Harsh and Philanthropic War: Success and Failure in U.S. Third Party Counterinsurgency

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ABSTRACT

Before 1950, the United States intervened in large scale counterinsurgencies twice as often and remained just as long as interventions after 1950. Yet, U.S. supported states developed before 1950 tended to survive an average 71.4 years after U.S. withdrawal. In contrast, U.S. supported states after 1950 have tended to survive on average only 3.25 years. The central question of this examination is why did U.S. military counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions before 1950 produce host-nation governments and host nation security forces that tended to endure almost twenty-four times longer than interventions after 1950?

My central argument is that when the U.S. military deeply embeds within and inhabits host-nation institutions (institution inhabiting strategies) then, state longevity improves in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. Inversely, when the U.S. military employs strategies of lower embeddedness (institution influencing strategies) then, state longevity decreases in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. I compare cases of intervention in tabula rasa or erased governance in the Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010. The former employed high degrees of embeddedness in governance and security development while the latter utilized low degrees in both. I also compare cases of intervention in existing governance in Nicaragua 1927-1933 and Vietnam 1965-1973. The former case employed a high degree of embeddedness in host-nation security force development and a low degree in host-nation government development while the latter case employed low degrees in both. My research finds a correlation between the degree of embeddedness used in developing security and governance and the duration of state longevity after withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The implications for this study are salient today. Where state fragility has progressed to the point where intervention by conventional military force is required to arrest it, institution influencing strategies like Advise and Assist are insufficient. And while trusteeship forms of relation have been largely dismissed since decolonization, the apparent efficaciousness of neo-trusteeships and shared sovereignty relationships in places like Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone, hold out the promise of more effectual strategies for state building in counterinsurgency interventions.
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GENERAL ABSTRACT

Before 1950, the United States intervened in large scale counterinsurgencies twice as often and remained just as long as interventions after 1950. Yet, U.S. supported states developed before 1950 tended to survive an average 71.4 years after U.S. withdrawal. In contrast, U.S. supported states after 1950 have tended to survive on average only 3.25 years. The central question of this examination is why did U.S. military counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions before 1950 produce host-nation governments and host nation security forces that tended to endure almost twenty-four times longer than interventions after 1950?

My central argument is that when the U.S. military embeds deeply within and inhabits host-nation institutions then, state longevity improves in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. Inversely, when the U.S. military employs strategies of lower embeddedness then, state longevity decreases in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. I compare cases of intervention in non-existent or erased governance in the Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010. The former employed high degrees of embeddedness in governance and security development while the latter utilized low degrees in both. I also compare cases of intervention in existing governance in Nicaragua 1927-1933 and Vietnam 1965-1973. The former case employed a high degree of embeddedness in host-nation security force development and a low degree in host-nation government development while and the latter case employed low degrees in both. My research finds a correlation between the degree of embeddedness used in developing security and governance and the duration of state longevity after withdrawal of U.S. forces.

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DEDICATION

To my precious bride Jeannette

The Wife of Noble Character
“I will not boast in anything. No gifts, no power, no wisdom. But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart—His wounds have paid my ransom.”

-Stuart Townsend, How Deep the Father’s Love For Us, (1995)

There is a long list of people to whom I owe an unpayable debt of gratitude. Foremost among these is my Redeemer, Jesus Christ—the lover of my soul. On a more terrestrial level there is a long list of people who have made this arduous journey one of the most fulfilling challenges of my life. My wife Jeannette has been more than a wife, more than a friend, more than a confidant, more than an advisor, more than an encourager, and more than a coach. I lack the vocabulary to adequately describe her impact on me in this challenge except to say—I love you and I could not have done this without you. Secondly, I am grateful to my sons, Hithem and Sami, who are my pride and joy. They surrendered substantial time with me during this process—thank you.

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Chapter 1-Introduction

“Would anyone really be willing to fight and die for an entirely corrupt government and national military structure? Compare this to Macarthur in Japan. When he left Japan after running afoul of President Truman, Japanese citizens lined the streets with tears in their eyes because he had brought good governance. If our generals are not prepared to do this in conflicts like Iraq, and Afghanistan, we should not get involved.”

- General Anthony Zinni, Interview with Author, January 2017.

1949-1955: The End of Institution Inhabiting Strategies

In 1940, both the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps consolidated a vast library of lessons learned in small wars and military government from 1860 to 1940. These lessons were captured in two seminal texts: The Small Wars Manual (1940) and Field Manual 27-5, Military Government and Civil Affairs (1940). After forty-two years of experience, the Small Wars Manual diagnosed the cause of U.S. interventions in small wars as host-nation “government which is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life…” (Small Wars Manual MCRP 12-15, 1940, pp. 1-1). On 16 February 1946, the U.S. School of Military Governance concluded its final course in Charlottesville, Virginia. On 8 September 1951, at a ceremony in San Francisco, Japan, the U.S. and other Allied states signed the Treaty of San Francisco which ended the occupation of Japan. On 5 May 1955, the Allied and U.S. occupation of West Germany ended. These events from 1946-1955 signaled the conclusion of over fifty-six years of U.S. reliance on strategies of high embeddedness such as trusteeships, military government, and encadrement to develop the institutions of states the U.S. intervened in.

In the years immediately following the end of World War II the U.S. began to disavow strategies of deeply embedding U.S. officers in the institutions of other states.
Strategies of high embeddedness were replaced by strategies of lower embeddedness which proscribed U.S. officers from inhabiting host-nation institutions. Strategies of lower embeddedness sought to preserve as inviolate the host-nation’s sovereignty through methods like governance assistance, military assistance to governance, and advise and assist. After May 1955, U.S. officers would develop host-nation institutions through influence from outside or alongside them.

Despite over fifty years of successful implementation, the American retreat from strategies of high embeddedness came as a reaction to anti-colonial and Marxist-imperialist critiques (Nagl, 2005; Killcullen, 2009; Montague, 1966; Boot, 2002). The start of the Korean War in 1950 would be the first of many limited wars where institution influencing strategies would be employed by the U.S. The question this examination asks is: was one period more successful than the other? And if so, what accounts for the differences?

**Results of Interventions Before and After 1950**

Before 1950, American combat formations\(^1\) intervened in foreign large-scale counterinsurgencies twice as often but experienced slightly longer durations of intervention as interventions after 1950. States the U.S. supported before 1950 tended to last an average 71.4 years after U.S. withdrawal and before a significant loss (or total loss) of empirical sovereignty.\(^2\) In contrast, U.S. supported states after 1950 have tended to last

\(^1\) _Combat formations_ here is used to distinguish between normal deployments of special forces troops and security cooperation/joint training missions which are normal in the course of military diplomacy.

\(^2\) For my understanding of “empirical sovereignty” I rely on Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg’s _Why Africa’s Weak States Persist_ (1982) where they distinguish between empirical or de facto sovereignty as a practical and tangible expression of sovereignty compared to juridical sovereignty or de jure sovereignty conferred on the state by international recognition.
only 3.25 years (see Table 1.1). The central question of this examination is why U.S. military counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions before 1950 produced host-nation governments and host-nation security forces that tended to last almost twenty-four times longer than interventions after 1950?

The U.S. military intervened with its conventional combat formations in large-scale foreign counterinsurgencies a total of seven times from 1898-1950. These interventions lasted an average of 8.85 years and resulted in an average state longevity after withdrawal (SLAW) of 71.4 years (Torreon, 2015). SLAW is the measure of time between the end of conventional operations by U.S. combat formations until violent overthrow or substantial loss of empirical sovereignty of the U.S. supported state. In contrast, the U.S. military intervened with its conventional combat formations in large-scale foreign counterinsurgencies on only three occasions since 1950. The duration of these interventions lasted for an average of 9 years and resulted in an average SLAW of 3.25 years. The contrast between the two periods is stark given the commonality in durations but extreme variance in outcomes (see Table 1.1).
Duration (years)  15  11  5  19  8  2  2  8.85  7  13  7  9

Violent overthrow or territory loss

SLAW (years)  71/104  54  46  12  41  26  0  71.4  3  TBD  3.5  3.25

By author from (Torreon, 2015)

**Table 1.1-U.S. COIN Intervention Outcomes Before and After 1950**

**Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this examination is that *when the U.S. military deeply embeds within and inhabits host-nation institutions (institution inhabiting strategies)* then, state longevity improves in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. Inversely, when the U.S. military employs strategies of lower embeddedness (*institution influencing strategies*) then, host-nation state longevity decreases in the course of counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions. Furthermore, this examination argues that the causal mechanism that accounts for the greater SLAWs associated with *institution inhabiting* strategies is *symbiotic adaptation*.

---

3 U.S. combat formations ceased unilateral combat operations in the Philippines between 1906-1913. Using the later date of 1913 gives an SLAW of 104 years. However, it could be argued that the Philippines lost its *empirical sovereignty* over its territory in 1941 with the strategic retreat of the U.S. and the conquest by the Japanese Imperial Forces. However, this is not particularly germane to this discussion of COIN. However, to account as conservatively as possible, this examination includes the latest date possible of 1946 as the start of SLAW.
This study argues that while all U.S. COIN interventions share many tactical similarities, those before and after 1950 differ fundamentally in the degrees of embeddedness used to develop host-nation institutions. The degree of embeddedness here refers to how deeply U.S. officers were embedded within and inhabited host-nation institutions to remediate or replace “government which is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life…” (Small Wars Manual MCRP 12-15, 1940, pp. 1-1). Prior to 1950, U.S. military and diplomatic forces addressed state failure within COIN interventions by repairing or replacing host-nation institutions from inside the institutions; by inhabiting them. After 1950, U.S. military and diplomatic forces addressed state failure during COIN interventions by repairing or replacing host-nation institutions from outside of the host-nation institutions; by influencing them.

State weakness or failure has become the newest focal point for third party COIN interventions (Miller, 2013; Kaplan, 2010; Johnson, 2017; Mueller, 2017). In contrast, other contemporary COIN theories have tended to focus on defeating the insurgency or protecting and controlling the populace. Discussed in this manner, contemporary COIN theories are sufficient for tactical discussions of a COIN campaign. They are however, inadequate as third-party strategies.

4 That is: requirements for population security, host-nation government legitimacy, and, defeat (or effective suppression) of the insurgency (USMC, 1940; Counterinsurgency FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 2006; Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 2014).

5 I will discuss this at length later, but the most compelling contemporary COIN theories are population centric, authoritarian or enemy centric, and hybrid COIN theories.
The introduction of U.S. conventional combat formations to kill rebellious citizens on behalf of a host-nation government is not a normal element of state to state intercourse. Rather, it represents an extreme departure. As Morgenthau argues, “A nation that gives command of its armed forces to the military of another state is forgoing its sovereignty. To be sovereign is to have the supreme law giving and law-enforcing authority within a certain Territory” (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 305). Contemporary COIN theories have found themselves searching for an appropriate focus: the population, the insurgents, or a combination thereof. However, if the host-nation government and its host-nation security force were able to protect its own populace and/or defeat (or effectively suppress) its own insurgents, the U.S. would not sacrifice blood and treasure to do so. Therefore, what is missing, is an understanding of how third parties like the U.S. intervene in foreign counterinsurgencies and leave behind states capable of persisting after U.S. withdrawal.

