Vicious Circle: The Dynamics of Occupation and Resistance in Iraq

Part One. Patterns of Popular Discontent
Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph #10

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18 May 2005

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INDEX

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1. Introduction: Iraqi public sentiments regarding the occupation

The occupation of Iraq is today less about rolling back Iraqi military power, dislodging a tyrant, or building a stable democracy than it is about fighting an insurgency -- an insurgency that is now driven substantially by the occupation, its practices, and policies. We can take a first step toward understanding the insurgency by locating it within the broader field of popular Iraqi opposition to the occupation, which is widespread. Iraqi public opinion has been polled repeatedly since the beginning of the occupation by a variety of firms. Their findings leave no doubt about the main contours of Iraqi sentiment regarding the occupation:

- On balance, Iraqis oppose the US presence in Iraq, and those who strongly oppose it greatly outnumber those who strongly support it.[1]

- US troops in Iraq are viewed broadly as an occupying force, not peacekeepers or liberators.[2]

- On balance, Iraqis do not trust US troops, think they have behaved badly, and -- one way or another -- hold them responsible for much of the violence in the nation.[3]

- There is significant popular support for attacks on US forces, and this support probably grew larger during the course of 2004, at least among Sunni Arabs.[4]

- A majority of Iraqis want coalition forces to leave within a year or less. Formation of a permanent government early in 2006 is the "tipping point" after which a very large majority of Iraqis may desire immediate withdrawal.[5]

Although disconcerting, these results provide the most reliable view of Iraqi attitudes available. The fact that they have played little role in the public discourse on the Iraqi mission imperils US policy and contributes to the present impasse. (The footnotes for each of the summary propositions provide greater detail on the opinion survey questions from which they are drawn.)

2. What drives popular oppositional sentiment?

Opposition to the occupation runs the gamut from simple discontent, to strong anti-Coalition sentiments, to "rejectionist" or "abstentionist" views (which shun the political process established by the Coalition), to pro-insurgency sentiments and activities. The intensity, character, and spectrum of popular opposition varies across Iraq's main ethno-religious groups and also has changed over time.   As a first approximation, however, we might understand popular opposition in terms of two dynamics:

■ A typical nationalist or patriotic response to foreign control, amplified by differences of culture, religion, and language; and

■ A reaction to the coercive practices of the occupation, including military, policing, and penal operations.

2.1 The power of nationalism

Although the power of nationalistic feelings is universally recognized, occupiers often resist the conclusion that their behavior is implicated by these feelings – especially if the ostensible goals of occupation are humanitarian or paternalistic.

Even Napoleon Bonaparte expected during his 1799 campaign in Egypt and Syria that his army would "increase with the discontented" and "armed masses" of the region because, in accord with the principles of the French revolution, he sought "the abolition of slavery and of the tyrannical government of the pashas."[6] As it turned out, the oppressed masses did not flock to Napoleon's standard. Eight years later he was similarly disappointed in Spain. He entered the country proclaiming that "With my banner bearing the words 'Liberty and Emancipation from Superstition, I shall be regarded as the liberator of Spain." Instead, the Spanish resistance tied down hundreds of thousands of French troops for 5 years, sapping the empire and exposing it to easy attack by the British. (Not incidently, the Spanish war popularized the term *guerilla* or "small war" among the British.) It mattered not one wit that the French political and economic system were in many ways preferable to both that of the Ottomans and that of the Spanish. What decided the popular response to Napoleon was his means of engagement: war, conquest, and occupation.

The Bush administration is not entirely immune to the idea that foreign military occupation tends inherently to invite nationalist opposition, regardless of what other benefits it might bring. As President Bush observed in April 2004:

> [T]he attitude of the Iraqis toward the American people [is] an interesting question. They're really pleased we got rid of Saddam Hussein... [But] they're not happy they're occupied. I wouldn't be happy if I were occupied either.[7]

The essential logic of nationalism is well expressed by a 47-year old mother who left her family in Baghdad to join the Mahdi army in Najaf: "We are going to fight them until we throw them out of Iraq. *Our country is our country.*"[8] Here, the effort to exorcize foreign control is experienced as a self-evident corollary of having a country. One simply follows from the other without qualification – that is: opposition to occupation is not contingent on the rationale for an occupation or how the occupiers behave.

Insofar as self-identity becomes tied to national identity and the latter is associated with a territory, incursions on that territory or on the control of it can invoke emotional responses that exceed the bounds of instrumental politics. This is reflected in the recollections of a former Iraqi major:

> Losing the war is one thing, but losing Baghdad is another. Baghdad is like losing the thing you hold dearest to you. Losing your country is bigger even than losing the men who fought with you to defend it.[9]

And, for many Iraqis, such feelings are reinforced by a strong faith-based obligation to expel invaders from "Dar es Islam" – the House of Islam. As a young preacher in Falluja explained with quiet conviction to Anthony Shadid of the *Washington Post* in June 2003: "If the situation stays as it is, we'll declare jihad... This is what God commands of us."[10]

In this context, even symbols of national identity from the Hussein era can be jealously guarded. Thus, the attempt to replace the old Iraqi flag inflamed opposition. Notably, the new design excluded the phrase "God is Great", which had been on the original. For some, however, the principal issue was not the new design, but the fact that it was associated with foreign occupation. As a young student told Patrick Cockburn of the *Independent*: "The main reason I don't like it is that it comes from the Americans."[11]

Although such nationalist reflexes might be considered arcane, irrational, or even petty, they are not uncommon. Their extent is suggested by a June 2004 poll conducted by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies. The poll found that 66 percent of respondents opposed the occupation. Asked why, forty-three percent of those who opposed the Coalition presence did so simply because "It is an occupation force and must leave immediately."[12] (An additional 3.6 percent opposed it because they felt the force lacked respect for Iraq's religion and culture; 29.4 percent opposed the presence because they associated it with death, destruction, or abuse; 8.7 percent opposed it because they thought the foreign presence aimed to exploit Iraqi natural resources; and 2.1 percent opposed it because they saw it as linked to Israeli domination).

2.2 War-related fatalities: their extent and significance

Ongoing military operations and other coercive activities further complicate the challenge inherent to conducting a foreign occupation. These acts embody the fact that sovereignty has been lost or compromised and that power resides in the hands of foreigners; they make the fact of occupation palpable. Moreover, the military occupation of Iraq did not begin with a blank slate. The forces occupying Iraq are those that conquered it. Regardless of the rationale for the war and subsequent occupation, these have imposed a significant blood price on Iraqis:

- Perhaps 30,000 Iraqis have died due to military action by all sides in the course of the war and occupation (as of May 2005). Approximately half of these were killed during the conventional combat phase of the war, which ended 1 May 2003.[13]

- Probably three-quarters of the total 30,000 were killed by coalition troops. Although a majority of these were probably Iraqi military personnel or insurgents, all the dead have families and friends. In an interview conducted by the International Crisis Group, a former Iraqi officer and tribal leader estimated that 10-20 percent of the soldiers killed in the war had strong tribal ties.[14]

- The number injured is much higher; if historical ratios of dead to wounded pertain, the total number of Iraqi casualties due to military action and terrorism is probably in the range of 100,000 to 120,000 people.

Thus, today there are many tens of thousands of families who may bear a grudge against the Coalition -- and their reach is amplified by wider village, tribal, and friendship ties.

Of course, the Iraqi insurgents -- or at least many of them -- are less discriminate than Americans in their killing of Iraqis. Indeed, the anti-Shia bombers purposefully target civilians. But this has not rebounded to the favor of the coalition. This was evident in the aftermath of the 29 August 2003 bombing in Najaf that killed Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer al-Hakim and 80 other Shiite faithful. Although the bombing was probably the work of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, mourners quickly apportioned principal blame to the United States -- for having failed to protect the leader or bring the paroxysm of violence under control.[15]

The fact is: many Iraqis tend to blame the occupation for eliciting insurgent violence, or for failing to prevent it, or both.[16] The same is true of violent crime: Iraqis fault the coalition and the appointed Iraqi governments for failing to contain it. Under pressure, some appointed officials, such as Iraq's first interim president, Ghazi al-Yawer, also point toward the United States as ultimately culpable:

> We blame the United States 100 percent for the security in Iraq. They occupied the country, disbanded the security agencies and for 10 months left Iraq's borders open for anyone to come in without a visa or even a passport.[17]

Assistant US Defense Secretary Peter Rodman described this dynamic in testimony before the US Congress: "When difficulties persist, it is natural for people to express resentment at those in authority -- especially when the latter are foreign powers exercising authority as an occupier."[18] The dynamic is reflected broadly in responses to a June poll conducted for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA):

- Sixty-seven percent of Iraqis said that violent attacks had increased in the country because "people have lost faith in the Coalition forces." Eighty percent said that they themselves had no faith in the forces. While only one percent said that Coalition forces were the most important factor contributing to their safety, *a majority said they would feel safer if US troops left immediately.*[19]

The post-war surge in violent crime is as onerous as the toll of military-related violence. Baghdad morgue records for the period 1 May 2003 through the end of 2004 indicate a total of more than 12,000 unexplained deaths in a city that constitutes about 22 percent of the nation's population.[20] Most of the dead are considered victims of crime, not accident, terrorism, or military action. (Those killed in military incidents and bombings are not usually referred to the morgues.) Based on pre-war experience, the rate of crime-related death has increased four fold. Samples from other provinces suggest lower increases outside the capital – much lower in the Kurdish regions and much of the Shiite south – making for a probable national toll of 20,000

for the period. A reasonable national estimate for *excess* crime-related deaths is 12,000 for the occupation period through the end of 2004.

Finally, the rate of non-violent death has increased during the postwar period due to accidents, sanitation problems, and problems in the utility and health care systems. One study (published in the leading British medical journal, *The Lancet*) based on a survey of almost 1000 households suggests as many as 40,000 excess non-violent deaths nationwide between 19 March 2003 and 16 September 2004 – although limitations of the survey method might mean that the actual total is only half as great.[21] Other studies have logged the persistent effects of the war on the Iraqi health care system and child malnutrition (which UNICEF estimates had nearly doubled during the first year after the invasion).[22]

A reasonably conservative estimate for total excess deaths due to fighting, crime, and non-violent causes is "more than 60,000" since the beginning of the war through the end of 2004. The study mentioned above adopted an estimate of 98,000 excess deaths, violent and non-violent, through mid-September 2004. And whether one accepts the higher or lower estimate as a baseline, the total would be higher today.

The impact of the war and occupation is also suggested by a September-October 2004 poll conducted for the International Republican Institute (IRI). Among its respondents, 22 percent reported that their households had been "directly affected by violence in terms of death handicap, or significant monetary loss" during the previous 18 months, which covers the entire period of war and occupation.[23]

2.3 Coercive practices of the occupation: their extent and effect

Besides the death toll imposed on Iraqis by the war and subsequent conflict, they must face the various routine irritants of occupation: constant foreign military patrols (about 12,000 per week), ubiquitous check-points, raids (8,000 total since May 2003), and citizen round-ups (80,000 detained since April 2003).   All this occurs under the indelible pall cast by the Abu Ghraib and similar scandals[24] – such as the video-taped killing of a wounded and unarmed Falluja insurgent in November 2004 -- as well as the too frequent fatal mishaps at coalition checkpoints.[25] Several opinion surveys have traced the acute and rapid decline of Iraqi confidence in the Coalition and its troops during the period November 2003 through June 2004.[26] The June 2004 ORI poll found that the chief reason for the decline was the torture scandal. Other leading reasons were the attacks on Falluja and other holy cities, "bad" or violent behavior by coalition troops, and the failure to provide security.

