

DOCUMENT-BASED POLITICIZATION OF THE U.S. MILITARY:  
A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. ARMY  
COUNTERINSURGENCY FIELD MANUAL (FM 3-24)

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Abstract

The politicization of military forces is not a development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Throughout history, armies have taken on roles traditionally relegated to non-military entities and accepted the notion that the actions of even the most junior members of their force may have substantial political implications. The development of the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq since 2003 has been particularly ubiquitous. Although the politicization of military forces is not a recent development, little effort has been made to locate the manner in which the politicization has been reflected by the doctrines included in the U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24). I hypothesize that the doctrines included in FM 3-24 not only codified many systemic strategic and tactical changes for the U.S. military, but also supported the politicization of the military in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I conclude that while not at the level I initially suspected, the doctrines included in the FM 3-24 reflected the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq following its release in early 2007.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

*War is the continuation of politics by other means.*

Carl von Clausewitz

The United States Army is an organization that historically has been reluctant to foster change within its structures. It is a large bureaucracy that often has fallen victim to its own inability to adapt quickly to the demands of external forces. Following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, the U.S. Army came face to face with a doctrinal challenge that made its presence felt from the squad-based tactical level up to the corps-wide strategic command level. Early in the occupation, it became glaringly clear that the U.S. Army was ill-prepared to employ counterinsurgency (COIN) operations aimed at combating the rising insurgency in Iraq. In-theater commanders were left waiting for an Army-wide document that provided guidance on COIN operations. For an organization that hangs its hat on document-based guidance and instruction, this was a significant shortcoming. The military required new doctrine to defeat the insurgency, and it needed it fast. Even though it took several years and the strong leadership skills of one of the nation's finest military minds, the Army finally produced the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, also known as Field Manual (FM) 3-24 (*cross-listed as Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*).

More than any other military document published in recent history, FM 3-24 serves as a significant articulation of contemporary military ideas including the changing nature of the politicization of the military. One of these effects focuses on the politicization of the U.S. military in its fight against the Iraqi insurgency following the release of the Manual in December 2006. This thesis seeks to answer the question: How can we more fully understand the new political calculus toward the insurgency in Iraq as expressed in FM 3-24? Due to the distinctive manner in which the Manual was written and the wide range of information included in its pages, I focus on five factors found throughout the Manual that I believe reflected and perhaps helped shape the new political calculus towards the Iraqi insurgency. I believe that the findings of the research will prove valuable in more fully understanding the changing roles of the U.S. military in the current COIN conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## “Politicization”

The goal of this thesis is to uncover the themes that reflected the shift in political focus of the U.S. military in Iraq. Throughout this thesis I will use “politicization,” “shift in political focus,” and “the genesis of a new political orientation” to express the same idea. In the theoretical framework (introduced in chapter two) I establish two areas of focus for the “politicization” of the U.S. military. The first concerns the reemergence of the military’s multidimensional role in COIN warfare. In conventional conflicts, the U.S. military performs traditional military duties such as conducting assaults, defending key terrain, or attacking enemy forces. When and if civilian entities are required to get involved in such conflicts, a clear line is drawn between the roles and duties of civilian and military actors. This, however, is not the case with COIN campaigns. Especially following the release of the Manual, it became clear that even though the civilian sector of the U.S. executive branch played key roles in the success of COIN operations, the likelihood of environmental constraints and resource limitations would hinder the involvement of civilian agencies. As a result, the U.S. military was “politicized” by taking on duties and roles that traditionally were consigned to the civilian sector. In this view the U.S. military becomes a quasi-political actor due to the range of duties and expectations placed on it in COIN operations.

The second area of focus concerns the political implications of involving even the most junior member of the U.S. military in COIN warfare. Recent history in the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies has shown that the nature of counterinsurgency conflicts has had enormous political ramifications on the actions or inactions of individual members of the U.S. military. As a result the term “strategic corporal” was coined to reference the vast influence that tactical-level actors in the U.S. military have. In my view, the writing team of the Manual fully understood the political nature of COIN missions and in particular the substantial weight placed on the actions of tactical-level actors. As a result, I believed that the writing team sought to make it explicit that the military is political by addressing the essential role played by even the most junior members of the COIN force. This understanding of the political climate faced by the U.S. military in its campaign against the Iraqi insurgency combined with the acceptance of the new multivariate roles of the U.S. military make up the definition of “politicization” used here.

## Purpose and Significance

With an ever changing battlefield it is imperative that the U.S. military learn to adapt to present threats. It is evident that the U.S. Army was unprepared to implement COIN operations as the insurgency in Iraq gained steam in 2003. Even though this unpreparedness may be attributed to strategic miscalculations by the Bush administration prior to the invasion, the U.S. military had to live with the consequences. Nonetheless, under the leadership of military intellectuals such as General David Petraeus, the U.S. military was able to address the shortcomings in its operations on both the strategic and tactical levels through the production of FM 3-24. The applicability of the COIN doctrines included in FM 3-24 is being played out in 2011 as Petraeus attempts to implement similar strategies in his fight against the insurgency in Afghanistan, albeit with evident recent divergence (for example, the introduction of 29 M-1 Abrams Tanks to Southern Afghanistan). The timely and cooperative manner in which the Manual was created is one of the major bright spots for the U.S. military in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, just as the U.S. was ill-prepared to address the threats of its enemies during the insurgency of 2003, there is a good chance that the U.S. military will find itself caught off guard in future military interactions. In my view, the top leaders in the Army and Department of Defense surely will be forced to adapt on-the-fly at the strategic level just as they did concerning COIN operations in Iraq. The Manual should serve as the gold standard for the creation of military doctrine, not necessarily because of its content (which is applicable and useful on multiple fronts), but because of the distinctive manner in which it was developed.

In addition, the resulting change in perspective throughout the U.S. military will continue to affect the actions of the military. Even though the U.S. military has to various extents throughout its history understood and implemented its role as a political entity, I believe the release of the Manual in 2007 represented a watershed moment. The authors of the Manual codified, for the first time, various changes that must be made within the U.S. military in order to find success in COIN operations. These changes pushed the U.S. military to step beyond its traditional military-centric roles and to focus on mastering duties previously relegated to civilian entities. Additionally, the Manual helped foster the notion that in 21<sup>st</sup> century battlefields, the actions and decisions of even the most junior soldier, marine, airman, or sailor can have strategic implications affecting the outcome of entire campaigns.

The purpose of this thesis is to uncover evidence of the new political calculus of the U.S. military in Iraq in the Manual. Even though a select number of troops fighting in Iraq prior to the release of the Manual in 2007 were already acting in their politicized role, I believe it was not until the codification of the COIN doctrines in the Manual that the U.S. military began to better understand and acknowledge its changing role in the fight against the Iraqi insurgency. By uncovering systemic evidence of the new political orientation towards the counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq, I will be able to provide a framework for future analysis of the second and third-order effects of military doctrine. Due to the primacy of the actions taken and the decisions made by the U.S. military on U.S. foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I believe developing such a framework can shift the manner in which those in and out of the armed services analyze the potential consequences of U.S. policy. Concurrently, it is my hope that those in the position to make such policy decisions in the U.S. government, especially the military, will acknowledge and take into consideration these second and third-order effects. My research suggests that these effects are not limited to the well-known “front-page” decisions; even the minutest detail in military doctrine can have broad implications for the entire country.

### Boundaries and Expectations

With such a broad topic as U.S. Army COIN operations in Iraq, it is easy to cast too large of a net in formulating a viable research question. I did not try to evaluate the performance of the COIN doctrines included in the Manual in Iraq. Nor was it my intention to provide a broad narrative of the state of affairs of the U.S. Army in Iraq following the release of the Manual. Instead, this is a study of the major themes of the newly established political calculus of the U.S. military as reflected through an in-depth analysis of these factors as seen throughout the Manual. I limited the research and analysis to the insurgency in Iraq. As useful as it would be to look concurrently at the politicization of the U.S. military in the COIN campaign in Afghanistan, the many differences between the two conflicts did not permit me to draw any substantive conclusions. And, of course, the motivation to create the Manual came due to the failures against the Iraqi insurgency, not against the Taliban and Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. This is not to say that the Afghanistan campaign was devoid of doctrinal shortcomings. However, it is apparent that the focus of the U.S. administration, the military, and the writing team for the Manual in 2006 was on Iraq, not Afghanistan.

I developed five propositions that my research explores. Although the military as a whole traditionally has been an organization resistant to change at times, I expected to find that many of the key members of the writing team would show strong support for the changes in COIN doctrine. Based on existing scholarship, it was apparent that many commanders in the U.S. military as well as scholars outside of the armed forces fully acknowledged the shortcomings in existing COIN doctrine. For many of these people, the establishment of modern COIN operations in the Manual served as a vehicle for necessary adjustment within the military. I also believed that I would find substantial evidence, from both primary and secondary sources, that showed the limited effects of the Manual's release on the situation in Iraq from 2007 to 2010. Although the development and release of the Manual may have played a major role in the decrease in insurgent activity, multiple factors also assisted in the rising stability in Iraq (for example, the U.S. troop surge in early 2007, the decrease of support for radical Sunni and Shi'ite movements amid the Iraqi populace, and the Sunni awakening).

Additionally, I expected that many of the documents and personal accounts collected through the interview process would point to staunch support for the write-by-committee style that included both civilians and military personnel in which FM 3-24 was written. This is one of the most important aspects of the legacy of the Manual. The U.S. military acknowledged that experts outside of the services could provide valuable insight and perspective concerning the creation of doctrine. I expected that the benefits of using resources outside of the military to fashion doctrine would lead military decision makers to follow such a course in the future. Even though this type of doctrinal writing stepped outside the existing parameters of the U.S. military, the benefits of such an approach are irrefutable.

Prior to conducting the research, I compiled a list of five key factors that I believed reflected the new political orientation of the U.S. military in Iraq following the release of the Manual. Even though I selected each factor based on my own notions concerning their influence, I was unsure to what extent each drove the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq. With this in mind, I hypothesized that two of the five factors would be prominent indicators of politicization. The first was the experience and expertise of the writing team in COIN doctrine. Because General Petraeus himself and the entire primary and secondary writing staffs had such impressive resumes with hands-on COIN experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam as well as being experts in virtually all things concerning counterinsurgency operations, I thought that

they would place the politicization of the U.S. military at the forefront of the Manual. The second factor is the role of historical COIN operations. After conducting background research on the previous works of the writing team, it became apparent that they all were well versed in the successes and failures of past COIN campaigns. Because of this, I supposed that classical COIN experiences calling for a politicized fighting force would significantly characterize the politicization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. military.

COIN operations differ from other types of U.S. military campaigns because they rely on both military and civilian entities to be successful. In order to defeat insurgent forces, it is paramount that each of these arms of the U.S. government works in conjunction with the other. The significance of a successful relationship between these two very different actors is shown by the inclusion of an entire chapter on the topic in the Manual. In addition, the relationship between civilian and military agencies is one of the factors that I believed highlighted the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq. Due to the constantly changing levels of stability and security in COIN theaters, recent history in Iraq (and Afghanistan) shows that when situations prove inhospitable for civilian agencies, the onus to pick up the pieces and carry on with the COIN mission falls to the military. Because of the dominant role of the military in COIN operations, I suspected that the Manual as well as my interviews would support the notion that the military should continue to take the dominant role in COIN operations relative to civilian agencies.

#### The Creation of FM 3-24

*This is a game of wits and will. You've got to be learning and adapting constantly to survive.*<sup>1</sup>

-General Peter J. Schoomaker, USA, 2004

Before commencing an in-depth analysis of factors in the Manual that reflected the changing politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq, it is important to understand why the Manual was even needed and to grasp the manner in which the Manual was produced. Appreciating both will help the reader see the importance of the nature of the politicization the Manual advanced.

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<sup>1</sup> Conrad Crane, Introduction to: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (Field Manual 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: li.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the entire U.S. military was forced to abruptly readjust its strategic and tactical missions around the globe. 9/11 served as a rude awakening for a military machine that was caught sleeping in a ten year stupor following the end of the Cold War. Throughout the 1990's the United States military still was designed to fight a large scale conventional mass-effect war similar to WWII or the Korean War. This became a significant problem following the downfall of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq. The general consensus among many was that political appointees of Presidents Clinton and W. Bush in the Department of Defense had left the military under-trained and under-resourced to defeat the insurgencies that soon developed in Iraq following the deployment and victory of the conventional forces. This should come as no surprise because COIN operations had been relegated to the Special Operations community since the Vietnam era.<sup>2</sup> However, as soon as the insurgency in Iraq began to take root amid the populace, the U.S. military learned that not only was the COIN mission too large to be fought solely within the Special Operations community, but the conventional side of the military, from the strategic to the tactical levels, was ill-prepared to play a major role in combating the insurgency in Iraq.

Due to the nature of its mission, the U.S. military must adapt to the ever-changing threats posed by foreign aggressors. It constantly attempts to locate the enemy's most probable course of action in order to stymie it before the initiative comes to fruition. Unfortunately for military policymakers, the actions of potential enemies are anything but static. This sets in motion a system of perpetual war gaming and planning designed to prepare the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines to find success against the enemies of the United States. Institutions such as the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, and the National Defense University are charged with preparing the future leaders of the U.S. military in the fight against state and non-state actors that pose imminent threats to the United States. The U.S. military experience in both Iraq and Afghanistan revealed that the largest threat to U.S. interests in the region and overall security came from insurgent movements in both theaters. Prior to the invasion and occupation of both countries, the U.S. military was without a definitive source of guidance and instruction concerning 21<sup>st</sup> century COIN operations. In an organization that develops manuals for everything from "how to clean the barrel of a M4 Carbine" to the step-by-

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<sup>2</sup>Seth G. Jones. In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan. New York and London: Norton, 2010: 124.

step process to successfully assault a bunker, this was a substantial problem.<sup>3</sup> The Army did have the Counterinsurgency Operations Manual (FM 90-8) that was published in 1987 to draw from, but it was far from sufficient to address the distinctive challenges of COIN operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> The evolution of weaponry and insurgent tactics since the Cold War era created a new breed of ideologically-motivated insurgents in Iraq that the U.S. Army was ill-equipped to combat. As international relations specialist Dr. Steven Metz put it, “The U.S. military was like a finely-trained sprinter suddenly entered in a marathon.”<sup>5</sup>

Without a military-wide standard text designed to guide COIN mission planning and implementation, most forces fighting the insurgency had to rely on command guidance, which could vary significantly from unit to unit. As the insurgencies in Iraq began to gain speed in late 2003, military leaders within the Department of Defense began the process of developing a document that would serve as the definitive source for guidance concerning COIN operations within the U.S. military. What emerged in October 2004 was the U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (Interim) 3-07.22. Albeit hastily constructed, FM 3-07.22 served as a band-aid for the U.S. military’s gushing wound that was COIN doctrine. The interim manual was sufficient for the time being, but military leaders understood that a definitive military-wide COIN doctrine needed to be published as soon as possible. This task fell upon the U.S. Army’s Combined Arms Center (CAC), which was led at the time by General David H. Petraeus who had just returned from his second command tour in Iraq.

Under the command of Petraeus, the CAC, located in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, began developing what would become the Counterinsurgency Field Manual in late 2005. The CAC is charged with preparing the Army and its leadership to meet the intellectual and strategic challenges of warfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Center accomplishes this task by providing “Army-wide leadership and supervision for leader development and professional military and civilian education; institutional and collective training; functional training; training support; battle command; doctrine; lessons learned; and other specified areas that the TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command of the U.S. Army) Commander designates.”<sup>6</sup> Under the guidance of

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<sup>3</sup> The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad Manual (Field Manual 3-21.8) Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Counterinsurgency Operations (Field Manual 90-8), Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Steven Metz. “Decision making In Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007.” *The Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle, PA: 2010: 12.

<sup>6</sup> “Combined Arms Center-Overview” US Army Combined Arms Center. 27 October 2010.

Petraeus and Lieutenant General James Mattis (U.S. Marine Corps) the CAC began the arduous task of re-writing the interim COIN manual and creating what would become “perhaps the most important driver of intellectual change for the Army and Marine Corps.”<sup>7</sup> Although FMI 3-07.22 provided useful insight attained primarily from lessons learned in the early months of the Iraqi insurgency in 2003-2004, it was never intended to serve as permanent U.S. Army doctrine. For the creation of the re-vamped COIN Manual, Petraeus turned to his West Point classmate Lieutenant Colonel Conrad Crane (U.S. Army, retired), who had a Ph.D. in history from Stanford University, to spearhead the effort. After establishing a writing team consisting of military personnel, human rights activists from the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard University, political theorists, economists, and cultural anthropologists, Petraeus moved forward with the production of the Manual. The Manual was written, revised, and published in break-neck speed. The final product was released in December 2006.

Typically, the construction of Army doctrine is done “in-house” behind closed doors; however, this was not the case with the creation of FM 3-24. Petraeus understood that because of the challenges presented by insurgent warfare, it was imperative that the very best minds both in and out of uniform contribute to the Manual’s creation. Lieutenant Colonel John A. Nagl (U.S. Army, retired), who received a Ph.D. in international relations from Oxford’s St. Anthony’s College, wrote concerning the distinctive manner in which the Manual was written and reviewed:

*In addition to this unusually open internal process; FM 3–24 was extensively analyzed by interested parties outside the Armed Forces, including not only the 80 or so participants who attended the Leavenworth review conference but also a much larger audience that commented on a draft version that was leaked online that summer. The writing team carefully reviewed each of the hundreds of comments it received and ultimately published a manual that was much better for the input of so many. No previous doctrinal manual had undergone such a public review process before publication or provided so many opportunities for comment to both those inside and outside the Army/Marine Corps tent.*<sup>8</sup>

Following his command at CAC, Petraeus was appointed in early 2007 by President George W. Bush to succeed General George Casey as the commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I). Petraeus’s time serving as the commander of all coalition forces in Iraq provided the opportunity to implement the same COIN doctrines he helped create during his tenure as

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< <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/overview.asp>>.

<sup>7</sup> John A. Nagl, Forward to: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: xvi.

<sup>8</sup> John A. Nagl, (Lieutenant Colonel-U.S. Army). “Constructing the Legacy of Field Manual 3-24.” *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, 2010 Third Quarter 58 (2010): 118-120.

Commander of the CAC. With the assistance of his closest military advisors, nicknamed “the Petraeus Guys,” including renowned military thinkers Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen (Australian Army), Lieutenant Colonel Mike Meese (U.S. Army), and Colonel H.R. McMaster (U.S. Army), Petraeus presided over successful efforts to curb sectarian violence and to decrease insurgent activity through the implementation of new-and-improved COIN operations throughout the countryside.