**A Generalizable Measure of COIN Intervention Success: State Survival**

For the purposes of creating a theory of third party COIN interventions, a generalizable dependent variable, one transcending context, is required. The most elemental question of success as a result of U.S. intervention is: *did the state the U.S. intervene to support survive at all after the U.S. left? And if so, how long?* It is impossible to have a discussion concerning the quality of democracy in South Vietnam in 2017 as a result of

---

6 The use of conventional combat formations is deliberate. The employment of U.S. trainers, advisers, and foreign military sales is “normal” in the course of international diplomatic missions. Even the use of drone strikes, covert special operations forces (SOF) raids, and intelligence operations, while possibly violent, have not historically risen to the level of war (e.g. drone strikes by the Obama Administration in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia as well as kinetic SOF raids in Somalia, and Pakistan).
U.S. intervention there in 1965. This is because South Vietnam no longer exists. Therefore, the most foundational measure of success for U.S. interventions in support of the counterinsurgency operations of another state is, how long did the U.S. supported state survive after the U.S. withdrew, or: state longevity after withdrawal (SLAW).

Other possible dependent variables, other measures of COIN intervention success, are problematic. Some other possible measures of success include the formation of a democratic regime, defeat of the insurgency, or attainment of the goals of the intervention. However, these all present problems of definition, attainability, enumeration, and/or transience.

Why not democracy as a dependent variable? As David Ucko notes with regard to using democracy as a dependent variable during COIN interventions, what form of democracy is desired or possible (Ucko & Egnell, 2013; Miller P. D., 2013, p. 14)? Is democracy of the stripe of modern Iran sufficient? Or is anything short of a 21st Century western liberal democracy a failure? In 1962, T.R. Fehrenbach questioned whether European democracy could ever be brought to South Korea and whether Koreans were even capable of western democracy (Fehrenbach, 1962). More recently, significant amounts of literature have questioned whether democracy is even possible in states like Iraq and Afghanistan (Cook, 2012 and Coburn & Larson, 2014). These are clearly ethnocentric and jingoistic arguments. Moreover, they are wrong as has been demonstrated by South Korea’s vibrant democracy. Democracy is as possible in Iraq and Afghanistan as anywhere else in the world. Unclear, however, is what type of democracy is necessary and what type is sufficient? Additionally, as Edelstein argues, “conflating occupation success with the establishment of liberal democracy and functioning economies is misguided”
Therefore, due to an inability to clearly define a universally acceptable standard, establishment of democracy is unsuitable as a generalizable dependent variable of success in third party COIN interventions.\footnote{The question of sufficient levels of democracy would call into question even examples of American democracy. For instance, one could ask, “Did U.S. only become a democracy on August 18, 1920, or was it a democracy for 131 years beforehand?” Before 1920, there existed no right to universal suffrage. Was the U.S therefore not a democracy because women did not possess the right to vote?}

If the cause of an insurgency is ideological or based on ethnic or sectarian rivalries, then as Stephen Biddle points out, one can never fully defeat an idea. Similarly, short of genocide, one cannot fully destroy an entire ethnicity (Biddle, 2008). Therefore, the best that can be hoped for is that the insurgents, ideological or ethnic, can either be brought into the peaceful political process or that they can be suppressed and/or marginalized to the degree that they no longer violently impact the peaceful political process (Ucko & Egnell, 2013; Moyar, 2009). Also, even where the insurgents can be brought back into the peaceful political process or are suppressed/marginalized while the intervening military forces are present, there is no guarantee that this will long endure. Therefore, this examination argues that defeat of the insurgency is also un-useful as a generalizable dependent variable in third party COIN interventions.

Similarly, using the attainment of stated goals as a generalizable dependent variable in COIN interventions is also un-helpful. First, some interventions begin as crisis events. As such, clear long-term goals are rarely enumerated except for prevention of further crisis. As Robert Heinl points out in his history of the Korean War, General Mac-
Arthur prosecuted a significant portion of his part of the war with few, if any, stated strategic goals. While he was given clear limitations, such as the prohibition on the use of tactical nuclear weapons along Chinese reinforcement routes into Korea and a limit of advance of the Yalu River, these hardly constitute clear strategic goals for the conflict (Heinl, 1979). Even when goals are expressed at the beginning of a conflict, given the protracted nature of insurgencies they rarely remain the same. Since the average duration U.S. COIN interventions is in excess of a decade, it is a certainty that the COIN intervention will outlast the U.S. regime that intervened in the first place and articulated the first goals. Further, goals are subject to constant modification due to pressures domestically, internationally, and from the enemy. Therefore, which goals should be the measure of the intervention’s success?

The existence of unstated or covert goals further complicates using the goals of the intervention as a measure of success. For every publicly stated goal of an intervention, there exists the potential for a significant number of classified or unstated goals to exist. T.R. Fehrenbach (1962) pointed out that containment of communism eventually became stated policy and the stated reason for intervening in Korea. However, the Truman Administration felt it had to keep this goal a secret from its domestic liberal supporters during the prelude to and early years of the Korean conflict. Similarly, secret Kennedy Administration memos reported by Latham (2000) indicate stability was seen as an economic good by the U.S. but was a deliberately unstated reason for intervention abroad. Therefore, because goals for an intervention may be unstated (at least initially), transient between administrations, or classified, these are also not useful as generalizable measures of success in developing a theory of third party COIN intervention.
Lastly, regime stability at the time intervening forces withdraw is the least useful as a generalizable dependent variable. The Viet Cong insurgency was so attrited during the Tet Offensive in 1968 that it ceased to be a relevant fighting force in South Vietnam. Moreover, for almost three years after the redeployment of the final U.S. Army headquarters in South Vietnam, the South Vietnamese government continued to function, to defeat insurgent groups, and to repel conventional North Vietnamese incursions, albeit with the help of massive U.S. airstrikes (Tucker, 2012). Nevertheless, because the South Vietnamese government fell in April 1975, Vietnam is considered the preeminent modern COIN intervention failure for the U.S. This failure, however, does give us some insight into what might constitute success. We can generalize that success for third parties to COIN interventions cannot take place while the third party is still intervening. Success for the third party must therefore be associated with host-nation government survival years after intervention.

Accordingly, this examination nominates state longevity after withdrawal (SLAW) of U.S. forces as a generalizable measure of success in COIN interventions. As previously mentioned, the very presence of a foreign combat formations operating unilaterally in another state is, by itself, a powerful indication of an abdication of material sovereignty by the host-nation. Cessation of foreign unilateral combat operations do not represent a complete restoration of material sovereignty to the host-nation government, but it does represent the start of it. The end of SLAW concludes with the violent overthrow of the U.S. supported state, or large portion of it. The use of the condition-**violent overthrow** is deliberate. This is an acknowledgement that a potentially healthy outcome for
an insurgency may be the reintegration of the insurgents back into peaceful political efforts of the state. As was the case of El Salvador in 1992.

**Stability-A Fundamental Component of State Survival**

Stability is the most elemental requirement of state longevity. In his analysis of early U.S. efforts in Iraq, Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004 provides that “it explains why a country must first have a state before it can become a democracy. The primary requirement of a state is that it hold a monopoly on the use of violence. By that measure, the body that the United States transferred power to in Baghdad on June 28 may have been a government—but it was not a state” (Diamond, 2004). Further, Edelstein differentiates successful from unsuccessful occupations on the basis of the stability of the post-occupation government and the diminishment of internal and external threats (Edelstein, 2004).

Stability is used here to describe the capacity of the state to act as the senior partner in an oligopoly over the legitimate use of violence (North, 1981; Lambach, 2007; Mehler, Lambach, & Smith-HoHost-nation, 2010). The concept of an oligopoly of violence evolves from a core understanding of the Weberian ideal of the state as possessing a monopoly of the use of violence (Weber, 1958, p. 78). The Weberian ideal does not reflect the reality that states frequently collude with and co-opt non-state actors as well as foreign intervening forces like the U.S. military. While the definition of stability can be
expanded to include a vast array of elements, Paul Miller argues that armed state building, is unique from other forms of state building. He argues that typical definitions of state building miss a crucial aspect that novelizes armed state building and COIN: the use of military force and violence (Miller P. D., 2013, pp. 3-4). Further, from the perspective of Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Iraqi Coalition Provisional Authority in 2004:

“In post-conflict situations in which the state has collapsed, security trumps everything: it is the central pedestal that supports all else. Without some minimum level of security, people cannot engage in trade and commerce, organize to rebuild their communities, or participate meaningfully in politics. Without security, a country has nothing but disorder, distrust, and desperation—an utterly Hobbesian situation in which fear pervades and raw force dominates” (Diamond, 2004).

Therefore, for this examination into COIN interventions, we will rely on stability to refer to the ability of the host-nation government to act as the senior partner in any oligopoly of the use of violence in its borders. Additionally, stability here refers to the ability to empirically demonstrate this ability against internal and external rivals within its de jure borders.

**Differentiating COIN Interventions-Small Footprint or Large Scale**

Unilateral operations by U.S. combat formations engaged in direct combat in the internal affairs of another state constitutes de facto, if not complete appropriation of host-nation sovereignty. Unlike intelligence support or special forces operations, intervention by U.S. conventional combat forces, is a clear signal the U.S. policy makers perceive the

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8 DoD Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability Operations*, (2011) describes stability operations as a wide array of political military operations including but not limited to good governance, rule of law, economic development, security force development, and provision of services.

9 He argues COIN is a subset of armed state building.
host-nation’s situation as dire. Intervention by unilateral U.S. combat formations demonstrates how close to failure U.S. policy makers perceive the state to be. It demonstrates the view that without a radical degree of intervention, the U.S. supported state will fail. According to Brent Gravatt, “Without a doubt, the surrender of the control of one's army, an executive agency, is concomitantly the surrender of one's sovereignty. Only a government experiencing a situation of extreme emergency will be willing to relinquish the command of its armed forces to a foreign power” (Gravatt, 1973 ). This is important because U.S. policy officially repudiates appropriation of another state’s juridical sovereignty. Also, the military doctrine of the U.S. considers sovereignty of other states as inviolable in theory if not in practice (Resolution 172: Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes, 1996; FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006; Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 2014; FM 3-07, Stability Operations, 2014).

In contrast, smaller footprint COIN interventions, do not constitute a major abdication of the international or material sovereignty. Smaller footprint COIN interventions, might include the commitment of U.S. special operations forces or the provision of economic, intelligence, or training support during counterinsurgencies (Watts, Campbell, Jostnationston, Lalwani, & Bana, 2015). These smaller footprint support mechanisms constitute normal operations of U.S. foreign policy abroad. They also reflect the relative confidence of U.S. policy makers that, while fragile, the supported state is not in danger of imminent failure. This was evidenced in the U.S. special operations support provided to the El Salvadorian government’s counterinsurgency efforts in the 1980s and
the Philippines since 2001. Both were exclusively limited to military training (Moyar, 2009). Therefore, as Secretary Colin Powell argued, when U.S. policy makers appropriate some or all of the material sovereignty of another state, the U.S. accepts responsibility for the outcome and the long-term stability and health of that state from that time forward (Woodward, 2004, p. 150).