2.3.1 House raids

Most of the house raids turn up nothing -- 70 percent according to one officer -- and most of those detained are soon released.[27] Division and brigade units may hold as many as 1,300 detainees at any one time, releasing between 66 percent and 75 percent within a few days.[28] Others are sent to one of several prisons in Iraq controlled by the United States, which hold

approximately 9,000 prisoners. Many of these central detainees are also released after six months. The International Committee of the Red Cross reports being told by military intelligence officers that between 70 percent and 90 percent of these were being held by mistake -- an estimate affirmed independently by some who have worked in the system.[29]

In some cases, the scope of the raids has been made intentionally broad so as to affect the wider family, friendship networks, and neighborhoods of suspected insurgents and other wanted individuals.[30] In other cases, entire villages have been sealed off so that residents must enter or leave only through control points.[31] (Some of these practices were already underway during the second-half of 2003 – long before the insurgency reached its peak levels and long before the devastating fall 2004 attack on Falluja.)

Productive or not, the raids are traumatic events, often mentioned as a motivating factor by those who oppose the US occupation.[32] Anthony Loyd of the *London Times* reports on several raids conducted in December 2004 in Zangora, a small town near Ramadi. The American troops, after using a shotgun to blast open the door of the target residence,

> [S]warmed through the compound, corralling the women and children into one room and the men -- by then cuffed and blindfolded -- into another as the search for munitions and documents began. Household goods were sent clattering to the floor, mattresses and bedding upturned, the contents of cupboards and drawers spilt on to a growing pile of personal effects and domestic items.[33]

But as the soldiers began questioning the blindfolded Iraqis they realized they were in the wrong house. The next target of the night's raids was also mistaken.

Along similar lines, Bill Johnson, an embedded reporter for the *Rocky Mountain News,* recounts one of a series of raids that took place in Samarra in December 2003:[34]

> The force of the two pounds of C-4 explosive...collapses the double aluminum doors leading into the courtyard of a house.... An elderly man and two others are left standing exposed in the courtyard. They fall face-first to the ground as a half-dozen M-16s are swung their way. Only their mouths move as they plead in Arabic for the soldiers not to shoot. ... The men of 2nd Platoon race past the burning car, kick open the door of the house and rush inside. Three men lay face down in the front room, adorned only with rugs and pillows. Against a wall, three women and three young children sob uncontrollably. ... [T]he house is thoroughly searched for weapons. None are found. The men are bound with plastic handcuffs and led to a Bradley. ... Prisoners taken earlier have identified the three as major weapons dealers in the city... They face days of custody and rigorous interrogation. Lt. Dave Nelson has spent the last few minutes distributing money that command has given him to compensate neighbors whose homes have been damaged by the blasts. The raids have netted more than a half-dozen men, but few weapons. "That ain't the point," a burly sergeant...says, as we speed away. "We're showing the bad guys we're here, we ain't playing and we damn sure ain't going away."

These third-party eyewitness accounts accord with many of the stories told by Iraqis. Ken Dilanian and Drew Brown, reporters for the *Knight Ridder* news service, recount the experience of Dr. Talib Abdul Jabar Al Sayeed, whose Baghdad home was raided on 31 July 2003:

> At least three dozen American soldiers blazed away for more than 60 minutes in the early morning hours of July 31, the British-trained physician recounted recently, pointing to the hundreds of bullet holes that still mark his stately home. "I shouted at them with all my strength to stop shooting," said Al Sayeed, 62. "I will open the door. Please give me a chance." Eventually, Al Sayeed said, the commanding officer told him he was sorry: They had raided the wrong house. But not before a soldier burst in and struck Al Sayeed with a rifle butt, knocking him down. The soldier kicked him in the ribs - an X-ray later showed they were cracked - and others bound his hands with plastic cuffs as his wife and young nieces cowered in the next room. They also took his three grown sons in for questioning, and they remain in a military jail in the south of Iraq.[35]

Peter Beaumont of the UK *Observer* offers this report of a 6 September 2003 raid on an apartment complex in Mahmudiya, near Baghdad, during which 18-year-old Farah Fadhil was killed by a hand grenade:

> Whatever happened here was one-sided, a wall of fire unleashed at a building packed with sleeping families. Further examination shows powder burns where door locks had been shot off and splintered wood where the doors had been kicked in. All the evidence was that this was a raid that...went horribly wrong. This is what the residents and local police told us had happened: Inside the apartment with Farah were her mother and a brother, Haroon, 13. As the soldiers started smashing doors, they began to kick in Farah's door with no warning. Panicking, and thinking that thieves were breaking into the apartment, Haroon grabbed a gun owned by his father and fired some shots to scare them off. The soldiers outside responded by shooting up the building and throwing grenades into Farah's apartment.[36]

The raids seem to exhibit a general pattern which was summarized in a February 2004 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross, based on its own investigation of reported incidents:[37]

> Arresting authorities entered houses usually after dark, breaking down doors, waking up residents roughly, yelling orders, forcing family members into one room under military guard while searching the rest of the house and further breaking doors, cabinets, and other property. They arrested suspects, tying their hands in the back with flexicuffs, hooding them, and taking them away. Sometimes they arrested all adult males in the house, including elderly, handicapped, or sick people. Treatment often included pushing people around, insulting, taking aim with rifles, punching and kicking, and striking with rifles. Individuals were often led away in whatever they happened to be wearing at the time of arrest – sometimes pyjamas or underwear... In many cases personal belongings were seized during the arrest with no receipt given.... In almost all incidents documented by the ICRC, arresting authorities provided no information about who they were, where their base was located, nor did they explain the cause of arrest. Similarly, they rarely informed the

arrestee or his family where he was being taken or for how long, resulting in the defacto disappearance of the arrestee for weeks or even months until contact was finally made.

US units often render some payment to families for collateral damage. It is also common to confiscate "excessive" family money, gold, or other valuables, however -- even in those cases where neither suspects nor banned types or quantities of weapons are found.[38] This, on the theory that the information targeting a family may be at least partially correct and that the family may be financing insurgent activities. Of course, it is hard to ascertain what constitutes "excessive" household valuables in a country with a cash economy but no functioning banking system. Throughout the period of sanctions, war, and occupation, it has been common for Iraqis to invest in gold jewelry as a form of inflation-proof savings. At any rate, the confiscations have generated hundreds of tort claims and add to the Iraqis' sense that the occupying troops are behaving in indefensible ways.[39]

2.3.2 Street patrols

Routine street patrols can also take on an aggressive character, especially as road attacks increase. Embedded with a US Army cavalry unit Ken Dilanian of *Knight-Ridder* reports on one such patrol:

> All day long, the soldiers pointed their guns at Iraqi civilians, whom they called "hajis"....
> Wary of ambushes, they rammed cars that got in the way of their Humvees. Always on the lookout for car bombs, they stopped, screamed at, shoved to the ground and searched people driving down the road after curfew - or during the day if they looked suspicious.[40]

New York Times reporter John Burns recounts an 18 January 2005 incident in Tal Afar (west of Mosul) witnessed and captured on film by Getty Images photographer Chris Hondros:[41]

> [S]oldiers of the Apache company were walking in near darkness toward an intersection along a deserted commercial street when they saw the headlights of a sedan turning into the street about 100 yards ahead. An officer ordered the troops over their headsets to halt the vehicle, and all raised weapons. One soldier fired a three-shot burst into the air, but the car kept coming, Mr. Hondros said, and then half a dozen troops fired at least 50 rounds, until the car was peppered with bullets and rolled gently to a stop against a curb. "I could hear sobbing and crying coming from the car, children's voices," Mr. Hondros said. Next he said, one of the rear doors opened, and six children, four girls and two boys, one only 8 years old, tumbled into the street. They were splattered with blood. Mr. Hondros, whose photographs of the incident were published around the world, said that the parents of four of the children lay dead in the front seat. Their bodies were riddled with bullets, and the man's skull had smashed.

The *Economist* (UK) reports:

> There is only one traffic law in Ramadi these days: when Americans approach, Iraqis scatter. Horns blaring, brakes screaming, the midday traffic skids to the side of the road as

> a line of Humvee jeeps ferrying American marines rolls the wrong way up the main street. Every vehicle [scatters], that is, except one beat-up old taxi. Its elderly driver, flapping his outstretched hand, seems, amazingly, to be trying to turn the convoy back. Gun turrets swivel and lock on to him, as a hefty marine sergeant leaps into the road, levels an assault rifle at his turbaned head, and screams: "Back this bitch up, motherfucker!"[42]

The basic rule of engagement for such encounters is posted on the bumpers of US military vehicles: "Keep back 50m or deadly force will be applied." Usually, soldiers and Marines will allow errant vehicles to approach much closer. But the *Economist* quotes a Marine lieutenant observing: "If anyone gets too close to us we fucking waste them; It's kind of a shame, because it means we've killed a lot of innocent people."

Newsday reporter Dionne Searcey describes a 25 January 2005 incident in Mosul during which a taxi carrying a five-year-old boy and his father approached a foot patrol from the 82nd Airborne Division:

> The car slowed, but then it sped up. In line with their rules of engagement, the troops opened fire, blowing out three of the four windows, two tires, and ripping through the windshield and hood of the Volkswagen sedan. ... From inside the pockmarked car, the driver, a tall balding man with a bullet hole in his chest, unlatched his door and stumbled to the curb. The father got out, too, blood covering his face and soaking his black wool sweater. The back door opened and round-faced Hakam with an injured hand stepped from the car, looked at the troops and started to sob.[43]

Searcey reports that the soldiers claimed three similarly fatal run-ins over a period of several weeks during which a dump truck driver, a mother and father, and a young girl were killed.

Iraqi police and security personnel are not immune to such run ins. On 9 August 2003, two Baghdad police officers were killed and third injured when their high-speed chase of a criminal suspect ran afoul of a US patrol. The recollections of the surviving officer were reported by Larry Kaplow of the *Cox News Service*:

> Albu-Mohammed, the surviving driver of the bullet-pocked Hyundai, said in an interview Tuesday that his car did not carry police insignia, but that his uniformed lieutenant was shot after tossing away his gun and stepping out of the car. Other police, in a marked car, were calling for the troops to hold fire. Albu-Mohammed was wearing a police armband...and his car is a common police vehicle. Despite watching his lieutenant be killed upon surrendering, Albu-Mohammed stepped from the car as he had, holding his police identification card above his head. Troops beat and kicked him to the ground and placed tight plastic handcuffs around his wrists.[44]

In a separate interview with a reporter for *Agence France-Presse* the police officer said:

> Three soldiers surrounded me. I got down on my knees, hands in the air, holding my badge... One of them kicked me in the back and I fell to the ground. Another one kicked

me twice in the face. They put their boots on my head and pressed it into the ground. I kept saying 'police, police'... [45]

The cumulative effect of such interactions is partially gauged by a June 2004 poll conducted by the Oxford Research International, which found that 10 percent of Iraqi respondents reported having had "very negative" encounters with coalition forces.[46] Also relevant is a March-April 2004 *USA Today*/Gallup/*CNN* poll, which found 58 percent of Iraqis claiming that US forces behave fairly or very badly.[47] Seven percent of this group (ie. 4 percent of the total population) said their opinion derived from personnel experience – a small proportion of the total population, to be sure, but one comprising about 700,000 adult Iraqis. (Another thirty-nine percent of the respondents said their opinion derived from things they had seen; 54 percent, from thing they had heard.)

3. From anger to insurgency

The mix of nationalistic feelings – often with a religious inflection – and the desire to avenge some wrong or humiliation is apparent in interviews with Iraqis who oppose the occupation in word, deed, or both. Jeffrey Gettleman of the *New York Times* reports the sentiments of a 32-year old laborer in Baghdad:

> "They searched my house," he said. "They kicked my Koran. They speak to me so poorly in front of my children. It's not that I encourage my son to hate Americans. It's not that I make him want to join the resistance. Americans do that for me."[48]

The connection between violation of homes by occupation forces and the defense of religion is also made by Ahmad Muhammad, a Falluja resident interviewed in April 2004 by Fiona O'Brien of *Reuters*: "They come and destroy our houses, it's the duty of all Muslims to fight them."[49] Similarly, a 24-year old Baghdad resident told the *Times*' Jeffrey Gettleman:

> If the Americans come this way, we will fight them. I'm going to defend my house, my street, my land, my religion.