Petraeus’s leadership in guiding coalition forces in the newly established COIN doctrines helped earn him the unofficial role of serving as the military’s “COIN operations guru.” His atypical combination of holding a doctorate in international relations from Princeton University in addition to his Airborne Ranger qualifications<sup>9</sup> and his “boots on the ground experience” serving as the commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Mosul Iraq allowed him to successfully lead the COIN mission in Iraq. More than any other strategic-level officer in the U.S. military at the time, he had the experience, knowledge, and leadership skills necessary to turn the tide in the Iraqi conflict. In subsequent years, Petraeus’s accolades during his time as commander of MNF-I led to his promotion to commander of CENTCOM (U.S. Central Command) and more recently as commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A).

It is not easy to surmise what the U.S. occupation in Iraq would be like today without the creation and implementation of the Manual. However, when the Manual was released in 2007, there was a substantial shift in the Army’s guidance concerning COIN operations. It is clear that the U.S. Army was ill-equipped to contain and destroy the Iraqi insurgency when it began to spread following the destruction of Saddam’s Ba’athist regime in 2003. Lieutenant Colonel Nagl is open in his assessment of the state of affairs facing the U.S. Army in Iraq in 2003 when he wrote in the introduction to the Manual: “ The American Army of 2003 was organized, designed, trained, and equipped to defeat another conventional army; indeed, it had no peer in that arena. It was, however, unprepared for an enemy who understood that it could not hope to defeat the U.S. Army on a conventional battlefield, and who therefore chose to wage war against America from the shadows.”<sup>10</sup> In order to keep Iraq from becoming the United States’ 21<sup>st</sup> century “Vietnam,” military as well as civilian leaders in the Army and the Department of Defense needed to make

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<sup>9</sup> John A. Nagl, Forward to: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: xv.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* p. xiii.

drastic changes in the strategic operation and implementation of U.S. forces in a timely manner. The Manual filled that void in the U.S. military's operational "tool kit." In the years since its release, the Manual has been analyzed, critiqued, praised, and dissected by both those in and out of uniform more than any other military document in recent memory.

### Thesis Structure

The next chapter will provide an outline of the scholarly literature relating to multiple issues concerning the Manual, U.S. COIN efforts in Iraq, and the politicization of the U.S. military. The chapter will reveal gaps in the research concerning the Manual that this thesis addressed. The third chapter will lay out the methodological framework for the research, including an examination of each of the five factors in the Manual selected as possible indicators of the politicization of the U.S. military. The fourth chapter presents the research findings. The final chapter will discuss the limitations of my research, the performance of the propositions tested, and ideas for future research. Finally, it presents the broad implications of the findings as well as my recommendations for the U.S. government pertaining to military doctrine creation and the politicization of the military.

## Chapter Two

### Application of Literature to Research

More than almost any other military doctrinal document, FM 3-24 has undergone substantial analysis and critique both within and outside the armed services. The sheer amount of inquiry into the Manual is a notable example of the widespread attention that has been paid to the doctrines included in its pages. My research suggested that more and more military scholars in and out of uniform acknowledge the importance of the Manual on the U.S. experience in Iraq and in the broader U.S. military mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even though substantial material exists analyzing the creation and implementation of the Manual, gaps remain in exploring the awakening of the military to the political contingencies reflected in the Manual.

The scholarly research presented in this chapter helped me decide what factors included in the Manual that I would use to tap the politicization of the U.S. military. Additionally, many of the authors included in my initial research helped me construct the framework I used to examine my hypotheses about the politicizing themes in the Manual. This chapter will offer insights and entry points into my methodology, propositions, and recommendations based on previous work.

One of the cornerstones of the Manual was the importance it placed on establishing high levels of cultural knowledge for COIN forces. In her monograph *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge*, Dr. Sheila Miyoshi Jager presented an argument supporting the significance of the mastery of cultural norms, expectations, and customs of the local populace. She opened with the following quote from General Petraeus in 2007 when he served as commander of MNF-I:

*Knowledge of the cultural terrain can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, the knowledge of the geographical terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographical terrain.*<sup>11</sup>

Throughout, Miyoshi Jager furthered the importance of cultural knowledge of the local population in the defeat of insurgent movements. Although she openly stated that the changes in COIN doctrine that the Manual brought forth were welcome improvements, she maintained that by late 2007 much work remained to be done in order to fully tie cultural knowledge into the

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<sup>11</sup> Sheila Miyoshi Jager. "The Uses of Cultural Knowledge." *The Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle, PA: November 17, 2007: 1.

overarching strategic framework in Iraq. By 2007 significant evidence suggested that increased cultural knowledge helped U.S. forces refocus their efforts to better achieve their operational and tactical goals.<sup>12</sup> She also sought to discover the implications if U.S. political and military policymakers were to apply the same cultural knowledge on a strategic level.

Miyoshi Jager closed by providing suggestions aimed at improving the strategic level fighting force of the U.S. military. One of the largest errors made on the strategic level was the separation between “us” and “them” with regards to the insurgent forces in Iraq: “They (policymakers) should focus less on the moral distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’—a major centerpiece of the Bush Doctrine—and more on the differences between ‘them.’” She continued: “This implies separating terrorist groups (as distinct social, cultural, and political entities) and also recognizing that although all of them hate America, they might hate each other even more. The more we learn to recognize and exploit the cultural differences among these terrorist groups, the better we will be able to isolate and defeat them.”<sup>13</sup> Her analysis called for improvements in the COIN doctrines included in the Manual that were in the process of being employed in Iraq by mid-2007. Her work revealed gaps in the Manual that needed to be filled in order to further the success of the COIN mission in Iraq. Although the Manual takes cultural differences into account, it can and should be amended to more fully exploit the cultural differences amid the populace.

Much has been written concerning the incongruity between the rising insurgency and the ability of the U.S. military to conduct COIN operations in Iraq starting in 2003. In scrutinizing the change in strategic decision making in Iraq in 2007, international relations scholar Steven Katz wrote about the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps to carry out COIN operations, “Neither the Army nor the Marine Corps were configured for large scale, protracted counterinsurgency. A decade of defense transformation had created a force optimized for intense, short-duration operations, not stabilization or counterinsurgency.”<sup>14</sup> Although the focus of his work was to analyze the manner in which the strategic level leadership all the way to President Bush was able to initiate a complete change in direction in Iraq overall, the change in COIN doctrine serves as the centerpiece of his analysis. Katz states that the success of the surge of U.S.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* p. 21

<sup>14</sup> Steven Metz. Decisionmaking In Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Strategic Shift of 2007. *The Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle, PA: 2010: 12.

military forces and the strategic shift in Iraq during 2007 resulted from what he called “a perfect storm” that included “good thinking, good timing, and good luck”.<sup>15</sup> The surge is widely touted as one of the most significant military success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet, even the man who receives most of the credit for its accomplishments admitted that its success was a confluence of multiple factors. General Petraeus openly stated that the success of the surge was a result of “Iraqis tiring of both Sunni and Shi’a extremists, Iraqi Security Forces achieving at least limited capacity to provide security, and the *U.S. military’s growth in tactical and operational prowess in counterinsurgency*”<sup>16</sup> (my emphasis).

Even though Katz’s work addressed the U.S. military operations in Iraq during 2007 at the macro level, he provided a vital perspective that aided in my research because of the frank manner in which he approached the strategic changes in the U.S. Army that took place in Iraq. His monograph helped isolate key factors (such as the troop surge) concerning the effects that the implementation of the COIN doctrines in the manual had on the U.S. Army in Iraq. Whereas he only briefly mentions the effects of the newly-established Army-wide COIN doctrines, I isolated and expanded on this factor in relation to the strategic level U.S. Army experience in Iraq.

In a separate monograph, Metz presents an intriguing analysis of the changes in U.S. military views of the manner in which it conducted counterinsurgent operations after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. In the introduction to Rethinking Insurgency, Metz acknowledged that since the end of the Cold War and the advent of widespread economic globalization, insurgencies have taken on a substantial role in global conflicts. Because modern insurgencies often arise in the context of larger overarching conflicts, Metz believed that the United States must rethink its strategy in combating insurgencies. On this issue he wrote:

*At the strategic level, the risk to the United States is not that insurgents will “win” in the traditional sense, take over their country, and shift it from a partner to an enemy. It is that complex internal conflicts, especially ones involving insurgency, will generate other adverse effects: the destabilization of regions, resource flows, and markets; the blossoming of transnational crime; humanitarian disasters; transnational terrorism; and so forth. Given this, the U.S. goal should not automatically be the defeat of the insurgents by the regime (which may be impossible and which the regime may not even want), but the most rapid conflict resolution possible. In other words, a quick and sustainable resolution which integrates insurgents into the national power structure is less damaging*

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6

*to U.S. national interests than a protracted conflict which leads to the complete destruction of the insurgents. Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat.*<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, the notion that “a quick and sustainable resolution which integrates insurgents into the national power structure is less damaging to U.S. national interests than a protracted conflict” may be hard for many within the U.S. military and policy realms to accept. However, the current U.S. counterinsurgent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan support Metz’s argument that a protracted conflict should be avoided at all costs.

One of the most significant issues that Metz addressed concerned the political, economic, and psychological aspects of insurgencies. Although he accepted the Clausewitzian view that wars (and insurgencies) are quintessentially political in nature, he believed that the economic and psychological aspects of insurgencies often are overlooked. Metz argued that an insurgency “provide(s) a source of income out of proportion to what the insurgents could otherwise earn, particularly for the lower ranks. And, it provides a source of identity and empowerment for those with few other sources of these things.”<sup>18</sup> Metz recommends that the primary goal of counterinsurgent operations should be to “raise the economic and psychological costs and risks of participation in an insurgency and provide alternatives.”<sup>19</sup> His primary argument is that COIN forces should spend substantial time, effort, and resources to develop a competitive and stable economy within the host nation. The host nation must be able to create enough jobs to give otherwise bored, uneducated, and disillusioned young males a reason to avoid joining the insurgency. If they have the opportunity to gain an education or to earn a steady income, the strength of the insurgency will decrease substantially.

The Manual’s writing team understood, just as Metz did, the importance of addressing the economic and psychological needs of the host nation’s populace. If the host government can, with the assistance of the counterinsurgent forces, develop viable economic opportunities for the populace to earn decent wages, joining the insurgent forces will be much less appealing. The economic appeal of insurgencies has been a substantial driving force in classical insurgencies. Economic issues served as a key driving force for the increase of insurgent forces in Iraq following the fall of the Ba’athist regime in 2003. Issues concerning the economic development and stability of the host nation are pivotal points to understanding and successfully combating

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen Metz. “Rethinking Insurgency.” *The Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle, PA: 2007: v.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

any insurgency. The writing team knew this and ensured that the Manual expressed the importance of developing the host nation economy.

Metz presented a sound analysis of key tenets of counterinsurgent operations that are sometimes overlooked. This monograph does a wonderful job displaying the manner in which counterinsurgent forces, which are frequently relegated to fulfilling strictly military roles, can and should also play a political role when conducting counterinsurgent operations. This notion of the multi-dimensional role necessary for COIN forces helped me establish the thesis for this work. Metz's book provided a useful platform for analyzing the viability and sustainability of the COIN doctrines found in the Manual. I utilized the economic focus of COIN operations as a key to locate and analyze the factors that indicated the military's new political orientation towards the insurgency in Iraq as expressed in the Manual.

Many advocates of large-scale COIN operations cite the dramatic decrease in military-based, sectarian-based, and insurgent-based violence in Iraq during 2007 as a product of the change in operational strategy in the U.S. Army. Even though it is easy to claim that the downturn in violence was produced solely by the release and application of the COIN doctrines in the Manual, such an outlook fails to address the outside factors that helped spur the decrease of violence in Iraq. In "The Myth of a Kinder, Gentler War," Michael A. Cohen looked at the implications of the change in mindset on future U.S. military activities.<sup>20</sup> Cohen was quick to point out that many other variables influenced the decreasing violence and increasing stability levels throughout Iraq in 2007. "Simply put, both sides (Sunni and Shiite) ran out of political opponents to slaughter. This is a critical point: though the decline in violence coincided with the surge in U.S. troop levels and the application of new, counter-insurgency tactics put forth in the Manual, a significant portion of the drop in bloodshed happened organically and because of actions taken by Iraqis themselves."<sup>21</sup> Cohen's critique of COIN operations in Iraq was rare for its frankness in analyzing the on-the-ground effects of the Army's newly established COIN doctrines. He was both realistic and critical in his overview of the U.S. military's experience in Iraq during 2007. By acknowledging the multi-faced nature of the factors that helped cause a decrease in violence, he significantly strengthened his argument.

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<sup>20</sup> Michael A. Cohen. "The Myth of a Kinder, Gentler War". *World Policy Journal*, Spring 2010 (2010): 74-86.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83.

Following the relative “success” in Iraq with the execution of the COIN doctrines from the Manual, a mindset developed among top strategic decision makers that many analysts have described as the “Iraq Syndrome.”<sup>22</sup> Colin H. Kahl defined this as the belief that the implementation of the FM 3-24-based COIN doctrines that worked in Iraq would work in any and all future COIN operations.<sup>23</sup> Similar to Cohen, Kahl was reluctant to jump on the Manual bandwagon. He believed that along with the improvements the Manual’s doctrines made in countering the insurgency in Iraq, it created operational standards that were unrealistic to maintain for the long run. According to Kahl the COIN personnel requirements outlined in the Manual were “simply too large to maintain.” He continued, “The degree of civil-military, multinational, and cross-sectoral planning, preparation, and coordination needed to succeed in these environments outstrips the current capacity of the U.S. government.”<sup>24</sup> In addition, he noted that although the Manual served a vital purpose in combating the Iraqi insurgency, because of the asymmetric nature of insurgencies, it would be ill-advised and naïve to assume that the same strategies would apply in different settings.

*Future U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns are likely to occur in contexts where the COIN FM will be particularly difficult to implement. First, the evolving nature of insurgency within the broader "war on terror" -- in which loose cellular networks of fighters operate transnationally and in dense urban environments, exploiting modern communications technologies and virtual domains to coordinate activities and magnify the symbolic effect of attacks -- produces immense challenges for counterinsurgents, challenges the manual (FM 3-24) only scratches the surface of.*<sup>25</sup>

Although the development and execution of the doctrines included in the Manual may be a weak option in a pool of poor choices, it represented a significant change of direction within the U.S. military.

Kahl’s work established a useful context for the real-world success and shortcomings of the Manual. I expanded on some of the same perspectives Kahl presented. By attempting to discover both the benefits and the *shortcomings* of the Manual as Kahl does, I was able to better present a comprehensive analysis of the Manual. Throughout the interview process I attempted to discover the on-the-ground implications of the COIN doctrines in the Manual as well as its forecasted success in future theaters by those who experienced the doctrines first hand.

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<sup>22</sup> Colin H. Kahl. “COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?” *Foreign Affairs* 86.6 (December 2007).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*

Due to the “open” manner in which the Manual was written, I believe it is essential to utilize the perspectives of some of the members of the writing team in order to more fully grasp the indicators of politicization in its construction and implementation. . Lieutenant Colonel John A. Nagl PhD., who assisted in the writing of the Manual, is one of the preeminent military academics in the U.S. in the field of international relations. Four years after participating in the creation of the Manual, Nagl wrote a stimulating article entitled, “Constructing the Legacy of Field Manual 3-24,” that evaluated the effects that the Manual should have on future Army doctrine creation and implementation. He stated that the Manual should serve as the model for future Army doctrine: “Future military doctrine should benefit from FM 3–24’s example of requesting input from the field and from outsiders, making the preparation of doctrine less about traditional practice handed down from past generations and more about constant learning and adaptation based on current experience and collaboration with a broad group of concerned partners.”<sup>26</sup> This view of the production methods used with the Manual served as a reference point for one of the propositions I analyzed throughout the research process.

Nagl does, however, differ from Kahl and Cohen concerning the usefulness and effectiveness that the COIN doctrines in the Manual had in Iraq following its release. During the open revision process of the Manual, many subject matter experts expressed their concerns over the applicability of the COIN doctrines included in the Manual. Because the Manual was largely based on academic study of historical COIN operations, some analysts were quick to point out that many of the suggested COIN operational doctrines may not apply to the U.S. COIN operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Regarding this concern, Nagl wrote, “Others, including this author, contend that the differences between previous and current insurgencies are overstated and that it was necessary for a military that had largely deemphasized its understanding of counterinsurgency over the preceding 30 years to regain a grasp of insurgency’s fundamental dynamics and challenges.”<sup>27</sup> Even though his strong support of the Manual may be somewhat problematic due to his direct involvement in its creation, his analysis is valuable nonetheless. Nagl’s presentation of the write-by-committee style in which the Manual was created opened the door to an aspect of the creation of military doctrine that is worthy of analysis. By including civilian subject matter experts in the fields of economic development, human rights, and

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<sup>26</sup> John A. Nagl. (Lieutenant Colonel-U.S. Army). “Constructing the Legacy of Field Manual 3-24” *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, 2010 Third Quarter, 58 (2010): 118-120.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*

anthropology, the writing committee was able to create a better product that addresses the multiple military *and* political roles that COIN forces must adhere to in order to defeat the insurgency.

Even though much of the planning for conducting COIN operations takes place on the strategic level, the true test of counterinsurgent doctrine is found on the tactical level. Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen, Ph.D., who worked as an advisor to General Petraeus while serving as the commander of Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and served as a key leader on the writing committee for the Manual, wrote an article specifically aimed at company-level leadership in COIN operations. The article, “Twenty Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” set forth guidelines for tactical-level leaders for implementing the COIN doctrines found in the Manual. This article, which was written specifically for tactical-level commanders, shed light on some of the most essential aspects of successful counterinsurgencies and serves as a proto-“how to book” for carrying out COIN operations.

Early in the article, Kilcullen revealed the substantial power and responsibility each tactical-level leader has in the overall success or failure of the COIN operation:

*You are being sent in because the insurgents, at their strongest, can defeat anything with less strength than you. But you have more combat power than you can or should use in most situations. Injudicious use of firepower creates blood feuds, homeless people and societal disruption that fuels and perpetuates the insurgency. The most beneficial actions are often local politics, civic action, and beat-cop behaviors. For your side to win the people do not have to like you but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security.*<sup>28</sup>

This perspective regarding the judicious use of military power is key tenet that can be found throughout the Manual. Because Kilcullen played such an integral role in writing the Manual, it comes as no surprise that many of the same paradoxes, concepts, and suggestions in this article also appear in the Manual itself. In fact, an abridged version of this article, entitled “A Guide to Action,”<sup>29</sup> is included in appendix A in the 2007 University of Chicago Press publication of the Manual. It is additions to the Manual such as this that helped further the political calculus of the military in combating insurgencies. After reading and studying the Manual, tactical level leaders,

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<sup>28</sup> David J. Kilcullen (Lieutenant Colonel- Australian Army). “Twenty Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency.” *Military Review*, 86.3 (May-June 2006): 103-108.