**Explaining Degree of Embeddedness**

This examination leverages the term *embeddedness* to describe how deeply U.S. officers penetrate and inhabit a host-nation’s institutions of governance and security. It also refers to the amount of the host-nation’s sovereignty that is appropriated by the third party. *Institution Inhabiting* strategies require U.S. officers to deeply penetrate and inhabit the host-nation’s organs of governance and security. These strategies officially appropriate substantial amounts of host-nation sovereignty. In contrast, *Institution Influencing* strategies proscribe U.S. officers from penetrating and inhabiting host-nation institutions or officially appropriating their sovereignty.10

**Defining Inhabiting Strategies**

*Institution Inhabiting* strategies historically have consisted of trusteeships, military governance, shared sovereignty arrangements, encadrement and the like. Trusteeships and encadrement reflect the deepest penetration and inhabitation of a host-nation’s institutions. A trusteeship exists when foreign military and/or political officers occupy legal,  

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10 It is important to note that I argue that *Institution Influencing* strategies appropriate “lower” degrees of sovereignty, as compared to *Institution Inhabiting* strategies. I deliberately avoided saying that *Influencing* strategies appropriated “low” degrees of sovereignty because, as previously mentioned, the mere fact that the U.S. military has been given at least tacit approval by the host-nation government to kill host-nation citizens suspected to be in rebellion, already demonstrates a higher than normal abdication of empirical sovereignty.
political, police, or military offices and exercise authority normally reserved only for host-nation officers. Possession of these offices allow U.S. military and civilian officers to make and enforce laws, establish and collect taxes, run elections, arrest, and use lethal force if necessary to defeat an insurgency (Boot, 2002; Caplan, 2007; Daase, 2011; Fearon & Laitin, 2004; Krasner, 2004; Krasner, 2005).

Military governance is a specific form of trusteeship, wherein foreign military officers assume political roles in the host-nation’s government. They govern until such a time as they can be replaced by civilian authority either from their own country or representatives from the host-nation (Small Wars Manual MCRP 12-15, 1940; Patterson, 2011; Advising: Multi-service Techost-nation iques, Tactics, and Procedures for Advising Foreign Forces, MCRP 3-33.8, 2009). Before 1950, military governance reflected the predominant means of developing states during small wars or after large ones like World War II (Patterson, 2011).

Shared sovereignty arrangements are a more circumscribed version of trusteeships. They are relationships, wherein foreign parties occupy specific roles within the offices of certain host-nation institutions. An example might be U.S. officers managing a host-nation customs office for a limited amount of time and for the purpose of ensuring its effective and efficient functioning (Daase 2011, Krasner 2004, Boot 2002). Shared sovereignty arrangements are more circumscribed than trusteeships in the degree to which they appropriate the host-nation’s sovereignty. The foreign officers operating within state organs may run these offices or, as happened in Sierra Leone, they may simply have a veto authority as a condition for continued economic support (Daase, 2011). Customs receiverships are a form of shared sovereignty arrangement, whereby a
foreign party installs its own officers in the customs institutions of another state to prevent corruption and ensure accountability, and usually the payment of international debt (Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; McPherson, 2013).

Finally, encadrement may be a facet of trusteeship or shared sovereignty arrangement. Encadrement is a term this study borrows from Bernard B. Fall that describes the command of a host-nation’s security forces by foreign military officers (Fall, 2005). These foreign officers exercise the same authority as host-nation officers would who occupied the same positions.11 These foreign officers are authorized and paid for through legislation by either the foreign party alone, by the host-nation government, or by both (Boot, 2002; Millet, 2010). The host-nation security force may be the only part of the host-nation government that foreign officers occupy (shared sovereignty arrangement). Or the host-nation security force may be only one among many of the institutions directly run by foreign officers (trusteeship). Encadrement was the default method employed by the U.S. military before World War II to repair or replace host-nation security forces during small wars interventions.

**Defining Influencing Strategies**

“After a decade and a half of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. policymakers want to change their approach to COIN by providing aid and advice to local governments rather than directly intervening with U.S. forces. Both this strategy and U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine in general, however, do not acknowledge the difficulty of convincing clients to follow U.S. COIN prescriptions. The historical record suggests that, despite a shared aim of defeating an insurgency, the United States and its local partners have had significantly

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11 For instance, a foreign officer occupying a battalion commander position in the army of the host-nation security force would have the same recruiting, courts martial, promotion, and tactical authority over host-nation officers and enlisted soldiers as would a host-nation officer (Fall, 2005).
different goals, priorities, and interests with respect to the conduct of their coun-
terinsurgency campaigns.” - (Ladwig, 2016, p. 99)

_Institution influencing strategies_ have been the default strategies the U.S. has em-
ployed to develop host-nation government/host-nation security forces during coin inter-
ventions since May 1955. _Institution influencing strategies_ refer to foreign political and
military officers advising host-nation governments and/or host-nation security forces. _In-
fluencing strategies_ lack any legal command authority\(^\text{12}\) or legislative, executive, or judi-
cial power to effect change. They rely entirely on influence to effect change in the host-
nation government and host-nation security forces. Since May 1955, and particularly
with the publication of the 2006 COIN field manual, all of the U.S. military’s efforts to
develop or improve host-nation government/host-nation security force institutions have
taken place outside and/or alongside these institutions through _influencing_ operations.

Examples of _Influencing strategies_ include governance assistance, conditionality
agreements, military assistance to governance, and advise and assist operations. Gover-
nance assistance reflects foreign civilian political assistance rendered to a host-nation gov-
ernment. An example of this includes the use of ministerial assistance teams (MATs) in
Iraq who advised Iraqi ministries in 2006 (DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in
Iraq-Report to Congress, 2006). Conditionality agreements are tools generally associated
with neoliberal investment in developing countries. These agreements _condition_ continued
investment upon performance of the developing state in accordance with established

\(^\text{12}\) The authority that a commander in the Armed Forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of
rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available re-
sources for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces
for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and
discipline of assigned personnel. MCRP 5-12a, Operational Terms and Graphics.
foreign party requirements. A form of military conditionality exists when continued economic or combat support by a foreign military is contingent upon the continued presence of foreign advisors or specified actions taken by the host-nation security force.

Embedded advising and parallel operations are *influencing* strategies that allow host-nation security forces to maintain their own sovereign control and identity. However, they are advised through intimate operation with or alongside adjacent foreign units. There is no official doctrine on embedded advising and parallel operations, but this was the de facto strategy in with the U.S. Marines in Al Anbar, Iraq from 2006-2010 and in Helmand province from 2009-2012. In embedded or parallel advising, the host-nation security force maintains its own sovereign control, but it is developed by embedding some of its soldiers in the foreign unit. Additionally, some of the foreign soldiers are also embedded in the host-nation unit. Operations are conducted in parallel, with host-nation officers leading their own units and foreign officers leading theirs in close coordination. Development by the host-nation security forces is effected through entire advising units instead of individual advisors.

Military assistance to governance is an *Influencing* strategy that consists of military officers advising civilian host-nation government officers. The purpose of military assistance to governance is to develop or refine basic governance capacity generally in areas of rule or law, elections, and provision of essential services (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006). “Advise and assist” is the military operational counterpart to governance assistance where military advisers work with host-nation security forces and advise them in how to further develop capacity. Security cooperation is the
least embedded form of *influencing* operation and allows both the foreign military and
the host-nation security force to train together to develop the ability of both militaries to
integrate and work together (Advising: Multi-service Techost-nation iques, Tactics, and
Procedures for Advising Foreign Forces, MCRP 3-33.8, 2009). In all these *influencing
strategies*, where the host-nation is reluctant to accept advise and reform, there is little the
U.S. officers can to compel change. The only compelling mechanism the foreign military
possesses is the withholding money or support when the host-nation is reluctant to
change. This *coercive influence* seeks to compel a host-nation government or host-nation
security force to behave a certain way. Nevertheless, even in the case of poor, self-de-
structive, or even illegal/immoral performance by the host-nation security force, the for-
eign officers have no way to command and compel change (Gravatt, 1973).

**COIN Intervention Success or Failure: Alternative Explanations**

The most common theories for articulating COIN success or failure are: popula-
tion centric COIN, enemy centric or authoritarian COIN, hybrid COIN, troop to popula-
tion ratios, presence of insurgent sanctuaries, and continued support to the host-nation
government after withdrawal. There has been some recent recognition on the differences
between first party COIN (host-nation COIN) and third party COIN interventions
(Simpson, 2010; Fritz, 2013; Sitaraman, 2012) as well as contributions specifically fo-
cused on occupations (Edelstein, 2004; Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, & Mohandas, 2009).
However, the bulk of COIN theory and literature do not specifically delineate the differ-
ences between first party and third-party COIN campaigns. Rather, they tend to assess
how well or how poorly third parties themselves protected the host-nation’s population or
defeated the insurgency-population and enemy centric COIN methods (Birtle, 1998;
Kilcullen, 2006; Killcullen, 2009; Krepinevich, 1990; Moyar, 2009; Ucko D., Regimes and Revolt: Authoritarian Ways of Counterinsurgency, 2016; Nagl J. A., 2005). Less attention has typically been given to the manner in which a third party intervenes and creates a stable host-nation government and security force which is able to persist after withdrawal.

Instead, as a result of COIN interventions in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, academics, military officers, and politicians have instead been searching for the most appropriate focus in counterinsurgency (COIN). The majority of literature on the subject has concentrated on case studies occurring in the latter half of the 20th Century. They largely ignore the first half of the century. From these analyses, three major theoretical bands have developed: population centric COIN, enemy centric or authoritarian COIN, and a more situational or hybrid version. The choice of the word centric is important because it does not imply an absolute focus on its subject to the total exclusion of other possible subjects. Rather, it expresses a primary focus on one subject at the expense of others. Therefore, while enemy centric COIN places a disproportionate focus on defeating the insurgents, it does not totally neglect the security of the populace. Nor does population centric COIN entirely ignore the defeat of the insurgents. However, both accept a certain amount of risk in which elements they designate as of secondary import. The principal flaw with all three theoretical bands, as regards third parties intervening in COIN, is that all three assume the third party responsibility for the outcome of the conflict, without a similar appropriation of host-nation sovereignty for the conduct of the conflict. Moreover, all three ignore the actual problem that precipitated the third party’s intervention in the first place—state failure. This is not to argue that the three major COIN theories are
invalid. Rather, this examination argues that these three bands are tactical methods that address symptoms rather than strategies designed to address the cause.

Population Centric COIN

“Many people think it impossible for guerillas to exist long in the enemy’s rear. Such a belief reveals lack of comprehension of the relationship that should exist between the people and the troops. The former may be likened to water and the latter to the fish who inhabit it….it is only the undisciplined troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element, cannot live”


Population centric COIN relies heavily upon Mao’s understanding of guerilla war to separate the population from the insurgents. It attempts to separate the insurgents from the support of the population. The population is not only separated from the insurgents, but it is also protected from and/or controlled to prevent insurgent coercion or coopting. Population centric COIN theories do not generally distinguish between host-nation nor third party counterinsurgents nor does not advocate for a particular degree of embeddedness in developing the state. However, since 1950, population centric COIN has been executed tactically by employing strategies of lower embeddedness such as advise and assist and military assistance to governance. Population centric COIN places the security and co-option of the population above defeating or suppressing the insurgency. Much of the writing that the theory is based on evolves from colonial counterinsurgents like Trinquea (1961 (1985)), Galula (1964), Thompson (1966), Kitson (1971), and Gwynn (1939). As colonial counterinsurgents, they were not influencing host-nation institutions from the outside, but they were occupying and inhabiting them from within.
Scholar-practitioners reprised the ideas of classical COIN in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan but within a new framework the proscribed U.S. officers from deeply embedding within and inhabiting host-nation institutions. After the U.S.’s failure in Vietnam and the success of the Persian Gulf War and the Powell-Weinberger Doctrine, all forms for foreign COIN intervention were eschewed as being inconsistent with the U.S. way of war (Gentile, 2013; Monten & Bennett, 2010). With the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, a new generation of scholars and scholar-practitioners began to leverage the writings of these colonial counterinsurgents in updating population-centric COIN theory. They argued that the central requirement was not only the security and co-option of the populace, but also the removal of the underlying causes of dysfunction (Killcullen, 2009; O’Hanlon, 2009; Gregg, 2009; Krepinevich, 1990; Mattis & Hoffman, 2005; Nagl J. A., 2005).