The theme of humiliation seems as common as that of injury. A 15 March 2004 poll sponsored by ABC News found that, at the time, 42 percent of Iraqis thought the war had liberated Iraq, while 41 percent thought it had humiliated Iraq.[50] On a more personal level, a fighter in Baghdad told *UPI* reporter P. Mitchell Prothero that issues of respect were important in motivating his decision to join the insurgency:

> There have been some [soldiers] that say 'hello' or 'peace be unto you' in Arabic to me... They give our children sweets and do their jobs with respect. One of these men I even see as my friend. So we were conducting an operation, about to shoot at a Humvee one night when I realized it was the nice soldier. I told my man not to shoot him. But others treat us like dogs. I saw one put his boot on the head of an old man lying on the ground (during a raid.) Even Saddam would not have done such a thing.[51]

While antipathy toward the occupation is widespread, many Iraqis are also significantly dependent on coalition authorities – the US mission and armed forces -- as the best-resourced and most powerful agencies in the country. Strong opponents of the occupation may cooperate with it to some degree, *per necessity.*   But dependency should not be confused with loyalty, support, or even gratitude. Indeed, dependency is itself often a source of humiliation and anger. For many Iraqis, if not most, resentment may permeate even their positive relationships with the occupiers – making these volatile and unreliable. How this plays out in day-to-day relations between occupiers and occupied can be gleaned from interviews with Iraqis:

- Dexter Filkins of the *New York Times* writes of the local reaction when two American soldiers were killed in Mosul.[52] A crowd gathered and some firefighters from a nearby station joined them. About the killings one of the firefighters said: "I was happy, everyone was happy". This, despite the fact that since the fall of Saddam these firefighters' salaries had risen by a factor of ten and they had received new trucks and uniforms. So the fellow conceded: "Yes, the Americans do good things, but...they are occupiers. We want them to leave."

- More recently Charles Onians of *AFP,* the French press agency, records the views of the major who leads the 303 Battalion of the Iraqi National Guard.[53] The good major says: "God willing, my work will hasten the American's departure. I'd like to see them leave now."

- More ominously, Damien McElroy of the *Sunday Telegraph* writes of an Iraqi police officer who works closely with US forces, but then turns intelligence over to the resistance.[54] This officer says: "I have good relations with the American soldiers in my work". Nonetheless he feels that the Americans "are thieves. They break into our houses without warning and stand on our heads. This is why the people are getting more hurt and more angry."

4. The fog and friction of occupation

National differences and the suffering caused by war create an uphill struggle for an occupying force hoping to win local legitimacy. These circumstances sensitize the Iraqi populace to negative interactions with the occupiers.   And such interactions – whether directly experienced, seen, or conveyed in stories -- are bound to unfavorably shape the interpretation of subsequent events.   An example is provided by the case of an Iraqi woman killed in her car at a US checkpoint in November 2004, as reported by Hamza Hendawi of the *Associated Press*):

- US troops had been engaged in a firefight with insurgents earlier – so culpability for the woman's death is not entirely clear. But her husband insisted he saw Americans shooting in their direction and argued: *"That's what Americans do, isn't that so? They do this all the time in Iraq."*[55]

The grieving husband's assertion does not have to be literally true in order for it to seem so to Iraqis, as indicated by the June 2004 CPA poll, which found a majority of thinking that the

behavior demonstrated at Abu Ghraib was typical of all US troops. Cultural alienation and the fact of foreign occupation act to multiply the impact of mistakes and misbehavior.

The terms "fog" and "friction" are used often to describe the inherent uncertainties and difficulties of waging war.[56] Occupation duty also involves fog and friction, but of a distinct type. Friction is inherent to the relationship between occupier and occupied, as suggested above. The agents and institutions of authority and power are fundamentally alienated from the community they oversee. And the two – occupier and occupied – frequently confront each other with asymmetric agendas: one seeking services and the other compliance, for instance. This can make every encounter stressful, frustrating, and potentially dangerous.

The fog of occupation rises out of differences of language and culture, which not only impede communication, but also make it difficult to "read" situations or predict the effect of one's own actions. The occupiers' lack of "rooted-ness" makes them strangers in an inexorably strange land and it can transform every patrol into a mystery tour. The complex nature of urban environments – characterized by multiple levels, obstacles, gaps, and defiles – makes situation awareness more difficult, thus adding to uncertainty. So does the presence of unconventional foes, who seek to erase apparent distinctions between themselves and the general populace.

In such circumstances, there is a natural tendency to elevate the requirements of force protection above those of winning "hearts and minds." One stratagem is to exploit the local populace's fear of the occupying force in order to encourage their rapid compliance. Thus, on patrol, some troops are quick to threaten bothersome or suspicious-looking Iraqis with a trip to Abu Ghraib. In some circumstances this can effectively scatter a crowd, but it also evokes and reinforces popular anger about prison abuse.[57]   Similarly double-edged is the practice by some units of painting "death head" skulls on Iraqi homes and businesses that have been searched for suspected insurgents and their supporters.[58] This is supposed to invoke fear and compliance, but it also associates the occupation with death.

The practice of emblazoning tanks and troop vehicles with monikers such as "Blind Killer," "Bloodlust," "Carnivore", "Anthrax", and "South Carolina Killers" also might aim to instill fear and caution in the local populace.[59]   Given that such nicknames are displayed in English, however, it is more likely that their primary audience is the troops themselves. For this audience, the aim is to build and sustain self-confidence and a martial spirit.

A similar psychological end might be served by the practice of referring to Iraqis as "Hajis" – a pejorative or condescending term.[60] The act of "re-naming" the Iraqis in this way creates a reassuring sense of control. It also can mitigate the cognitive dissonance caused by the persistent friction between "liberated" and "liberators".

Whether or not such practices are effective in maintaining morale, they do increase the distance between occupier and occupied. And this can enable more deleterious practices. For instance, only a small step away is the act of scrawling an obscene insult – "Fuck Iraq and every Iraqi in it!" – on a bedroom mirror during a house raid.[61]   This may not seem like much, but a single act of this sort can affirm nationalist tendencies in an entire neighborhood and color its perception of the American mission. *The Economist* reports a more serious example where

Marines in Ramadi, searching for insurgents, randomly kicked in the doors of houses to shout at the women inside: "'Where's your black mask?' and 'Bitch, where's the guns?'" [62]

The mechanism of psychological "distancing" makes it possible for a soldier to fire canisters of buckshot at jeering children in Mosul, while explaining: "It's not good, dude; it could be fatal, but you gotta do it."[63] Against some of the collaterals of war, however, no psychological defense is adequate. *Knight-Ridder* news service reports a Baghdad incident in which a member of Charlie Company 1/8 Cavalry thought he saw gunshots flashing from a building rooftop while on patrol, prompting the rest of the unit to shower the building with machine-gun fire:

> The next morning, soldiers arrived to find several female members of a family dead - and one little girl alive, clinging to her dead mother. Some of the men broke down in tears, the soldiers said. "I will never forget that girl raising her head up," said [the unit's staff sergeant].[64]

The dilemma facing US troops, their difficulty managing it, and its effect on the conduct of the mission is captured in the *Knight-Ridder* reporting on the 3/4 Cavalry, cited above. The article records one staff sergeant observing:

> What's really hard is the fine line between the bad guys and the good guys. Because if you piss off the wrong good guys, you're really in trouble. So you've really got to watch what you do and how you treat the people.

But another sergeant grimly concludes:

> The one thing you learn over here is that there are no innocent civilians, except the kids. And even them - the ones that are all, `Hey mister, mister, chocolate?' -- I'll be killing them someday.

This soldier nonetheless recognizes that, "Every time we kill one of them, we breed more that want to fight us. We end up turning neutral people against us." His final conclusion conveys both the dilemma posed by the occupation and his effort to cope with it: "It's not really our fault, though, because I have to defend myself."

A similar ambivalence is evident in the recollections of Lt. Gen. James Conway (USMC), who led the first major assault on Falluja in April 2004. Conway initially opposed the attack, preferring other methods for pacifying Falluja. Looking back, he says: "When we were told to attack Falluja, I think we certainly increased the level of animosity that existed." But Conway also opposed the decision to halt the offensive once it got underway:

> When you order elements of a Marine division to attack a city, you really need to understand what the consequences of that are going to be and not perhaps vacillate in the middle of something like that... Once you commit, you got to stay committed.[65]

Certainly, wars are not won by half-measures. But General Conway's ambivalence also illustrates how the logic of war can keep a nation committed to Pyrrhic or self-defeating

enterprises. A more general appraisal of the US military's dilemma in Iraq is offered by the outspoken Army reformer, Col. Douglas A. Macgregor (ret.):

> Most of the generals and politicians did not think through the consequences of compelling American soldiers with no knowledge of Arabic or Arab culture to implement intrusive measures inside an Islamic society. We arrested people in front of their families, dragging them away in handcuffs with bags over their heads, and then provided no information to the families of those we incarcerated. In the end, our soldiers killed, maimed and incarcerated thousands of Arabs, 90 percent of whom were not the enemy. But they are now.[66]

5. Variations in Iraqi public opinion by region and community

Iraqi opinion regarding the occupation and the insurgency varies significantly among the nation's three major ethno-religious communities. Earlier we suggested that, as a first approximation, Iraqi public attitudes regarding the occupation could be understood in terms of two drivers: a general nationalistic reaction to foreign control and a more specific reaction to the coercive practices of the occupation. Additional variables are required to explain variations within this framework:

- Despite a popular predisposition against occupation, a foreign military presence can be perceived as more or less legitimate depending on how it relates to local authority and to popular needs and aspirations. In the Iraqi case, three sets of issues are relevant: (1) humanitarian needs, postwar reconstruction, and material quality of life; (2) maintenance of social order and security; and (3) self-determination. To the extent that foreign occupation is seen as effectively advancing these ends, people may support or, at least, tolerate it. In judging the relationship between foreign occupation and self-determination, two questions are paramount: How responsive are the foreign forces to existing, recognized indigenous authority? And, how well and how rapidly does the foreign presence advance a more effective local rule?

- The margin of tolerance is very small for any over-zealous, cavalier, or imprecise use of force or coercion by foreign military personnel. The popular legitimacy of an occupying military depends on its using its power much as a good police force would – that is, in ways tightly constrained by law, restrictive rules of engagement, and strict accountability to recognized authority. Police forces enjoy little or no latitude for collateral damage. Nonetheless, opposition to putative excesses and collateral damage may not be general, but only local – if the pattern of military activity itself falls along salient ethno-religious or regional divisions in the country.

5.1 Is life better?

By almost every measure, the Kurds stand apart as uniquely positive in their attitudes about the occupation and the postwar situation in Iraq. They strongly support the US troop presence and tend to have good relations with coalition forces, who the vast majority of Kurds see as having

behaved "well" or "very well".   By contrast, the Sunni Arab community tends to exhibit the strongest oppositionist views, being least satisfied with postwar conditions, the foreign troop presence, and the behavior of the troops.

On some issue regarding the war and postwar conditions, the Shiites represent a midway position between Sunni and Kurdish views. On other issues, the distribution of opinion in the Shiite community is closer to that of the Sunni.