<sup>29</sup> David Kilcullen, *Appendix A-A Guide to Acton*, in: General David H. Petraeus., Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (Field Manual 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 287.

who will be the ones making the actual on-the-ground decisions, will be able to better understand the political role that they must play in addition to their traditional military duties.

One of the main paradoxes of counterinsurgency included in the Manual and Kilcullen's article was that in many instances the more force used in counterinsurgencies, the less effective it is.<sup>30</sup> Kilcullen's astute observations from past COIN operations helped him understand that the manner in which a counterinsurgent force utilizes its military power can be the sole deciding factor in the success or failure of the entire operation. Concerning the role of the counterinsurgent forces and the use of military force, Kilcullen wrote:

*Conduct village and neighborhood surveys to identify needs in the community—then follow through to meet them, build common interests and mobilize popular support. This is your true main effort: everything else is secondary. Actions that help build trusted networks serve your cause. Actions—even killing high-profile targets—that undermine trust or disrupt your networks, help the enemy.*<sup>31</sup>

Non-military concepts such as addressing practical economic, social, and political needs rather than focusing solely on killing the insurgents may seem counterintuitive for military-minded leaders. However, it is paradoxes like this that make the doctrines found in the Manual distinctive; they aim to provide guidance on successful counterinsurgent operations, not to further the status quo of out-dated military doctrine.

“Twenty-Eight Articles” is especially pertinent to a thorough analysis of the Manual because it provided useful insight into and elaborated on the doctrines included in the Manual. Because Kilcullen served on the writing committee for the Manual, he is particularly qualified to describe the actual process of carrying out COIN operations. His article is easily accessible and readily available for combat leaders to use as they continue fighting counterinsurgencies around the globe. I analyzed the plethora of COIN concepts, strategies, and ideas included in this article to help build a platform that helped locate the features of the new political calculus of the U.S. Army in COIN operations. I wanted to discover how the concepts included in Kilcullen's article relate to the politicization of the U.S. Army in conducting COIN operations as expressed in the Manual.

Because insurgencies are not a recent development, it is vital not only to analyze the successes and failures of past counterinsurgencies, but to also assess whether or not the same

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> David J. Kilcullen (Lieutenant Colonel- Australian Army). “Twenty Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency” *Military Review*, 86.3 (May-June 2006): 105.

tactics and doctrines employed in classical counterinsurgencies still hold value in combating the insurgencies of today. Kilcullen took on this task in “Counterinsurgent Redux.” Just as he did in “Twenty-Eight Articles,” Kilcullen exhibited his expertise in counterinsurgent operations by presenting a clear and concise synopsis of the issues brought forth with the advent of 21<sup>st</sup> century insurgencies. He revealed the significant changes between classical counterinsurgencies such as the Algerian and Malayan campaigns and the modern counterinsurgencies that the United States finds itself engulfed in today. “Counterinsurgency Redux” contains many of the ideas found in the pages of the Manual itself. By analyzing the Manual and Kilcullen’s articles, I was able to better understand the concepts and doctrines that played a major role in the new political calculus of the U.S. Army in COIN operations.

One distinction that Kilcullen drew between the Iraqi insurgency and classical counterinsurgent operations dealt with the motivations and goals of the insurgents themselves. Kilcullen believes that unlike classical insurgents who sought to gain control of the state apparatus and govern the country, the Iraqi insurgents wanted nothing more than to disrupt and eventually dismantle the coalition government itself:

*For example, in Iraq multiple groups are seeking to paralyze and fragment the state, rather than to gain control of its apparatus and govern. Insurgents favor strategies of provocation (to undermine support for the coalition) and exhaustion (to convince the coalition to leave Iraq) rather than displacement of the government. This is a “resistance” insurgency rather than a “revolutionary” insurgency.<sup>32</sup>*

Kilcullen’s synopsis of the aims of the Iraqi insurgent forces represented a significant paradigm shift in COIN operations. Because the U.S. Army was now dealing with insurgents that were motivated differently than those of historical counterinsurgencies, top leaders and strategists within the U.S. Army were forced to reassess the manner in which they studied the lessons learned from earlier counterinsurgencies.

In addition to revealing the substantial differences in tactics and approach between modern and classical counterinsurgent operations, Kilcullen provided a list of “New Counterinsurgency Paradigms”<sup>33</sup> that is similar to the list of counterinsurgency paradoxes included in the first chapter of the Manual. One of the substantial paradigms that Kilcullen included also serves as a summation of the key issue that I analyzed in the thesis. The sub-section entitled “Modern

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<sup>32</sup> David J. Kilcullen (Lieutenant Colonel-Australian Army). “Counterinsurgency Redux.” *Survival* 48.4 (Winter 2006-2007): 115.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121.

counter-insurgency may be 100% political – comprehensive media coverage making even the most straightforward combat action a ‘political warfare’ engagement” reveals key issues regarding the political nature of military forces in COIN operations. Kilcullen elaborated:

*Given pervasive media presence and near-instantaneous propaganda exploitation of all combat action, counter-insurgency may now be 100% political. Commanders, even at the lowest tactical level in the most straightforward combat action, may need to conceive of their task as a form of ‘political warfare’ in which perception and political outcomes matter more than battlefield success. Counter-insurgency specialists already understand this, but broadening it to conventional units and “big army” commanders would be a true paradigm shift.<sup>34</sup>*

The U.S. Army’s attempt to internalize the necessity of a counterinsurgent force that fully understands and accepts its role as a political entity in the defeat of the insurgency summarizes a major motivation for this thesis. The role of counterinsurgent forces conducting “political warfare” is a tenet of COIN doctrine that cannot be overstated. Although Kilcullen’s focus on the political roles and duties of the counterinsurgent forces was paramount, it serves here as a stepping stone. I expanded on this concept in order to more fully understand how the writing team might have understood the politicization of the U.S. Army in its conduct of COIN operations.

Reflecting on and learning from past training operations, deployments, or combat missions is not new in the U.S. military. Throughout history military leaders have conducted after-action reviews to learn from personal experiences, both good and bad, and to learn from the experiences of others. Although after-action reports are a foundational characteristic of the U.S. military, sometimes the lessons learned were either neglected or overlooked completely. From the strategic level down to the squad level, a strong military must make this a priority. Petraeus provided an exhaustive synopsis of the lessons he learned while serving as a commander conducting COIN operations. “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq,” which he wrote in 2006 soon after taking command of the Combined Arms Center in Ft. Leavenworth, outlines the COIN doctrines he successfully implemented in Iraq. This article, which was written in the early stages of the Manual’s research and writing, reflects some of the same classical COIN doctrines that can be seen throughout the Manual.

Petraeus’s article is similar to Kilcullen’s “Counterinsurgency Redux” in that they both presented an elaborate listing of counterinsurgent paradigms and observations. A similar list of

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 123.

COIN paradoxes can be found in the first chapter of the Manual. These lists help readers understand and take with them the key points of contemporary COIN doctrine. Just as the Manual emphasized the political nature of the U.S. military in its conduct of COIN operations, a close analysis of, “Learning Counterinsurgency” revealed similar politicization. Petraeus’s final three observations are useful examples of the factors that indicated the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq. Observation number twelve re-establishes the importance of “strategic corporals and lieutenants,”<sup>35</sup> which also can be found in “Counterinsurgency Redux” as well as the Manual. Petraeus expanded on the same ideas that Kilcullen presents by not only acknowledging the imperative role played by these strategic corporals and lieutenants but also providing suggestions for upper echelon commanders to help these corporals and lieutenants succeed in their COIN operations. Regarding the responsibility to prepare these tactical-level leaders for the multi-faceted issues of COIN operations, Petraeus wrote:

*Commanders have two major obligations to these junior leaders: first, to do everything possible to train them before deployment for the various situations they will face, particularly for the most challenging and ambiguous ones; and, second, once deployed, to try to shape situations to minimize the cases in which they have to make those hugely important decisions extremely quickly.<sup>36</sup> But there are some actions we can take to try to ensure that our young leaders have adequate time to make the toughest of calls decisions that, if not right, again, can have strategic consequences.<sup>37</sup>*

The general’s first-hand experience in conducting COIN operations in Iraq strengthens his argument about the importance of developing and mentoring junior, tactical-level leaders. Although mentorship is not a recent phenomenon in the U.S. military, due to the level of strategic importance of strategic corporals and lieutenants, the new Counterinsurgency Field Manual had to spend time addressing this issue.

Another key tenet of modern COIN operations is the ability of counterinsurgent leaders to be flexible, adaptive, and willing to set the right tone for their entire unit. As Petraeus wrote, these leadership characteristics are “a statement of the obvious, but (one) that nonetheless needs to be highlighted given its tremendous importance.”<sup>38</sup> Just like the classical theorists of counterinsurgencies, Petraeus understood that the ability to adapt to an ever-changing environment often dictates success or failure of COIN operations. In his article Petraeus ensured

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<sup>35</sup> General David H. Petraeus (U.S. Army). “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq.” *Military Review* 86.1(January-February 2006): 9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9

that this concept was forefront in his synopsis of his two and a half years as a commander in Iraq. He concluded by quoting General John Galvin, who served as the Commander of U.S. Southern Command during the El Salvadoran insurgency, regarding the duties of officers fighting in a counterinsurgency:

*“[a]n officer’s effectiveness and chance for success, now and in the future, depend not only on his character, knowledge, and skills, but also, and more than ever before, on his ability to understand the changing environment of conflict.” General Galvin’s words were relevant then, but they are even more applicable today. Conducting counterinsurgency operations in a vastly different culture is exceedingly complex.*<sup>39</sup>

While Petraeus led the creation of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, he understood, just as he did while he was a field commander in Iraq, the importance of fostering adaptive leaders and developing often overlooked tactical level leaders. Both are aspects of fighting insurgencies that the U.S. military can control. Petraeus was selected to head the creation of the Manual for good reason. His command of the 101<sup>st</sup> (Air Assault) Division and his mastery of COIN doctrine was one of the few bright spots for the U.S. in the early years of the war in Iraq. More than any other strategic-level leader in the U.S. Army, he possesses the experience, knowhow, and expertise to successfully create and conduct COIN doctrine.

This article also is valuable for the concepts and content that it contains. It re-affirmed the importance of the concepts that I explored in my analysis of the Manual. Even though this article did an excellent job revealing the importance of key ideas within COIN operations, it did not fully develop the role they played in the politicization of the U.S. military in its conduct of COIN operations in Iraq. I took some of the concepts included in General Petraeus’s article and used them as stepping off points for my research.

The literature that this chapter examined assisted in shaping my research design. Each of the aforementioned authors analyzed a particular aspect of the ideas involved in the creation and implementation of the Manual’s COIN doctrines. I focused on compiling certain perspectives, design structures, and analyses from each in order to develop my own research framework. Each of the authors did a helpful job developing their analysis of a specific aspect of the Manual. However, none of them presented a definitive analysis of how the Manual characterized the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Design**

In order to fully analyze the factors tapping the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq, I implemented a two-pronged approach. First, I conducted thorough textual analyses of the Manual and scholarly sources that focused on the role of the U.S. military as a counterinsurgent force. Secondly, I conducted interviews with key individuals who participated in writing and editing the Manual or who had a particularly important perspective regarding the second and third-order effects of a politicized fighting force.

Before I expand on my research design, it is important to explicitly state the boundaries of my research. Because of the amount of material concerning a plethora of topics relating to the U.S. military experience prior to and during the invasion/occupation of Iraq, I limited my examination to scholarly literature that specifically addressed concepts related to the changing role of the U.S. military from late 2004, as the insurgency was gaining speed, through the development and execution of the Manual, and finally to the pull-out of all U.S. combat forces in August 2010. By placing my research in this time period I was able to locate and isolate the changes in the new political calculus of the military that already were in place or beginning prior to the development and release of the Manual.

#### Textual Analysis

Prior to conducting the textual analysis of the U.S. Army counterinsurgency field manual, I located five factors that I believe served as indicators of the new political calculus of the U.S. Army in combating the insurgency in Iraq. This is not to suggest that these factors were the sole indicators of the new found political focus of the U.S. COIN force in Iraq. Instead, they represent five key areas where I believed there was an observable and significant transformation in the U.S. Army's involvement as a political entity. A thorough analysis of these indicators in the Manual permitted me to determine what role (if any) its contents may play in modifying the extent that U.S. Army officials, from generals at the Pentagon to privates conducting dismounted patrols in Ramadi, serve as a political actors in conducting counterinsurgent operations in Iraq.

*Factor #1- The expertise and experience of General Petraeus and the writing team*

The U.S. Army counterinsurgency field manual is distinctive for many reasons. One is the manner by which General Petraeus selected a writing team comprised of both military and civilian experts on counterinsurgent operations. Petraeus also sought out leading anthropologists, international relations theorists, human rights experts, and regional experts to contribute to the Manual. This combined effort among academics, active duty and retired military strategists, and civilian policy makers represented a significant paradigm shift for the U.S. military.

Traditionally, the U.S. military has handled the creation of new doctrine and doctrinal change in-house, behind closed doors. By including leading experts from various subject areas relevant to counterinsurgent operations, General Petraeus was able to create a counterinsurgency manual for the U.S. military that sought to address the doctrinal needs of a military tied up in the most difficult counterinsurgent campaign since Vietnam. One of the key propositions that I developed prior to conducting the empirical research for this thesis was that the write-by-committee style that included a coordinated effort between military and civilian entities was staunchly supported by those military and civilian analysts. More importantly, I predicted that those in the military who were responsible for carrying out the doctrines included in the Manual would support the new style in which the Manual was written.

I looked for indicators in the Manual that suggested whether the level of expertise and experience in counterinsurgencies assisted in characterizing the new political orientation of the U.S. military in its conduct of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq. The first indicator is whether evidence of the areas of expertise of the writing and editing committee appear within the document. I looked for passages in the Manual that addressed concepts such as the role of economic development, human rights, and cultural awareness among the COIN and host nation forces in the conduct of counterinsurgent operations. I looked specifically for commonalities in the themes, perspectives, ideas, propositions, and recommendations between the Manual and previous scholarly works completed by members of the writing team. Because the writing team consisted of intellectuals and COIN strategists such as Petraeus, Nagl, Crane, Sewall, McDaniel and Kilcullen I was able to locate similarities between their previous works and sections of the Manual. This also afforded me the opportunity to compare the extent that these authors pushed for the politicization of the military in their past works either implicitly or explicitly.

By focusing on such evidence of the influence of the combined writing committee, I sought to isolate how their expertise manifested itself in the Manual's focus on the U.S. military in conducting COIN operations in Iraq. After reading previous works concerning the conduct of COIN operations written by members of the writing team, I predicted that of the five factors, the expertise and experience of the writing committee would be the most common indicator of the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq in the Manual. Most members of the writing team had previously expressed support for a COIN fighting force that could take on duties outside their traditional military-centric roles and understood the political implications of their actions.

*Factor #2- Continuation of military writing customs and norms*

The Army, and the entire military for that matter, has a notably unified and routine manner for everything from planning missions to developing solutions to problems via the military decision making process to conducting meetings. The same holds for writing official doctrine. Although the Manual was distinctive for the manner in which it was created with the help of experts outside of the military, there is no doubt that it is a *military* document. Prior to conducting the analysis of the Manual, I hypothesized that its language, style, and format of the Manual would be significant indicators of the political calculus of the U.S. military in combating the insurgency in Iraq. I believe that everything from the straightforward writing style seen throughout the Manual to the numbered paragraphs assisted in bringing forth the political focus of the U.S. Army in conducting COIN operations. Because many of the concepts and doctrines included in the Manual were new for many in the military, the writing team knew that it had to produce a document that not only was useful in the practical application of COIN doctrines, but also was easily accessible to those who were to use the Manual. I suspected that the writing team made it a priority to maintain continuity in the military writing format in order to make the ideas included in the pages accessible to the soldiers and Marines who would have the arduous task of carrying out the COIN doctrines in the streets of Iraq.

I looked for multiple indicators in the Manual that signified the ways that writing style reflected the politicization of the U.S. military. In addition to the open use of military writing practices such as numbered paragraphs and appendices, I searched for distinctive characteristics of the Manual that made it better suited not only to prepare its readers to carry out COIN operations, but also to help them understand and embrace their role as political actors on the

battlefield. Characteristics of the Manual such as the inclusion of a glossary for the plethora of acronyms utilized, a list of reading recommendations for soldiers and Marines looking to enhance their grasp of COIN operations, and the use of flow charts, graphs, and tables make FM 3-24 a virtual user's manual for counterinsurgent operations. Additionally, I thought that the inclusion of characteristics like the numbered paragraphs made the Manual an easy reference for commanders prior to and during COIN deployments. All of these characteristics helped the members of the U.S. military responsible for conducting COIN operations better understand the politicizing factors included in the Manual. As a result, I believed that the design of the Manual itself reflected the politicization of the U.S. military.

The Manual is *not* a comprehensive summary of counterinsurgencies. Rather, it is a military document created with the sole purpose of providing the U.S. military a doctrinal foundation for conducting successful counterinsurgent operations. Even though it may be easily read and understood by the average U.S. citizen, it was written to be understood and utilized by military personnel. I believe that even though the Manual presents many new ideas to the U.S. military, the writing team consciously wrote within the confines of traditional military writing customs and norms in order to streamline the application of COIN doctrines in Iraq and to help those who were responsible for carrying out the COIN operations to embrace the political nature of their task.

### *Factor #3- Strategies of past COIN operations*

Many of the experts on the writing team have spent significant time throughout their careers analyzing the intricacies of counterinsurgencies; as such it should come as no surprise that lessons from past counterinsurgencies can be seen throughout the Manual. In addition, the military is an organization that prides itself on learning from past operational mistakes and decisions. With the exception of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the U.S. military found itself grossly unprepared to conduct a large scale counterinsurgency campaign after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Because the U.S. military had not conducted counterinsurgent operations since the Vietnam conflict, it was essential that the writing team draw from many previous counterinsurgency operations, regardless of the nation conducting the COIN operation, in order to create a comprehensive doctrinal platform for the conduct of COIN operations by the U.S. military. Even though the writing team was quick to point out that no two

counterinsurgencies are exactly alike, it was widely understood that in order to devise a document sufficient for the needs of the U.S. military, it needed to include lessons learned from the counterinsurgencies in Algeria, Vietnam, and Malaya.

