quality of these forces has generally increased over time with the certification of just under 30,000 Afghan National Army soldiers as CM1 or capable of conducting independent operations.⁵⁹

Counterinsurgency practices in Afghanistan are somewhat unique to the conflict. For much of the occupation, coalition forces chose not to occupy significant portions of the country. Instead, the coalition relied heavily on local warlords and their militias to administer much of the country. These forces were often given exclusive control of their regions with little interference or support from the central government. Reporting before the Armed Services Committee in February 2008, Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, testified that 60% of the country was controlled by local leaders. In contrast, the Afghan government controlled only

⁵⁶ Jason Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro. "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan." *Brookings Institution*. April 28, 2009. <http://www.brookings.edu/foreign-policy/~media/Files/Programs/FP/afghanistan%20index/index20090428.pdf>, 4.

⁵⁷ Lynne O'Donnell. "Mullen in Afghan war zone as US gears up for Kandahar ." *Agence France-Presse*. Mar 30, 2010.

⁵⁸ Ian S. Livingston, Heather L. Messera, and Michael O'Hanlon. "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan." *Brookings Institute*. April 8, 2010. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/FP/afghanistan%20index/index.pdf>, 11. The number of NATO-ISF troops under Southern command more than doubled even excluding U.S. troops part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

⁵⁹ Ian S. Livingston, Heather L. Messera, and Michael O'Hanlon. "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan." *Brookings Institute*. April 8, 2010. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/FP/afghanistan%20index/index.pdf>, 12-13. Jason Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro, 11-12.

30% of the country while the Taliban controlled the remaining 10%.⁶⁰ And while IASF and U.S. deployments as well as reconstruction efforts have steadily expanded across the country consistent with more conventional counterinsurgency practices, the heavy reliance on local actors rather than coalition forces or the host central government appears to be a unique feature of the campaign.

In some sense, it could be argued that during the initial phases of the occupation of Afghanistan, the coalition adopted two counterinsurgency principles. Where the IASF held sway, most efforts were aimed at securing the populace and enhancing the legitimacy and capabilities of the government. Unlike efforts in the Philippines where punitive efforts played a notable role in the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, activities in these areas have been almost entirely focused on reconstruction and developing the Afghan government. In contrast, U.S. forces not part of the IASF, particularly those in the southern and eastern reaches of Afghanistan, have been more focused on search and destroy operations.⁶¹ Since much of the country is not under the direct control of the IASF or U.S. forces, reconstruction efforts in many areas have been left to Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Yet, while these teams have produced positive results, these teams are relatively small with only a handful of people on each team carrying out substantive work and cannot carry out large scale efforts.⁶² This trend is changing with new U.S. deployments to Afghanistan and General McChrystal's population centric new strategy;

⁶⁰ Tate, Deborah. "US Official Says Afghan Government Controls Only 30 Percent of Country." *Voice of American News*. February 27, 2008. <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-02/2008-02-27-voa67.cfm?CFID=231522006&CFTOKEN=75957331>.

⁶¹ Sean Maloney. "Afghanistan: From Here to Eternity." *Parameters*. Vol. 34. Spring 2004, 5.
James Dobbins et al., "America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq," 133.

⁶² Michael McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs [Provincial Reconstruction Teams] a Model or a Muddle?" *Parameters*. Winter 2005. May 20, 2008.

Michelle Parker. "Testimony: The Role of the Defense Department in Provincial Reconstruction Teams." *Rand Corporation*. September 27, 2007.
http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Parker_Testimony090507.pdf, 7.

however, the general characterization holds for the majority of the conflict and the effects of this new strategy are still difficult to assess.

The insurgency in Afghanistan may also have been influenced by a number of other variables. Afghanistan has historically had a weak economy, poor infrastructure, and ineffectual central government. These weaknesses meant that the Karzai government had considerable difficulty extending its influence even in areas not directly controlled by the insurgents. The rugged terrain of the “graveyard of empires” had sustained a successful insurgency against the Soviet Union and was perceived as a significant concern for any occupier. The insurgency in Afghanistan appears to have a number of critical advantages. The insurgency particularly the core of Al-Qaeda believers was generally well trained, organized, and motivated. The insurgents also have the advantages of sanctuary, support, and fertile recruiting grounds in Pakistan.⁶³

The potential influence of the above factors strongly suggests that the lack of coalition troops had only a limited effect on the rise of the insurgency. The Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and Hizb-i-Islami all follow various strands of radical Salafism, which favors a strict adherence to Islamic law and opposition to non-Islamic influences. These groups would have opposed the U.S. and the Afghan central government under virtually any circumstances.⁶⁴ The primary question is not whether Al-Qaeda and Taliban loyalists would have resisted the American occupation but rather whether the insurgency would have been as broad or influential if more American troops had been deployed in the initial stages of the occupation. A more compelling case could be made that the insurgency may have been significantly impeded, although not halted entirely, if more troops were deployed to cut off the Taliban and Al-Qaeda’s escape routes into the mountains of

⁶³Seth Jones. “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad.” *International Security*. Vol. 32: 4. Spring 2008, 20-24, 31.

⁶⁴ Admittedly, some elements of these groups may not be as strongly opposed to the current government on ideological grounds; however, core elements of these groups hold these beliefs. Jones, 29.