- Is life better in postwar Iraq compared to before -- or worse? In the March-April 2004 *USA Today*/Gallup/*CNN* poll, 39 percent of all Iraqis said worse and 42 percent said better. However, in Kurdish areas, only 1 percent said worse, while 99 percent better. In Sunni areas outside Baghdad, 55 percent said worse, 26 percent said better. In Shiite areas outside Baghdad, 37 percent said worse, 41 percent said better. In Baghdad, a mixed city, 55 percent said worse, 21 percent said better. This puts Shiite opinion significantly closer to that of the Sunnis, than the Kurds.

- On a similar question, the 15 March *ABC* poll found Shiite opinion about midway between Sunnis and Kurds -- with a slight bias toward the Kurdish position. Among Kurds, 69 percent said life was better postwar than before; 12 percent said worse. Fifty percent of Sunnis said better, 25 percent said worse. In Shiite areas, 60 percent said better, 16 percent said worse.[67]

Questions about the war and its effect tend to show Shiite opinion -- especially outside the south -- to be closer to Sunni views, although still less negative.

- Did the war liberate or humiliate Iraq? The March 2004 *ABC* poll found 82 percent of Kurds saying "liberate".   Among Sunnis, only 21 percent held this view. Among Southern Shiites, 49 percent said liberate, while among Shiites elsewhere "liberate" was affirmed by 34 percent. (The mid-point between Kurdish and Sunni views would be 52 percent.)

- Did the war do more harm than good? The March-April 2004 *USA Today*/Gallup/*CNN* poll found 97 percent of Kurds saying "more good," while only 2 percent said more harm. By contrast, in Sunni areas (outside Baghdad), only 20 percent said good, while 56 percent said harm. In Shiite areas (outside Baghdad), 28 percent said good and 47 percent said harm. While in Baghdad, a mixed Sunni and Shiite area, only 18 percent said more good, while 59 percent said more harm. What may be most relevant to these results are the differences in how the war and postwar conflict affected these areas.

Overall, bringing the costs of war into the picture tends to sour Iraqi opinion on postwar conditions. Thus, while the *USA Today* poll found Iraqis splitting 42 percent versus 39 percent over whether life was better or worse after the war, 46 percent of all Iraqis said the war did more harm than good and only 33 percent said more good than harm.

But the Shiites, like the Kurds, stand apart from the Sunnis in their optimism about the country's general direction – an attitude that was linked to their strong support for the January 2005 elections.

■ The September-October 2004 poll by the International Republican Institute reports that 72 percent of those in the Kurdish areas thought the country was moving in the right direction. In Mosul and Kirkuk only 18 percent thought so. (Mosul is a majority Sunni Arab city. Kirkuk is evenly divided between Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and Turks.) In other areas where Sunni Arabs concentrate, even fewer – 14.5 percent – thought the country was moving in the right direction. In Baghdad, which is more evenly mixed between Shiites and Sunnis, 32 percent had this opinion. In the south of Iraq and the mid-Euphrates area – areas with high concentrations of Shiites – 51 percent and 45 percent respectively thought the country was moving in the right direction.

Several subsequent IRI polls asked the same question and these illustrated further polarization. Kurdish and Shiite-dominated areas grew more optimistic as the elections approached, while Sunni areas, Mosul, and Kirkuk grew less optimistic about the country's direction. IRI polling on Iraqis' intent to vote showed similar regional and ethno-religious differences: Shiites and Kurds were both heavily invested in the election process.[68]

5.2 Foreign troop presence and behavior

Regarding the presence of foreign troops and the appraisal of their behavior, Shiite opinion tends to be close to that of the Sunni community – with one caveat: Shiites have tended to be much less supportive of actual attacks on coalition troops.

■ The March-April 2004 *USA Today* poll found 71 percent of Iraqis thinking of coalition forces as occupiers. In Baghdad, 82 percent of respondents held this opinion and only 4 percent thought of the foreign troops as "liberators." In Sunni and Shiite areas outside Baghdad, 80 percent of respondents saw the coalition as occupiers. Ten percent of the Sunnis and 7 percent of the Shiites saw the coalition as liberators. In the Kurdish areas, opinion was reversed: 97 percent saw the coalition as liberators and only 1 percent saw them as occupiers.

■ Similar percentages of Sunnis and Shiites also desired an immediate withdrawal of US troops: 61 percent in Shiite areas and 65 percent in Sunni. Baghdad registered the highest percentage desiring immediate withdrawal: 75 percent. Only 3 percent in Kurdish areas supported immediate withdrawal.

Regarding the behavior of Coalition troops:

■ The *USA Today* poll found 58 percent of all Iraqis saying the troops had behaved very or fairly badly, 34 percent said fairly or very well. In Kurdish areas, however, only 1 percent said badly, while 98 percent said well. In Baghdad, 81 percent said badly, 9 percent said well. In Sunni areas outside Baghdad, 67 percent said badly, 24 percent

well. In Shiite areas, 61 percent said badly, 26 percent said well. This shows a close correspondence in Sunni and Shiite views.

A closer look at Sunni and Shiite views indicates a significant difference, however:

- In Sunni areas, those who thought the forces had behaved "very badly" constituted 43 percent. In Shiite areas the proportion with this judgement was only 26 percent. The opinion of Baghdad residents fell in between the two: 37 percent thought that coalition forces had behaved "very badly".

It is also notable that the percentage of Iraqis who said their opinion of coalition forces derived from personal experience differed from region to region: 10 percent in Sunni areas, 8 percent in Baghdad, and only 6 percent in Shiite areas said their opinion was based on personal experience.

Support for attacks against US forces correlated closely with the percentages of those who thought the coalition had behaved "very badly":

- The percentage of respondents who thought that the attacks could be completely or somewhat justified was 35 percent in Baghdad, 43 percent in Sunni areas, and 26 percent in Shiite areas. In Kurdish areas it was zero percent. (The 15 March *ABC* poll similarly found that support for attacks was notably higher among Sunnis than Shiites: 36 percent versus 12 percent.)

Another correlation relevant to feelings about the military presence has to do with regional variations in the incidence of violence. The September-October 2004 poll conducted by the International Republican Institute found 22 percent of Iraqis reporting their households as having been "directly affected by violence in terms of death handicap, or significant monetary loss." The results by region were: 33 percent each for Baghdad and the Sunni regions, 26.6 percent in Mosul and Kirkuk, 18-19 percent for the mid-Euphrates and the south, and 10.5 percent for Kurdish areas.

In sum: *direct experiences of violence, poor appraisals of US troop behavior, and support for insurgent attacks seem to correlate.*

6. Foundation of Kurdish opinion

The Kurdish community has been a strong supporter not only of the postwar order, but also the war that brought it about. For them, the new order promises an end to severe ethnic oppression and a rise to greater power. It has meant realization of their long-time interim goal of regional autonomy. The Kurds also have advanced very substantially in Iraqi national governance – first by means of appointments and subsequently by means of an electoral system that allowed them to capture a percentage of national assembly seats far exceeding their population share. (While comprising 15-20 percent of the Iraqi population, the Kurdish ethnic parties succeeded in capturing 27 percent of assembly seats, principally by means of

superior voter turnout in Kurdish dominated provinces.) And the Kurdish paramilitary organizations have become the backbone of the new Iraqi army, giving it an ethnic hue.[69]

The effects of the war itself on Kurdish areas was minimal. Also minimal have been postwar violence and military operations in the Kurdish majority provinces (Dohuk, Arbil, and Sulaymaniyah). Indeed, in these areas, the foreign military occupation has been essentially nominal. Both security and governance have been largely in Kurdish hands since the war's end.

Being neither Arabist nor Islamist, the Kurdish parties are more ideologically compatible with the United States and fit more comfortably within the US administration's regional goals – including the hope that Iraq will establish normal relations with Israel. Washington's difficult relations and image in much of the Arab and Islamic world do not matter much to Kurdish leaders, who are narrow nationalist in orientation. In fact, Washington's tensions with Syria and Iran have some resonance with the Kurds' own concerns.

Also important: the relationship between the Kurdish parties and the US military is quite friendly and substantial -- the latter having provided overflight protection and other assistance for more than ten years. Rather then seeing the US military presence in Iraq as compromising their self-determination, the Kurds see it as providing a shield and guarantee. Although the United States opposes the grander national aspirations of Kurds, ending the Iraqi occupation would in no way advance this goal; it would only weaken the Kurds' present position – and they know it.

7. Foundation of Shiite ambivalence

For the Shiite community, the war likewise meant an end to communal repression under Hussein and it opened a path to political power in Iraq. This is the foundation of Shiite optimism and gratitude. But the war also imposed a higher blood cost and caused greater disruption and privation in Shiite areas than it had in the Kurdish north -- both during and after the period of major combat. For Shiites, what immediately followed the American war was not communal power and self-determination but, instead, an *occupation* – one far more visible, intrusive, and real than that experienced in Kurdish areas. With foreign troops regularly patrolling the streets and byways, the tensions implicit in occupation assumed a more public and volatile public form -- although more so in some Shiite cities and neighborhoods than others. Relations are more contentious at the level of leadership, too, reflecting fundamental differences in goals and orientation.

Shiite views admit regional variation, however. As revealed in the *ABC* polls, Shiites in the south tend to be more tolerant of the occupation than those elsewhere, whose views correspond more closely to those of Sunnis. One explanation for a different cost-benefit calculus among southerners is that they suffered the brunt of Hussein's suppression campaign following the 1991 Gulf war. Another is that significant portions of the south are controlled by British forces, who are reputed to have a lighter touch than their American comrades.[70] (Nonetheless, the British have themselves had to face some violent nationalist reactions.[71] And they have been embroiled in abuse scandals of their own.[72])

Regional variations aside, the issues that divide the occupiers and the Shiite community are fundamental. The political culture and aspirations of most of Iraq's Shiite community are expressed in Islamic or pan-Arab terms, which puts them at odds with the US administration's regional vision. Most Shiites share a negative view of Washington's relations and activities in much of the Arab and Muslim world.

7.1 Washington and the Shiite community: a strategic game

Regarding the occupation: The paramount Shiite parties have tolerated it and urged grassroots patience and restraint only as part of a tactical calculation. For them, elections offer a legitimate and plausible path to greater power *vis-a-vis* Iraq's other communities and the occupation. However, just as they needed Washington to topple Hussein and enable their leaders to repatriate, they still need US power to help prevent national fragmentation and civil strife. To put it bluntly: they need Washington to keep the Sunnis down and the Kurds in. (And some would add: the Iranians out.) But their end game is to dis-invite American power.

The Bush administration has been playing its own strategic game with regard to the Shiites, of course. The administration needs to keep Ayatollah al-Sistani, the Supreme Council, and al-Dawa "on board" in order to preclude what would be a catastrophe: mass Shiite resistance to the occupation. But the Administration has no intention of handing the state over to Islamic fundamentalists.

The potential for a Shiite insurgency was demonstrated by the revolts that swept 11 cities in April and August 2004. Sparked by coalition efforts to reign in Moqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi army, the two explosions of violence involved between 3,000 and 6,000 insurgent combatants and many more supporters. As significant: mutual support linkages began to develop between the Sunni Falluja insurgents and the Mahdi army. Although support in the Shiite community divided along class and factional lines, the revolt briefly made Moqtada Sadr one of Iraq's most popular leaders. The June 2004 CPA poll of six major cities found 81 percent of respondents saying that their opinion of Sadr had improved. He registered second in popularity among leading Iraqi figures, surpassed only by Ali al-Sistani.

The containment of grassroots resistance is a card deftly played by the fundamentalist parties, as illustrated in a *Financial Times* interview with Seyyed Hasanain, a Sistani representative in Basra:[73]

> "We want them (the people) to wait; we tell them to wait for instructions." The Shia are looking beyond the petrol crises and the gunfire at night, he explains, and demanding elections that will bring, finally, real Shia representation in a central government. "People want their rights and Sistani will protect their rights," he warns. "If he says he cannot guarantee their rights then it would be a very dangerous situation. Look at Falluja now.... In Basra there would be 100 Fallujas."