From my initial research on these past counterinsurgencies, I was able to locate several shared characteristics. One key feature of the French in Algeria, the British in Malaya, and the U.S. in Vietnam was the importance each placed on having the COIN forces fully understand and accept their role as political entities. In all three counterinsurgencies, the insurgencies were defeated (or not) based on the ability of the COIN forces to help the host nation provide the basic civil, social, and economic needs of the populace while simultaneously “winning the hearts and minds of the people.” I suspected that the Manual’s inclusion of lessons learned from these past counterinsurgencies would serve as an indicator of the U.S. military’s adoption of its role as a political entity while it was combating the insurgent forces in Iraq.

As counterinsurgent operations have developed into the primary mission for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps since the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, many civilian and military scholars spent substantial time and effort attempting to draw connections with past counterinsurgent experiences in order to develop policy and doctrine for the U.S. military. I explicitly searched throughout the Manual for references to past counterinsurgent operations that I believed served as key evidence of the possible influence of past COIN operations on the U.S. military in Iraq. In my research, I looked for specific examples of past COIN experiences and ascertained how the writing team sought to use the reference. I searched the Manual for any mentions or discussion of past COIN operations whether led by the U.S. or other nations. I looked at the depth the authors placed on each COIN experience. I sought to discover whether the mention of past COIN experiences by the writing team indicated the politicization of the U.S. military. Through this approach, I sought to answer the question, “What was the author’s(s) purpose for including this anecdotal reference to past COIN experiences?”

#### *Factor #4- Relations between civilian leaders and the military during COIN operations*

The complex and multi-faceted nature of counterinsurgent operations make the likelihood of defeating an insurgent force an arduous task. Success can only be found when all of the parts that make up the COIN force work together as a well-oiled machine. David Galula, who served as a French officer during the Algerian insurgency and who also wrote what has become

arguably the preeminent work on combating insurgencies, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, fully understood the importance of COIN forces stepping beyond their strictly “military” duties. Not only did the writing team reference many of Galula’s ideas, they also included one of his more famous quotations to open the chapter on the integration of civilian and military actions: “Essential though it is, the military action is secondary to the political one, its primary purpose being to afford the political power enough freedom to work safely with the population.”<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, even if all COIN forces (civilian and military alike) work smoothly, many aspects of the conflict are beyond their control. It is evident that the writing team understood the importance of establishing unity of effort and command when writing FM 3-24. Counterinsurgent operations are distinct from any other form of military action because they require the input, support, and assistance from organizations beyond the borders of the military. By nature, the goal of insurgent forces is to disrupt and dismantle the economic, political, and social systems of the host nation in order to bolster support for their cause and to create frustration with the host nation as well as the COIN forces. As a result, the task of eliminating insurgents is secondary to the COIN forces developing and supporting the basic civic functions of the host nation. Even though military personnel alone are more than adept at assisting the host government in developing the infrastructure to meet the basic societal needs of the populace, COIN operations run much more smoothly through a coordinated effort between civilian and military entities from the nation conducting the counterinsurgent operation.

Due to the level of importance the literature on past counterinsurgent operations placed on military and civilian integration, it is not surprising that the writing team sought to address the many challenges to establishing a strong working relationship between military and civilian entities involved in COIN operations. I believed that this conscious focus of the writing committee to explicitly define the roles and boundaries of civilian and military was key in tapping the politicization of the U.S. military in its role as a COIN force in Iraq. Even though the writing team attempted to draw clear lines between the duties of the civilian and military COIN forces, they acknowledged the likelihood of a spillover between the two that caused the military forces to take on political duties that otherwise would be relegated to civilian agencies. I

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<sup>40</sup> David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1964, quoted in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (Field Manual 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 53.

searched for specific instances throughout the Manual where the writing team established boundaries between civilian and military actors in government. I looked particularly at the text's tone about the duties assigned to both military and civilian actors in COIN operations. I sought out specific recommendations, especially in Chapter Two-*Unity in Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military activities*, concerning the development and sustenance of the working relationship between the two actors in COIN operations. I searched for specific discussions throughout the Manual that contained any combination or close relation between phrases such as "civilian and military conjuncture," "civilian and military cooperation," or "unified effort (between civilian and military actors)." Based on the recommendations and language used by the writing team, I sought to tap the level of the politicization of U.S. military defined as taking on more roles traditionally consigned to civilian actors.

#### *Factor #5- Lessons learned from the initial failure of U.S. COIN operations in Iraq*

Scholars both in and outside of the military have been quick to point out the failure of the U.S. executive branch in properly handling the needs of a post-Saddam Iraqi populace and the insurgency that soon followed after the downfall of the Ba'athist regime. Titles from leading scholarly publications such as "An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far?"<sup>41</sup> and "The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq: A Retrospective Analysis of the Reconstruction"<sup>42</sup> illustrate the widely held view that U.S. civilian officials and the U.S. military made significant policy and strategic mistakes prior to and immediately following the removal of Saddam's regime. Just as the third factor attempted to tap politicization by the analysis and use of lessons from historical counterinsurgencies, the fifth measured the extent to which the writing team openly addressed the changes needed following the quagmire that developed in Iraq in 2003.

I was interested to see the type of narrative, if any, the authors presented to explain the missteps of the U.S. government in the early years of the war in Iraq and whether these explanations were tied to increasing the political focus of the troops fighting against the Iraqi

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<sup>41</sup> Daniel Byman. "An Autopsy of the Iraq Debacle: Policy Failure or Bridge Too Far?" *Security Studies* 17.4 (October-December 2008): 599-643.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack. "The Seven Deadly Sins of Failure in Iraq: A Retrospective Analysis of the Reconstruction." *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 10.4 (December 2006): 1-20.

insurgency. I believed that it made sense for the authors to comment on the early mistakes of the U.S. military in conducting counterinsurgent operations in Iraq in order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the updated counterinsurgency doctrines included within the Manual. I looked for instances in which the authors specifically mentioned past mistakes in combating the Iraqi insurgency while providing new doctrines in a “lessons learned” format. I believed that if the authors specifically mentioned previous strategic and tactical shortcomings in the U.S. military’s approach to COIN operations, it would suggest an increase in the political focus of the soldiers responsible for carrying out the counterinsurgency. I searched the Manual for specific phrases, mentions, and discussion of past U.S. military experiences in Iraq. When I located these instances, I analyzed them, first, to locate the evident purpose of the writing team in including it in the Manual; secondly, to see what (if any) recommendations the authors made based on this experience; and lastly, to discover how (if at all) these instances supported the politicization of the U.S. military.

### Interviews

In order to develop a more complete understanding of the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq following the release of the Manual, I believed it was necessary to contact those key personnel who were directly involved in writing and editing its contents. By talking directly with military and civilian academics that played a direct role in the creation of the Manual, I hoped to be better suited to present a sound analysis of the politicization of the U.S. military. I sought to conduct interviews with academics such as Lieutenant Colonel Conrad Crane (U.S. Army-retired) and Dr. Sarah Sewall, who were both members of the Manual’s writing team. Crane was the lead author hand-selected by General Petraeus. Additionally, Sewall wrote the introduction to the Manual published in 2007 and served as a direct advisor to General Petraeus throughout the writing and revision process. Both of my interviews with Crane and Sewall took place over the telephone.

In addition, I wanted to contact strategic-level leaders within the U.S. military to gain a military-based perspective on the political nature of soldiers and Marines fighting insurgencies. I had the opportunity to meet with General Anthony Zinni (United States Marine Corps, retired) face-to-face to discuss his perceptions of the Manual, its effects on the politicization of the U.S. military, and the future of civilian-military relationships in COIN operations. General Zinni

served as the commanding officer of CENTCOM (the position held by General Petraeus prior to his replacement of General McChrystal in Afghanistan) from 1997 to 2000. Although Zinni did not serve in the armed forces during the invasion and occupation of Iraq, his regional and military expertise provided an invaluable perspective on the shift in political and civil duties of the U.S. military forces. Additionally, he served as a successful diplomat and business leader following his retirement from the Marine Corps. His distinctive combination of military and civilian leadership experience offered a useful perspective to comment on the focus of my research.

The information collected from the interviews provided perspectives my textual analysis of the Manual may have overlooked. Combining the evidence collected through the interviews with the document-based data allowed me to draw conclusions about the new political calculus of the U.S. military in Iraq as expressed in the Manual (for a list of the types of questions I asked my interviewees please see appendix A). Combining interviews with individuals who either had a direct role in the creation of the Manual or offered useful perspectives of its implications on the military with a thorough textual analysis of the Manual allowed me to examine the nature and the extent of the politicization of the military that the Manual tapped

## **Chapter Four**

### **Findings**

As I suspected prior to conducting my empirical research, each of the major factors that I examined tapped the overall politicization of the U.S. Army. In some instances, the findings were quite surprising. Many of the factors in the Manual that I initially believed reflected the shift in focus of the U.S. military turned out to be less influential. Conversely, other indicators such as the discussion of the nature and breakdown of civilian and military relations amid the counterinsurgent forces evidently played substantial roles in politicizing the U.S. military in Iraq. In addition, the data collected through interviews with Dr. Sarah Sewell and Dr. Conrad Crane provided invaluable perspectives from those who participated in the creation of the Manual and were instrumental in establishing a fuller understanding of changes in focus. They offered personal analyses concerning the role of each factor in the shift in political focus in the U.S. military in Iraq. They helped me better understand the focus and goals of the writing team for the U.S. military in its execution of counterinsurgent operations.

In this chapter I will examine each of the five factors that I used as indicators of the politicization of the U.S. military. I will provide a thorough presentation of my findings from the textual analysis. Additionally, I will supplement the textual evidence with data from my interviews with Dr. Sewell, Dr. Crane, and General Anthony Zinni. I also will include evidence from the command directives General Petraeus gave to the troops in Iraq when he took command of the Multinational Force-Iraq following his command of the Combined Arms Center.

#### Factor One- The Expertise and Experience of General Petraeus and the Writing Team

I hypothesized that the experience and expertise in COIN operations, doctrine, and theory of key members in the writing team reflected the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq following the release of the Manual.

As General Petraeus returned from his tour of duty leading the Multi-National Transition Command-Iraq in 2005 to take command of the Combined Arms Center, he faced an arduous task. It was his responsibility to lead the effort to re-write the U.S. Army and Marine Corps doctrinal manual on counterinsurgency operations. Prior to this, the standard approach for writing military doctrine was to organize a writing team of top-level military strategists in the

armed services who would coordinate, compile, and construct the new doctrine. From the outset General Petraeus sought to turn this tradition on its head. Not only was the new COIN manual to be written, edited, and released within a calendar year (a very aggressive timeline), Petraeus reached outside of the confines of the armed services and called on leading civilian COIN strategists, anthropologists, historians, and political scientists to supplement his military writing team. This manual was written during the height of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was clear that FM 3-24 would become an atypical military document for multiple reasons, none of which was as important as the expertise and experience of the individuals that assisted in writing and editing the Manual.

Prior to conducting my analysis of the Manual, I noticed a pattern in most of the literature concerning the U.S. military's execution of the counterinsurgent mission in Iraq. Most authors dissected and critiqued the flaws in U.S. COIN doctrine, as would be expected based on the high levels of instability and violence in Iraq from 2003 to 2007. However, only a small contingent of these authors stepped beyond simple criticism and provided useful suggestions to better prepare the U.S. military to defeat insurgent forces. Many of these inputs came in the form of anecdotes from historical counterinsurgent operations of what does and does not work. "Lessons learned" was a common theme. In addition, many of the authors came from various disciplines, ranging from anthropology to global economics, and were able to provide useful input expertise that could prove beneficial for the improvement of U.S. military COIN doctrine. With the assistance of General James Mattis, Petraeus called on many of these same intellectuals to assist with the creation of the Manual. Individuals such as David Kilcullen, Sara Sewall, Conrad Crane, and John Nagl accepted Petraeus's call-to-arms and brought their skills to the writing team. My textual analysis of the Manual underscored that the wide range of expertise of the writing team appeared in the new-found political calculus for responding to the insurgency in Iraq.

It makes sense to begin presenting the implications of the expertise of the writing team by addressing the influence of the person who spearheaded the effort to re-write the U.S. military's counterinsurgency doctrine, General David H. Petraeus. Petraeus displayed an impressive combination of military leadership prowess with a savvy intellect in international relations theory. In the foreword to the 2007 University of Chicago Press edition of the Manual, Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl describes General Petraeus's strengths:

*Petraeus is an atypical general officer, holding a doctorate in international relations from Princeton University in addition to his Airborne Ranger qualifications. He commanded the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, taking responsibility for governing Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, with a firm but open hand. Petraeus focused on the economic and political development of his sector of Iraq, inspiring his command with the question, "What have you done for the people of Iraq today?" He worked to build Iraqi security forces able to provide security to the people of the region and quickly earned the sobriquet Malik Daoud (King David) from the people of Mosul.<sup>43</sup>*

This perception of Petraeus is not limited to Nagl. When asked "Why do you feel the unique write-by-committee style involving assets both in and out of the U.S. military sphere of influence will not be repeated with future doctrine?" Dr. Sara Sewall responded: "I simply do not believe there are many leaders with the competence and intellectual breadth that Petraeus holds."<sup>44</sup> In addition, Petraeus's experience commanding the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Mosul afforded him first-hand experience with the intricacies of leading a successful counterinsurgency effort in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Upon returning from his tour of duty in Mosul, Petraeus immediately sought to share his COIN experiences with the entire military. His brief article, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," served not only as a synopsis of the lessons he learned commanding a COIN force, but also as a launching pad for the Manual itself.<sup>45</sup> Petraeus arguably was the most qualified leader in the U.S. military to guide the production of the Manual.

Many of the same COIN doctrines that Petraeus cites in his article can be seen in the Manual as well as in his directives while serving as commander of the Multi-National Forces Iraq (MNF-I). A useful example of the conceptual continuity between Petraeus's article and the Manual can be found in his first observation on the conduct of counterinsurgent operations. Petraeus begins with a quote from T.E. Lawrence concerning the necessity of allowing the host nation to accomplish as much as possible on its own:

*"Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia,*

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<sup>43</sup> General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: xv.

<sup>44</sup> Sara Sewall, telephone interview, February 8, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> General David H. Petraeus. "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq" Military Review (January-February 2006).

*your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is. It may take them longer and it may not be as good as you think, but if it is theirs, it will be better.”<sup>46</sup>*

This notion of stepping aside to allow the host nation to perform as many duties as possible appears throughout the Manual. One of the nine paradoxes of counterinsurgency included in the first chapter of the Manual is: “The host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well.” In fact, all fourteen of Petraeus’s “observations” in his article appeared in the first chapter of the Manual. In a chapter focusing on the intricate details of the creation and implementation of the Manual included in Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges, Dr. Conrad Crane, who served as the lead writer of the Manual, comments on the unique role Petraeus played in the creation of the Manual:

*He (Petraeus) wanted his insights incorporated into the manual, and all 14 observations eventually worked their way into Chapter 1. We also discussed the outline for the volume and the makeup of the writing team. It was very apparent to me that (then) Lieutenant General Petraeus was going to be an active participant in the creation of the new doctrine, and we soon established a pattern of weekly, and sometimes daily, communications about the manual.<sup>47</sup>*

Following the publication of the Manual in December 2006, Petraeus headed back to Iraq to take command of the entire multi-national effort. As commander of the Multi-National Force Iraq, he had the opportunity to implement the very COIN doctrines that he helped articulate during the previous 18 months at Ft. Leavenworth. Because Petraeus took command of MNF-I immediately following the release of the Manual, it had been read and reviewed by only a small number of upper-echelon leaders in the Army and Marine Corps. Although the Manual had yet to reach a widespread audience, Petraeus made it his personal mission to pass its contents to every member of the multi-national effort in Iraq through his command guidance and written directives. One such directive released in 2008 from the MNF-I headquarters in Baghdad explicitly outlined Petraeus’s command guidance on COIN operations within Iraq. The directive provides 23 essential points of focus for the MNF-I forces aimed at defeating the Iraqi insurgency. Petraeus’s directive reads like an abridged version of the Manual. The doctrines within the directive that were passed down to the forces in Iraq call for the same mission focus, command structure, and guidance of the Manual. Each of the 23 points of focus addressed a

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<sup>46</sup> T.E. Lawrence, “Twenty-Seven Articles,” *Arab Bulletin* (20 August 1917), quoted in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 50.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney. Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges. New York: Routledge, 2010: 61.

specific aspect of the COIN operation in Iraq that was vital for the eventual defeat of the insurgent forces. One point in particular displayed the significance of the decisions and actions of the troops fighting the insurgency. Point 19 states: “Realize that we are in a struggle for legitimacy that in the end will be won or lost in the perception of the Iraqi people. Every action taken by the enemy and the United States has implications in the public arena.”<sup>48</sup>

Even though the Manual had yet to enjoy widespread readership among the forces carrying out the United States counterinsurgency battles, Petraeus was able to push the same vision for COIN operations in the Manual, down to the lowest levels of the force in Iraq through his written directives and leadership style. When asked in an interview how the COIN doctrines from the Manual were implemented in Iraq, Crane responded, “The doctrine was transferred to the troops from General Pet’s directives. The guidance he gave to the troops set out the ideas of the Manual as he saw fit for the current situation in Iraq.” He continued, “The ideas within the Manual were nothing new to those who had already been serving in Iraq. What General Petraeus did is standardize the practice and create a unified, uniform counterinsurgency campaign. This is where the doctrines get exercised.”<sup>49</sup> Petraeus’s experience with and knowledge of COIN operations, his hands-on approach to working with the writing team, his insistence on including his “14 observations of COIN operations,” and the directives he issued to the entire force in Iraq during his command of MNF-I were all crucial in guiding the new political calculus toward the Iraqi insurgency.