Afghanistan.⁶⁵ This may have allowed the United States to capture key Taliban and Al-Qaeda leadership; however, as the case of the Philippines demonstrates, such efforts are not invariably successful.

At first glance, these deployments might appear to suggest that increasing force levels merely serve to increase casualties and general levels of violence. However, the relationship is by no means simple. The Afghan Army and police forces, which as local troops ought to engender limited resentment, were also increasing during this period, yet were insufficient to reverse the increase in violence. While it was certainly true that local forces who shared ethnic ties with the populace or who had been fighting on the same side during the civil war were generally successful in providing security, these forces did not perform as well when dealing with other ethnic groups or when transplanted from their home regions. Local forces tend to perform well when they are genuinely “local” and have established, long-standing ties with the population. Moreover, Kabul, the region with the most coalition forces, does not appear to have been the center of violent activity as such a hypothesis would predict.⁶⁶ Instead, increases in violence appear to prompt commanders to request more soldiers. Or as General David Petraeus stated when requesting 10,000 additional soldiers for Afghanistan, “if you assume there is an insurgency throughout the country . . . you need more forces.”⁶⁷ Finally, it is not entirely clear that the addition of new forces has put Afghanistan on the path to success. While some progress has been made over the years in extending the reach of the Afghan government and in expanding its security forces, the increasing violence threatens to undo prior progress. In addition to the

⁶⁵ Michael O'Hanlon. “A Flawed Masterpiece.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 81:3. May/June 2002, 54-55.

⁶⁶ Anand Gopal. “Afghanistan’s insurgency spreading north.” *Christian Science Monitor*. April 29, 2008. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0429/p07s02-wosc.html>.

⁶⁷ Ann Scott Tyson. “Military Wants More Troops for Afghan War.” *The Washington Post*. April 2, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/01/AR2009040102652.html>.

rise in military deaths, civilian casualties have been rising steadily from 992 deaths in 2006 to 2,259 in 2009.

Iraq and the Surge:

Even before the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003, the United States saw hints of a possible insurgency as the Fedayeen Saddam carried out guerilla style raids in southern Iraq. And while some took the defeat of the Iraqi army and the end of major combat operations as a clear sign of victory, America's troubles in Iraq had only just begun. In November 2003, the coalition lost 110 soldiers in addition to the 250 soldiers killed in the preceding six months.⁶⁸ Notably during this period, coalition forces were steadily declining from approximately 173,000 to 147,000 troops or between 6 to 7 soldiers per 1000 civilians. The next three years would see relatively constant levels of casualties with over 800 casualties per year although the number of attacks would slowly increase particularly in 2006. Force levels in this period fluctuated between 147,000 and 183,000 troops. Force levels peaked twice, first in the run-up to the first Iraqi elections culminating in the deployment of 180,000 troops in February 2005. Troop levels spiked again for the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections between October and December 2005. Unsurprisingly, violence also increased during both these elections with increases in both coalition deaths and the number of attacks.⁶⁹ By 2006, the situation looked

⁶⁸See Appendix A for a summary of coalition troop deployments and deaths in Iraq.
"iCasualties: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count." *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

⁶⁹"iCasualties: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count."
Michael O'Hanlon and Jason Campbell. "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq." *Brookings Institution*. March 29, 2009.
[http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq Index/index20090326.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20090326.pdf), 6, 24.

An additional potential variable is the presence of private military contractors who play both security and support roles in Iraq. While figures on the number of contractors in Iraq are very rough with figures ranging between 190,000

particularly grim with dramatic increases in violence as the country descended into what many feared would be a full scale civil war.⁷⁰

The proposed solution to these problems was the highly controversial surge. The proposed surge envisioned a one-time increase of 30,000 U.S. troops into Iraq in the hopes that these forces would be able to purge the insurgency from Baghdad and create a window of opportunity for progress. While the increase in troops began in January with President George Bush's official announcement of the surge, it would take time for the troops to deploy. As the troops arrived, they were committed to a string of offensives. At first, these moves appear to have increased casualties to the point of worrying General Ray Odierno, the second ranking commander in Iraq.⁷¹ However, these worries were short lived. In the following months, violence in Iraq began to steadily decline and many began to herald the surge as a success, even before the full complement of U.S. forces arrived. For the purposes of evaluating whether the surge should count as putting Iraq on the path of success or failure, this paper argues that the surge was not counterproductive. Although Simon claims that the surge is strengthening sectarianism and future opponents of the central government, as Max Boot points out, "sectarianism was much worse before the surge when Shiite gangs were ethnically cleansing Baghdad and al-Qaeda [in Iraq] and other extremists held sway in Sunni areas." Also the Sons of Iraq are slowly being integrated into the government although admittedly not as quickly as they would prefer. These trends in addition to the very real decline in violence suggest that

and early Pentagon figures of 25,000, it is estimated that at least 20,000 of these personnel are involved in security functions.

P.W. Singer. "Outsourcing War." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 84:2. March/April 2005.

Peter Grier. "Record Number of US Contractors in Iraq." *Christian Science Monitor*. August 18, 2008. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0818/p02s01-usmi.html>.

Ranae Merle. "Census Counts 100,000 Contractors in Iraq." *Washington Post*. December 5, 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/04/AR2006120401311.html>.

⁷⁰ For instance, see: Fearon, James. "Iraq's Civil War." *Foreign Affairs*. March/April 2007. Vol. 86:2.