The *Financial Times* reporter found this assessment echoed at the street level as well. Interviewing some students at Basra University, he reports them saying:

> "We have accepted the occupation for a short time," one tells me. "It is quiet in the south because we are being quiet." "We will follow what Sistani tells us," says another.[74]

Actually, Sistani does not own the Shiite street. He and the non-rejectionist Shiite religious parties are in competition with radical populist preachers such as Sadr for the allegiance of many communities. Their different appeal reflects class and generational divisions. Sadr, who appeals to the poor and working classes, channels all manner of popular dissatisfactions into religious-inflected nationalist revolt. By contrast, the main Shiite religious parties have a stronger hold on the middle classes. Assuming a stance that combines cooperation and dissent, they have vowed to use their participation in American devised governing and electoral schemes to safeguard and advance Shiite power. In late 2004, Sadr stood down and Sistani's electoral strategy won sway among Shiites, making elections the immediate focus of their nationalist aspirations.

The January 2005 Iraqi election was part of the price the Bush administration has had to pay in order to maintain the compliance of the Shiite religious leadership. The result was the dislodgement of Iyad Allawi and the elevation of the Shiite religious parties. Nonetheless, the Bush administration aims to retain pivotal influence in the economy, in security affairs, and in the administration of government, while it works to advance the position of those parties and individuals who are more amenable to its vision. And, one benefit the administration gained from the election is greater international legitimacy for its program in Iraq. The administration calculates that if the occupation can be sustained, friendly actors -- Kurds and neo-liberal secularists -- eventually will gain power, and this will facilitate an enduring American military presence. At minimum, the US mission in Iraq is working to weld the nascent Iraqi security sector to the American one.

7.2 Post-election sentiment regarding the occupation

With elections won, Sadr has again begun to agitate for setting a US troop withdrawal date. And the popular appeal of his message was reaffirmed by a Baghdad rally on 9 April 2005 that by some accounts drew as many as 300,000 participants.[75] Regarding the desirability of withdrawal, the leader of one of the major religious parties concurs. Abdul al-Aziz al-Hakim, who heads the Supreme Council, said on 23 January 2005:[76]

> No people in the world accepts occupation and nor do we accept the continuation of American troops in Iraq. We regard these forces to have committed many mistakes in the handling of various issues, the first and foremost being that of security, which in turn has contributed to the massacres, crimes and calamities that have taken place in Iraq against the Iraqis. Iraq can rely on itself and its people and it does not want foreign troops in its country.

Although Hakim refused to suggest a time line for US withdrawal, he did suggest that Iraq look beyond the United States and explore some form of cooperation with Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Kuwait in solving its security problems. At any rate, he was passed over for the position of Prime Minister in favor of al-Dawa's Ibrahim Jaafari.

From the US perspective, Jaafari is a more palatable choice than al-Hakim. Although both have good relations with Iran, Hakim and the Supreme Council are closer to it doctrinally and organizationally than are Jaafari and al-Dawa.[77] And Hakim spent more time there in exile than did Jaafari, who moved to London in 1989. Regarding the choice between the two: Bush administration officials claimed to have played no role in the Iraqi deliberations, although they did consult intensively with United Iraqi Alliance principals after the election (but before the formation of the government) about their attitude toward Iran and America's Iranian policy.[78]

Hakim opposed the assault on Falluja and the campaign against Moqtada Sadr, but he says that it would be a big mistake to call for US troop withdrawal at the present time:[79]

> We have to look into the reasons why the multinational troops remain in Iraq, and not only Iraq, but in many regions around the world; the troops are present in a certain country when the breaches in the security situation are greater than the capacity of the security apparatus in that country to handle it... When we are able to improve Iraq's security, it will be normal then to ask for the withdrawal of the multinational troops from Iraq.

If this open-ended formulation stands without further specification, it is all the wedge that the Bush administration needs. Jaafari's position on withdrawal may also drive a wedge between the new government and Moqtada Sadr. Indeed, there is enough distance between al-Jaafari's view and al-Hakim's to suggest a divide inside the United Iraqi Alliance. If so, it would not fall strictly along SCIRI *versus* al-Dawa lines because Adel Abdel-Mehdi, a SCIRI member and new Iraqi vice-president, has also spoken out against setting a withdrawal time line. (Abdel-Mehdi, who was Finance Minister in the appointed interim government, is favored in Washington because of his strong neo-liberal views on the economy.)[80]

8. The foundation of Sunni opposition

Polls of Iraqi public opinion show that oppositional sentiments and "rejectionist" views are more common in Sunni areas than elsewhere. Explanations of this often begin and end with the observation that Sunnis fared better than did other groups under the Hussein regime. The eclipse of their relatively "privileged" status is supposed to have propelled disproportionate numbers of Sunnis into opposition, rejectionism, and insurgency. The implication of this view is that Sunni dissatisfaction is an unavoidable side-effect of the democratic transition. We will assess this notion below, drawing on polling and other data to show that Sunni dissatisfaction has more complicated roots. At any rate, it is important to note that some aspects of postwar governance and several policies enacted by occupation authorities tended to alienate the Sunni community more than was necessary or wise.

8.1 The Sunnis and postwar governance

The linkages between the Sunni community and the occupation authorities have been weak throughout the postwar period Of course, among the parties favored by the United States, only the Kurdish ones could have been said before the war to actually represent and lead their

community of reference. At the other extreme, the secular Iraqi expatriates had shallow roots, at best -- although they were granted a strong position in the appointed governing bodies. The expatriate leaders of the religious organization -- al-Dawa party, the Supreme Council, and the Iraqi Islamic Party -- enjoyed significantly deeper roots. At minimum, their organizations had a significant presence inside the country and they were part of a broader indigenous network of religious leaders and institutions. But the positions in the governing bodies granted to the Islamic parties were not commensurate with their indigenous power: all together they controlled about a dozen of the 60 positions in the two, successive appointed governments.   And the Sunni-based Iraqi Islamic Party was the least well-represented of the group.

Occupation authorities did favor some Sunnis who had tribal connections: Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawir, Hazim Sha'lan, Abd al-Basit Turki, and Adnan al-Janabi.   But selective representation of tribes was likely to alienate as many Sunnis as it attracted; this is the nature of tribalism. At any rate, more than half of the Sunnis appointed by the occupation authorities eventually distanced themselves from the US mission because of specific policies. Several quit their posts, or refused re-appointment, or became advocates of electoral delay or boycott.

8.2 Pivotal issues

The Abu Ghraib torture scandal (which disproportionately involved Sunnis) and the Falluja offensives were among the issues that alienated Sunni opinion.[81] Others include:

- The mass dismissal in May 2003 of civil servants, police, and military personnel;
- The mass "De-Baathification" campaign; and
- The electoral system set out for Iraq in the Transitional Administrative Law.

The mass dismissal of government and army personnel disproportionately affected residents of the Baghdad area and Sunnis generally. (While former military personnel below the level of major have been encouraged to enlist in the new Iraqi military, those from higher ranks have been mostly blocked).

8.2.1 De-Baathification

To varying degrees, "De-Baathification" measures affected all former members of the Baath Party: as many as 1.5 million Iraqis. Notably, these measures are pro-active and do not require proof that the affected individuals have themselves committed any crime. The effect of these measures has fallen most heavily on Sunnis, including many who are recognized as leaders or prominent individuals in their communities.

Some De-Baathification measures affect access to jobs in government and the public sector.[82] Others, codified in the interim constitution, limit participation in the political process.[83] While the former measures may have fed the sense in the Sunni community that it was being held

collectively culpable for the crimes of Hussein and his henchmen, the latter may have contributed to a sense that the "new order" is not for Sunnis.

Unfortunately, the process was led initially by a prominent Shiite, Ahmed Chalabi. Other Shi'ite leaders (including Ibrahim Jaafari and Adel Abdel-Mehdi) have spoken out strongly in favor of continuing and intensifying it – thus giving it an ethnic spin.[84] As an anonymous US official in Baghdad told the *Financial Times*:[85]

> [Shiite leaders] speak about the need to reach out to the Sunni and then they'll talk about the need to clean up the Baathists. And when you ask about the tension in those two statements, you don't get a look of instant comprehension.

8.2.2 Problems with the electoral system

Turning to the electoral system: It treats all Iraq as a single electoral district -- a decision that proved especially disadvantageous for Sunnis. In the Iraqi system, unlike the American, assembly seats are not rooted to geographic subdivisions of the country. Insofar as the distribution of Iraq's ethno-religious communities tends to vary geographically, this means that the extent of government representation for each community is always up for contest. How well any particular region is represented in government depends not only on population but also on voter mobilization and turnout. Any differences among regions in ballot access – due to security, number of voting stations, or any other factor – will likely affect ethnic representation. Even had their been no Sunni boycott, the differences in security conditions among Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish areas virtually guaranteed that Sunnis would be under-represented in government. Also, any differences among ethnic groups in the maturity and wherewithal of their party organizations will affect not only how many seats each *party* wins but also how seats are allocated among the *ethnic regions.* These characteristics of the system confront minority regions with the possibility that their role in government could be reduced to insignificance.

The Kurdish minority won a disproportionate share of assembly seats because their parties were able to turn out an exceptionally large portion of the Kurdish population. This, in turn, was partly due to the fact that they had been governing Kurdish areas for more than ten years and were able to campaign in peace. Sunnis enjoyed neither of these compensating advantages.

The solution to this problem is simple and commonplace: allocate seats among provinces or among provincial subdivisions and make assembly elections local affairs.

Nothing was more galling to Sunnis than the refusal of the Interim Government and the US mission to respond positively to their concerns about the election. Of course, as noted above, moving forward with the election was the price of continued Shiite acquiescence to the occupation. But this is cold comfort to Sunnis; in fact, it only fuels their suspicion and alienation.

8.3 Revolt of the privileged?

While it has become common to shrug off Sunni discontent by ascribing it to the loss of undeserved privilege, the proposition is too cavalier and sweeping in its treatment of Sunnis. When assessing the Sunni prospect during and after the Hussein period, several points should be kept in mind:

■ First, it is true that the Hussein regime favored some towns, families, and tribes – and that these were disproportionately Sunni. But this does not mean that most Sunnis were well- or even fairly treated. Hussein's favor was notoriously mercurial and always came at high cost -- for instance: a willingness to pour tribal youth into the grinder of the Iran-Iraq war.[86] Sub-groups of every community fell in and out of favor. And those tribes, families, and towns -- Sunni, Shiite, or Kurdish -- who ran afoul of the regime faced extreme and open-ended sanctions, including economic deprivation, job dismissal, imprisonment, torture, and assassination. No one – not even Hussein's immediate family – was secure.

■ Second, although Saddam did not target the Sunni community *as such* for special repressive measures or extermination campaigns, the nature of governance in Sunni areas, as elsewhere, was dictatorial. Nowhere was democracy practiced and nowhere did respect for human rights meet minimum standards. Non-compliant religious leaders and congregations in Sunni areas, for instance, were routinely repressed, as were political activists and organizations outside the Baathist sphere.

■ Third, it is true that Sunnis dominated the upper levels of the Baath Party, Iraqi government, and armed forces. However, Hussein's leadership circle was exceedingly small. And it ruled the larger institutions of power much as it ruled society overall: by means of terror, torture, and murder. For this reason, among others, the armed forces chose not to fight for the regime or to fight only half-heartedly.

■ Fourth, even those Sunnis who did face a loss of privilege in the postwar order (or most of them), might have been drawn into a more cooperative relationship with the postwar governments. The loss of a relatively privileged position does not necessarily imply a real or absolute decline in living standards, freedom, or political power. Positive changes in postwar Iraq – the end of sanctions and repression, the beginning of reconstruction and economic revitalization – might have constituted "a rising tide that lifts all boats (or communities)" above their prewar conditions. Even those who enjoyed Hussein's unreliable and double-edged "favor" might have seen their living conditions improve.