The 2006 and 2014 versions of the DoD’s counterinsurgency manuals added the requirements for the U.S. to enhance good governance, rule of law, and provision of essential services in addition to securing and co-opting the populace (Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 2014; FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006). Therefore, while U.S. forces pursued insurgents kinetically and secured the populace, they were also responsible for developing good governance, economic development, rule of law, essential services and HNSF development.13 U.S forces executed these Lines of Operation (LOOs) through Military Assistance to Govern-

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13 Based on author’s notes regarding assigned lines of operation (LOOs) from COIN operations in Iraq from 2008-2009 and in Afghanistan from 2010-2011.
Military Assistance to Governance represents an institution influencing strategy, and a lower degree of embeddedness than its forerunner, military governance. Additionally, the means by which the U.S. developed host-nation security forces after 1955 was through Advise and Assist operations. Advise and Assist also represents an institution influencing strategy, and a lower degree of embeddedness than its forerunner, encadrement.

U.S. military practitioners in Afghanistan have related the ironic observation that they found themselves actually losing by winning. That is, because U.S. forces were leaving, they could not take the hearts and minds that they had won with them when they left. Their success in winning the hearts and minds of the populace was, in a sense, stealing fidelity from the host-nation institutions who were staying. Population centric COIN and Advise and Assist have been called armed social work by COIN theorists such as Kilcullen (Kilcullen, 2006). Population centric COIN is credited with General Petraeus’ unmitigated, albeit short lived, success associated with “The Surge” in Iraq (Feaver, 2015; Ricks, 2011). However, like enemy centric COIN interventions, population centric COIN theory does not address how these efforts increase state longevity after U.S. forces withdraw. As U.S. troops and civilian agents help provide good governance and win the populace over to soldiers who are ultimately leaving, this creates an artificial success that dissipates rapidly after the third party withdraws.

Author’s notes based on discussions with Regimental Combat Team Commander Colonel David Furness and battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel James Fullwood in Marjah, Afghanistan 2010-2011.
Enemy Centric and Authoritarian COIN

Enemy centric or authoritarian COIN focuses the counterinsurgent’s efforts on suppressing the insurgents rather than protecting the populace or addressing the grievances that caused the insurgency (Ucko D., 2016). Like population centric COIN, enemy centric or authoritarian COIN does not specifically prescribe a degree of embeddedness to develop host-nation institutions. Early in Vietnam, the U.S. military employed an enemy centric methodology to battle the Viet Cong (VC) culminating in VC defeat during the Tet Offensive of 1968. However, due to the strategic loss the U.S. took as a result of the Tet Offensive, enemy centric COIN fell out of favor with military practitioners and academic scholars until recently.

The potential efficacy of enemy centric or authoritarian COIN has been reinvigorated with the writings of Martin Van Creveld (2005), David Ucko (2016), and Daniel Byman (2016). Van Creveld articulated what he termed *The Hama Model* used by Bashar Al Assad to crush the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, Syria. Ucko provides historic reviews of authoritarian-Marxist COIN tactics employed against those identified as societal reactionaries. And Byman argues, “Authoritarian states are often surprisingly successful counterinsurgents. In particular, authoritarians often repress on a vast scale and inhibit insurgent organization, transfer populations, have excellent intelligence penetration, and can counter war weariness in ways not available to democracies” (Byman, 2016, p. 62).

As a result, enemy centric or authoritarian COIN has once again gained traction. As David Ucko points out, authoritarian COIN has been enormously successful at suppressing the grievers, rather than addressing the grievances which is the basis for population centric COIN (Ucko D., Regimes and Revolt: Authoritarian Ways of Counterinsurgency,

In many cases, after their own successful revolutions, many former revolutionaries like Stalin, Mao, and Castro leveraged very effective enemy centric/authoritarian COIN strategies and crushed social reactionaries and/or counter-revolutionaries. Stalin’s liquidation of the Kulak revolution, Mao’s Cultural Revolution, Ho Chi Minh’s counter-revolutionary campaign, and Castro’s suppression of reactionaries have demonstrated the potential effectiveness of an enemy centric/authoritarian COIN campaign (Fenby, 2008; Conquest, 1986; Dreke, 2002). Ucko points out that while these may present successful short-term strategies for authoritarian regimes, they are not tenable for Western Liberal Democracies politically. Nor do they demonstrate great potential for long term success. Ucko demonstrates that as soon as the authoritarian suppression is lifted, the insurgency and its grievances explode all the more dynamically as has been observed in Chechnya, the former Yugoslavia, and Syria for example. Still, none of these writers on enemy centric/authoritarian COIN argue for how these methods assist or prevent a third-party counterinsurgent in leaving behind capable host-nation institutions after withdrawal.

Back to the Future: Hybrid COIN

Concerning Confederate guerillas operating against Union forces, “in no other way does the enemy do such great damage to Union operations at so little cost to Confederate forces”–Abraham Lincoln (Birtle, 1998, p. 24).

Hybrid or situational COIN is nothing new. This COIN method is a situational or shifting prioritization of focus between protecting the population and defeating/suppressing/marginalizing the insurgents. The counterinsurgent pursues both the control/protec-
tion of the population and the defeat/suppression/marginalization of the insurgency simultaneously, but weighting both efforts unequally depending on the context. The hybrid method relies on understandings of the rights and responsibilities of the counterinsurgent and the population that originated from Francis Liber’s *Guerilla Parties* (1862). *Guerilla Parties* was ultimately codified into *General Order 100* (G.O. 100) issued by Abraham Lincoln on 24 April 1863 (Birtle, 1998). Like population and enemy centric approaches, hybrid COIN is silent as regards third parties developing host-nation institutions. However, when first employed in the Civil War and Philippine-American War, hybrid COIN methodologies were executed within strategies of the highest degrees of embeddedness.

General Order 100 prescribed the obligations of the counterinsurgents to protect the population and their property. It also enumerated the responsibilities of the population to respect the counterinsurgent’s authority and prescribed penalties for refusal to do so. This was expressed as Lincoln’s policy of *moderation* and *reprisal*. It was later re-primed in the U.S.’s first foreign counterinsurgency intervention in the Philippines as *attraction* and *chastisement* (Birtle, 1998; Boot, 2002). Indeed, the whole of U.S. COIN history can be argued to have ostensibly used a series of hybrid COIN methods. What differentiates the different periods of U.S. COIN intervention however, is the means by which the U.S. developed host-nation governance and security while employing its hybrid tactical approach. Before 1955, the U.S. military employed a hybrid tactical approach by deeply embedding within and inhabiting the host-nation institutions through military government and encadrement. After 1955, the U.S. military has still employed what is really a hybrid tactical approach. However, they have done this while developing
the host-nation’s institutions through *influencing strategies* like Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist.

This concept of hybrid COIN has been further reprised as a result of concerns espoused by practitioners and writers like Gian Gentile (2013) that the U.S. military might be overly wedded to population centric COIN. Current hybrid COIN theory is best captured in the Rand studies (2010 & 2013) that were critical source documents for the recently re-written U.S. military COIN publication FM 3-24 (2014) (Paul, Clarke, & Grill, 2010; Paul, Clarke, Grill, & Dunigan, 2013). These approaches can best be described as *hybrid* or *situational* approaches to COIN. In line with what some scholars and practitioners perceive as the situational nature of counterinsurgency, Bard O’ Neil (2005) sought to examine the entire history of major insurgencies and has identified nine different types of insurgencies. From these he argues that each requires a discrete strategic approach making any generalizable approach unsatisfactory. Dan Cox, and Thomas Bruscino (2011) along with Ray Springer (2012), all from the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, also argue for a situational, balanced, or hybrid approach between enemy-centric and population-centric COIN. Still, none of these authors address how this tactical method addresses the long-term viability of the state after U.S. withdrawal. Nor does it advocate specifically for or against higher or lower degree of embeddedness to effect SLAW.

**Advise and Assist**

The current norm for U.S. development of host-nation institutions during COIN interventions is Advise and Assist. Advise and Assist relies on influence to effect change
and reform in host-nation institutions and they represent strategies of the lowest degree of embeddedness. An example of Advise and Assist includes the governance assistance regimens sanctioned by the U.N. in most interventions (Krasner 2004, Daase 2011). However, given their strictly advisory role, Advise and Assist lacks the ability to compel weak host-nation institutions to fundamentally reform even in the face of obvious predation and dysfunction. Daase, Krasner, and Caplan argue that if the state is completely broke, no amount of advising will work and that the current tools being employed to repair broken governance are inadequate (Daase, 2011; Krasner, 2005; Caplan, 2007). As Daase advances, “In this context, the establishment of democracy and good (economic) governance is usually not considered as an internally driven project of post-conflict and weak states but rather triggered and highly, if not decisively, influenced by external (donor) involvement” (p. 4, 2011). Moreover, Daase notes that even when lower embedded Influencing strategies like Advise and Assist are used, that given the dire circumstances under which the external party is intervening, negotiations with the host nation may nevertheless occur on what she calls the “fringe of coercion” (2011, p. 4).

Military Assistance to Governance

Valuation of host-nation juridical sovereignty forms the major difference between military government and Military Assistance to Governance in COIN interventions. Military government as a COIN intervention strategy insists that expropriating or at least sharing the juridical sovereignty of the HNG is necessary because the HNG “is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life…” (Small Wars Manual MCRP 12-15, 1940, pp. 1-1). Before 1955, this resulted in a number of either shared sovereignty
arrangements such as customs receiverships, or transferred sovereignty arrangements such as or protectorates and trusteeships (Boot, 2002). In contrast, according to Boot (2002) and Nagl (2005), methods like Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist evolved in response to anti-colonial, Marxist, and imperialist critiques. These new strategies prevented deep embedding in host-nation institutions and at least superficially preserved host-nation sovereignty.

As intervention strategies, Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist seek to preserve the juridical sovereignty of the host-nation as inviolate (Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, 2014). Rather than sharing or transferring the juridical sovereignty, Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist strategies rely on influence, advice, and mentoring to develop host-nation institutions (Advising: Multi-service Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures for Advising Foreign Forces, MCRP 3-33.8, 2009). Since 1955, Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist have represented the contemporary and conventional policy tools of the U.S. military in COIN. And, as Caplan notes, this form of arrangement “requires a consensus between local and international actors if they are to succeed. Such a consensus is often lacking, it is argued, because of encroachments on sovereignty, even if negotiated, are likely to meet local resistance” (Caplan, 2007, p. 232).

Military Assistance to Governance and Advise and Assist often require encroachments on host-nation sovereignty. This, even though they were themselves designed as a reaction to imperialist critiques over violations of juridical sovereignty. These sovereignty encroachments include making U.S. support contingent on host-nation agreement
with U.S. decisions, conduct of unilateral U.S. military operations, and the expectation of the host-nation’s “rubber stamping” of U.S. decisions (Krepinevich, 1990; Viscuso, 2015; Ayala, 2015; Clark, 2015; Nagl, 2005). In his critique of these governance assistance arrangements, Stephen Krasner argues, “The policy tools that powerful and well-governed states have available to ‘fix’ badly governed or collapsed states—principally governance assistance and transitional administration…are inadequate” (Krasner, 2004, p. 85). Research on Military Assistance to Governance and military government provide significant implications regarding the debate over contemporary governance assistance and neo-trusteeship arrangements.