⁷¹ Michael Duffy. "The Surge at Year One." *Time Magazine*. January 31, 2008.

integration may yet occur and even if it does not, the government will be in a better, not worse position to counter any violence due to improvements in the Iraqi security forces. The data generally supports this opinion. Coalition casualties, civilian casualties, and enemy initiated attacks following the surge have generally decreased.⁷²

Yet, the apparent success of the surge was not exclusively a result of military efforts. In conjunction with the surge, the Sons of Iraq program offered former Sunni insurgents money and legitimacy in exchange for providing local security and working against Al-Qaeda. As a result of these efforts and increasing resentment towards Al-Qaeda, many Sunni insurgents switched sides and began to work against Al-Qaeda. These ceasefires, particularly when coupled with guarantees from the more numerous U.S. forces, allowed moderate Shiite forces to stand down as well. Finally, ethnic cleansing may have played a role by reducing the number of ethnically divided communities in the worst possible way.⁷³

Despite being the bloodiest of the three campaigns, Iraq appears to have had a number of advantages in comparison to both the Philippines and Afghanistan. First, despite a dysfunctional regime, Iraq was comparatively well developed and had a somewhat functional central government, which could have been co-opted by the coalition.⁷⁴ Second, aside from the urban environments, the terrain is not as formidable as in Afghanistan. Third, the potential opponents of the regime were divided into three highly distinct groups, dissatisfied Sunni, foreign terrorists,

⁷² Michael O'Hanlon and Ian Livingston. "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq." *Brookings Institute*. February 26, 2010.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20100226.pdf>, 3-5.

"iCasualties: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count." *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

⁷³ Steven Simon. "The Price of the Surge: How the Surge is Hastening Iraq's Demise." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 87:3. Summer 2006.

Biddle, Stephen, Michael O'Hanlon, and Kenneth Pollock. "How to Leave a Stable Iraq." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 87:3. September/October 2008.

Max Boot and Steven Simon. "Online Debate: Has the Surge Put Iraq on the Path to Success." *Council on Foreign Relations*. May 9, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16185/>.

⁷⁴ Dobbins et al., 170.

and recalcitrant Shiites. Furthermore, while die-hard supporters of the regime and foreign terrorists were almost certain to oppose the occupation, many Sunnis did not have quite as much to lose and plausibly could have been persuaded to support the regime. Unfortunately, these advantages were not immediately exploited as the decisions to disband the army and to push an aggressive program of Debaathification drove many against the occupation.⁷⁵

These political decisions in conjunction with the presence of regime loyalists and foreign terrorists probably meant that some form of resistance would have emerged even with additional troops. Moreover, the lack of planning during the initial phases of the conflict meant that the available troops were not effectively utilized. For instance, American soldiers did little to prevent the looting following the fall of Baghdad and did not secure arms caches across Iraq.⁷⁶ Next, of the three campaigns examined, this case provides the clearest evidence that, although rising casualties appear to be correlated with higher force levels, the causal arrow is reversed and the relationship between troop levels and casualties are due to conscious decisions to increase force levels to counter increasing violence or to an upcoming key event such as an elections, which prompt both sides to increase their efforts. Both pre-surge spikes in violence and troop levels appear to be centered upon an election while the surge was carried out in hopes of reversing worsening trends in violence. Moreover, during the surge, coalition casualties peaked before the surge took full effect rather than after coalition forces expanded their presence as advocates of the Afghan model might suggest.

Finally, while the case of Iraq does suggest a relationship between force levels and success, the decline of the insurgency also coincided with the Sunni Awakening, ethnic

⁷⁵ James Fallows. "Why Iraq Has No Army." *The Atlantic Monthly*. Vol. 296: 5. December 2005, 64-66.

George Packer. *The Assassins' Gate: American in Iraq*. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 194-195.

⁷⁶ Packer, 136-137.

cleansing, and Shiite restraint. Both supporters and opponents of the surge believe that the defection of the former Sunni insurgents, who had previously played a large role in operations against the coalition, was a critical factor in reducing the violence. As such, when evaluating the independent effectiveness of the surge, it is useful to examine other increases in U.S. forces. Although the surge placed approximately 183,000 coalition soldiers in Iraq, the coalition had deployed over 180,000 troops to Iraq twice before without the dramatic downturn in violence following the surge. Admittedly, the surge did manage to keep large numbers of U.S. troops in country for a somewhat longer period of time with over 170,000 coalition troops deployed for six months rather than three or four months in the previous two incidents. Yet, it seems unlikely that such an increase could have such a dramatic effect alone particularly since the violence began to decline a month before 170,000 troops were in theater.⁷⁷ Instead, as was the case in the Philippines, there are plausible alternative explanations for the dramatic decline in violence.

This being said there are reasons to suggest that, while the increase in troop levels may not have been sufficient to pacify Iraq on its own, the surge had positive effects. Although U.S. commanders in Iraq “officially” received all the troops they had requested, there were strong signs that more forces were required. In early September 2003, General Ricardo Sanchez stated that his forces would be unable to deal with a new outbreak of conflict.⁷⁸ Similarly, an unnamed Marine general once reported to Senator Joe Biden, “if anybody tells you we have enough troops over there when you get back, tell them to go to goddamn hell.”⁷⁹ At a local level, some areas were so undermanned that soldiers began to report “ghost patrols” that never actually took

⁷⁷Michael O’Hanlon and Jason Campbell. “Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq.” *Brookings Institution*. March 29, 2009.
[http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq Index/index20090326.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20090326.pdf), 24.