■ Finally, regarding those Sunnis who did experience a postwar decline in living standards: not every such decline produces an impetus to revolt or even to active dissent. If policymakers are to understand and alter Sunni attitudes, it is important to be more specific about what has stimulated Sunni oppositionism.   In particular, the decision to rebel usually involves some type of moral judgement: people must feel that

their treatment is undeserved or unjust. Shortages of electricity alone are not likely to produce such sentiments.

8.4 Opinion research: what Sunnis say about their postwar condition

Important insights into Sunni sentiments and motivations can be gleaned from several opinion polls that parsed their respondent pools into ethnic communities or regions. Two, in particular, stand out: The March-April 2004 *USA Today*/Gallup/*CNN* poll and the September-October 2004 IRI poll.[87]

The *USA Today* poll confirms that Sunnis exhibit a much higher degree of dissatisfaction with the change in conditions than do Kurds or Shiites.

■ The poll asked Iraqis if their families were, in general terms, "better off", the same, or "worse off" than before the invasion. The percentages for Baghdad were 35 percent saying better and 35 percent saying worse. For Sunni areas outside Baghdad the percentages were 37 saying better, 38 saying worse. For Shiite areas outside the capital the percentages were 51 better versus 18 worse. And for Kurdish areas, they were a remarkable 92 percent saying better versus *zero percent* saying worse.

Clearly, the felt experience of those in Baghdad and in Sunnis areas is quite different than that in Shiite areas – and very different than that in Kurdish areas. It is difficult, however, to correlate these differing assessments of change with perceived changes in material conditions.

■ Asked about changes in family income, for instance, *gainers outnumber losers in all the communities.*

■ The percentages reporting major *decreases* in income are small everywhere: 3 percent in Sunni areas and 6 percent each in Baghdad and the Shiite areas. And,

■ Notably, *the margin of postwar income gainers over losers is greater in Sunni areas (24 percent) than in Shiite ones (17 percent).* In Baghdad, gainers outnumber losers by only 4 percent.

The poll also asked about the incidence of specific shortfalls or problems before and after the war. Regarding the provision of electricity, clean water, medicine, and food: Sunnis and denizens of Baghdad generally report that conditions are worse today than before war, while Shiites report they are better.

■ Looking just at the assessment of prewar conditions: Sunnis reported significantly less serious shortages of food, medicine, and security than did Shiites during the prewar period. By most measures, Baghdad was better than both. These results may indicate the relative privileges enjoyed by Sunnis and by citizens of the capital during the Hussein period.

- Looking at the postwar period, however: Sunnis and Baghdad residents report more shortages than do Shiites. This would suggest that their current condition is not one of equality, but relative disadvantage.

Sunnis, Shiites, and Baghdad residents all report dramatic improvement in their freedom to worship. But they also all report a dramatic deterioration in personal safety. *The decline in safety and the overall level of reported insecurity was much worse in Baghdad and Sunni areas.*

None of the declines in material conditions except security seem sharp enough to explain the Iraqi responses to the first question: Are your families better or worse off? The responses on family income do not correlate with it at all. Nor do they support the hypothesis that Sunnis are especially angry because they have lost their privileges. Some support for the "Sunni privilege hypothesis" is found in the other data, but it also suggests that what exists today for Sunnis is not equality, but *disadvantage* with regard to the provision of some goods and services.

The results concerning family security bring to mind those from another, more recent poll that may better explain the current differences in community attitudes. As reported earlier, the September-October 2004 IRI poll asked Iraqis if their families had been "directly affected by violence in terms of death, handicap, or significant monetary loss" in the 18 months since the US invasion began. Affirmative responses by region were: 33 percent each for Baghdad and the Sunni regions, 26.6 percent in Mosul and Kirkuk, 18-19 percent for the mid-Euphrates and the south, and 10.5 percent for Kurdish areas. Just as these correlated well with attitudes toward US troops and the insurgency, they generally correlate with differences in regional assessments of postwar life.

In sum: *Iraqi opinion polls suggest that insecurity and experiences of violence since the war began play a major role in how different communities and regions have responded to the occupation and to the new order in Iraq.*

9. Patterns of Coalition Military Activity

Public opinion polls point to the experience of war-related violence as one important factor in explaining Sunni alienation from the post-war order. A review of US military activity shows that its affects during the main combat phase of the war probably were felt near equally by Sunni and Shiite communities. During the postwar period, however, US military activity has focused especially on Baghdad and the Sunni areas.

9.1 Main Combat Phase of the War, March-May 2003

Civilian casualties and collateral damage during the major combat phase of the war, probably fell most heavily on the Shiite community – as a consequence of where the war was fought.[88] But the fighting – and especially the American use of artillery and aerial bombardment – grew more intense as the coalition swept northward from the Shiite majority areas to the evenly mixed areas around Baghdad.[89] Still, a two-to-one ratio of Shiite to Sunni *non-combatant*

deaths is likely for the first phase of the war. The extent of Shiite fatalities in the war is suggested by the steep spike in burial activity at the Najaf cemetery, a central burial site for Shiites.[90]

Regarding combatant fatalities, however: these probably affected the Sunni community more heavily than the Shiite community – insofar as the most persistent fighters were Republican Guard personnel (often recruited from loyal tribes), regime security personnel, and pro-regime militias of various sorts. And combatant fatalities in the war were probably two or three times as numerous as noncombatant.[91]

Reflecting the factors recounted above, the blood cost of the war's initial phase was probably close to evenly divided between the Sunni and Shiite communities. But Shiite communities would have suffered more of the collateral damage caused by the war. Similarly, the general trauma caused by an invading army – the fear, disruption, and uncertainty that it generates wherever it passes – would have immediately affected more Shiites than Sunnis. These circumstances, together with nationalistic impulses, would have created a basis for common Sunni-Shiite opposition to the invaders. Counter-balancing this would have been the Shiites' hatred for the Hussein regime and the Shiite expatriates' vision of using the war and occupation as a step ladder to power.

9.2 Coalition Military Operations after 1 May 2003

With the end of major combat, the focus of US operations gradually shifted to the north and west of Baghdad. The map below shows the areas of Iraq under Coalition control on 10 April 2003; they are shaded in light green. The tan areas are those lacking significant coalition forces. Initial postwar military operations focused on (1) extending and asserting US control in detail throughout Iraq, (2) finding and interring Iraqi government, military, and Baath Party leaders -- many of whom had fled to the Sunni hinterland, and (3) extinguishing any residual armed resistance.

By July 2003, US forces had ceded day-to-day control of the southern four provinces to other members of the multinational coalition, while Kurdish forces controlled the northern three. By November 2003, the purview of non-US forces had expanded, leaving US forces focused primarily on six central provinces (and part of a seventh) – all areas of Sunni concentration. Of course, US Central Command continued to lead and support the overall effort and US units continued to conduct numerous operations throughout the country. But a review of 106 named operations shows that these, too, focused largely on areas of Sunni concentration. (See below)

During June and July 2003, US troops conducted three major campaigns in Sunni areas, targeting Baath Party members, suspected former members of Hussein's security services, other suspected regime supporters, and "hot beds" of insurgent activity.[92] During this period, the intensity, frequency, and scope of raids increased dramatically in an effort to preclude evasion by targets, disrupt support networks, and gather intelligence. Suspects included 9,000 members of four leading tribal families that had been supportive of the Hussein regime; 1,200 of these were actually rounded up and detained.

Thus, the US Iraq mission and Sunni areas were locked in contention quite early in Operation Iraqi Freedom. With the exception of operations against Moqtada Sadr, the US military presence and US military operations exhibit a geographical focus that corresponds to the distribution of Sunnis. Despite this dedicated focus (or because of it), the insurgency grew in size and intensity throughout the period under review – from an average of 10 attacks per day in the few months to a peak of 80 in late 2004.
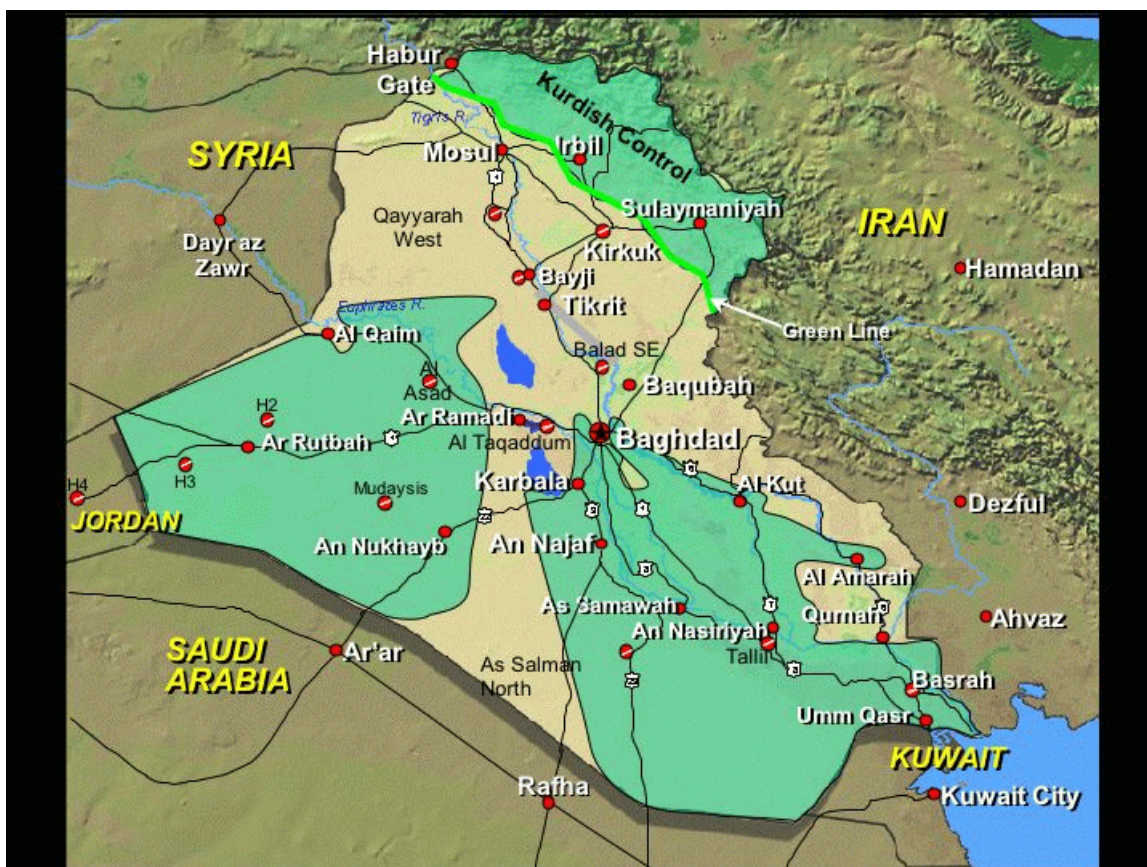

Table 1. summarizes the geographical distribution of the 106 operations for the period May 2003 through the end of 2004.   (Only those operations with a mission emphasizing enforcement, interdiction, or combat tasks are included in this tally.) A number of these operations encompassed more than one province. For each province the table shows the number of operations that affected it. Provinces with Sunni majorities or large minorities appear in bold. The subset of operations that might be considered "major" are noted in parentheses. These involved more than 5,000 troops, a significant use of air power, and large deployments of heavy weapons.

If we accept as an inexact proxy measure of operational activity the number of named operations multiplied by the number of provinces each one affected, then 80 percent of

operational activity has focused on areas of Sunni concentration – and this has been true throughout the duration of the occupation. This pattern did not emerge in response to the insurgency. Instead, it began as a process of asserting control over Sunni areas and mopping up former regime elements. It subsequently transitioned to a counter-insurgency effort.