**Troop Ratios in COIN**

Identifying the appropriate troop ratios is a common theme COIN scholarship, yet this factor falls short of explaining state longevity after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. The 2006 U.S. field manual on COIN estimates that “Most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counterinsurgents for every 1,000 residents in an [area of operations]. Twenty counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective [counterinsurgency] operation…” (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13). Goode notes that this is most likely reflective of James Quinlivan’s seminal work on the subject (Quinlivan, 1995-96; Goode, 2010). While McGrath (2006) notes substantial discussion regarding mitigating factors like intensity of the conflict, densities of population, troop rotation, and use of indigenous forces none seriously contradict Quinlivan. Rather, discussions of appropriate COIN troop ratios reflect mere adjustments to Quinlivan’s measurements or they question his
variables (McGrath, 2006; Goode, 2010; Lewis, 2010). McGrath also points out the multiplicative impact of indigenous forces as a replacement or amplifying effect of U.S. troop ratios. As a result, the minimum number required might possibly be modified from 1:50 in the COIN manual, to possibly 91:1—citizens to counterinsurgents (McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Brown J. S., 2006). While force ratios of U.S. counterinsurgent forces are not unimportant, neither they are helpful in determining the state’s ability to defend itself once U.S. forces leave.

**Presence of Sanctuaries**

Inability to interdict insurgent sanctuaries is a common theme associated with predicting COIN success or failure. Harry Summers was the second to last U.S. officer out of Saigon as the last helicopter lifted off the U.S. Embassy in 1975. He asserted in his seminal analysis of the conflict that it was North Vietnamese infantry supported by tanks and artillery, not insurgents who captured Saigon. Summers argued the U.S. did not lose a counterinsurgency because the insurgents were a non-entity after the Tet Offensive in 1968. He argued that U.S. forces would have been better employed in creating a broader DMZ and focusing U.S. efforts on defeating the NVA allowing the South Vietnamese forces to defeat the Viet Cong (Summers, 1995). Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni and Max Boot, also agree that it winning a counterinsurgency is improbable where insurgent sanctuaries are never successfully interdicted (Zinni, General (USMC, ret), 2017; Boot, 2002).

These theories are unsatisfying because they fall short in explaining COIN successes despite continued presence of insurgent sanctuaries and they do not help understand how state survival after U.S. withdraw is expanded or contracted. There do not
seem to be many or any cases that the U.S. was able to foreclose on insurgent sanctuaries completely. Insurgent sanctuaries seem, in every case to continue to exist in all U.S. COIN intervention cases. In some cases, like U.S. interventions in the Philippines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Nicaragua, the U.S. did not foreclose on insurgent sanctuaries. However, state survival after U.S. withdrawal was seventy-one years, twelve years, twenty-six years, and forty-one years respectively (see Table 1.1). In contrast, while the U.S. also failed to permanently foreclose on insurgent sanctuaries in Vietnam and Iraq, their histories of state survival after U.S. withdrawal are substantially circumscribed. Vietnam only survived three years and Iraq was only able to defend itself without U.S. reintervention for three and a half years (see Table 1.1). While sanctuaries do much to keep the insurgents alive, they do little to allow the insurgents to succeed in co-opting large population centers. This is not to say that they are not important. Rather, the longer the insurgents remain separate from the population they mean to co-opt from the government, the more they self-marginalize.

**Continued Support After U.S. Withdrawal**

Continued U.S. support after withdrawal is a more compelling theory to explain state survival after U.S. withdrawal. If the U.S. continues to support the host-nation at the same level, indefinitely, there is a greater chance the supported state will survive. Conversely, when this support, upon which the host-nation has become dependent upon, is ceased, the supported state’s survival is threatened. U.S. support to a foreign military comes in a number of forms. The U.S. may provide military economic support to help fund foreign military operations. The U.S. may also provide combat support and combat service support. Combat support refers to direct assistance provided to maneuver units
allowing them to directly engage with and maneuver against enemy maneuver elements. Combat support might include artillery, tactical air support, engineering, intelligence, and communications. Combat service support is related to the provision of sustaining functions such as logistics, supply, maintenance, transportation etc.\textsuperscript{15}

The \textit{Foreign Assistance Act of 1974} contained an amendment prohibiting further U.S. aid to the South Vietnamese government and military. Zinni argues that based on the performance the South Vietnamese military during the 1972 Easter Offensive, the South Vietnamese could have continued to defeat the North Vietnamese in 1975 if they continued to receive U.S. combat support, combat service support, and funding (Zinni, 2017). Generals Raymond Odierno, James Amos, Joseph Dunford, Jack Keane, James Mattis, Lloyd Austin III, David Petraeus, and former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta have also made similar cases for the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2010 (Scarborough, 2015; Petraeus D., 2015) What these arguments seem to point to is that states developed by the U.S. since 1955 should be classified as \textit{strategic rentier states}. As \textit{strategic rentier states}, they are able to persist indefinitely as long as U.S. \textit{strategic rents} continue to be paid.

\textsuperscript{15} Fire support and operational assistance provided to combat elements. Joint Publication 1-02 \textit{DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms} (JP 1-02) (2016), p. 39. These consist of primarily \textit{sustainment} and/or logistical functions such as transportation, supply, rations, ammunition, etc. The essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of all operating forces in theaters at all levels of war. Joint Publication 1-02 \textit{DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms} (JP 1-02) (2016), p. 39. These consist primarily of fire support, close air support, communications, and intelligence functions.
Novel Potential Theories in Third-Party COIN

Contemporary COIN theories have great value in understanding tactical approaches to COIN, but this is not what has led the U.S. to intervene historically. Rather, the U.S. has intervened because the host-nation could not secure and control its own population and/or defeat its own insurgency. Had the host-nation been able to either of these or both, the U.S. would not have invested U.S. lives and money to do it. As such, contemporary COIN theories are particularly unsatisfying when trying to understand what allows a U.S. supported state to endure after the U.S. has withdrawn. In contrast, scholarship related to trusteeships and neotrustedeeships, military government, shared sovereignty arrangements, armed state building, and military adaptation provide more unconventional and potentially gratifying possibilities. However, these inhabiting strategies also rely on a more contingent view of host-nation sovereignty and may be, as Caplan concedes, the “best worst option” (Caplan, 2007).

Trusteeships and Neotrustedeeships

Trusteeship and neo-trustedeeships exemplify institution inhabiting strategies with the highest degree of embeddedness. They involve temporary control over all or part of a state’s organs of governance by external actors and may present the “best-worst option” for addressing state failure in the context of COIN interventions. The idea of a trusteeship is nothing new. The concept formed the core of many U.S. intervention strategies from 1898-1950 (Patterson, 2011; Boot, 2002). These strategies often included creating protectorates that were managed by both U.S. military and/or civilian officers at various

16 Including its security forces, rule of law, and economic development.
times. This represents the most invasive form of intervention possible. The U.S.’s first effort at establishing a trusteeship occurred during its intervention in the Philippines. There, the U.S. military initially managed both the security and governance for the Philippine state. Later, William Howard Taft became the civilian governor of the Philippines, while military officers like General Arthur McArthur continued to direct the country’s security apparatus until just prior to World War II. The U.S. would continue to use trusteeships and shared sovereignty arrangements in sundry instances from 1898-1947 as a means for addressing state fragility and failure. The last trusteeships of this period were the American operation of the German and Japanese governments after World War II.

These last trusteeships were also original examples of U.S. military governments before they transitioned over to American civilian governors or high commissioners. The U.S. employed military governments in during Civil War Reconstruction in 1865, the Philippines 1898 – 1946, Cuba 1898--1902, Puerto Rico 1898, Veracruz, Mexico 1914, the Rhineland 1918--1923, and in several Marine Corps interventions in the Caribbean (Mueller, 2017). The School of Military government (1942-1946), the Small Wars Manual (1940), and Field Manual 27-5, Military Government and Civil Affairs (1940) all codified into doctrine the U.S. lessons learned in executing military government. Since May 1955, military government has been largely forsworn as a means for handling conflict and post-conflict governance development. However, more recently there has been renewed interest in resurrecting the concept of military government, especially when only the military is able to gain access to the population due to security concerns. The DoD’s 2006 counterinsurgency field Manual, FM 3-24 mentioned the potential for military gov-
And, the U.S. Army’s latest operating concept includes preparations for “security operations abroad including initial establishment of military government pending transfer of this responsibility to other authorities” (Johnson, 2017, p. 81).

The advent of the United Nations and the decolonization movement would see the additions of Articles 77 and 78 the *United Nations Charter*. These articles expressly prohibited the creation of trusteeships in *sovereign* member nations. In the 1990s, with the conclusion of the Cold War and increased concern with state fragility and its impact on international stability, new methods were pursued. Many of these *new* methods sought to resurrect old ones, holdovers from the colonial and imperial age. As Ruth Gordon notes in the Cornell Internal Law Journal, “The ensuing human misery has generated appeals for international intervention… scholars and commentators are proposing paradigms to ‘save failed States,’ to assist disintegrating States, or simply to bring back colonialism… to bring back various forms of trusteeship” (Gordon R. E., 1995).

**Neotrustedships**

While the closing of the School of Military Government and the repudiation of quasi-colonial/imperialist methods seemed to signal the forsaking of trusteeships for good, a new brand of international trusteeships began to take shape in the early 1990s (Lyon, 1993; Caplan, 2007). Indeed, as Brian Deiwer observes, “The use of territorial trusteeships or trusteeship-like arrangements has increased over the years. Politicians, editorialists, and legal experts have called for trusteeships of the Palestinian territories,

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17 It was subsequently removed though from the 2014 version.
Cambodia, East Timor, Kosovo, Liberia, Bosnia, and now Iraq. It has been suggested the
United Nations can ‘help the United States bear the burdens of lone-superpower status’
by reactivating ‘one of the world body's most vital organs,’ the U.N. Trusteeship Coun-
cil” (Deiwert, 2004, p. 772). Deiwert argues that the management of foreign lands for the
benefit of the citizens residing therein has a substantial history from the Mandates System
in the League of Nations in the early Twentieth Century, to the U.N.’s intervention in Ko-
sovo (Ibid, p. 805).

Robert Caplan (2007) offers a more qualified view of neo-trusteeships in the con-
text of precarious statehood. Caplan notes that, “Impracticable though the idea of inter-
national trusteeship may have seemed to many at that time, it soon became a reality in all
but name with the establishment of international territorial administrations in Bosnia and
(Caplan, 2007, p. 231). Caplan questions the efficacy of neo-trusteeships beyond the
small number of instances where they have been employed successfully. His concern is
for whether the successes of these cases are generalizable across the spectrum of inter-
vention. However, Caplan also argues that in spite of this qualification, “Their limita-
tions notwithstanding, what may most recommend arrangements of this kind in future is
simply that they can represent the least worst option, if not sometimes the best hope, for
easing a territory's transition from war, injustice and dependence to peace, basic human
rights and relative independence in the context of the changing international order of the
post-cold war era” (Ibid).
Given their strictly advisory role, *institution influencing strategies* of lower degrees of embeddedness, such as governmental and military advise and assist missions, lack the ability to compel an already broken state to fundamentally reform (Daase, 2011; Fukuyama, 2004; Krasner, 2005; Boot, 2002; Caplan, 2007). Those who advocate for more invasive forms of intervention in the host-nation’s organs argue that if the state is entirely dysfunctional, or nearly so, no amount of advising will work and that the current tools are inadequate (Ibid). Indeed, Ruth Gordon (1995) notes that a key case made for suspending Articles 77 and 78 of the *U.N. Charter* is that these articles really to *sovereign states* and not those whose empirical sovereignty it either absent or nearly so. Also, as Daase advances, “In this context, the establishment of democracy and good (economic) governance is usually not considered as an internally driven project of post-conflict and weak states but rather triggered and highly, if not decisively, influenced by external (donor) involvement” (Daase, 2011, p. 4). For those authors who see state failure as first order threat, the severity of the problem demands a relatively severe solution. Nevertheless, these scholars are not ignorant of the obvious criticisms that are often leveled:

“Some forms of external involvement during the socio-economic transition of post-conflict and weak states could raise concerns not only about the remaining autonomy of the receiving or borrowing state but also about the legality and legitimacy of the arrangements, as critics may speak of international interventionism into the domestic institutions of a sovereign (weak) state or even of new forms of colonialism taking ownership of the processes from the receiving-state. After all, the balance between local needs and weak institutional environments and the depth of international involvement seems fragile, and international donor activities can in fact push against or go beyond the borders of the concept of sovereignty, blurring the lines between the domestic and international sphere” (Daase, 2011, p. 34).
However, Fearon and Laitin argue that despite some similarities, there are also significant difference between classical imperialism and modern trusteeships or neo-trusteeships (Fearon & Laitin, 2004). They acknowledge that neo-trusteeship’s intense control over the governance and economy of the host nation by a foreign power resembles classic imperialism. However, in contrast to management by a single monopoly state, neo-trusteeships rely on a “hodgepodge” of state actors, NGOs, and IGOs. Additionally, where classical imperialism sought to remain indefinitely, neo-trusteeship actors seek to exit as soon as possible. Finally, where the classical imperialist required no legal mandate, the modern neo-trusteeship seeks a legal writ to justify its intervention.