⁷⁸John McCain. “U.S. Situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. November 5, 2003.
http://www.cfr.org/publication/6502/us_situation_in_iraq_and_afghanistan.html.

⁷⁹Packer, 246

place.⁸⁰ Finally, the increase in American forces may have reassured the militias that the United States would remain committed in Iraq and would continue to support those who sided with the United States.⁸¹

Japan: The Ideal Case:

The U.S. occupation of Japan has been trumpeted as one of the greatest examples of a successful occupation and nation-building campaign. Following the surrender of the Empire of Japan on the decks of the U.S.S. Missouri, the United States was given the responsibility of occupying Japan. General Douglas MacArthur had originally planned to deploy 500,000 soldiers due in part to concerns that some dissidents would not acknowledge the emperor's order to surrender. However, by December 1945, deployments reached a peak of 355,000 troops or 5 soldiers per 1,000 civilians.⁸² Despite some minor initial looting, the occupation did not encounter any serious resistance and the occupying forces suffered no combat deaths.⁸³ The United States was able to draw down its forces rapidly and by August 1946 had a total force of 192,000 soldiers.⁸⁴

There are a number of potential explanations for the success of this occupation. First, MacArthur was careful to minimize the grievances of potential opposition. The surrender agreement and the status of the Emperor Hirohito were particularly critical to MacArthur's strategy. While the allied terms were officially unconditional, the emperor would remain the spiritual head of the Japanese society although he would be subject to the authority of the

⁸⁰ Packer, 247

⁸¹ Biddle, Stephen, Michael O'Hanlon, and Kenneth Pollock. "How to Leave a Stable Iraq." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 87:3. September/October 2008, 43.

⁸² McGrath, 28, 32. Dobbins et al., 33.

⁸³ Dobbins et al., 153.

John Dower. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 25-26.

⁸⁴ McGrath, 28.

Supreme Allied Commander.⁸⁵ MacArthur was particularly adamant regarding the status of the imperial house and warned Washington that if the emperor were tried as a war criminal, he would require at least a million troops to occupy Japan.⁸⁶ The creation of a peace accord that was generally satisfactory to the Japanese public meant that a resistance would be forced to draw upon a relatively narrow base of support. Moreover, other steps were taken to ensure divisions in potential resistance to the American occupation. On the sensitive issue of purging Japanese militarists, MacArthur was also careful to exploit divisions between the militarists and the general public. Most of the 5,700 indictments for Class B and C war crimes were suggested by Japanese citizens.⁸⁷ Another key advantage was the presence of a highly developed and organized state, which provided a preexisting base to build upon. Finally, some have suggested that the incredible amount of damage inflicted on Japan may have weakened their will to resist.⁸⁸ This variable may also be closely linked to the existence of a peace accord and could have served as a clear demonstration of American resolve.

Somalia: An Insurgency that Might Have Been

In response to a massive humanitarian crisis in Somalia, the United States launched Operation Provide Comfort with the primary aim of safeguarding relief efforts. Initial deployments of roughly 30,000 U.S. Marines and foreign components of the United Task Force (UNITAF) were able to secure the capital and much of south-central Somalia with little

⁸⁵ Judith Munro-Leighton. "The Tokyo Surrender: A Diplomatic Marathon in Washington, August 10-14, 1945." *The Pacific Historical Review*. Vol. 65:3. August 1996, 460.

⁸⁶ Edward Drea. "Transcript: The U.S. Army in Post World War II, Japan 1945-1952." *United States Army Website*. Accessed April 26, 2009. <http://www.army.mil/postwarjapan/transcripts/2.html>.

⁸⁷ Ray Salvatore Jennings. "The Road Ahead: Lessons in Nation Building From Japan, Germany, and Afghanistan for Post War Iraq." *United States Institute for Peace*. April 2003. <http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks49.pdf>, 18.

⁸⁸ Edelstein, 59-60. Also the causal mechanisms suggested by Edelstein reduce the motivations of potential opponents to the occupation.

difficulty.⁸⁹ Once on the ground, these forces were able provide protection for food convoys and aid workers although attempts to rob aid workers continued. At its peak, the UNITAF force consisted of 35,000 soldiers, approximately 5 soldiers per 1000 civilians, with as many as 25,000 American troops.⁹⁰ However, although UNITAF carried out some disarmament initiatives, it had a relatively limited mandate and did not move aggressively to disarm the warlords. Although UNITAF was largely successful in its limited objectives, the United States had never intended to keep its forces in Somalia for an extended period of time and had always anticipated handing over the operation to the UN. By May 1993, the majority of U.S. forces had left and had been replaced by the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II). UNOSOM II was authorized with a more expansive mandate than UNITAF and was explicitly tasked with nation-building functions including creating political institutions and revitalizing the economy.⁹¹ Moreover, its new mission also doubled the geographic area covered by UNITAF's mandate.⁹² Yet, UNOSOM II had fewer troops than UNITAF with an authorized strength of 28,000 although only 16,000 soldiers were ever deployed, not counting the 1,200 strong Quick Response Force.⁹³ These forces were also generally less capable and less well armed than their UNITAF counterparts.⁹⁴ However, soon after the departure of U.S. forces, General Mohamed Farah Aidid, the most powerful warlord in Somalia and the principle opponent of the peacekeeping presence, ambushed a group of Pakistani peacekeepers, killing twenty-three. In response, the UNOSOM II began an unsuccessful attempt to bring Aidid to justice, which culminated in the Battle of Mogadishu and left eighteen Americans dead. Following this disaster, the United

⁸⁹ Walter Clark and Jeffery Herbst. "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 75:2. March/April 1996, 75.