Table 1. Military Operational Activity in Iraq: Named Operations by Time Period Number of Military Operations Affecting Each of Iraq's Provinces (Number of major operations appear in parenthesis. Sunni population concentrations in bold.)				
	May-31 Dec 2003	Jan-30 June 2004	July-31 Dec. 2005	Total
Total per period >> Provinces:	36 (5)	34 (3)	36 (8)	106 (16)
Irbil and Dahuk	0	0	0	0
Sulamaniyah	1 (1)	0	0	1 (1)
Nineveh	**4 (1)**	**1**	**6 (1)**	**11 (2)**
At Ta'min	**5 (2)**	**3**	**2**	**10 (2)**
Salah ad Din	**13 (4)**	**6**	**2 (1)**	**21 (5)**
Diyala	**10 (3)**	**3**	**5**	**18 (3)**
Al Anbar	**13 (2)**	**9 (1)**	**9 (2)**	**31 (5)**
Baghdad	**7 (1)**	**8**	**8 (3)**	**23 (4)**
Babil	3 (1)	0	2 (2)	5 (3)
Karbala	1 (1)	1 (1)	1	3 (2)
Wasit	1	2 (2)	1 (1)	4 (3)
An Najaf	1	3 (2)	1 (1)	5 (3)
Al Qadisiyah	3 (1)	2 (1)	0	5 (2)
Dhi Qar	0	0	0	0
Maysan	1	0	0	1
Al Muthanna	1	0	0	1
Al Basrah	1	0	0	1
Data source: "Iraq Pacification Operations," GlobalSecurity.org, available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_ongoing_mil_ops.htm				

10. The roots of Sunni anger: contributing incidents

From the start, military deployments and activities were a focus and stimulus of tensions between the occupiers and the occupied. A series of incidents during the spring and summer of 2003 in Sunni areas and Baghdad fed negative impressions of the coalition and the postwar order. Among these:

■ In Mosul, in two separate incidents on 15 and 16 April 2003, US troops killed between 10 and 17 civilians during rioting against the installation of a new governor, an expatriate former Iraqi general.[93]

■ Two months later, on 12 June 2003, in the village of Al Hir near Mosul, a man, his three sons, and his grandson were killed mistakenly by US troops after the soldiers had had a firefight with former regime elements. The fighting prompted villagers to flee into nearby fields where they were fired on by the American unit.[94]

■ Six weeks later in Mosul, on 26 July, two young men were killed and two or three wounded when US troops fired on a crowd that had been throwing rocks. The crowd had been trying to enter a mosque for afternoon prayers, but it had been cordoned off due to a recent military operation nearby: 1200 feet away US troops had earlier cornered and killed Saddam Hussein's two sons. The fighting erupted when the soldiers blocked access to the Mosque and the crowd would not desist in its efforts to enter.[95]

■ The troubles in Falluja began on April 28 and 30, 2003, when in two separate incidents US troops shot and killed between 13 and 17 people protesting the US presence and the seizure of a local school for a headquarters. More than 50 people were injured. The troops claimed to have been fired on themselves first by someone in the crowd, although the protestors deny it. At any rate, the Americans suffered no casualties.[96]

■ Falluja was further alienated by the 12 September 2003 accidental killing of 10 Iraqi police and security personnel as well as a hospital worker.[97] Traveling in three vehicles, the police had been in pursuit of a car load of individuals who had attacked the mayor's office – when they unexpectedly came upon a US military patrol, which included two tanks. Startled, the US unit reportedly opened fire on the police convoy; eight died on the scene, two later. Hearing gunfire, guards from a nearby hospital also opened fire on the road. The American unit returned fire on the hospital, killing an orderly and causing significant damage to the building. Central Command later expressed deep regret for the incident, but insisted that the US unit had been attacked by unknown forces.

■ On 25 May 2003 in Samarra, four members of a wedding party were killed and nine injured when US troops fired on their vehicles.[98] The revelers had been driving around town and shooting in the air – a common occurrence at Iraqi weddings. Tensions in the town escalated and on May 28, two more people – a 12-year old boy and 15-year old girl – were killed at a checkpoint. The wedding party incident in Samarra led to a spiral of violence partly because of tribal dynamics. According to Sheikh Ahmed Ali Yaseen, who heads the Albu Abass tribe, efforts to gain compensation for the killing were rebuffed:

> "The only way to settle this is to pay a diya (blood money) and the Americans have told
> us they will not do this. Our people have been refused their rights under our law, and so
> they are angry."

In Baghdad, tensions sprung from regular patrols and checkpoints which occasionally proved
fatal to innocent civilians. These incidents boiled to head in late July and early August 2003:

- On July 27, five Baghdad residents, including two children, were killed by US troops at
  an impromptu cordon set up during a nearby house raid. (The target of the raid was
  Sheikh Rabia Mohamed Habib, a prominent tribal leader.) Several cars were fired on
  when they unwittingly approached barbed wire strung across the road.[99]

- Eleven days later, on 8 August, five or six Iraqis were reportedly killed at a checkpoint in
  Baghdad's al-Suleikh district, prompting a complaint from the head of the Iraqi
  Governing Council.[100]

- As mentioned earlier, on 9 August, US troops killed two Iraqi police in Baghdad and beat
  a third. The police had been engaged in a high speed pursuit in an unmarked car. But
  one officer was reportedly trying to surrender when killed. Other police, in uniforms and
  marked cars, unsuccessfully tried to intervene.[101]

While the incidents cited above fed discontent through a process of slow accretion, two others
may have been pivotal in laying a basis not only for discontent, but also insurrection. These two
are the 11 April 2003 killing of the paramount leader of the al-Kharbit tribe and the 18 June
killing of former Iraqi soldiers protesting for back pay.

10.1 Alienating the Sunni tribes

Before the war, the United States had an opportunity to coopt or neutralize the Dulaimi tribal
federation through a working relationship with the Kharbit tribe, a major force in the federation.
With an estimated two million members, the Dulaimi had been pillars of the Hussain regime.
Their strongholds were Falluja, Ramadi, Qaim, and others towns of the Sunni triangle. Leaders
of the Kharbit had been meeting with and assisting US intelligence operatives in Jordan. They
were key in facilitating prewar special operations in Western Anbar province.[102]

Unfortunately, on 11 April 2003, US aircraft dropped six guided bombs on the home of the
Kharbit's paramount leader, Malik Al-Kharbit, killing him. The air raid was meant to kill one of
Hussein's half brothers, who was thought to be at the sheik's compound. Along with al-Kharbit,
21 other family members were killed, including a dozen children. (Malik's successor, Abdul
Razak Al-Kharbit, has sought an apology from the United States and authority over the militias
of Al-Anbar province, promising to bring them under control. Instead, he was exiled from Iraq in
July 2004 for fomenting trouble in the province – a probably valid charge, given tribal dynamics
and the killing of his predecessor. Predictably, Ramadi was convulsed by violence when his
expulsion became known; Twenty-five more people were killed.)

Compounding this friction with Sunni tribes was a series of incidents involving the Al-Jumaili, also influential in Ramadi and Falluja. (Two of Iraq's pre-Hussein presidents had come from the al-Jumaili clan, including Abd ar-Rahman Arif, who had been deposed by Baathists.) Nine relatives of Sheikh Mishkhen al Jumaili, who sits on the Ramadi city council, were killed during a four-day period in September 2003.[103] A family of four, including a one-year-old boy, were killed accidently at a US checkpoint. Two others were killed in a mistaken attack on a farm house. And, in an incident recounted earlier in this paper, two were killed – perhaps mistakenly – when US troops engaged a group of insurgents.

Following the attack on the farm house, the cousin of one of those killed told reporters from the San Francisco Chronicle:

> As long as (American troops) act like this, there will be no stability in Iraq. Every person martyred here today is worth 100 Americans... Let me make this clear: The real war has not started yet. It starts from this day on.[104]

10.2 Alienating former military personnel

Equally serious was the killing of former Iraqi military officers on 18 June 2003. The officers and other military personnel had undertaken a series of demonstrations for back pay when on 23 May 2003 Paul Bremer announced the demobilisation of the Iraqi army, which increased the desperation of the soldiers' protests. Worse, in several cities, protesting soldiers were shot and injured or killed. On 18 June in Baghdad, two former soldiers were killed and several injured when US troops fired into their protest.[105]   Some of the protestors had begun throwing rocks at the US troops and pounding on vehicles entering the former presidential palace compound. The soldiers had gathered earlier in the day at the national recruiting center hoping to receive a promised one-time payment. When told there was no payment to be made that day, they reassembled at the Republican Palace.

One of the protestors pled his case in a subsequent interview with an *Agence France Presse* reporter:[106]

> We were not Saddam's soldiers, we were soldiers fighting to defend our country and the Americans know that the Iraqi army did not fight because they took Baghdad without facing any resistance.... We don't know why they want to punish us by abolishing the defense ministry and the army... It looks like the Americans do not care if they anger the Iraqis. It will be a real problem here in Baghdad because the capital is home to half of the Iraqi army.

Agence France Presse also interviewed one of the protest's leaders, Tahseen Ali Hussein, after a delegation met with US officials:

> If...the Americans do not find a suitable solution to our tragic situation, we will take up arms," he said, sparking a round of loud applause among a large crowd of former army servicemen in civilian clothes. ... Hussein added: "We are all very well trained soldiers and

we are armed. We will start ambushes, bombings and even suicide bombings. We will not let the Americans rule us in such a humiliating way.

Part Two: Patterns of Insurgency (*forthcoming*)

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NOTES FOR PART ONE

1. In a June 2004 poll, Oxford Research International (ORI) found 58 percent of Iraqis somewhat or strongly opposed the presence of Coalition forces in Iraq. The ratio of those strongly opposed to those strongly supporting the Coalition presence had increased to 3-to-1.

Confirming these results, the Iraq Centre for Research & Strategic Studies (ICRSS) found in a June 2004 poll that 66 percent of Iraqis strongly or somewhat opposed the presence of Coalition troops, while 30 percent supported it. The ratio of those strongly opposed to those strongly supporting the Coalition presence was greater than 6-to-1.

In a February 2004 poll, Oxford Research International found that 56.3 percent of Iraqis somewhat or strongly opposed the presence of Coalition forces in Iraq. The ratio of those strongly opposed to those strongly supporting the Coalition presence was 2.5-to-1.

Sources:

June 2004 ORI poll: Oxford Research International, *National Survey of Iraq, June 2004* (Oxford, UK: ORI, June 2004); available at: http://www.oxfordresearch.com/publications.html.

June 2004 ICRSS poll: Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies, *The Results of the Public Opinion Poll in Iraq* (Baghdad: ICRSS, June 2004); available at: http://www.back-to-iraq.com/archives/Files/Final%20Results%20of%20JUNE.doc; and,

February 2004 ORI poll: Oxford Research International, *National Survey of Iraq, February 2004* (Oxford, UK: ORI, February 2004); available at: http://www.oxfordresearch.com/publications.html.

2. In the June 2004 ORI poll, 70 percent of Iraqis viewed Coalition troops as an occupying or exploiting force; only 30 percent saw the Coalition as a liberating or peacekeeping force.

In the June 2004 poll by ICRSS, 46.5 percent of the 66 percent who opposed the Coalition presence (ie. 30 percent of the total population) did so because "it is an occupation force and must leave immediately" or because "they don't respect Iraq's religions and cultures." A different 23 percent of those opposing the Coalition (ie. 15 percent of the total population) did so because the Coalition forces had "brought

nothing for Iraq but death and destruction."

A May-June 2004 poll commissioned by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and conducted by the Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies (IIACSS) found that 92 percent of Iraqis viewed coalition forces as occupiers, rather than liberators or peace keepers.