My analysis of the Manual and subsequent documents as well as the interviews with Sewall and Crane strongly support my hypothesis that the experiences and expertise of the writing team, especially its leader General Petraeus, played a substantial role in expressing the political focus of the U.S. military in Iraq. The vision of the writing team to establish doctrine that furthered an understanding of the political nature of COIN operations can be seen throughout the Manual. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the final paradox of counterinsurgency at the end of the first chapter. The ninth paradox, “Many important decisions are not made by generals,” addresses the need for tactical-level leaders, soldiers, and Marines to acknowledge and understand the political implications of their actions and inactions. This paradox introduces the notion of the “strategic-corporal,” signifying the broad implications of the

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<sup>48</sup> General David H. Petraeus. “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance.” Headquarters, Multi-National Force-Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq (June 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

actions of even the most junior member of a military unit conducting COIN operations. The authors of this chapter elaborate on the importance of the tactical-level soldiers and Marines accepting that their decisions have the potential to sway entire counterinsurgency campaigns:

*Indeed, young leaders—so-called “strategic corporals”—often make decisions at the tactical level that have strategic consequences. Senior leaders set the proper direction and climate with thorough training and clear guidance; then they trust their subordinates to do the right thing. Preparation for tactical-level leaders requires more than just mastering Service doctrine; they must also be trained and educated to adapt to their local situations, understand the legal and ethical implications of their actions, and exercise initiative and sound judgment in accordance with their senior commander’s intent.<sup>50</sup>*

The actions of a small group of tactical-level soldiers in the Abu-Ghraib prison in 2004 is an unfortunate example of the powerful political and strategic implications of the actions of even the most junior members of the U.S. military.

The personal experiences and knowledge of historical counterinsurgent operations of the writing team clearly were behind its focus on driving home the importance for the soldiers and Marines fighting the Iraqi insurgency to understand the political effects of their actions. Throughout the Manual, the authors present concepts that reveal their stance on the importance that the soldiers understand the political implications of their actions. Rather than discuss each individual instance of the “politicization of the soldiers” included in the Manual, I will mention only a few of the most telling examples.

Crane, who wrote the first chapter himself, made a concerted effort to provide the reader with a brief, yet substantive overview of the essential concepts of counterinsurgency operations. In addition to serving as a useful primer for the Manual, the first chapter includes striking examples of the author’s attempt to shift the focus of the soldiers and Marines from a strictly military mindset to a more holistic approach that takes into account the political implications of their actions. One such instance came in paragraph 1-123:

*At the beginning of a COIN operation, military actions may appear predominant as security forces conduct operations to secure the populace and kill or capture insurgents; however, political objectives must guide the military’s approach. Commanders must, for example, consider how operations contribute to strengthening the HN (host nation) government’s legitimacy and achieving U.S. political goals..... Military actions executed without properly assessing their political effects at best result in reduced effectiveness and at worst are counterproductive. Resolving most insurgencies requires a*

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<sup>50</sup>Conrad Crane, *Chapter One-Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 51.

*political solution; it is thus imperative that counterinsurgent actions do not hinder achieving that political solution.*<sup>51</sup>

This excerpt is particularly telling because it states that although it is imperative for COIN forces to conduct traditional military duties such as raids and patrols, they also must shift their focus over time to address the political needs of the host nation. This is evidence that the writing team wanted the COIN forces to understand not only the political implications of their actions in theater but also the importance to step beyond their traditional military duties.

The fifth chapter of the Manual, written by Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (United States Marine Corps), focuses on the execution of counterinsurgency operations. This chapter developed as a result of a combination of best-practices from the COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as McDaniel's personal study of historical COIN operations.<sup>52</sup> In this chapter McDaniel sets forth general guidance and ideas for leaders to implement in their units to defeat the insurgent forces. The chapter covers everything from population control measures to information gathering systems. The sub-section entitled *Increasing Popular Support* utilizes language that serves as evidence of the author's goal of strengthening the political calculus of the COIN forces.

*Counterinsurgents should use every opportunity to help the populace and meet its needs and expectations. Projects to improve economic, social, cultural, and medical needs can begin immediately. Actions speak louder than words. Once the insurgent political infrastructure is destroyed and local leaders begin to establish themselves, necessary political reforms can be implemented.*<sup>53</sup>

This is an explicit continuation of the political focus. The parallels between these two excerpts support my hypothesis that the experience and expertise of the writing team contributed to a concerted effort to ensure that the COIN forces that would be carrying out the Manual's doctrines understood and acknowledged the political implications of their actions.

Some of the strongest data came from the interviews. Dr. Sara Sewall previously served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance in the Clinton administration, and she currently is the Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University. She played an integral role as a key advisor for General Petraeus throughout

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Rid and Thomas Keane. Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges. New York: Routledge, 2010: 64.

<sup>53</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (USMC), *Chapter 5- Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 181.

the writing and editing process. Dr. Conrad Crane, who was a classmate of General Petraeus at the United States Military Academy at West Point, currently serves as the director of the U. S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. As has been noted, Petraeus personally selected him to serve as the lead author for the Manual due to his expertise in COIN doctrine and experience writing and analyzing military doctrine.

Their responses to inquiries about the effects of the focus, expertise, and experience of the writing team on the shift in political focus for the Army in Iraq were particularly useful. When asked whether the politicization of the COIN forces was merely a secondary effect of the doctrines included in the Manual or if it was a concerted effort on the part of the writing team, Crane responded: “One of our *primary goals* was to express the importance of developing a fighting force that understood the political implications of their actions” (my emphasis). He continued, “We wanted to apply (David) Galula’s dictum that it’s 80% political and 20% military.....Everyone down to the lowest level must understand the political implications to what they are doing.”<sup>54</sup> When asked to elaborate on the changes brought by a military fighting force that understands the political effects of their actions, Sewall stated: “The notion of understanding the political implications of your actions as a military professional is elemental, especially in the 21st century. That is the essence of what it means to be the very best soldier you can be. This (refocus on the political ramifications of your actions) represented a maturation of what it meant to be a military professional.”<sup>55</sup>

The textual analysis of the Manual as well as the interviews clearly support the hypothesis that the writing team’s experience and expertise in COIN doctrine helped reflect and communicate the changed political focus of the U.S. Army in Iraq. Everyone involved in the creation of the Manual, from General Petraeus to the secondary authors who worked on the chapters and sub-sections, knew either from their first-hand experience fighting in the COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan or from their expertise in a particular aspect of counterinsurgency, the importance of utilizing a fighting force that understands the political implications of their actions.

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<sup>54</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Sarah Sewall, telephone interview, February 8, 2011.

## Factor Two- Language and Structure of the Manual

In the early stages of the research, I hypothesized that although the writing team included some new writing techniques and language in the Manual, its continuation of essential military writing styles would help the troops accept the doctrine included in the Manual. The United States military employs a writing style all its own. Everything from written operations orders (OPORDs) to correspondence between cooperating unit commanders utilizes a concise and focused writing style that is both accessible and easily understood. This is a far cry from much scholarly writing, which can be convoluted and pedantic. The military calls its type of writing BLUF, or *bottom line up front*. It should come as no surprise that the Army has a manual that sets out a step-by-step process for the creation of virtually all written documentation.<sup>56</sup> The Army regulates the manner in which written documentation is created for many reasons. Arguably the most important is that it creates an Army-wide standard that is easy to follow, and it uses a language and writing style that are accessible to the wide range of reading abilities within the force.

Although the Manual *is* a written piece of Army doctrine that shares many similarities with other Army manuals, it is distinctly different in many respects. Whereas most Army doctrine is written at a high school reading level, the Manual was written at the college level. The manner in which the Manual uses sophisticated, yet accessible language and the easy-to-follow flow between concepts is a distinct change from the conventional presentation of military doctrine. In the months following its release in 2007, many early readers went so far as to describe the Manual as “eloquent.”<sup>57</sup> Dr. Crane commented on the writing style of the Manual: “Most manuals are written at the high school level, this was written at the collegiate. There were initial concerns about this, but it proved to be a non-issue.”<sup>58</sup> Crane also mentioned that since its release in 2007, the Manual has been used as a textbook in several foreign policy and international relations courses at various universities. In addition to the more advanced writing style, the writers of the Manual included tools such as an annotated bibliography that had never before been included in formal military doctrinal manuals. The purpose was to allow readers to continue their study of counterinsurgency doctrine from the very works the writing team used.

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<sup>56</sup> Preparing and Managing Correspondence. United States Department of the Army Headquarters, Washington D.C.: June 3, 2002.

<sup>57</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*

Yet, through all of the changes in language, flow, and contents of the Manual, it shares some key similarities with previously published Army doctrine.

I believed despite the many new aspects in the structure and contents of the Manual, the intended audience was able to understand the concepts it included. I suspected that the COIN forces in Iraq who read and carried out the doctrines in the Manual would be able to acknowledge their new found political role in the execution of COIN operations regardless of the writing techniques and structure of the Manual. The accessibility of the Manual is particularly important due to the nature of COIN operations. As the previous section mentioned, the Manual sets forth the importance of so-called “strategic corporals.” Because even the most junior soldiers and Marines need to fully understand the concepts included in the Manual as well as the political implications of their actions, the writing team knew that it could not step too far away from the accepted norm of doctrine writing.

I concluded that the writing team was able to institute a suitable balance between utilizing a college level writing style while creating a document that could reach the wide range of reading abilities in the Army by keeping similar aspects of military doctrine in the pages of the Manual. One example of the writing team establishing continuity between the Manual and other doctrinal manuals that the intended audience would already be familiar with is the inclusion of charts, tables, and diagrams. Although the U.S military recently has drawn substantial criticism (frequently for good reason) for its overzealous and often overly-complicated tables, flow charts, and PowerPoint slides, these visual aids serve a vital role in military writing and documentation. Because many of the concepts in the Manual are complex and involve multiple variables, in many cases visual aids can be quite useful for delivering the message to the reader. One such instance can be found in *Appendix B- Social Network Analysis and Other Analytical Tools*. In this section the author, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Reed (U.S. Army), reveals the importance of conducting social network analysis (SNA) and developing a reliable understanding of the intelligence picture in any counterinsurgency operation. For even the most weathered combat veteran, this can be a challenging task. In order to simplify the understanding and use of SNA in COIN operations, Reed included multiple examples of maps, social network models, and connectivity models. Although some are in-depth and complex, when taken along with the ideas

he presents, they are useful supplements to his ideas. Figure B-8 is an example.<sup>59</sup> At first glance this figure resembles a confused conglomeration of nodes, dyads, and links in a social network grid resembling a complex spider web. However, in the context of the appendix, the figure provides the reader a visual representation of the difference between organizations with a high concentration of connections and those with a less dense structure.

One of the best examples of the effectiveness of including figures to support the doctrine in the Manual can be found in *Chapter Five- Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*. The author of this chapter, Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (U.S. Marine Corps), outlined the necessary steps for commanders to take in order to defeat an insurgent force. He begins by outlining the Logical Lines of Operation in counterinsurgency (LLOs):

*Commanders use LLOs to visualize, describe, and direct operations when positional reference to enemy forces has little relevance. LLOs are appropriate for synchronizing operations against enemies that hide among the populace. A plan based on LLOs unifies the efforts of joint, interagency, multinational, and host nation (HN) forces toward a common purpose. Each LLO represents a conceptual category along which the HN government and COIN force commander intend to attack the insurgent strategy and establish HN government legitimacy. LLOs are closely related. Successful achievement of the ends state requires careful coordination of actions undertaken along all LLOs.*<sup>60</sup>

Even though McDaniel's description of LLOs is holistic, the reader will more than likely not fully comprehend the role of LLOs in counterinsurgent operations without visual aids. The figure on the subsequent page supplements McDaniel's description by providing a visual representation of the starting conditions, the various areas of focus within COIN operations necessary to combat insurgent forces, and the perceived end state LLOs produce.<sup>61</sup>

The LLOs deserve an expanded analysis due to the potential effects of including such a concept for the intended audience. The LLO diagram that McDaniel includes sets forth a broad strategic plan of action for COIN force commanders to focus their efforts to defeat insurgent forces and gain the support of the HN. The goal in the figure is to increase the overall numbers of the insurgent forces and to substantially increase the number of HN citizens supporting of the HN government. The five areas of focus in McDaniel's LLO are significant because I believe

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<sup>59</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Brian Reed (US Army), *Appendix B-Social Network Analysis and Other Analytical Tools*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. [The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual \(FM 3-24\)](#). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 321.

<sup>60</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (USMC), *Chapter 5-Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*, in: Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. [The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual \(FM 3-24\)](#). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 321.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

they are all vehicles reflected the new political calculus within the Army in Iraq. Those areas of focus include conducting combat operations/civil security operations, developing HN security forces, establishing essential services, assisting the HN governance process, and assisting in the economic development of the HN.<sup>62</sup> Except for the first area, all of the others are starkly different from the traditional military-specific roles of the U.S. Army. If COIN forces and their commanders follow the LLO as presented in chapter five of the Manual, the result will be a politicized fighting force imbued with an understanding of the political and strategic ramifications of their actions.

Not only did the writing team carry on the military writing custom of utilizing figures to supplement the concepts and doctrines in the Manual, but it also included a distinct set of progress indicators. The progress indicators are essential because they provide the reader with a list of measurement standards that can be used to assess the progress of COIN operations and the overall stability of the host nation. The areas of measurement included at the end of chapter five encompass issues ranging from “acts of violence” to “level of industry exports.”<sup>63</sup> Additionally, I believe that many of the progress indicators furthered the politicization of the U.S. Army. Some of the key non-military areas of COIN operations that the progress indicators address include “participation in elections,” “freedom of movement of people, goods, and communications,” and “employment/unemployment rates.” Mastery of these areas of COIN operations requires a fighting force that can take on multiple roles beyond those that are traditionally military. The inclusion of such lists provides the reader with tools to constantly reassess the progress of their operations; this is not a new idea for U.S. Army doctrinal manuals. Nonetheless, due to the complexity of COIN operations, such tools are imperative to the defeat of insurgent forces. By including the list of progress indicators, McDaniel not only helped better equip a fighting force to adjust to the ever-changing dynamics of COIN operations, but also assisted in bringing forth the politicization of the U.S. Army. The inclusion of progress indicators focusing on tasks for the COIN force such as supporting the electoral process and assisting in the economic development of the HN indicates a distinct shift in political focus for the U.S. Army.

Even with the many modifications that the Manual made in the traditional writing style for U.S. Army doctrinal manuals, the authors evidently succeeded in meeting the needs of the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192.

COIN force. They were able to do this by establishing a balance among the inclusion of traditional military writing tools such as figures and progress indicators, the use of an advanced writing language, and the presentation of expert analysis on the multi-faceted concepts in COIN operations.

Not surprisingly, both Crane and Sewall had strong feelings regarding the structure of the Manual. When asked why the Manual was written in a language different from the U.S. Army's norm for doctrinal manuals, Crane responded, "We tend to underestimate the ability of our soldiers and Marines to read and comprehend complex ideas and doctrines."<sup>64</sup> This is not to suggest that as an organization the U.S. Army has a low standard for the reading ability of its members. However, because of the complex nature of the concepts necessary for successful COIN operations, the writing team believed it better to present the ideas in a manner that was accessible to the entire force. Both Sewall and Crane mentioned that in the flood of comments on and reactions to the Manual from those in theater carrying out the very doctrines included in the Manual, they have yet to hear a soldier or marine mention that the Manual was beyond their reading ability. It is evident that although there may have been some early reservations about the language and style of the Manual, they have been put to rest as the Manual has continued to enjoy widespread readership throughout the entire U.S. military. Crane provided a useful summation of the style and language of the Manual: "The people in uniform tend to say, 'I understand what it is trying to tell me;' which is the most important aspect of the manual."<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Sewall observed, "This is not typical doctrine; it wasn't written in the way that typical doctrine is written; it's not used in the typical way that doctrine is used. But it is *very accessible to mid-level field leadership*" (my emphasis).<sup>66</sup>

The Manual is distinctive for many reasons. It utilized a new writing language for U.S. Army doctrinal manuals; it showed that the force is able to understand doctrine written in such language; it included some new tools such as an annotated bibliography while keeping such traditions as the use of figures to support ideas; and its style and language relayed the importance of the concepts it included. None of those ideas was more important than the shift in focus of the COIN forces from a strictly military-operational basis to an acknowledgement of the wide range

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<sup>64</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Sarah Sewall, personal interview, February 8, 2011.

of responsibilities for a COIN force beyond traditional military duties and an understanding of the political implications of their actions.

Even taking all of the benefits the Manual had for those responsible for carrying out COIN operations into account, it was never intended to be a “user’s manual for COIN operations.” The writing team understood that although it could provide a broad guideline of what works in COIN operations, members were explicit that the specific factors in each area of operation trump anything included in an Army field manual. They wanted to establish a uniform standard that commanders could use as a platform from which they could launch their units’ COIN operations. Sewall ended our interview by providing a strong sense of the overarching goal of the Manual; “They don’t take it (the doctrines included in the Manual) as gospel, they take it as a starting point and apply their own knowledge and experience from their respective AO (area of operations) to the foundational principles within it.”<sup>67</sup> This is an essential perspective that serves as a useful summation of the role played by the language and structure of the Manual in reflecting the political calculus for the U.S. military in Iraq.

### Factor Three- The Role of Historical COIN Operations

The adage that “Those who fail to learn from history are destined to repeat it” is particularly relevant in military doctrine and strategies. Many universities and military institutions have substantial budgets dedicated to the study and analysis of past military operations. The sole purpose of such inquiry is to establish a thorough understanding of what went wrong and what went right on battlefields in order to make educated decisions in contemporary conflicts. For instance, it may be hard for some to see the relevance of studying guerrilla wars that occurred over a century ago. Many external variables are quite different today than they were even 10 years ago. Nonetheless, many key tenets of military operations remain the same throughout history. I believe that hindsight may be the most important tool for contemporary leadership in the U.S. as the country attempts to win the war on terror. Because of this, I expected to find that the writing team’s strong understanding of and perspective on historical COIN operations would serve as a way of presenting the new political calculus of the U.S. military in its fight against the Iraqi insurgency. However, I found that although historical COIN conflicts did create a strong platform for the writing team in developing their

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

methodologies for defeating insurgencies, these past operations did not have the overarching importance in communicating the political calculus of the military that I initially suspected.