⁹⁰ Johnathan Stevenson. "Hope Restored in Somalia?" *Foreign Policy*. Summer 1993, 139-140.

⁹¹ Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis. *Making War and Building Peace*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 152-156.

⁹² Stevenson, 139-141.

⁹³ Dobbins et al., 60.

⁹⁴ Doyle and Sambanis, 152-153.

States retreated from Somalia and left the situation in the hands of the remaining UN forces who promptly scaled back many of the more expansive aims of UNOSOM II.

Following the later departure of the UN forces, Somalia largely reverted to its original state and the ambitious objectives of UNOSOM II were never fulfilled although the intervention is credited with saving as many as a quarter million Somali lives. However, this limited humanitarian success came at the cost of 43 U.S. soldiers.⁹⁵ The standard explanation for the events that led to the departure of the U.S. is that the expanded mandate of UNOSOM II pushed Somali warlords who had reluctantly tolerated what they perceived as a temporary international presence to resist a potential threat to their power.⁹⁶ However, while there is near universal agreement that adopting an expanded mandate with a reduced force was a poor decision, it is less clear whether the warlords would have vigorously resisted attempts to disarm them if American forces had remained present.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the Somali case provides the first possible example of an instance when a sufficient troop presence might have quelled large-scale resistance to an occupation altogether. However, there are other reasons to suggest that, even with a significant troop presence, creating some sort of lasting solution in Somalia would have been difficult. Somalia had been divided by numerous warlords and lacked any legitimate central government. Its economy and infrastructure were equally poor with at least 60% of the country's infrastructure having been destroyed in earlier fighting.⁹⁸

Haiti: Limited Aims and Limited Victory

⁹⁵ Ryan Crocker. "The Lessons of Somalia: Not Everything Went Wrong." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 47:3. May/June 1995, 3. Crocker argues soon after the departure of the UN that Somalia was somewhat improved; however, later assessments do not believe that this progress was permanent. E.g.: Dobbins et al., 60.

⁹⁶ Doyle and Sambanis, 153-154.

⁹⁷ Clark and Herbst (75) suggest that resistance would have been minimal while Doyle and Sambani (153) place more weight on the limited objectives of the occupiers as reasons for the warlord's acceptance.

⁹⁸ Dobbins et al., 57-58.

On September 30, 1991, the democratically elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted from power in a military coup by General Raoul Cedras. After attempting to convince the ruling junta to step down through economic sanctions, the Clinton administration began preparations for an invasion of Haiti. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council authorized the creation of a multinational force to the use “all necessary means” to return Aristide to power.⁹⁹ As the U.S. troops were preparing to deploy to Haiti, former President Jimmy Carter, Senator Sam Nunn, and General Colin Powell traveled to Haiti in an effort to persuade the military to relinquish power. At the eleventh hour, the military leadership chose to resign their positions and to cooperate with American forces in exchange for amnesty. On September 19, 1994, U.S. and multinational forces entered the country with an initial deployment of 23,000 personnel or slightly over 3 soldiers per thousand civilians. Within a year only 6,000 UN peacekeepers and 800 UN civilian police remained.¹⁰⁰ The occupation of Haiti was not entirely without violence; however, the multinational forces suffered only four combat casualties.¹⁰¹

In the end, the U.N. mission to Haiti was successful in its immediate objective of restoring Aristide to power although efforts to bring lasting democracy or economic progress to Haiti were largely unsuccessful. The lack of violence in Haiti can be largely attributed to the peace agreement forged by Carter, which peacefully removed the most likely opponents of the occupation. An additional factor may have been the limited objectives of U.S. leaders who did not make a serious effort to disarm the country and “invaded Haiti for the primary purpose of

⁹⁹ “S/Res/940: United Nations Security Council Resolution 940 (1994).” *United Nations*. July 31, 1994.

¹⁰⁰ James Dobbins. “Haiti: A Case Study in Post-Cold War Peacekeeping.” *Institute for the Study of Diplomacy Report*. Vol. 2:1. October 1995.

¹⁰¹ Dobbins et al., 153.

protecting themselves.”¹⁰² This limited commitment coupled with the weakness of Haiti’s political system and economy made it difficult for the coalition to establish meaningful democracy or development.¹⁰³ However, carrying out an occupation with more limited objectives may have helped to limit casualties since the occupying power was not threatening the critical interests of any major players.