Sources: June 2004 ORI poll, *see* Footnote 1; June 2004 ICRSS poll, *see* Footnote 1.

May-June 2004 IIACSS/CPA poll: Robin Gedye, "Iraqi support for coalition falls," *Daily Telegraph* (UK), 17 June 2004; Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society/CPA poll, *Public Opinion in Iraq: First Poll Following Abu Ghraib Revelations, 14-23 May 2004* (Baghdad: CPA, May 2004), available at: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5217741/site/newsweek/. Updated 15 June 2004.

3. The May-June IIACSS/CPA poll found that confidence in Coalition forces had fallen from 28 percent in January 2004 to 10 percent in May. Fifty-five percent said they would feel more safe if Coalition forces left immediately. And 67 percent said violence had increased because people had lost faith in the Coalition forces.

Fifty-four percent of respondents in the May-June IIACSS/CPA poll said that all Americans behaved in the ways revealed at Abu Ghraib prison. Thirty-eight percent said such behavior involved fewer than 100 people.

In a March-April 2004 poll sponsored by *USA Today, CNN,* and Gallup, 58 percent of Iraqis said US forces have behaved very or fairly badly; 34 percent say US forces have behaved very or fairly well. The ratio between those saying "very bad" and those saying "very well": 3-to-1.

An August 2003 Zogby International poll found that over 55 percent of Iraqis gave a negative rating to "how the US military is dealing with Iraqi civilians," while 20 percent gave the US military a positive rating.

Sources:

May-June IIACSS poll, *see* Footnote 2.

March-April 2004 *USA Today* poll: Cesar G. Soriano and Steven Komarow, "Poll: Iraqis out of patience," *USA Today,* 28 April 2004; "Key findings: Nationwide survey of 3,500 Iraqis," *USA Today,* 28 April 2004, available at: http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-04-28-gallup-iraq-findings.htm. Also see: Richard Burkholder, *Gallup Poll of Iraq: Liberated, Occupied, or in Limbo?* (Princeton, NJ: Gallup Organization, 28 April 2004).

August 2003 Zogby International poll: James Zogby, "Bend it like Cheney - Polling evidence shows most Iraqis have a negative view of the US-led occupation," *The Guardian,* 29 October 2003, available at: http://www.zogby.com/search/ReadClips.dbm?ID=6168; and, Guy Dinmore, "Opinion poll underlines Iraqi distrust of America," *Financial Times,* 11 September 2003.

4. A January 2005 Zogby poll found that 53 percent of Sunni Arabs thought that ongoing attacks on Coalition forces were a legitimate form of resistance.

The March-April 2004 *USA Today* poll found that 30 percent of Iraqis thought that attacks on US forces were somewhat or completely justified; another 22 percent said they were sometimes justified. In Sunni areas, 43 percent found the attacks somewhat or completely justified; in Shiite areas, 26 percent.

A poll of Baghdad residents conducted by the Gallup Organization in September and October 2003 found that 36 percent of the city's inhabitants thought the attacks on the United States were either completely, somewhat, or sometimes justified.

The four-city poll that Zogby International conducted in August 2003 found that 49 percent of Iraqis described the attacks on US troops as "resistance operations," while only 29 percent saw them as attacks by "Baath loyalists."

Sources:

August 2003 Zogby International poll, *see* Footnote 3.

January 2005 Zogby International poll: "Sunni boycott as Iraq goes to polls," Sunday Mail (Australia), 30 January 2005, p. 44; "Survey predicts deep divisions in Iraq," *UPI,* 29 January 2005; Press Release, *Survey Finds Deep Divisions in Iraq; Sunni Arabs Overwhelmingly Reject Sunday Elections; Majority of Sunnis, Shiites Favor US Withdrawal, New Abu Dhabi-TV / Zogby Poll Reveals* (Zogby International, 28 January 2005).

September-October 2003 Gallup poll: Richard Burkholder, "Baghdad Views US Troops: Protectors or Justifiable Targets?", press briefing, *Gallup Organization,* 14 October 2003.

5. The January 2005 poll by Zogby International found 82 percent of Sunni Arabs and 69 percent of Shiites favor US withdrawal "either immediately or after an elected government is in place."

The June 2004 IIACS/CPA poll found 41 percent of Iraqis favoring "immediate withdrawal" and 45 percent favoring withdrawal after election of a permanent government, which implied early 2006. Ten percent in June 2004 were amenable to a US stay of two years or longer – that is, a stay up to or beyond June 2006.

The June 2004 poll by ICRSS found 30 percent of Iraqis desiring immediate US withdrawal and 51 percent wanting withdrawal after a government was elected – which could imply either early 2005 or early 2006. Just 13 percent said that Coalition forces should remain until stability was achieved.

The March-April 2004 *USA Today* poll found 57 percent of Iraqis wanting US forces to "leave immediately"; Thirty-six percent said they could "stay longer".

The June 2004 ORI poll found 53 percent of respondents saying "leave now" or "within a few months" or "until an Interim Government is in place" or "in six months to a year" (that is, by June 2005). Thirty-three percent allowed a stay of "more than one year" or "until permanent government" was in place, which implies sometime in 2006. Only 13.6 percent were amenable to a longer stay.

The February 2004 ORI poll found 33 percent of Iraqis wanting US withdrawal within a year – which would have implied early 2005. Forty percent wanted withdrawal once an Iraqi government was in place – which would imply early 2006, at the latest. Twenty-seven percent were amenable to a longer or more open-ended stay.

Sources: January 2005 Zogby International poll, *see* Footnote 4; May-June 2004 IIACS/CPA poll, see Footnote 2; June 2004 poll by ICRSS, see Footnote 1; March-April 2004 *USA Today* poll, see Footnote 3; June 2004 ORI poll, *see* Footnote 1; February 2004 ORI poll, *see* Footnote 1.

6. Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte, Book II* (University Press of the Pacific, June 2001).

7. "Press Conference with President George W. Bush," *Federal News Service,* 13 April 2004.

8. Robin Shulman, "Clashes Break Out in Baghdad; US Forces Battle Insurgents as Militia Returns From Najaf," *Washington Post,* 29 August 2004, p. 20.

9. Laurie Kassman, "Iraqi Major on the Defeat of Iraqi Military," *Iraq Crisis Bulletin,* 17 April 2003.

10. Anthony Shadid, "Frustration and Foreboding in Falluja," *Washington Post,* 19 June 2003, p. 16.

11. Patrick Cockburn and David Usborne, "Burning With Anger: Iraqis Infuriated by New Flag That Was Designed in London," *Independent* (UK), 28 April 2004.

12. June 2004 ICRSS poll: Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies, *The Results of the Public Opinion Poll in Iraq* (Baghdad: ICRSS, June 2004); available at: http://www.back-to-iraq.com/archives/Files/Final%20Results%20of%20JUNE.doc.

13. Our estimate of the total Iraqi death toll during the main combat phase of the conflict is 13,000 (+/- 2,000). This includes between 3,200 and 4,300 noncombatant deaths. For the derivation of these estimates *see* Carl Conetta, *The Wages of War: Iraqi Combatant and Noncombatant Fatalities in the 2003 Conflict, PDA Research Monograph #8* (Cambridge MA: Commonwealth Institute, 20 October 2003).

Our estimate of Iraqi fatalities due to military or terrorist activity during the postwar period (through 1 May 2005) is approximately 15,000. This estimate comprises several sub-estimates: 5,000-6,500 insurgent deaths, 2,500 police and security force deaths, and 6,200-7,500 other Iraqi deaths.

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Health, at least 3,487 Iraqis died due to military and terrorist action in the five months from April to September. The Ministry also estimates that 3,274 died due to conflict situations during an overlapping period of six months, July through the end of December 2004. These figures imply a total of more than 5,000 for the last three-quarters of 2004. This estimate includes police and national guard. Also included would be some portion of insurgent deaths.

Sources: "Iraq Health Ministry Figures," *BBC News,* 30 January 2005; "Iraq data 'includes rebel deaths'," *BBC News,* 20 January 2005; and, Nancy A. Youssef, "More Iraqi civilians killed by US forces than by insurgents, data shows," *Knight Ridder,* 24 September 2004

Based on a variety of sources, the Brookings Institution's *Iraq Index* estimates that between 6,059 and 7,297 Iraqi civilians have been killed during the entire postwar period through 9 April 2005. Excluded from this estimate are Iraqi insurgent deaths, security force deaths, and deaths due to criminal activity.

Sources: Michael E. O'Hanlon and Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, *Iraq Index: Tracking Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 18 April 2005), available at: http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf. Also see: "The Descent into Chaos: after the Fall: One Year's Civilian Death Toll," *Independent* (London), 9 April 2004, pp. 6-7; and, *The Iraq Body Count Database*, http://www.iraqbodycount.net/database/

The available reports of civilian deaths in Falluja for the period of the November offensive are only partial, however. As a modest hedge against undercounting we have added 141-203 fatalities to the Brookings total, bringing it up to 6,200-7,500. Attributing 40 percent to 50 percent of this total to coalition action would be consistent with the practices reviewed in this study, incidents reported in the news media, and medical reports from main combat areas, especially Falluja.

There are several partial estimates of Iraqi security and police personnel killed during the postwar period. The Brookings Institution *Iraq Index* summarizes these as follows: 1,500 police killed, April 2003 - December 2004; 1,342 police and soldiers killed, June 2004-February 2005; 721 Iraqi security force recruits killed, May 2003-23 September 2004. A combined estimate of 2,500 police and security force personnel killed during the entire postwar period through April 2005 would be consistent with these figures.

Including action against civilians, police, and security service personnel, insurgents may be responsible for 6,000 postwar Iraqi deaths. More than 2,000 of these would be the result of mass casualty bombings. (Iraqi Human Rights Minister Bakhtiar Amin has reported that Iraq's insurgents and criminal gangs are responsible for 6,000 postwar killings).

Source: "Iraq insurgency has killed 6,000 civilians," *Reuters,* 5 April 2005.

Estimates that as many as 10,000-15,000 insurgents were killed in 2004 alone are not plausible, given the estimated size of the insurgency as having never exceeded 20,000 fighters. Nor are they consistent with the estimate by Gen. George W. Casey that 15,000 total has been captured or killed in 2004. Given the prison population, Casey's estimate would imply significantly less than 10,000 killed in 2004. Even estimates made by front line units are notoriously unreliable – often overstating the numbers killed by a factor of three or more.   Of course, it is also difficult in the heat of battle to distinguish combatant from non-combatant deaths. A more realistic projection based on a review of news reports for the combat-heavy 2nd and 4th quarters of 2004 is that between 5,000 and 6,500 insurgents have been killed by coalition forces during the entire postwar period. (This projection is based on the assumption that no less than 35 percent and no more than 50 percent of all insurgent deaths occurred during the periods under review.)

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Including action against insurgents and the accidental killing of civilians, coalition forces may be responsible for more than 8,500 postwar Iraqi deaths.

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beginning at al-Kut, al-Hillah, and Karbala and running north to Baghdad and its immediate surrounds.
In this area, Iraqi Republican Guard Divisions had been deployed. A second zone where firepower
usage was more moderate is bounded on the north by al-Kut and al-Hillah and in the south by an-Najaf
and ad-Diwaniyah. In these two zones, almost 90 percent of combatant casualties and more than 70
percent of combatant casualties occurred.

To the south of an-Najaf and ad-Diwaniyah is a third zone which extends to Iraq's southern borders,
where coalition forces entered the country. In this zone, combat was sporadic, focused on the cities of
an-Nasiriyah, as-Samawah, al-Basrah, the al-Rumeila oil fields, and the small towns of the al-Faw
peninsula. Most important: Apart from the artillery barrage along the border that opened the war, and
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