The authors used their historical knowledge of COIN doctrine to establish a baseline of counterinsurgency issues for their readers. Although the Manual never explicitly states this, the authors evidently based their doctrine largely on the foundational COIN principles of David Galula. Galula, who served as an officer in the French Army, witnessed firsthand the complexities of COIN operations while taking part in the 20<sup>th</sup> century insurgencies in China, Greece, and Algeria. His capstone book, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, remains one of the major pieces on the conduct of COIN operations. Lieutenant John Nagl, one of the authors of the Manual, had each member of the writing team read Galula's book prior to beginning the writing process. As a result, Galula's views on COIN warfare can be seen throughout the Manual. Conrad Crane commented on Galula's influence on the writing team,

*Galula was probably the most influential "dead theorist" on the writers. The most important insights from his work that affected the new FM were that the "rules" of revolutionary war favored insurgents in an unfair fight, information operations permeated all aspects of counterinsurgency, military forces had to be prepared to do traditionally non-military missions in counterinsurgency, political actions were more important than military ones for lasting success, and it was essential for counterinsurgents to recognize an insurgency existed early and aim at its root causes.<sup>68</sup> These "rules of revolutionary wars" helped inform the *Nine Paradoxes of**

*Counterinsurgency*, which served as the backbone of the Manual. These paradoxes represented a stark contrast from conventional military dictums and norms in the U.S. Army in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only did they turn military conventional wisdom on its head, but these paradoxes served as the overarching guidelines for the Manual. The *Nine Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency* are:

1. Sometimes, the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be.
2. Sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is.
3. The more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk must be accepted.
4. Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction.
5. Some of the best weapons for counterinsurgents do not shoot.
6. The host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well.
7. If a tactic works this week, it might not work next week; if it works in this providence, it may not work in the next.
8. Tactical success guarantees nothing.

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney. Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges. New York: Routledge, 2010: 61-62.

9. Many important decisions are not made by generals.<sup>69</sup> This succinct list serves as a useful synopsis of the COIN doctrines that are included in the pages of the Manual. Although the list is short, it represents years of research, analysis, and in-depth study of historical counterinsurgencies and historical documents. The *Nine Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency* serve as a strong example of the influence historical counterinsurgency doctrines and experiences had on the platform the authors utilized to present their recommendations for the success of U.S. COIN operations.

In addition to presenting the *Nine Paradoxes*, the writing team included multiple anecdotes of past counterinsurgency successes and failures to help readers see the applicability of the concepts the authors presented. These stories, while dated, significantly assist with the application of the doctrines in the Manual to the COIN battlefield in Iraq. I focus on two specific stories included in the Manual that represented historical “best-practice” in the execution of COIN operations. The first example comes in Chapter Five, *Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*. In this chapter Lieutenant Colonel McDaniel describes the necessary steps and procedures for the conduct of COIN operations. One important aspect of any successful counterinsurgent force is its ability to work with the HN security forces. In order to achieve this, McDaniel calls for the implementation of a concept known as combined action. Combined action is:

*A technique that involves joining U.S. and HN troops in a single organization, usually a platoon or company, to conduct COIN operations. This technique is appropriate in environments where large insurgent forces do not exist or where insurgents lack resources and freedom to maneuver. Combined action normally involves joining a U.S. rifle squad or platoon with a HN platoon or company, respectively.*<sup>70</sup>

After defining combined action, McDaniel provided key ideas to be followed by the counterinsurgent forces in building a successful combined action program with the HN security forces. McDaniel recommends that combined action unit members “develop and build positive relationships with their associated HN security forces and with the town leadership.”<sup>71</sup> McDaniel believes this can be accomplished by having U.S. forces “ask HN security forces for training on

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<sup>69</sup> Conrad Crane, *Chapter 1-Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 48-51.

<sup>70</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (USMC), *Chapter 5-Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*, in: Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 184.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 185.

local customs, key terrain, possible insurgent hideouts, and relevant cultural dynamics.”<sup>72</sup> He continues by listing appropriate tasks for the combined action units, including “helping HN security forces maintain entry control points and conducting multinational, coordinated day and night patrols to secure the town and area.”<sup>73</sup> At this point, the reader has a strong understanding of the make-up, purpose, and expectation of combined action groups. However, McDaniel provides the reader with a real-world example of the merits of establishing a successful combined action program in counterinsurgency warfare. He presents a brief synopsis of the U.S. Marine Corps’ implementation of its Combined Action Program in Vietnam, which was based on experiences in early 20<sup>th</sup> century counterinsurgency experiences in Haiti and Nicaragua. This program combined teams of about 15 Marines with a group of 20 South Vietnamese troops in the northern-most provinces of South Vietnam. McDaniel commented on the success of the Combined Action Program: “The Marines were very successful in denying the Viet Cong access to areas under their control. The Combined Action Program became a model for countering insurgencies. Many lessons learned from it were used in various peace enforcement and humanitarian assistance operations that Marines conducted during the 1990’s.”<sup>74</sup> Not only does an anecdote such as this help the reader see the applicability of the doctrines in the Manual, it also strengthens the author’s ability to help the reader apply the doctrines from the Manual to their respective area of operations.

Another significant historical anecdote that helped build the doctrinal platform can be found in Chapter Six *Developing Host-Nation Security Forces*, written by security expert Dr. James Corum. This chapter provided counterinsurgent leaders with a blueprint for the all-important task of ensuring that the HN security forces can develop to the point of securing their nation against the aggression of the insurgent forces. Corum based a majority of this chapter’s contents on his own research into security sector reform in Germany, Cyprus, and Malaya.<sup>75</sup> His expertise in security force development can be seen throughout the chapter as he outlines the challenges and limitations of supporting HN security forces, the methods for measuring progress, and goals for developing HN security forces. The chapter elaborates on virtually every aspect of the establishment, support, and continuation of the HN security forces. Corum covered

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p. 185.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p. 186.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p. 187.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney. Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges. New York: Routledge, 2010: 66.

everything from addressing the challenges of equipping an entire HN security force to establishing a military academy system to train and educate the non-commissioned and commissioned officer corps. The chapter provides the reader with a strong sense of the vast complexities that are inherent in assisting the HN develop its security forces. Even though it is brief, the chapter covers a significant amount of information in 36 pages.

Similar to McDaniel's focus on combined action units, however, Corum's emphasis on establishing the HN security forces would not be complete without the historical reference with which the chapter concluded: a synopsis of a historical counterinsurgency operation that instituted virtually every concept included in the previous pages. This inclination to end a chapter with a real-life example of the proper execution of the COIN doctrines probably helped foster confidence in the Manual in the U.S. military. These anecdotes show that following the guidelines set forth in the Manual can and will lead to success on COIN battlefields. Corum presents a précis of the British COIN experience in Malaya from 1948 to 1953 that reveals the importance of establishing a legitimate police force in counterinsurgency warfare. He discusses the problems of corruption, poor training, inept leadership in the Malayan police force, and he applauded the efforts of the British COIN forces to completely overhaul the police force structure in order to bring stability to the nation. The renovation of the Malayan police force did not occur overnight. It required significant amounts of patience, manpower, and money from the British forces. However, Corum is quick to point out that revamping the Malayan police system was the driving force that allowed the British to begin withdrawing their own troops and to eventually hand over the counterinsurgency battle to the Malaysians.

*The Malaya insurgency provides lessons applicable to combating any insurgency. Manpower is not enough; well-trained and well-disciplined forces are required. The Malayan example also illustrates the central role that police play in counterinsurgency operations. British leaders concentrated on training the Malayan leadership. The British insisted that chosen personnel receive the full British Army and police officer course. These actions built the Malayan security forces on a sound foundation. By taking a comprehensive approach to security force training and reform, the British commanders transformed a demoralized organization into a winning force.<sup>76</sup>*

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<sup>76</sup> James Corum, *Chapter 6-Developing Host-Nation Security Forces*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 235.

Such an example arguably would instill confidence in U.S. COIN forces because it shows that insurgencies have been defeated in the past and that there is no reason the U.S. forces cannot replicate such successes in Iraq.

Examples of historical successes and failures similar to Corum's can be found throughout the Manual. Even though they may not have fully reflected the development of the new political calculus of the U.S. military as I originally expected, it is evident that they helped to build and support the writing team's doctrinal platform.

Prior to conducting the research I was confident that historical COIN operations would serve as a major driving force in the development of the political calculus of the U.S. Army in Iraq. Historical anecdotes and the experiences of the writing team appeared throughout the Manual, but that was the extent of history's apparent role. After speaking with both Dr. Sewall and Dr. Crane, I came to understand why the influence of past COIN operations was as limited as they appeared to be. Each explained to me that although COIN experiences of both the U.S. and foreign countries can and often do provide the U.S. military with overarching insights into what has worked in the past, it is impossible to identify definitive best-practices for contemporary COIN conflicts strictly from historical examples.<sup>77</sup> They can provide broad guidelines for the execution of COIN operations, but that is the extent of their role. I began to see a connection between history's role in the Manual and one of the *Nine Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency*. The seventh paradox, "If a tactic works this week, it might not work next week; if it works in this providence, it may not work in the next," summarizes the writing team's perspective on past COIN experiences. Because the paradox illustrated the importance of acknowledging that COIN tactics are fluid and need to be assessed individually for each area of operations, it should come as no surprise that the authors refrained from advertising a historical COIN tactic as the be-all and end-all for every COIN operation regardless of circumstances.

When asked to elaborate on the role of historical COIN experiences in the Manual, Crane helped me understand why past operations were not a driving force in communicating the shift in focus of the U.S. military in Iraq. "When you try to write doctrine, you try to balance insights from the past provided by historians, with visions of the future provided by political scientists, and contemporary best-practices from those in uniform. Every insurgency is different. There are

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<sup>77</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011, and Sara Sewall, telephone interview, February 8, 2011.

not many historical lessons, but *insights* into what works” (my emphasis).<sup>78</sup> The inclusion of best-practices provided by the soldiers and Marines that had already been fighting the insurgents in multiple deployments significantly strengthens the doctrines in the Manual. This ensured that what was working on the ground at the time played a leading role in the direction of the doctrines discussed by the writing team. It is now clear to me why contemporary best practices evidently appeared more frequently in the Manual than historical COIN experiences. Crane summarized: “History was an illustrator, but was not as much of an influence on the doctrine as contemporary best-practices were”<sup>79</sup>

Similarly, Dr. Sewall believed that rather than conducting a complete survey of all historical COIN operations, the writing team selected key examples to establish a broad pathway for the U.S. COIN forces to follow in order to defeat insurgent forces. She observed that the military was not compelled to shift its focus beyond strictly military duties by history alone. In her view, the development of the new political calculus in the Army came from the doctrines themselves, which were a compilation of multiple experiences, schools of thought, historical perspectives, and contemporary best practices: “I do not think the U.S. Army was moved by historical cases, the army was moved by the doctrine. The historical cases were harnessed to illustrate the points in the doctrine.”<sup>80</sup>

After conducting my analysis of the Manual and speaking with two scholars that spearheaded the effort to create the new COIN manual, it is clear that history did not appear to be as significant as I initially suspected. Historical examples of both successful and failed COIN operations served as illustrations of the doctrines included in the Manual, but did not themselves fully capture the new political orientation of the U.S. military in Iraq.

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<sup>78</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Sarah Sewall, telephone interview, February 8, 2011.

#### Factor Four- Military and Civilian Relations in COIN operations

*Essential though it is, the military action is secondary to the political one, its primary purpose being to afford the political power enough freedom to work safely with the population.*<sup>81</sup> –David Galula

Unlike many military maneuvers, COIN operations require a distinct unified effort between civilian and military actors. Although each has their own set of duties and roles in these operations, often the lines become blurred, and the military carries out tasks typically relegated to civilian actors. This usually comes as a result of security issues in the area of operation in question or due to logistical limitations amongst the civilian agencies. This notion of the military taking on duties normally reserved for civilians served as a key part of my definition of the politicization of the U.S. military. Additionally, I hypothesized that the writing team's explicit acknowledgement that in many cases the military will be required to carry out tasks previously assigned to civilian actors reflected the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq.

Following the introductory chapter, the writing team addressed the often ambiguous lines between the duties of military and civilian entities in times of conflict. Dedicating an entire chapter early in the Manual to the integration of military and civilian actions, highlighted the importance of a unified effort in COIN operations. In most military operations, civilian and military entities work within strict boundaries in order to complete the mission. Typically, it is the military that takes the lead role in this relationship. This, however, is not the case in counterinsurgency operations. Colonel Richard Lacquement (U.S. Army), who wrote *Chapter Two- Unity in Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities*, sought to ensure that the reader understood the complex integration of efforts necessary for success in COIN operations. The duties for the military in COIN operations outlined in the chapter indicate that the military will no longer be limited to a strictly military role. The Manual calls for the military, and the U.S. Army and Marine Corps in particular, to assist civilian entities in COIN operations by taking on many of the roles that previously had been reserved for the civilian sector in warfare. Depending on local security, logistics, and insurgent activity, Lacquement also acknowledges that in certain circumstances the military may have to carry out both military and civilian duties without the assistance of any civilian entity. It is at this point where the relationship between civilian and

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<sup>81</sup> David Galula. Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice. London: Praeger, 1964: 58-59.

military organizations in COIN operations appears as a part of the new political calculus of the U.S. military in Iraq.

Throughout my research I located multiple examples when the writing team formally and informally showed the politicization of the military by assigning specific duties that had been relegated to civilian actors. In addition, Crane and Sewall both spoke candidly concerning the efforts of the writing team to fuse the duties between the military and civilian sectors while still maintaining mission focus. The two acknowledge that establishing a foundational working relationship between sectors with contrasting schools of thought and modus operandi is no easy task. However, this is exactly what the Manual attempted to accomplish. In order to display the importance of the relationship between the civilian and military arms of the U.S. government, I will provide some key examples from the Manual that signify a shift in approach in the Army. I also will include commentary from Dr. Crane concerning the multi-faceted role of the U.S. Army in COIN operations.

In chapter two of the Manual, Lacquement addresses multiple issues regarding the unity of effort between civilian and military actors. One area of particular importance is his statement on the preferred division of labor. His perspective directly addresses the ideal breakdown of duties between the civilian and military sectors, while still acknowledging that in many instances such a division of duties is unattainable due to outside factors.

*In COIN it is always preferred for civilians to perform civilian tasks. Whenever possible, civilian agencies or individuals with the greatest applicable expertise should perform a task. Legitimate local authorities should receive special preference. There are many U.S. agencies and civilian IGOs with more expertise in meeting the fundamental needs of a population under assault than military forces have; however, the ability of such agencies to deploy to foreign countries in sustainable numbers and with ready access to necessary resources is usually limited. The violence level in the AO (area of operation) also affects civilian agencies' ability to operate. The more violent the environment, the more difficult it is for civilians to operate effectively. Hence, the preferred or ideal division of labor is frequently unattainable. The more violent the insurgency, the more unrealistic is this preferred division of labor (my emphasis).<sup>82</sup>*

Because Lacquement and the entire writing team understood that attaining the preferred division of labor in COIN operations was unlikely, they stressed the importance of creating a fighting force that is capable of moving between both military and civilian duties. Although not ideal,

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<sup>82</sup> Colonel Richard Lacquement (U.S. Army), *Chapter 2-Unity in Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 67.

Lacquement recognizes that warfare is not a fair game, and in many situations it is the side that can best adapt to prevailing situations that will emerge victorious. To stress this point he included a quote from Galula's Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice on the precarious situation for military forces fighting insurgency warfare:

*“To confine soldiers to purely military functions while urgent and vital tasks have to be done, and nobody else is available to undertake them, would be senseless. The soldier must then be prepared to become...a social worker, a civil engineer, a schoolteacher, a nurse, a boy scout. But only for as long as he cannot be replaced, for it is better to entrust civilian tasks to civilians”*(my emphasis).<sup>83</sup>

It is important to note the viewpoint shared by Galula and the writing team on the proper distribution of duties on COIN operations. When the environment prohibits the participation of civilian organizations in the stabilization of the HN, the military must be prepared to pick up where the civilians left off (or never began). As the lead author, Dr. Crane shared a similar view. When asked to comment on the preferred division of labor in COIN operations, he responded: “In order to accomplish the mission along those different lines of effort, the military must help governance, assist in economic growth, help train host nation police and military forces, restore essential services; things outside the normal ‘shoot the bad guy’ modus operandi.”<sup>84</sup>

Additionally, General Anthony Zinni expressed his concern regarding the separation of duties between civilian and military entities in COIN operations. He noted that even though the military may not necessarily be designed to carry out duties typically relegated to civilian entities, there is no foreseeable alternative. In his view the burden of tying up any loose ends in COIN operations must fall on the military.<sup>85</sup>

By no means did Crane, Zinni, or Lacquement suggest that the military should take on the burden of conducting COIN operations alone. Rather, they understood that if and when the environment becomes too hostile for civilian agencies that are ill-equipped and ill-trained to operate in combat zones, the military must pick up where they left off. The writing team and its leader, Dr. Crane, took this reality in stride and devised a plan of action that not only increased the likelihood of success against insurgents, but added a valuable weapon to the toolkit of the

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<sup>83</sup> David Galula. Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice. London: Praeger, 1964, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007:68.

<sup>84</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>85</sup> General Anthony Zinni, personal interview, March 3, 2011.

U.S. military: the ability to serve in multiple roles beyond traditional combat operations. On this point, Crane commented:

*We (U.S. military) go into these operations and we expect civilian agencies to do certain things and when they don't the military ends up doing them. We call that mission creep; which can be a self-inflicting wound. What the manual is trying to say is that this is always going to happen. The military always must be prepared to do it (civilian duties). It actually helps because of the synergy and the lines of operation. Doing these extra missions actually helps the military in achieving the overall objective.*<sup>86</sup>

A pivotal aspect of the relationship between civilian and military agencies in COIN operations is the development of a unified effort and command structure. Because civilian agencies, U.S. military units, foreign military units, NGOs, and HN organizations are all focused on the task of defeating the insurgent forces, it is crucial that their efforts are synchronized and that they employ strong lines of communication. Operating shoulder-to-shoulder with such a mosaic of organizations with a wide variety of skills and operational techniques has the potential to develop into a substantial road block to COIN success. Because of the possibility for friction, it is imperative that military leaders understand their leadership roles in working with various organizations. Concerning this potential problem, Lacquement acknowledged, "Various agencies acting to reestablish stability may differ in goals and approaches, based on their experience and institutional culture. When their actions are allowed to adversely affect each other, the populace suffers and insurgents identify grievances to exploit."<sup>87</sup> Lacquement understood the potential for friction between the assortment of COIN organizations and provided guidance concerning the role that military leadership must take.

*A clear understanding of the desired end state should infuse all efforts, regardless of the agencies or individuals charged with their execution. Given the primacy of political considerations, military forces often support civilian efforts. However, the mosaic nature of COIN operations means that lead responsibility shifts among military, civilian, and HN authorities. Regardless, military leaders should prepare to assume local leadership for COIN efforts. The organizing imperative is focusing on what needs to be done, not on who does it (my emphasis).*<sup>88</sup>

This statement about the nature of the relationship amid the montage of COIN actors is evidence of the writing team's objective in emphasizing the focus of the U.S. military. Although multiple parties are involved in combating insurgents, it is the military that must take the lead in

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<sup>86</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>87</sup> Colonel Richard Lacquement (U.S. Army), *Chapter 2-Unity in Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 58.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57.

coordinating their efforts. In this section of the Manual in particular, the authors called on the military to accept the leading role in coordinating COIN efforts. This required the military to explicitly reach beyond its traditional roles and develop into an organization equipped to conduct raids and patrols just as well as it can build a local school house and coordinate efforts with non-profits to establish a village clinic.