Analysis: Men, Blood, and Victory:

The following cases suggest that there is a complex relationship between force levels, the rise of insurgencies, casualties, and victory. Increased troop deployments are not a panacea; however, neither are they a curse. First, the number of soldiers on the ground only has a weak relation to the rise of an insurgency. The peak deployments in Japan and Haiti, two most successful cases, were 5 and 3 soldiers per thousand civilians respectively. However, at the end of major combat operations in Iraq, 7 soldiers per thousand civilians were deployed. In each of these cases, politics meant more than military considerations. In the Philippines and Afghanistan, the United States was confronted by virtually ready-made insurgencies. America was unwilling to satisfy the nationalist or ideological demands of the insurgents, making armed resistance the only likely response. Defeat on the conventional battlefield simply caused a change in strategies. In the case of Iraq, some arrangement may have been possible; however, poor political decisions by the occupier meant that some potential allies or, at least, neutral parties turned to violence. Conversely, in Japan and Haiti, an official surrender or other agreement signified a limited acceptance of the occupation and conferred significant legitimacy upon the occupying forces. In both cases, the United States may have prevented the rise of an

¹⁰²Boot, 325. The quote is from author Bob Shacochis.

¹⁰³Michael Mandelbaum. “Foreign Policy as Social Work.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 75: 1. January/February 1996, 21.

armed resistance due to its limited objectives. The decisions to retain many of the Emperor's privileges in Japan and not to carry out widespread disarmament in Haiti limited the costs of accepting the occupation for significant portions of the population and may have contributed the lack of resistance in both cases. In Somalia, politics also made a difference since the shift from the non-threatening UNITAF to the more expansive UNOSOM II gave the warlords new motivation to resist. However, in this case, it is possible that a large enough force might have convinced the warlords to back down. If this is true, it might suggest that, although troop levels do not matter when the likely centers of resistance are motivated by ideology, large troop deployments may intimidate those motivated by greed and self-interest. Yet, while large-scale troop deployments may not prevent the rise of insurgencies particularly those motivated by ideology, this is not to say that one should simply deploy a token force and hope for the best. If the presence of more troops helps end insurgencies, then larger deployments may allow the occupier to effectively deal with an insurgency if one does arise.

Next, this paper does not find that larger troop deployments cause more casualties. This paper does not deny that there is a correlation between troop levels and casualties. However, this relationship is frequently the result of commanders demanding more troops in the face of increasing violence, not the result of a greater nationalist response to the presence of foreigners. In many cases, levels of violence declined even as troop levels remained high. In other cases, the relationship between troop levels and casualties is the result of commanders and insurgents simultaneously increasing their efforts in anticipation of upcoming key events or due to political decisions to initiate offensives to achieve expanded objectives.¹⁰⁴ The natural response is for commanders to expand the occupying force while insurgents increase their attacks. However, it

¹⁰⁴ This paper has only examined circumstance where initial escalation was carried out by the occupying power e..g. the surges in the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Iraq as well as the decisions to expand the objectives of the U.N. mandate in Somalia although in the latter case it was not accompanied by the deployment of additional troops.

is notable that in the three bloodiest counterinsurgency campaigns considered by this paper that the requests for more troops in the face of increasing violence were often accepted. In contrast, the response to high costs in Somalia was to retreat. The obvious difference between the two cases is resolve. Only states with the resolve to accept significant casualties will remain long enough to suffer high casualties.

Finally, while increases in troop deployments were correlated with the two most successful counterinsurgency campaigns in this analysis, simply putting more boots on the ground is not enough. In both these cases, other events were closely linked to success and troop increases that occurred without other dramatic changes were insufficient to pacify the occupied countries. However, a sufficient number of troops may be a necessary condition for success. While it is impossible to kill or capture every insurgent, it is likewise true that even the most effective campaign to win hearts and minds cannot convert every insurgent. Die-hard insurgents can survive even under highly unfavorable circumstances simply by coercing the support of the populace. In these circumstances, a counterinsurgent requires a significant presence to hunt down these die-hards and deny them safe haven. In short, boots on the ground are not a silver bullet; however, they are still an essential part of counterinsurgency.

Policy Implications: What Went Right and Wrong with the Afghan Model?

Since the previous analysis appears to provide a relatively strong indictment of the Afghan counterinsurgency model, what explains apparent initial success of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan? In the first three years of the American occupation, the coalition suffered a total of 198 combat fatalities.¹⁰⁵ In contrast, in the first six months following the end of major combat

¹⁰⁵ "iCasualties.org: Operation Enduring Freedom." *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/oef/>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

operations in Iraq, coalition forces suffered 318 fatalities and suffered 2,159 deaths by the end of 2005.¹⁰⁶ The limited objectives of the initial occupation appear to have served to limit the number of casualties at least initially. By ceding significant portions of the country to the control of local warlords and frequently sweetening the pot by providing economic aid or arms, the coalition dramatically diminished the incentive for these groups to actively resist the occupation and in many circumstances, secured the active cooperation of these groups against the Taliban. However, allowing these local warlords such freedoms frequently means conceding the objective of expanding central government control to these regions. In other cases, it entails conceding human rights objectives as the United States is forced to work with unsavory individuals such as General Rashid Dostum, the leader of Afghanistan's Uzbek minority, who has been accused of numerous abuses by Human Rights Watch including suffocating Taliban prisoners to death by locking them in shipping containers. There is a partial truth to the Afghan model in that low troop deployments are often associated with decreased casualties and violence. However, one of the reasons this relationship exists because low numbers of troops are frequently associated with limited objectives. Expanding one's objectives, for example by attempting to gain more direct control over a region, frequently entails the deployment of additional forces and a subsequent reaction by those whose power in the region is threatened.