Shared Sovereignty Arrangements

Shared sovereignty arrangements are *institution inhabiting strategies* which also require foreign officers to deeply embed in a host-nation’s institutions, but less so than trusteeships/neo-trusteeships. Within a shared sovereignty framework, unlike in the case of a trusteeship, the host-nation government retains control over portions of its institutions. In fact, in some cases, the host-nation government may maintain near total control with the exception of foreign officers embedded in state organs as supervisors and in possession of *veto-power* rather than specific command authority. Shared sovereignty arrangements were also a common feature of pre-1950 U.S interventions wherein, short of appropriating all of another state’s sovereignty, the U.S. *inhabited* portions of the state’s institutions and/or functions. An example of this might include customs receiverships the U.S. established in many Caribbean states from 1898-1933 to ensure proper collection of customs duties as a means to pay off foreign debts (Millet, 2010; Boot, 2002; Gravatt,
Another military example is the U.S. Marines’ unilateral creation of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua even as they operated under the Nicaraguan government’s authority.

While more invasive forms of intervention fell out of favor in U.N. and U.S. policies between 1950 and the 1990s, the intractability of modern state failure has precipitated a revived evaluation of shared sovereignty arrangements (Caplan, 2007; Fearon & Laitin, 2004; Krasner, 2004; Gordon R. E., 1995). Kenneth Menkhaus notes that “In reality, the notion of state fragility constitutes a complex cocktail of causes and effects, a syndrome that has proven largely impervious to quick, template-driven external solutions’ (Menkhaus, 2012, p. 85). Further, Cindy Daase argues, “Current tools for international organizations like the World Bank to promote good governance mostly consists of ‘governance assistance and transitional administration projects,’ neither of which have proven particularly successful” (Daase, 2011, p. 7). Krasner takes this further, adding:

“The policy tools that powerful and well-governed states have available to ‘fix’ badly governed or collapsed states—principally governance assistance and transitional administration ... are inadequate. In the future, better domestic governance in badly governed, failed, and occupied polities will require the transgression of accepted rules, including the creation of shared sovereignty in specific areas. In some cases, decent governance may require some new form of trusteeship, almost certainly de facto rather than de jure” (Krasner, 2004, p. 85)

In terms of operationalizing shared sovereignty arrangements, Daase identifies several themes for the successful implementation situated around her work on Liberia and Sierra Leone. First, she asserts that shared sovereignty arrangements should leave the host-nation in effective control and be of a clearly temporary nature. Both of these stipulations are designed to demonstrate, ab initio, a clear intention to restore full juridical and
empirical sovereignty at an established time or under specified conditions. Second, Daase recommends the shared sovereignty arrangement be circumscribed within specific functions, institutions, and powers for the intervening actor. This also is designed to instill confidence in the host-nation that the foreign actor does not intend a general assumption of complete control of the state organs. Fourth, she argues that shared sovereignty arrangements should be self-enforcing, self-executing, and provide for rewards and sanctions for compliance or defection. This is critical because the host-nation remains in control. Therefore, if the outside actor has to continually obtain permission to act from an already dysfunctional state there is meager hope for legitimate change. Moreover, if the state has reached the level of dysfunction that requires outside intervention to ameliorate, simple influence without the genuine threat of sanction or promise of reward is unlikely to demonstrably amend behavior. Finally, she also concedes that given the inauspicious circumstances under which the external party is intervening, negotiations with the HNG typically are effected under what she calls the “fringe of coercion” (2011, pp. 4, 7-8).

**Armed State Building**

*Armed state building* provides another novel approach to the real target of third party COIN interventions: state fragility. Paul Miller writes, “Armed state building is an exercise of military power by great powers to compel failed or collapsed states to govern more effectively” (Miller P. D., 2013, p. 4). Miller’s core argument is that states fail along different dimensions of *statehood*¹⁸ and to different degrees¹⁹ and that the strategies

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¹⁸ He describes five dimensions of statehood as: security, legitimacy, capacity, prosperity, and humanity (Miller P. D., 2013, p. 9)

¹⁹ He identifies five types of state failure as anarchic, illegitimate, incapable, unproductive, and barbaric (Ibid).
of state building should be appropriately aligned. To align this strategy, Miller recommends two questions: what is the appropriate focus and what is the appropriate level of control for the third-party actor to assume? With respect to level of control Miller identifies three levels: Observer, Trainer, and Administrator, with the Observer demonstrating the lowest degree of embeddedness and Administrator the highest (Miller P. D., 2013, pp. 9-10).

Miller’s analysis of aligning the correct strategy with the type and degree of failure is critical to addressing the appropriate degree of embeddedness. He argues that where damage done to a state as a result of conflict is relatively low/limited, a strategy of lower embeddedness is entirely appropriate. Conversely, he points to the cases of the Axis powers from World War II, noting that former enemies could not be trusted to rebuild their own governments and were, at any rate, completely destroyed. Miller argues that where governance and security has been completely shattered, or if the state completely inept or predatory, strategies of the highest embeddedness would be required. And in the specific context of a foreign COIN intervention, there is little that could be more broken than a state that is compelled to hire out the killing of its rebellious subjects to another state.

Miller’s argument is relevant and important because it asks important questions regarding success and provides a pragmatic view of sovereignty in the case of failed or weak states. Firstly, Miller asks, “When do we measure success?” (Ibid, p.14). He provides a loose estimation of ten years after the conflict. This appears somewhat arbitrary, but his larger question is crucial. He points out that success cannot be measured while
the intervening force is still present, and success, by whatever measure one uses, can only be determined well after the intervening force has left. Secondly, Miller’s thesis takes a contingent view of sovereignty in failed or failing states. His contention is that, it is of little value lamenting the appropriation a sovereignty that the host-nation does not materially or evidentially possess with the exception of simple U.N. recognition.

**Counterinsurgent Adaptation and Innovation**

Nagl (2005), in his seminal book on counterinsurgency, argues that the differences in their organizational cultures made the British in Malaysia more adept at rapid learning and adaptation than the U.S. Army in Vietnam. He argues that this penchant for greater adaptability and institutional learning translated into improved COIN operations in the former and poorer performance in the latter. However, Nagl’s argument, with these specific case studies, fails to compare like things. The issue in Vietnam was not the inability of the U.S. to learn but the failure to compel the South Vietnamese government to learn and adapt.

In Vietnam, the U.S. supported the government. In Malaysia, the British were the government. As a result, the British learned and adapted within Malaysian governance and security institutions symbiotically with the Malaysian citizens who were also operating within these institutions. The lessons learned became the shared intellectual property of the Malaysian institutions. In contrast, the U.S. in Vietnam learned lessons operating unilaterally and outside Vietnamese institutions. When U.S. forces advised the Vietnamese, the U.S. transferred its unique and strictly American adaptations artificially to the Vietnamese. Thus, the state that needed to learn and adapt the most, the one who would
remain after U.S. withdrawal, actually adapted and learned the least. *Inhabiting* and *Influencing* strategies are really concerned with how third parties learn, adapt, and innovate during COIN campaigns and they transmit these lessons, adaptations, and innovations. This is particularly crucial when the cause of intervention is the failure of state institutions.

**Adaptation in Conflict**

By what means do U.S. forces learn and transmit lessons learned to a host-nation government or security force during a COIN intervention? Clausewitz, in his seminal text *On War*, theorized that war was like a wrestling match between two hostile irreconcilable parties both trying to impose their wills on the other (Clausewitz, 1976). Through this contest of wills, each force is compelled to continually act, observe, react, and adapt to the efforts of the adversary. This concept of mutual adaptation was further developed by John Boyd. Boyd’s formulation of what has become known as the Observe, Orient, Decide, Act Loop (OODA Loop) was based on his research of air to air combat between fighter pilots of the Korean War (Boyd, 1995). The combination of Clausewitz’s *zweikampf* and the continual adaptation represented by the OODA Loop has several implications that were originally predicted by Boyd in his 1976 *Destruction and Creation*. The first is that due to entropy—the state of affairs that existed at the beginning of the conflict would bear little resemblance to the state of affairs at the end. Secondly, the combatants themselves would also be dramatically changed by the struggle as both are compelled to continuously learn and adapt until one can no longer keep up and either quits or
is destroyed. This describes two actors well, but how does the U.S. then transmit these adaptations onto a host-nation government or host-nation security force?

**Artificial Adaptation**

When the U.S. intervenes in a foreign counterinsurgency and operates unilaterally outside the host-nation’s institutions, this complicates the learning and adaptation during the conflict. Previously, the host-nation government and security force and the insurgents were compelled to adapt, react, observe, and learn in order to remain competitive. However, the U.S. will only find it necessary to intervene if the host-nation is not adapting and learning and is no longer competitive. Upon intervention, the U.S. forces assume the lead role and often relegate host-nation security forces into less demanding roles. The American forces and the insurgents are forced to adapt and learn in order to remain competitive. However, the host-nation’s forces are not compelled to learn and adapt as dramatically because they are relegated to less demanding tasks and their survival is assured by U.S. force.

All sides involved in a counterinsurgency are forced not only to learn and adapt to each other’s adaptations but also to adapt to and negotiate with the populace. These negotiations, while they are not the preferred initial outcome for either the third party or the insurgency, they are nevertheless necessary to continue to compete. An excellent example of this is the Al Anbar Awakening in Iraq 2006-2008. U.S. military forces had no desire to create grassroots militias and local governments who would ultimately compete

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20 What used to be termed as end states for each conflict or round of conflicts is now regarded by the U.S. military as a series of new states of both situations and combatants that is more in line with Clausewitz’s theory (Joint Publication 3-0; Joint operations, 2011).
with the central Iraqi government the U.S. supported. However, winning over the local Sunni Muslim populace forced the U.S. military to negotiate into a more competitive but less comfortable position. The empowering of local Sunnis paid dividends for the U.S. against Al Qaeda in Iraq. However, the largely Shia-led Iraqi government had not been compelled to make the same negotiations and abandoned these negotiations shortly after the last U.S. forces withdrew.