The final piece of evidence that I believe reflects politicization as tapped by the relationship between civilian and military actors comes from the command directive given by General Petraeus to all coalition forces in Iraq in 2008. This directive was the first major documented application of the COIN doctrines included in the Manual. His published directive, which was distributed to all military personnel regardless of nationality in Iraq at the time, served as a quasi-abridged version of the Manual. Just as Colonel Lacquement addressed the need to develop a unified effort amongst the various entities fighting against the insurgency, Petraeus sought to ensure that the troops in Iraq understood the significance of using all available assets to defeat the insurgents. This meant that the soldiers and Marines on the ground would have to step outside of their comfort zones and work hand-in-hand with foreign militaries and civilian agencies with which they were unaccustomed to working. In his directive Petraeus included a section concerning the importance of a successful civilian-military relationship in COIN operations.

*Employ all assets to isolate and defeat the terrorists and insurgents. Counter-terrorist forces alone cannot defeat Al-Qaeda and other extremists; success requires all forces and all means at our disposal—non-kinetic as well as kinetic. Employ Coalition and Iraqi conventional and special operations forces, Sons of Iraq, and all other available multipliers. Integrate civilian and military efforts to cement security gains. Resource and fight decentralized. Push assets down to those who most need them and can actually use them.<sup>89</sup>*

General Petraeus's command guidance serves as strong evidence of the importance of civilian and military relationships in the shift in focus of the U.S. Army fighting the Iraqi insurgency. Combined with Colonel Lacquement's guidance on issues relating to unity of effort between civilian and military entities, Dr. Crane's comments about the intentions of his writing team, and General Zinni's perspective, I believe the dynamic relationship between civilian and military actors reflected the new political calculus of the U.S. Army.

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<sup>89</sup> General David H. Petraeus. "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance." Headquarters, Multi-National Force-Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq (June 2008).

### Factor Five- Lessons Learned from Iraq (pre-Manual)

As mentioned earlier, my research did not find conclusive evidence in the Manual supporting the significance of historical COIN operations and experiences in the politicization of the U.S. Army. However, I thought it necessary to research separately the potential influence of the specific experiences of U.S. forces fighting against Iraqi insurgents prior to the release of the Manual. I suspected that because the Manual and its predecessor [FM 3-07.22-Counterinsurgency Field Manual (Interim)] were designed initially to address the shortcomings in the U.S. military's conduct of COIN operations following the invasion of Iraq, the experiences of those involved in the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom would appear in efforts to communicate the politicization of the U.S. Army following the release of the Manual in 2007. I searched the Manual for inclusions of lessons-learned from Iraq and any mention of successes and failures of U.S. forces prior to the release of the Manual.

One of the most well-known instances of successful COIN operations in Iraq prior to the release of the Manual occurred in Tal Afar in Northern Iraq. Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (U.S. Marine Corps) included a brief discussion of the experiences of Colonel H.R. McMaster (U.S. Army) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in Chapter Five-*Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*. This brief synopsis of the experiences of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Northern Iraq provided a successful example of the “clear-hold-build” COIN strategy, which was a quintessential doctrine found throughout the Manual. The U.S. experience in Tal Afar was particularly telling because like many cities throughout Iraq in 2004-2005, it was in the grips of a ravaging insurgency. McDaniel described the state of affairs in Tal Afar: “The insurgents achieved some success as the populace divided into communities defined by sectarian boundaries. Additionally, Tal Afar became an insurgent support base and sanctuary for launching attacks in the major regional city of Mosul and throughout Ninevah province.”<sup>90</sup> Needless to say, the situation in Tal Afar prior to the arrival of Colonel McMaster and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR was quite ominous.

Immediately upon arrival, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR began the “clear” stage of its operation by locating and destroying the insurgent forces in and around Tal Afar. This was by no means an easy task, but a unified effort between Iraqi security forces and U.S. soldiers enabled them to

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<sup>90</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lance McDaniel (USMC), *Chapter 5-Executing Counterinsurgency Operations*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 182.

defeat a significant insurgent force. The most effective tactic they employed was building an eight-foot high berm around the entire city in order to control who entered and left the city. By funneling all personnel traffic to specific checkpoints, the combined COIN forces of Iraqi security forces and U.S. soldiers could better identify insurgents and take them into custody. After establishing a stranglehold on the insurgent elements in Tal Afar, McMaster and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR began implementing the “hold” stage of their strategy. This second phase focused primarily on creating a sense of security for the citizens of the city. This was accomplished by providing the police force with extensive training in law enforcement and security problems from a coalition-supported police academy. In addition, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR ensured that the U.S. forces, Iraqi police, and Iraqi security forces had strong lines of communication and all worked towards a common end. This unified security effort in Tal Afar not only increased security in the city but also helped destroy an insurgent network that included a chain of safe houses between Syria and Tal Afar.<sup>91</sup>

Upon successfully executing the second phase of its COIN strategy, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR began the “build” phase. In this effort the U.S. troops in Tal Afar joined forces with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Transition Initiatives to bring basic services back to the citizens of Tal Afar. By re-establishing basic needs like sewage, water, electricity, and trash collection, the COIN forces were able to solidify the support of the HN populace and virtually wipe out the power of the insurgents in and around the city. McDaniel summarized the effects of the actions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tal Afar:

*As security and living conditions in Tal Afar improved, citizens began providing information that helped eliminate the insurgency’s infrastructure. In addition to information received on the streets, multinational forces established joint coordination centers in Tal Afar and nearby communities that became multinational command posts and intelligence-sharing facilities with the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police.<sup>92</sup>*

The actions taken by the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tal Afar displays the chain reaction of positive outcomes that can follow the defeat of insurgent forces city-by-city.

After analyzing the type and amount of information regarding the experiences of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tal Afar and discussing the probable reasons behind the inclusion of such anecdotes in the Manual with Dr. Crane and Dr. Sewall, I concluded that the pre-Manual experiences of the U.S. military in Iraq had minimal part in the establishment of the military’s new political

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* p. 183.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 184.

calculus. Similar to past COIN operations discussed earlier, the actions and events that took place in Iraq prior to the release of the Manual, while necessary for taking the pulse of the Iraqi insurgency, did not directly drive the politicization of the U.S. military. Many senior-level analysts and military personnel, including those who contributed to my research, acknowledge that the politicization of the U.S. military was not a new phenomenon prior to the invasion of Iraq. The U.S. military has been involved in COIN operations in some form or another for the better part of a century. The lessons-learned from such military exchanges as the Spanish-American War, the Vietnam conflict, and the El Salvadoran civil war all helped shape the U.S. military's doctrine concerning counterinsurgency operations. There is no doubt that each of these operations differed in scope and environment; however, each added different elements to the U.S. military's planning for and conduct of COIN operations. Having said that, it is clear that for many years COIN doctrine was put on the Department of Defense's back-burner, limited to the focus of U.S. Special Operations Command. Nonetheless, COIN doctrines *did* exist. All the military had to do was bring people together to compile years of COIN research and experience into a COIN doctrine that could be applied to the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. military.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence against the influence of the pre-Manual COIN experiences on the politicization of the U.S. military came from my interview with General Zinni. He stated that the same principles of COIN operations that made up the backbone of the Manual were established and utilized during Vietnam. When asked to elaborate on the similarities between the Vietnam era counterinsurgency doctrines and those included in the Manual, Zinni responded: "After the Vietnam War we (U.S. military) already had sufficient COIN doctrine in place. We understood that in order to defeat insurgent forces, we must focus on three key areas: fighting and defeating the insurgents, meeting the needs of the populace which included re-establishing their infrastructure, and the improvement of the environment which included bringing democracy to their society. These same ideals can be found in FM 3-24."<sup>93</sup> Like Petraeus, Crane, and Sewall, Zinni believed that a fighting force that attempted to defeat an insurgency while solely focusing on traditional military tasks was destined to fail. He fully supported constructing a military that was proficient in conducting raids *and* in opening and operating a city's sewage system (albeit on a temporary basis). In addition, he stated not only

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<sup>93</sup> General Anthony Zinni, personal interview, March 3, 2011.

that was he not alone in this view, but that for many years personnel in and out of the armed services had been calling on the military to polish its non-traditional military roles.

It is apparent that neither COIN doctrine itself nor the politicization of the U.S. military were phenomena that developed after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Because of this, I conclude that references to early experiences of the U.S. military in Iraq such as those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tal Afar were illustrations of COIN doctrine. However, I do believe that this sort of politicization of the U.S. military did not fully take effect in Iraq until after the release of the Manual. It took the concerted efforts of a team of experts to codify the COIN doctrines created from years of trial-and-error practices and research in order to communicate about a politicized fighting force. Additionally, the writing team included supplementary examples of successes and failures in Iraq prior to the release of the Manual including a brief anecdote of General Petraeus's successes in Mosul and a synopsis of the merits of the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq. While beneficial for helping the reader see the merits of employing the doctrines included in the Manual, they added little to understanding the doctrinal politicization of the troops. From the outset, the writing team understood that success in COIN operations depended on utilizing a force capable of wearing multiple hats. Long before General Petraeus came to the Combined Arms Center, each of the members of the writing team, through their own experiences and expertise, knew that the U.S. military must become comfortable taking on tasks beyond their traditional modus operandi. The struggles of the U.S. military following the invasion in 2003 only solidified this idea. As such, the inclusion of pre-Manual experiences in Iraq served as persuasive illustrations for the benefits of a politicized fighting force. The ideology for a politicized military already had been in place in the theoretical tool kits of the writing team for years.

### Summary and Conclusion

Before commencing my research on the politicization of the U.S. military found in the Manual, I located five factors to test as possible indicators. For each, I developed a hypothesis based on my initial research and my personal notions. After conducting the research and drawing conclusions from the data collected, I was able to locate the essential factors in the Manual that helped tap the politicization of the U.S. military. Similarly, I also discovered the factors in the Manual that evidently added less to an understanding of the politicization. Additionally, my

research permitted me to develop a useful perspective on the U.S. government's execution of COIN operations and military doctrine creation. This perspective allows me to make recommendations to the U.S. government aimed at streamlining the doctrine creation process as well as increasing the likelihood of success in COIN operations. The final chapter elaborates on such recommendations.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Prior to embarking on my research on the factors in the Manual that reflected the politicization of the U.S. military, I had many preconceived notions regarding the roles assigned to and the views of the U.S. armed forces in COIN operations. I believed that through my research I would find a fighting force resistant to change that was hesitant to take on assignments outside of its traditional modus operandi. I believed that, though distinctive in the manner in which it is carried out, counterinsurgency doctrine would follow a familiar structural design often found in the Department of Defense. Additionally, I suspected that the politicization of the U.S. military was merely a second-order effect of the implementation of the COIN doctrines in the Manual, not a primary force in the Manual's creation. Through my research I soon learned that not only were my initial views off-base, but that virtually all of them would be shown to be invalid.

As I reflected on the findings, I realized that in addition to uncovering a striking aspect of the U.S. military's role in COIN operations, I found myself contemplating future avenues of research relating to U.S. military policy and doctrine. I was able to address many of the questions and propositions that I had prior to beginning my research, but discovered a few along the way that remain unanswered. In this final chapter I summarize the various limitations I located throughout my research. Because the study focused on factors that were constantly evolving and could vary from unit to unit and environment to environment, it is imperative to acknowledge such limitations and to address the extent that they influenced my findings. Then, I will address the results of the propositions that I presented in Chapter One. Following this summary, I will present a detailed explanation of what I believe are useful research questions to be addressed in the future. With such a large area of focus as U.S. military doctrinal formation and communication, my thesis was only able to scratch the surface. I hope that the study will motivate others to reach deeper into the intricacies of U.S. military doctrine. The thesis closes both with a discussion of what I believe to be the broad implications of my findings as well as with some recommendations for the U.S. government to consider when writing future military doctrine and/or conducting COIN operations.

## Limitations

Upon completing my research, I located four key limitations. To a varying degree, each played a role in the politicization of the U.S. military as well as the conclusions that I drew from my research.

The first limitation dealt specifically with the second factor the previous chapter discussed: the language and structure of the Manual. When I studied this factor I wanted to learn how the troops received and understood the doctrines the Manual included based on the design and syntax the writing team used. In an ideal environment, this would be relatively easy to identify; however, an operational COIN battlefield is a far cry from such a setting. After analyzing the structural and language-based evidence in the Manual as well as speaking with Drs. Crane and Sewall, I came to the realization that in certain situations, the politicizing nature of the language and structure of the Manual is completely irrelevant.

Because much of the intended audience for the Manual was downrange fighting against the Iraqi insurgency when the Manual was released in 2007, a large portion of the very people the authors had in mind when writing the Manual did not have the means or resources to read and study the contents of the Manual immediately following its release. In many situations members of the tactical-level leadership and below learned of these new unified COIN doctrines via the interpretations of their commanders. I am not suggesting that basing COIN operational guidelines on one's commander's understanding is necessarily a disadvantage. However, many of the very troops who were being politicized by the features of the Manual possibly never read the Manual themselves until returning home from their tours of duty. Therefore, it is important to note the possibility that few members of the U.S. COIN force in Iraq had the opportunity to read, acknowledge, analyze, and apply the doctrines in the Manual immediately following its release in 2007.

Another closely related limitation concerns the discretion of the commanders operating in the various COIN environments. Due to the ever-changing nature of insurgent activity, COIN force commanders must constantly adapt their strategies and tactics in order to try to stay one step ahead of the enemy. This is notwithstanding the complications that come with addressing the needs of the HN populace as well. However, the Manual wholeheartedly acknowledged this as did Crane and Sewall. This was such a central concept that the writing team dedicated one of the nine paradoxes of counterinsurgency to this very idea: "If a tactic works this week, it might

not work next week; if it works in this province, it might not work in the next.”<sup>94</sup> This fluctuating aspect of COIN operations led to a significant limitation in my research.

Commanders in the U.S. military conducting COIN operations need to have both the ability to interpret the doctrines in the Manual from their own perspectives and the ability to dictate how and where they will apply those doctrines in their area of operations (AO). As a result, two U.S. military units operating in neighboring Iraqi cities could have completely different mission expectations and operational standards about their relationship with the local populace and insurgent forces. Besides causing potentially catastrophic discrepancies in communication and operations between military units, this aspect of COIN operations helped me to realize that my analysis could be significantly limited due to the discretion of commanders on the ground. For example, if a battalion commander in the U.S. Marine Corps was operating in an area of Iraq that was particularly hostile at the time and had high levels of insurgent activity, they would be well within their right to order their troops to cease construction on the local hospital in order to conduct cordon searches of suspected insurgent safe houses. Such a decision would significantly alter the level of the “politicization” of his Marines. With this in mind, I had to consider that the level of politicization of U.S. troops in Iraq following the release of the Manual could vary from unit to unit due to the realities on the ground in the respective AOs.

In this discussion of the applicability of the COIN doctrines in the Manual to various AOs and the requirement for field commanders to use discretion in implementing the guidelines included in the Manual, it is essential to understand its intended purpose. Crane was frank in reflecting on the purpose of the Manual.

*Even the most avid supporters of the new doctrine must admit that it is not a universal solution to conflict. It is not even a blueprint for success in the global war on terror. It is designed to help guide forces in a theater to design and execute a successful counterinsurgency campaign.*<sup>95</sup>

It is important to keep this point in mind when attempting to gauge the level of politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq as well as understanding the factors reflecting that politicization.

It is evident that a substantial decrease in sectarian violence and an increase in the overall stability of Iraq took place following the release of the Manual in December 2006. However,

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<sup>94</sup>Conrad Crane, *Chapter 1-Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, in: General David H. Petraeus and Lieutenant General James F. Amos. The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24). Chicago: Chicago Press, 2007: 50.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney. Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges. New York: Routledge, 2010: 70.

what is not as easy to see is the influence that the release of the Manual and the simultaneous politicization of the U.S. military had on the rising stability of Iraq. Not only was this a proposition that I framed from the outset of this thesis, but I believe it also developed into a limitation of my research. Even though it may be convenient to claim that the release of the Manual was a watershed moment for the U.S. military that brought systemic changes that reversed the manner in which the Army and Marine Corps fought the Iraqi insurgency, such is simply not the case. The Manual represented a unified compilation of current best-practices in COIN operations combined with expert analysis of COIN doctrine. In many cases, the troops had already been carrying out the doctrines included in the Manual for many years prior to its release. Bearing this in mind, it is important to keep the influence of the Manual on the rising stability of Iraq in perspective along with other influences such as the troop surge and the Sunni Awakening. Crane was quick to point this out when he wrote concerning the critics of the Manual in Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges:

*Some critics of the new doctrine are in uniform. The most prolific has been Colonel Gian Gentile from the History Department at West Point. He commanded a battalion in combat in Iraq during 2006, and has been identified as a leading spokesman of a 'conservative school' within the Army by Andrew Bacevich. Gentile argues that the new doctrine gets too much credit for success in Iraq. Other unique circumstances were more important, including the fact that we "bought off" most of the opposition by hiring "concerned local citizens" or "Sons of Iraq".<sup>96</sup>*

Even though I did not intend to conduct an analysis addressing the effect the Manual had on the increase of stability in Iraq after it was released, its role in the increase of stability in Iraq must not be overlooked. Nonetheless, it is virtually impossible to state the explicit causes of this rising stability. Because of this, a limitation of the analysis is the inability to locate the specific role (if any) that the politicization of the U.S. military through the Manual played in stabilizing Iraq.

In any research venture conducting interviews with individuals who had direct links to the analyst's variables or research question can be very useful. My primary motivation for seeking interviews with Dr. Crane and Dr. Sewall was to gain a perspective from individuals who played principal roles in the development of the Manual. Additionally, I sought an interview with General Anthony Zinni to gain a view of the strategic changes brought about by a politicized U.S. military. All three interviewees surpassed my expectations. Each offered insights that proved invaluable to my analysis of the factors in the Manual that reflected the politicization

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

of the military. Keeping the usefulness of these interviews in mind, it is important to note that the data collected from these individuals were just that, individual views. Even though their perspectives were vital, I had to consider that these individual viewpoints did not necessarily represent institutional views held by the U.S. government. This limitation, albeit minor in consequence, is worth noting due to the prominent role of the interviews in my research.