Under many circumstances, ceding power to local actors perhaps even at the expense of the central government is not inherently dangerous provided a number of conditions are met. First, such an approach is only viable if the occupier expects these local actors to remain relatively tolerant of the central government and the occupier, otherwise allowing them free reign over their regions, may simply allow them to time to rebuild and recover. For similar reasons,

¹⁰⁶ "iCasualties: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count." *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

such a strategy requires that the occupier and the central government have no future ambitions to extend control over these actors. Third, local actors must be expected to remain neutral in the conflict and not provide other groups with supplies or safe haven.

Unfortunately, it is less than clear that these conditions were met in Afghanistan. While allowing the Taliban and its supporters to control significant portions of the population may have limited coalition casualties, future conflict between the central government and at least some elements of the Taliban was inevitable.¹⁰⁷ Ceding significant portions of the country to the Taliban and associated forces allowed them to receive support and sanctuary in these regions and may have reduced the long term prospects for eliminating insurgency.

This is not to say that the Afghan model is entirely without merit provided one's strategic objectives are compatible with the objectives the model can accomplish. For instance, failure to eliminate the insurgency may be acceptable provided one is willing to accept Taliban control of some portions of Afghanistan and some level of violence in the country. This is not an unreasonable perspective and it may be possible to secure the United States against terrorist threats and disrupt the operations of Al-Qaeda even without perfect control of the country.¹⁰⁸ Second, it is critical to recognize that the Afghan model can be transformed into a more traditional counterinsurgency strategy over time as has been the case in Afghanistan. This may allow an occupying power involved in multiple conflicts to fight what amounts to a holding action in one theater while devoting more resources elsewhere. Admittedly, such a strategy may

¹⁰⁷ Exactly which elements of the Taliban are committed to opposing the current government is a subject of significant current debate and is beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Jervis. "The AFPAK Channel: Withdrawal without winning?" *Foreign Policy*. September 14, 2009. http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/14/withdrawal_without_winning. Austin Long. "What a CT mission in Afghanistan would actually look like." *Foreign Policy*. October 13, 2009. http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/10/13/what_a_ct_mission_in_afghanistan_would_actually_look_like. For a dissenting opinion see: Bruce Riedel and Michael O'Hanlon. "Why we can't go small in Afghanistan." *USA Today*. September 24, 2009. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2009/09/column-why-we-cant-go-small-in-afghanistan.html>.

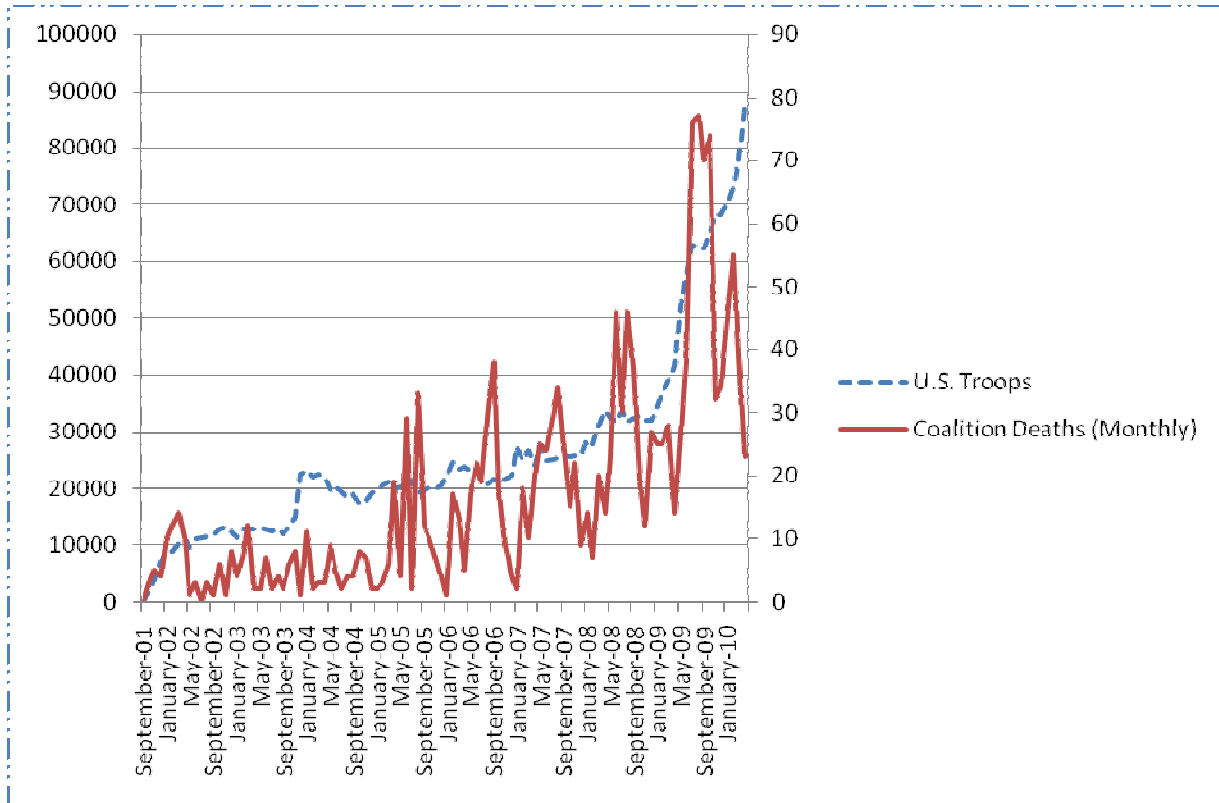
increase the costs of returning to the previously neglected theater; however, this may be the only viable strategy in the face of limited resources.¹⁰⁹