Similarly, the insurgents are also forced to adapt. A valuable example is in improvised explosive device (IED) construction and employment in Iraq. IEDs in Iraq began with residual military ordnance—primarily artillery shells using command wires to detonate. Travelling on mostly paved roads, U.S. and Coalition forces learned to spot hiding places of insurgents and likely IED hiding places. As a result, insurgents adapted by using improvised wireless command detonation systems which did not expose the trigger-man’s observation post. Later, the insurgency adapted further by fabricating massive home-made explosives and deep buried IEDs, low metallic signature IEDs, and explosively formed projectiles (EFPs). This caused the U.S. to further adapt by using complex array of mine resistant, ambush protected vehicles (MRAPs), mine rollers fitted to vehicles, electronic jammers, metal detectors, unmanned aerial vehicles, and an enormous array of techniques, tactics, and procedures.

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21 Based on the author’s personal experience in Hilah and Ramadi, Iraq 2003-2009.
Training Effect, Retarding Effect, and Training Gap.

In artificial adaptation, the only element in the above equation who was not compelled to adapt or negotiate was the Iraqi government and security forces. These institutions inherited their lessons through U.S. influence operations. Colonel Michael Lewis (U.S. Army, ret) with Marine Corps University argues that the insurgents and the foreign COIN forces are both compelled to continually adapt just to keep up (Lewis, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency, 2016). He asserts that this has a training effect on both the insurgents and foreign counterinsurgents who survive. In contrast, because the foreign COIN force is forced to compete, adapt, and negotiate and the host-nation is not require to to the same degree, this has a retarding effect on the host-nation’s institutions. Thus, even when advisors pass off successful American lessons learned, they tend to leave behind a more capable insurgent force and not a more capable host-nation. Lewis describes this as a training gap—the disparity between the level of capacity the insurgents have earned and the level of capacity the HNSF has inherited.

Another aspect Lewis points out is U.S. advisors leave behind a host-nation that is used to fighting the same style of warfare as U.S. forces. U.S forces are heavily dependent on technology, close air support, fire support, and a massive economic and industrial base. Thus, the style of warfare U.S. advisors pass off to their charges is uniquely American and dependent on U.S. support to sustain. This pattern has been present in every conventional COIN intervention since 1954 in Vietnam. A valuable example provided by Boot and Zinni is the comparison between the outcomes of the Easter Offensive in 1972 and the North Vietnamese offensive of 1975 (Boot, 2002; Zinni, 2017). Zinni and Boot point out that in 1972 the South Vietnamese successfully defeated the North Vietnamese.
During this offensive, the South Vietnamese were supported by robust American close air
support and advisors. However, once that support was withdrawn, the South Vietnamese
were easily overrun in 1975 by a North Vietnamese force that was no more capable than
it had been in 1972. From this example, the successful invasion of ISIS in Iraq, and a re-
surgent Taliban in Afghanistan, we observe adversary militaries who are more capable
than U.S. supported states without perpetual U.S. support. These U.S. supported states
are able to endure only so long as perpetually receive the same strategic rents to which
they have become acclimatized.

**Strategic Rentier States.**

The U.S. creates a *strategic rentier state* when the U.S. supported state can only
continue to exist with perpetual U.S. combat and financial support. U.S. forces artifi-
cially transmit uniquely American lessons and styles of warfare when they operate out-
side host-nation institutions using *institution influencing strategies*. To fight in the same
manner as American forces, the host-nation requires substantial and perpetual strategic
rents. These rents may include economic assistance, close air support, fire support, and
logistical, intelligence, and training support.

To understand the idea of a *strategic rentier state*, I rely on Hossein Mahdavy and
Hazem Beblawi’s understanding of what constitutes a *rentier state* (Mahdavy, 1970;
Beblawi, 1987). A rentier state is one in which foreign rents constitute a significant por-
tion of its economic capacity and for whom there is a conspicuous absence of domestic
revenue from taxation (Mahdavy, 1970, p. 428). According to Beblawi there are four cri-
teria that describe a rentier state: 1) rent situations predominate; 2) the state economy re-
lies in large part on foreign rents; 3) only a small percentage of the population in the rentier state is involved in the production of the rent, even if many benefit from it; and, 4) the host-nation government is the primary recipient of the rents (Beblawi, 1987, p. 384). The host-nation expends little or no opportunity cost in the extraction of rents and little is required of the host-nation to earn the rents except to possess the resource being “rented.” Because foreign provided rents replace many of the needs for domestic tax extraction from the populace, there is a twofold stagnative effect. Firstly, massive welfare regimes create little incentive for citizens to pressure the host-nation government for reforms. Secondly, the lack of popular pressure increases the opportunities for kleptocratic regimes and decreases the likelihood of change (Mahdavy, 1970, p. 437).

I further rely on Barnett Rubin and Rolf Schwarz’s conceptualizations of strategic rents to describe the production of strategic rentier states through Institution Influencing strategies. Barnett Rubin (1992) conceptualizes the extraction of foreign rents in the form of foreign aid and Rolf Schwarz (2008) extends the concept to the earning of “strategic rents” from military basing agreements, alliances, etc. A problem of moral hazard is perpetuated when states receive strategic rents based on a continually deteriorating security situation. There is what Beblawi terms a break in the reward-causation cycle and creates what he calls the “rentier mentality” (Beblawi, 1987, pp. 385-386). In this case, there is actually greater incentive for the host-nation to perpetuate its own instability. This perpetual dysfunctionality threatens U.S. prestige in countries where the U.S. has taken responsibility for security outcomes. The threat of continued dysfunction and to American prestige guarantees the payment of continued rents. Further, despite the in-
tended purpose of the *strategic rents*, greater host-nation instability actually earns the dysfunctional state greater rents—the worse the security situation, the more the U.S. is willing to pay to repair it.

Beblawi points out that these rents continue to prevent substantive host-nation leadership improvement because: 1) there is no existential requirement for improved governance or security because foreign rents artificially keep the host-nation government in power without having to effectively compete, negotiate, or adapt; and, 2) host-nation improvement would actually have the effect of reducing the rents (Beblawi, 1987, pp. 385-386). This situation perpetuates until the money dries up. Rolf Schwarz points out that, “Politically, a rentier political bargain is stable only as long as sufficient resources are available. In terms of abundance, it hinders the emergence of independent political interests demanding democratization and strengthens the autonomy of the state….” (Schwarz, 2008, p. 610). Finally, when the U.S. is either no longer willing or no longer able to sustain the rents, the host-nation fails as they have been poorly equipped to compete with their adversaries on their own terms. They are also left poorly acclimatized to the negotiative and coercive techniques required to extract taxes and support themselves domestically (Schwarz, 2008, p. 608).

**Symbiotic Adaptation**

U.S forces are constrained to adapt symbiotically within host-nation institutions and their discrete cultural and economic realities when they employ *institution inhabiting*

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22 *It is because rentier states do not have to rely on domestic taxation to the same degree of most other states that writers like Barnett Rubin argue that rents distance the government from needing to be pliant and vigilant to the demands of the populace and allow them to assert "control without bargaining with or being accountable to its citizens”* (Rubin, 1992, p. 78).
strategies. The outcome of this symbiotic relationship is neither wholly American nor host-nation; they are both changed. This is further reinforced when the host-nation government is exclusively responsible for funding and equipping the institution(s) American officers are embedded within. Whatever adaptations U.S. officers might otherwise choose are constrained to what the host-nation can afford.

Adaptation within the constraints of the host-nation’s culture and resources creates a sustainability that is not found when the host-nation is trained to govern and fight in uniquely U.S. styles and accustomed to U.S. rents. Additionally, because U.S. officers are compelled to negotiate with the populace and compete with the insurgents through the host-nation institutions, all adaptations and lessons become the property of the host-nation institutions. Further, these lessons and adaptations are uniquely suited to the discrete cultural dimensions and adversary threats. Examples of this include the Philippine Scouts and the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua. This also produces a sustainability unique to the peculiar context within which the host-nation exists.

The institutional adaptations that result from the symbiosis between U.S. forces and host-nation institutions are solidified and become permanent through what Migdal describes as a process of compliance, legitimation, and participation with the new institutions (Migdal, 1988). While host-nation citizens are initially forced to interact with and within these new institutions, the institutions themselves gain a legitimacy after a time. Once the situation has stabilized and foreign officers withdraw, control is transferred over to host-nation citizens. Host-nation citizen participation then legitimizes these new institutions that are not uniquely third party nor host-nation. Examples of this might include
the Philippine Supreme Court, the Philippine Air Force, the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, etc. Ultimately, host-nation citizens begin to participate in these institutions voluntarily. Benedict Anderson asserts as much regarding colonial institutions. By operating within these institutions and relying upon them, host-nation citizens no longer question the ontological logic of the institutions but accept and even internalize them as part of their national identity (Anderson, 1991).

**Understanding Third Party COIN Outcomes Through Degrees of Embeddedness**

As previously stated, U.S. military counterinsurgency (COIN) interventions before 1950 produced longer lasting states than interventions after 1950 (see Figure 2 below). Where the degree of embeddedness was highest, state longevity after withdrawal tended to persist twenty-four times longer on average.

![Institution Inhabiting versus Institution Influencing](image)

**Figure 1.1- State Longevity Outcomes: Inhabiting versus Influencing**
There does not appear to be a correlation between contemporary COIN theories and increased state longevity when an internal conflict has become so dire, that only U.S. combat formations are perceived as sufficient to arrest it. There does appear to be a correlation between how deeply U.S. military and diplomatic forces embedded in host-nation institutions and state longevity. Specifically, where the degree of embeddedness was highest, U.S. supported states tended to endure far longer but produce weak democracies. In contrast, where the degree of embeddedness was lowest, as in Institution Influencing strategies, U.S. supported regimes evolved into rentier regimes and endured only as long as the U.S. maintained its rents to the host-nation indefinitely.

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23 This is not to say that focusing on the population, legitimacy of the government, and defeat of the insurgency are not important. Rather, it does mean that no amount of success in these three areas appear to overcome failure to develop the host-nation institutions themselves.
Stability and Governance

Further demarcation within *Institution Inhabiting strategies* is required. The U.S. did not exclusively use *Inhabiting strategies* to develop host-nation security forces. At times, the U.S. used *Inhabiting* strategies to develop both the host-nation’s governance and its security forces as in the Philippines. In other cases, such as Nicaragua, the U.S. employed a combination of *Influencing strategies* to develop governance and *Inhabiting strategies* to develop security. Finally, the U.S. also used exclusively *Influencing strategies* to develop both governance and security. The state outcomes of each of these combinations are significant.
Depending on the degree of embeddedness the U.S. employed, this examination identifies presents variegated outcomes with respect to stability and democracy (see Figure 3). This examination includes a measure of democracy here not as a component to measure SLAW, but rather as an additional measure of effectiveness of liberalizing interventions. For this examination’s understanding of this concept of liberalizing armed state building, I rely on Paul Miller’s (2013) comparison of liberal intervention with classical imperialism. The outcomes I identify denote two outcomes with respect to stability and three with respect to democracy. The combination of these outcomes of stability and governance further begets three types of states produced after U.S. withdrawal.

Conditions of high stability were produced where U.S. forces were deeply embedded in the state’s security institutions. This was evidenced in all cases before 1950. Stability was a critical precursor to state longevity but did not necessarily promote democracy or good governance. In contrast, conditions of low or only temporary stability were occasioned where U.S. forces developed the state’s security institutions from outside or alongside these institutions through influence alone. This was observable in all cases after 1950. In contrast to the cases of high stability, these cases produced states that could not effectively compete with their adversaries after U.S. withdraw. They either lost a significant portion of their territory or the entire country.