### Propositions

At the beginning of the thesis I set forth five propositions that I hoped to examine. As I neared the end of my research, I found that although I did uncover useful revelations concerning each, the results often were quite surprising. This was by far one of the most rewarding aspects of the entire process: gaining knowledge and uncovering information that either did not exist previously or was not sufficiently addressed in other scholarly work.

The first proposition concerned the reception by those both in and out of uniform of the development of a new unified military-wide COIN doctrinal manual. Prior to launching my study, I suspected that there would be widespread support for the creation of the Manual. My initial suspicions were met as I conducted the background research for the literature review and spoke with interviewees. Albeit at various levels, almost all the literature as well as the individual respondents fully supported the military's action to create a unified COIN doctrinal framework that would significantly increase the continuity amongst the fighting forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. I assumed that this support was a result of the U.S. military's shortcomings in its execution of COIN operations following the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. military as a whole was significantly deficient in COIN doctrine and guidance in the early years of the Iraqi campaign.

Interestingly, however, one key individual was cool to the idea of re-establishing a military-wide COIN doctrine for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. General Zinni stated that he believed the COIN doctrines that were established during the Vietnam conflict were more than sufficient to meet the needs of the U.S. military in Iraq.<sup>97</sup> From his perspective, the difficulties in the Iraqi COIN campaign were a matter of execution and a lack of understanding of the operational environment, not a doctrinal deficiency. Zinni's illustrious career serving as a Marine officer, diplomat, and government advisor lent these views particular weight.

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<sup>97</sup> General Anthony Zinni, personal interview, March 3, 2011.

Attempting to locate a specific factor that led to the decrease in insurgent activity, decline in sectarian violence, and increase in overall stability in Iraq is like trying to find the root cause of the Renaissance. In each case, multiple factors came into play that together helped bring widespread societal changes. I expected that my research would find textual data as well as individuals who shared my belief that although the release of the Manual *may* have had an effect in the overall stability and security of Iraq between 2007 and 2010, its role was minimal relative to other factors. At the outset, I argued that developments such as the troop surge, the leadership of Petraeus as commander of MNF-I, and the Sunni awakening played a much larger role in the rise of stability in Iraq in the years following the release of the Manual. The data collected from my textual research and interviews supported the notion that the release of the Manual had mostly minimal effects on the state of affairs in 2007-2010 Iraq. Even though many of the scholars I studied to design a framework for my research strongly supported the creation of the Manual, most accepted that its role in the decrease of insurgent activity and violence in Iraq often was overstated.

Even so, FM 3-24 was distinctive for many reasons. None of these is more apparent than the manner in which it was written. Many military doctrines are conceptualized and written by a similar write-by-committee method as was FM 3-24; however, 3-24 differed due to the individuals who made up this writing committee. When General Petraeus initiated the creation of the Manual, he stepped outside the box by inviting anthropologists, economists, human rights experts, historians, and COIN experts who were not members of the armed services to assist in the development of the COIN doctrines in the Manual. After completing my research, I believe that this combination of military and civilian input is one of the biggest reasons the Manual was so well received by the U.S. government and the civilian intellectual community. I drew this conclusion based on examining another proposition made prior to commencing my research. Long before I began this research, the only things I knew about the Manual were that it was written by both military and civilian strategists and that it was the brainchild of General Petraeus. Because of this, I expected to find useful evidence supporting the notion that the civilian-military write-by-committee manner in which the Manual was created should be repeated for future military doctrine.

The creation and implementation processes of the Manual represent a significant change in the approach and mindset within the U.S. military. Because the military is only as good as the

training and guidance its members receive, it is essential that TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command) provide soldiers with cutting-edge war fighting doctrine. If the U.S. military is to succeed in future conflicts, it is vital that it continue to defer to topical experts regardless of affiliation when establishing or revising doctrine. In “Constructing the Legacy of Field Manual 3-24,” Lieutenant Colonel Nagl commented about the lasting impact of the manner in which the Manual was created:

*Future military doctrine should benefit from FM 3–24’s example of requesting input from the field and from outsiders, making the preparation of doctrine less about traditional practice handed down from past generations and more about constant learning and adaptation based on current experience and collaboration with a broad group of concerned partners. This legacy may be as important for the future of the U.S. military as the manual’s twin pillars of protecting the population and constantly learning so we can adapt to the demands of the wars we are fighting, rather than the wars we would prefer to fight.*<sup>98</sup>

Virtually all of the data I collected from secondary sources as well as interviews suggested that although the manner in which the Manual was composed was innovative and useful, the likelihood of a similar approach being repeated was low. Crane elaborated on his view concerning the future of doctrine writing in the U.S. military during our interview: “Besides (FM) 3-24 and (FM) 3.07, the doctrine writing process has reverted back to the couple-of-guys-in-uniform-sitting-in-a-room mode. I have not seen any further efforts to go down the road of bringing in outside involvement.” He continued:

*This was General Petraeus’s attempt to create a big tent to bring in outside help to develop essential doctrine for the military. I don’t see other general officers that want replicate this process. It entails more work; there is a danger of losing control, lots of moving pieces. Rarely does a doctrinal manual attract the attention of a general officer.....It was a unique time in history with some unique people involved and I don’t see the same pattern shaping itself again for a similar joint-effort between military and civilian intellectuals.*<sup>99</sup>

Although the combined effort between civilian and military personnel led by General Petraeus is commendable, it seems unlikely that a similar approach will be repeated very frequently in the future.

In Chapter One I stated that of the five factors found in the Manual, the level of experience and expertise in COIN operations/doctrine of the writing team and historical COIN operations would be the most evident indicators of the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq. I

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<sup>98</sup> John A. Nagl, (Lieutenant Colonel-US Army). “Constructing the Legacy of Field Manual 3-24” JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly, 2010 Third Quarter, 58 (2010): 118-120.

<sup>99</sup> Conrad Crane, telephone interview, February 11, 2011.

found that the expertise and experience of the writing team on COIN operations and doctrine was most apparent. This, however, was not the case concerning historical COIN operations. I had predicted prior to my research that past experiences in COIN operations both by the U.S. and other global powers would play pivotal roles in presenting the doctrine included in the Manual and the accompanying politicization of the military. I discovered that historical COIN operations served merely as illustrations of the doctrines in the Manual and the politicization of the troops. This was a far cry from being a central indicator of the politicization that I had envisioned. Because many military leaders spend substantial time studying past military successes and failures in order to inform their own decisions, the relatively insignificant role of historical COIN experiences was one of the largest surprises of my research.

The final proposition dealt with the roles military and civilian actors performed in COIN operations. I proposed that there would be continued dominance of the military in the fragile relationship with civilian entities. Due to environmental circumstances and resource limitations of the civilian sector, the military often has to pick up where civilian agencies left off, both figuratively and literally. On this proposition, my findings were somewhat mixed. Although much of the scholarship and the conversations I had with interview respondents supported the idea that the military *should* continue to have superiority over civilian entities, I found mixed views of the future of the complex relationship between military and civilian actors. Each of my interviewees believed that for the time being, there is no other option other than to allow the military to take precedence in COIN operations. However, they also thought that the U.S. government needs to do a better job of integrating civilian actors into the COIN effort. Although the performance of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan shows that it is more than capable of carrying out duties traditionally relegated to civilians, it is unlikely that the military can keep up this operational tempo for extended lengths of time. The strongest supporter of a systemic change in the way the U.S. government distributes duties between the military and civilian entities in COIN operations was General Zinni. (I will address his recommendations later in the chapter.) Based on my research, I conclude that there is support to continue the dominance of military forces over civilian actors in COIN operations due to environmental challenges or logistical constraints. Nonetheless, the future of the distribution of assignments between military and civilian actors in COIN operations remains undetermined.

## Future Research

Even though I was able to gain significant personal insight into the intricacies and implications of following U.S. military doctrine, I discovered that multiple stones have yet to be overturned. In many ways it seems as though I have more questions at the conclusion of my thesis than I did at the commencement. I do not believe this is bad thing, however. Rather, it is essential to develop an inquisitive mind that is constantly looking for opportunities to find new research opportunities. Throughout the research process, I came across several situations that presented opportunities to expand the scope of my thesis. Yet, I also understood that it was imperative to maintain a framework that would permit me to draw substantive conclusions.

With that said, I believe that two primary aspects of U.S. COIN doctrine are worthy of future research. The first deals with the difference between the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army in interpretation and execution of the doctrines in the Manual. Due to the nature of COIN operations, the Marine Corps and Army have taken on a majority of the duties in the current COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is not to take anything away from the Navy and Air Force. To suggest that the U.S. military could successfully defeat insurgent forces without the assistance of the Navy and Air Force would be both irrational and naïve. However, because of the similarities in mission structure between the Marine Corps and Army, I believe it would be more useful to limit the scope of such a proposed research project to these two services.

My goals in conducting a comparative analysis of the Marine Corps and Army would be, first, to locate what if any differences exist between their interpretations and execution of the doctrines from the Manual and, second, to better understand the cultural, systemic, structural, and leadership characteristics that account for these differences. I believe the similar duties of these two services in counterinsurgency operations make it imperative that the upper echelons in the Department of Defense better understand how each service interprets and executes doctrine. Additionally, because many Marine and Army units now work together in the same AOs in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is critical that their leaders understand how the other will carry out the doctrines included in the Manual.

As I set the framework for my research, I purposefully limited my focus to the Iraqi insurgency. I did this for two reasons. Most important was that doing so provided the opportunity to develop specific conclusions about a particular campaign. Moreover, the primary focus of the U.S. military at the time of the release of the Manual was Iraq, not Afghanistan. Nevertheless, I

found myself on multiple occasions asking how these same factors in the Manual might have reflected the political focus of the troops fighting against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. This brings me to my second idea for a future research project. I believe it would be useful to conduct an analysis of the extent and nature of politicization of the U.S. forces fighting in the Afghanistan COIN campaign. Unlike my research on the factors in the Manual that reflected the desired politicization of the troops in Iraq, I would design my research on Afghanistan for the period starting in 2007 after the release of the Manual through 2011 when President Obama called for a drawdown of U.S. forces in theater. Extending the time frame would allow me to view the politicization of the troops as the focus of the U.S. government shifted back to Afghanistan as Iraq gradually stabilized between 2008 and 2010. Additionally, an expanded timeline would allow me to examine the leadership role of General Petraeus on the politicization of the forces. By measuring the political focus of the troops during the leadership of General Stanley McChrystal compared to that of General Petraeus through interviews and primary source documents such as blogs and diaries, I could isolate each general's influence on the politicization of the U.S. forces. It would be interesting to see if and how the politicization of the U.S. military in Afghanistan changed after General Petraeus took command of International Security Assistance Force- Afghanistan (ISAF) following the resignation of General McChrystal in June 2010. This would reveal the level of influence Petraeus had on the politicization of the forces as an individual leader.

My research on the factors included in the Manual that reflect the politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq would serve as a useful launching pad for both of these proposed research projects. Furthermore, conducting research that looked at the differences in interpretation and execution of COIN doctrine between the Marine Corps and Army as well as between the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan would establish fuller understanding of the overarching second and third-order effects that U.S. military doctrine has on the fighting force.

### Broad Implications and Recommendations

Even though I do not consider myself an expert on either COIN doctrine or the establishment of military doctrine, I believe my research qualifies me to present recommendations to the U.S. government aimed at increasing its success in COIN campaigns. Throughout my research, I found multiple issues that, if addressed adequately, could strengthen

the effectiveness of the U.S. government in combating insurgent forces. A key theme throughout this thesis has been the manner in which the Manual was written. As my research demonstrated, there was significant support for the inclusion of a wide range of experts both in and out of uniform in writing and editing the Manual. Nonetheless, it does not seem as though this combined effort is very likely to be repeated in the future. Regardless of the reasons behind excluding a wide range of civilians from the creation of future military doctrinal manuals, I strongly oppose such a policy. It is my professional opinion that the inclusion of perspectives from outside the military is essential to the development of sound policy and doctrine.

Too often organizations become complacent by relying solely on ideas and inputs from the same group of individuals; the military is no different. When a group of military personnel sit together in a room to discuss doctrinal changes, strategic decisions, or changes in policy, it is reasonable to assume that many share similar views and perspectives. Of course, I am not suggesting that everyone in the military thinks and acts in the same ways. However, I am suggesting that when it comes to making such vital decisions as doctrinal changes, it would be worthwhile to tap the vast reserve of civilian experts in the United States. With so many difficult challenges ahead for the military (such as the impending austerity measures, instability in Afghanistan, rising threats from Pakistan, and the ongoing threat of international terrorism), it is essential that the military puts its best foot forward when dictating policy and establishing doctrine. For this reason, I strongly recommend that the military continue to work hand-in-hand with civilian intellectuals as it did with the creation of FM 3-24. Our nation's security and longevity may rest on this relationship.

My second recommendation developed from my interview with General Zinni. One of the key ideas that I focused on during our interview was the relationship between civilian and military parts of the U.S. government. Because General Zinni served both as a strategic-level military leader and as a diplomat following his retirement, he was particularly qualified to comment on the current relationships in COIN operations. During our discussion, Zinni revealed his support for a system that would alleviate many of the problems that have plagued the U.S. government in COIN operations since 9/11. One of the largest problems that he witnessed was a systemic disconnect between military and civilian agencies. He cited multiple instances where differences in structures, culture, and leadership inhibited mission success in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Effectively utilizing the Civil Affairs units in the military and establishing Civil-

Military Operations Centers (CMOCs) in COIN theaters are starting points, but they alone are not sufficient to relieve the difficulties in the civilian-military relationship.

In order to address the challenges in the civilian-military operational relationship, General Zinni put forward the idea of creating a completely separate Civil Affairs “super agency” in the U.S. executive branch. Such an entity would consist of both military and civilian experts in everything from constructing roads and hospitals to providing humanitarian aid. This new arrangement would serve as an umbrella for myriad civilian and military agencies focused on furthering U.S. strategic goals. However, the key is that it would be built with the same structural framework as the military. This would allow for a seamless cohesion between personnel and ideas from this new agency to military COIN forces. This agency would have a similar chain of command and communication structure as the military. Such a system would allow easy communication between military and civilian actors and would address many of the shortcomings of the current relationship. This would permit civilian agencies such as the State Department or the Department of Energy to easily plug into the COIN effort and immediately begin to provide needed assistance. Such a design would provide a unified voice and a unified effort for the large number of actors involved in military operations.<sup>100</sup> No longer would civilian entities be stalled in COIN operations due to security or logistical issues. In such a system they could easily coordinate with defense forces in the “super agency” to provide the necessary security. Additionally, because many of the resource management issues would be taken care of in-house by the super agency, logistical problems would be reduced substantially.

Even though designing and establishing such a proposed entity is a very lofty goal, especially considering the fiscal struggles currently facing the U.S., I strongly recommend that the U.S. president take a serious look at designing such a structure. Doing so not only would help alleviate many of the problems facing U.S. executive branch agencies in COIN operations in Afghanistan, but it also would help ensure that future nation-building campaigns would not be as problematic as in Iraq. There is no telling what future foreign policy decisions the U.S. government will face. However, I would be so bold as to suggest that the combined effort of military and civilian entities will play a pivotal role in the success or failure of these future decisions.

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<sup>100</sup> General Anthony Zinni, personal interview, March 3, 2011.

After conducting my research, drawing conclusions from the data, and reflecting on the implications of my findings, I find it appropriate to put forth my personal views concerning the future of the politicization of the U.S. military in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such politicization is not a development of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Throughout history militaries have been forced to carry out duties beyond their modus operandi. Furthermore, because military forces are tools to be used by political entities, it is important that they understand the broader political and strategic ramifications of their actions. Entire battles, campaigns, and empires throughout history have been dictated by the actions of a few. With this in mind, it was my intention to reveal the factors in the Manual that reflected further politicization of the U.S. military in Iraq. Although this politicization was not a new phenomenon, I believed it was beneficial to more fully understand it.

Based on the experiences gained through the research process, I strongly recommend that U.S. presidents continue to politicize the armed forces. Based on the definition of politicization used here, I believe that a fighting force capable of carrying out duties beyond its stated mission and that acknowledges and accepts the political implications of individual actions is much better suited to meet the needs of the U.S. Regardless of whether one supports the military playing an increasing role in U.S. foreign policy (or believes that the military is playing an increasing role in foreign policy at all), I believe that the current global situation requires a continued presence of the U.S. military. With this in mind, I think it is paramount that the president and Department of Defense continue to support the politicization of the military. Many methods can ensure this politicization continues; I believe one of the best is through written doctrine.

*Politics is the continuation of war by other means*

Foucault

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

Below is a list of the type of questions that I used during my interviews with Dr. Sara Sewall, Dr. Conrad Crane, and General Anthony Zinni. In all three interviews we discussed topics beyond those presented in my questions as well.

- What were some of the largest shortcomings in the U.S. Army's implementation of COIN operations in Iraq prior to the release of FM 3-24?
- Unlike most Army and Marine Corps doctrinal manuals, FM 3-24 was written and edited by a team of leading experts in the fields of counterinsurgent operations, economic growth, regional social issues, anthropology, and military strategy both in and out of uniform. What is your view on this? What potential benefits and disadvantages did this have?
- Do you believe that the manner in which the doctrines in the manual were created should be emulated in the future?
- To what extent do you believe the U.S. military takes on a role as a political entity in wartime?
- Do you believe the doctrine included within Manual explicitly attempted to shift the focus of the U.S. military from strictly military-focused to the political?
- In the years since the release of FM 3-24, the situation in Iraq has changed significantly. This can be attributed to many factors including the troop surge and the Sunni Awakening. What role (if any) did the release of the new COIN doctrines included in FM 3-24 play in the increase in stability in Iraq?
- Multiple influences may have helped further the politicization of the military as expressed in the Manual such as the expertise and experience of the writing committee, shared norms within the military culture, and the study of historical COIN operations. What are some other factors that may have influenced the politicization of the military?
- The manual spends substantial time addressing the separation between military and civilian entities and the limitations thereof in COIN operations. How well do you think

the manual addresses any of the deficiencies between the civilian and military parts of the U.S. government that were present prior to and directly after the invasion of Iraq in 2003?

- FM 3-24 acknowledges, “young leaders—so called ‘strategic corporals’—often make decisions at the tactical level that have strategic consequences” (paragraph 1-157); with this in mind, do you believe that the strategic power yielded by tactical-level leaders is confined to COIN operations, or is it an aspect of military doctrine here to stay?
- Do you feel it is important to have a military force capable of taking on multiple roles beyond those traditionally accepted regardless of the environment, or should this be something limited to COIN operations?