Yet, despite the Afghan model's initial promise, it is not a replacement for the "clear, hold, build" model. The Afghan model will frequently be capable of producing initial victories at comparatively low costs. Since the model never prioritizes the creation of a strong national government to oppose the insurgency or effectively denies the insurgency supply and sanctuary, some insurgents are likely to remain capable of resistance. It is less than clear that such an approach is superior to the classical "clear, hold, build" model if one's objective to eliminate the insurgency and expand the influence of the central government.¹¹⁰ If a country decides to pursue more expansive objectives such as establishing a stable, prosperous, democratic country with respect for human rights, the "clear, hold, build" model will generally be more capable of achieving these objectives albeit at a price.

¹⁰⁹ A similar approach can also be applied regionally albeit with greater risks. An occupier might rely on local allies and a smaller footprint in one region of a country while carrying out more conventional operations elsewhere in the country. However, this strategy is often only viable if the regions of the country in question can be effectively segregated from one another. Otherwise, insurgents will simply fade away in one region only to return once the occupying force has turned elsewhere.

¹¹⁰ Some low levels of violence are admittedly likely even under the most ideal conditions and it may be virtually impossible to entirely eradicate the insurgency since, barring massive political changes, it will always be able to find sanctuary in Pakistan.

Appendix A:
Force Levels and Deaths in Afghanistan:



Casualty figures provided by:

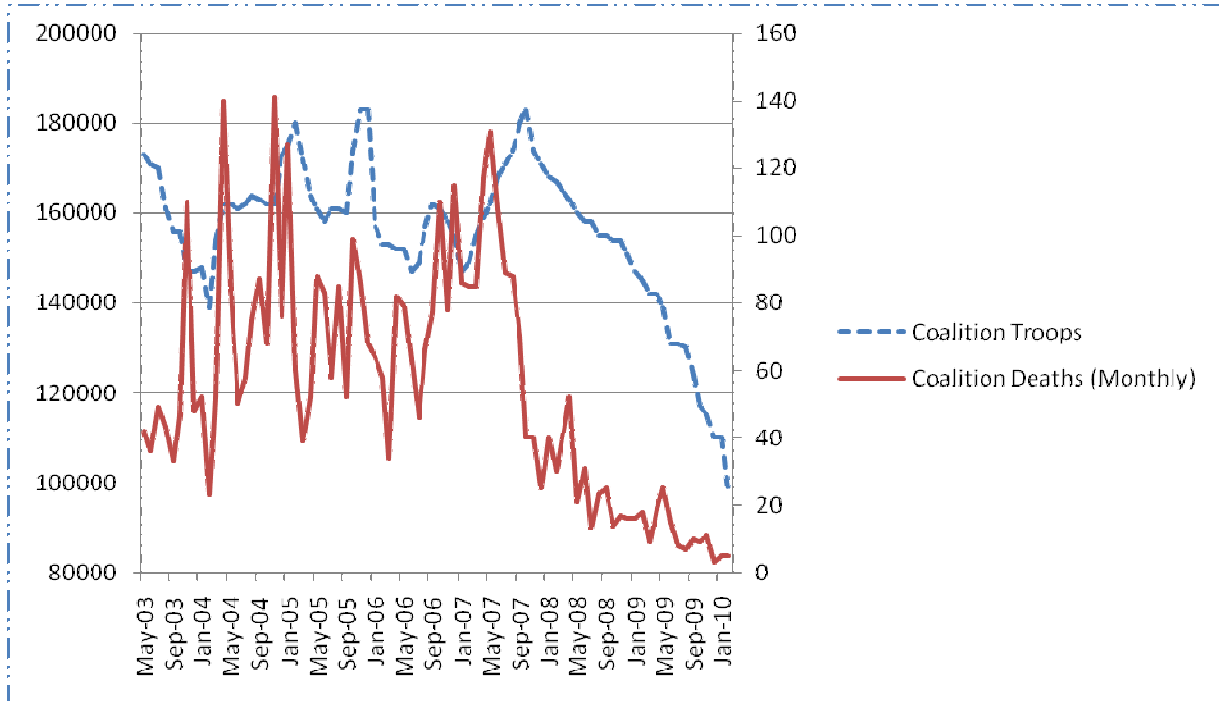
“i:Caualties.org: Operation Enduring Freedom.” *iCasualties*. <http://icasualties.org/oef/>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

Force levels provided by:

Ian S. Livingston, Heather L. Messera, and Michael O’Hanlon. “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan.” *Brookings Institute*. April 8, 2010.

Unfortunately, similarly comprehensive monthly casualty data on the Philippines is not available.

Appendix B:
Force Levels and Deaths in Iraq:



Casualty figures provided by:

“iCasualties: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count.” *iCasualties*.

<http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>. Accessed April 15, 2010.

Force levels provided by:

Michael O’Hanlon and Jason Campbell. “Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq.” *Brookings Institution*. March 29, 2009.

[http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq Index/index20090326.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20090326.pdf), 24.