Conditions of low democracy were produced where the U.S. civilian and military personnel were most deeply embedded in the state’s security and governing institutions. The examination defines low democracy as an situation where democratic institutions
persist indefinitely but are restrained by systemic corruption and strong patronage systems such as the Filipino *compradrazgo system*\(^{24}\) (Karnow, 1989; Silbey, 2007). A low democracy appears to be the zenith of what might be expected as a result of third party COIN conventional intervention.

A best case of *low democracy* seems unduly pessimistic. However, as Miller observes, “Few state-building missions result in an unqualified and comprehensive success” (Miller P. D., 2013, p. 14). This is all the more understandable as the antecedent conditions that necessitated intervention were appraised to be so dire that only U.S. combat formations could staunch them.

Conditions of *faux democracy* were produced where U.S. personnel deeply embedded in the state’s security organs but not its governing institutions. *Faux democracy* defines a reality where the high degree of stability provided by the state’s security forces on the behalf of the governing regime results in only the pretense of democracy. An example of this is the Nicaraguan case. *This pretense is maintained by constantly abrogating old laws or fabricating new ones to justify the currently illegal and/or the democratically corrupt.* Lastly, conditions of *no democracy* were produced where the degree of embeddedness employed by U.S. forces were low in both the state’s security and governing institutions. The overthrow of the entire regime, or large portions of the state’s territory, make discussions of democracy moot where the state no longer exists.

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\(^{24}\) Karnow and Silbey describe the *compradrazgo system* in the Philippines at length (Karnow, 1989; Silbey, 2007). They relate how this system bound patron and client into familial relationships that transcended loyalty to state or jurisdiction. They show how the *compradrazgo system* was both essential to Filipino interpersonal relationships. However, they show how this also led to Emilio Aquinaldo’s forces being overwhelmed easily and how it leads to rampant corruption.
Combinations the degrees of embeddedness and their impacts on stability and governance produced three types of states after U.S. withdrawal: *stumbling states, tumbling states, and crumbling states*. While the names of these different types of states are not intended to be overly pessimistic, it is important to recognize just how broken a state must be before the U.S. will intervene with combat formations to save it. *Stumbling states* are generated where *institution inhabiting strategies* were employed in developing both security and governance institutions. The idea of a *stumbling state* is employed to denote a state recovering from frailty but nevertheless providing semi-effective and persistent governance albeit beset by routine but non-existential shortfalls. The Philippines provide a good example of a *stumbling state*.

Tumbling states are produced where *inhabiting strategies* were employed in developing security organs and *influencing strategies* were used to develop governance institutions. The imagery of a *tumbling state* was chosen to depict a state that possesses very effective security instruments but poor governance and/or democracy. This combination points to a lengthy authoritarian reign but also to an inexorable demise when the security force becomes less effective and/or government ineptitude or corruption are no longer tolerable. Nicaragua provides a solid example of a *tumbling state*.

Finally, *crumbling states* are resultant from former *strategic rentier states*. *Strategic Rentier states* are initially produced where *influencing strategies* are employed in developing both security and governance institutions. As long as these *strategic rents* continue to be paid, the state continues to persist. Examples of this include Vietnam, Iraq, and most likely Afghanistan. However, once *strategic rents* cease to be paid, this results in a *crumbling state*. The depiction of a *crumbling state* is purposed to describe
an eventuality where neither the governance nor security institutions have been ade-
quately developed to demonstrate empirical sovereignty for long after U.S. withdrawal.

**Methodology**

I employ small-N qualitative case study methodologies to both develop and to test a theory of state centric counterinsurgency. These methods include the use of process tracing, contextually constrained historical comparison, Delphi method, and hoop tests to both infer a theory of state centric counterinsurgency and to test it alongside with rival competing hypotheses. In support of theory development, I utilize a contextually con-
strained historical comparison of the universe of U.S. COIN interventions involving ma-
jor combat formations to determine antecedent conditions, isolate independent variables, and to identify a dependent variable (Collier, 2011; Van-Evera, 1997). Then, I use small-
N, qualitative case study methodologies to test my theory as well as rival hypotheses. In support of this testing, I employ controlled comparison, process tracing, and hoop tests to select cases, create strong tests, and evaluate the explanatory value of my hypothesis.

**Theory Development**

One of the key criteques of small-N, case study methods is the challenge with determining antecedent conditions under which a theories predictions would be germane. Specifically, critics like Stanley Lieberson argue that a small number of experiences will produce very different conclusions and these conclusions are often wrong because a small number of cases is an inadequate basis for generalizing about the process under study (Lieberson, 1991, p. 311). In contrast, numerous qualitative methodologists disagree and find that small-N case studies can provide fertile ground for theory development and test-
ing provided various biases are addressed and antecedent conditions are clearly identified
(Bennett, 2010; Gerring, 2004; Bennett & Elman, 2007; Van-Evera, 1997). In answer to Lieberson, a large-N study would not be required here as the entire universe of U.S. conventional interventions affords only ten instances in toto. Additionally, because the U.S. military is the recurring actor in every one of these cases, the inferences provided by my hypothesis require not only longitudinal depth within each case but also latitudinal comparison across all the cases in order to arrive at my unique predictions.

Then entire population of U.S. COIN interventions from 1789 to the present amounts to twenty-two cases. From these, there were fifteen wherein the U.S. military was the lead intervening military force. From these fifteen there were a total of seven wherein the U.S. military force was in the lead for the COIN intervention and conventional forces were employed. These cases are: Philippines (1898-1913), Nicaragua (1927-1933), Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Cuba (1917-1933), Vietnam (1965-1973), Afghanistan (2001-Pres), Iraq (2003-2010) (Torreon, 2015).

From this universe of cases I have identified antecedent conditions under which state centric COIN theory would operate. First, the U.S. military would intervene in a foreign intra-state conflict in support of the host-nation government. Second, the U.S. or the host-nation government (if it exists) interprets the situation as dire enough that only U.S. conventional ground combat formations is sufficient to arrest it. Third, by employing U.S. conventional military force against an internal threat, the host-nation government (if it exists) accepts or is constrained to accept help from a foreign entity to execute violence against its own citizens in the name of the host-nation government. Fourth and finally, U.S. units are allowed to operate unilaterally within the foreign state under the
command of U.S. officers. Next, I enlist controlled comparison in the identification of and nomination of likely independent variables.

According to Slater and Ziblatt, “Controlled comparisons remain indispensable amid this ‘multimethod turn,’ explicating how they too can generate both internal and external validity when their practitioners (a) craft arguments with general variables or mechanisms, (b) seek out representative variation, and (c) select cases that maximize control over alternative explanations” (Slater & Ziblatt, 2013, p. 1301). Through the use of contextually constrained historical comparisons and a diverse array of secondary sources, I have been able to nominate a promising dependent variable: state longevity after the withdrawal of or cessation of conventional combat operations by U.S. military formations. Moreover, this examination was able to eliminate other possible dependent variables due to the previously enumerated issues with definability, attainability, enumerability, and endurance.

Lastly, I also used constrained historical controlled comparisons, the Delphi method, and Stuart Mill’s method of difference to identify the independent variable I expect to be at work in a theory of state centric counterinsurgency. In this vein I interviewed practitioners and thought leaders of the stripe of General Zinni (USMC, ret), General Neller (USMC), General Ayala (USMC), and General Petraeus (USA, ret). I further conducted controlled comparison across the body of U.S. conventional COIN interventions. As a result, I found the contemporary explanations for COIN theory unsatisfying and unable to transcend the context of all U.S. COIN interventions. They also proved unsatisfying their efficacy in predicting or even being able to provide a generalizable definition of third-party COIN success. Therefore, I enlisted controlled comparisons to identify weak
potential independent variables and nominate a single strong independent variable through the method of difference. As a result, I have nominated the degree of embeddedness by U.S. forces in host-nation institutions as my independent variable.

**Theory Testing**

I engage small-N, qualitative case study methods to test a theory of state centric COIN. Among these methods, I rely on the method of difference, process tracing, constrained historical controlled comparison, and counterfactuals to create and conduct a series of hoop tests to examine alternative hypotheses. First, the case study method is uniquely suited to testing predictions that are unique and not otherwise predicted by any other theory (Van-Evera, 1997, p. 54; Collier, 2011, p. 824). Second, the case study method is also well disposed to the testing of explanatory hypotheses. And finally, case studies as theory testing methods add distinct explanatory value.

I further leverage the method of difference and constrained historical comparison to investigate U.S. COIN interventions latitudinally. I examine across two cases most representative of the *Institution Inhabiting* phenomena and two more cases most representative of the *Institution Influencing* phenomena. All four cases are excellent candidates for the method of difference as they all present with very similar independent variables which would be predicted by the alternative hypotheses.

**Independent Variables for Alternative Explanations for COIN Success or Failure**

In support of population centric COIN I will examine security and control of the host-nation’s population and their support as predictors of state longevity in COIN interventions. These measures of success were provided by the 2006 COIN U.S. Army and

I will test other potentially fruitful independent variables as well that are not necessarily associated with any one macro theory. I will look at the potential for the enduring presence of insurgent sanctuaries and continued U.S. economic support to account state longevity (Zinni, 2017; Boot, 2002; Summers, 1995). These are often presented hand in hand and most specifically with respect to the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Finally, I will analyze troop ratios with respect to geography, population, and insurgents as possible explanations of state longevity (McGrath, 2006), (see Table 1.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Independent Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Were U.S. and HN forces able to foreclose on insurgent sanctuaries?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Troop Ratios Sufficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did state require perpetual combat support to endure after withdrawal of U.S. forces?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the U.S. and HN forces destroy or defeat insurgency while U.S. was present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the U.S. employ Institution Inhabiting Strategies to develop HN institutions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the U.S. employ Institution Influencing Strategies to develop HN institutions?</td>
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**Table 1.2-Potential Independent Variables Predicting State Longevity**

Finally, I rely on process tracing to analyze cases longitudinally and establish causal links from antecedent conditions, through the independent variables to the DV (Mahoney, 2010). I also use process tracing as “an analytical tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence that are often understood as part
of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena” (Collier, 2011, p. 824). Within my process tracing of each case I establish a series of hoop tests for the theory I have advanced as well as rival competing hypotheses (see Table 1.2 for the elements of these tests).

The success of rival competing theories will weaken but not eliminate my hypothesis. However, failure of these hoop tests by the theory I have advanced eliminates it (Collier, 2011, p. 825). While incapable of producing a smoking gun test outcome, the combination of a series of hoop tests eliminating rival hypothesis further strengthens the reliability of state centric COIN as an explanation for increasing state longevity after withdrawal of U.S. forces in the course of COIN interventions by U.S. combat formations.

Case Selection

In order to test my hypothesis and rival hypotheses I have selected cases based on: method of difference, extreme variance on the independent and dependent variables, most representativeness, and host-nation government status at the onset of the U.S. intervention. In this selection, I have taken care to avoid what Lieberson warns of in the use of method of difference of creating “such broad categories as to make it relatively easy for all cases to fall into the same rubric” (Lieberson, 1991, p. 317). Moreover, I have selected cases based on extreme variance in the study IVs and DV.

The Philippine case demonstrates the Institution Inhabiting phenomena through an entirely trustee form of relationship with the host-nation as well as the encadrement of host-nation security forces. This intervention produced a state longevity of seventy-one
years. The Nicaragua case study demonstrates a combination of Inhabiting and Influencing strategies and produced a state longevity of forty-six years. In contrast, Vietnam, exemplifies the Institution Influencing phenomena through military assistance to government and advising and produced a state longevity of only three years. Finally, Iraq also exemplified the Institution Influencing phenomena through military assistance to government and advising produced a state longevity of only 3.5 years. Even if most SLAWs of first two cases are minimized as much as possible, they still result in an average state longevity of 58.5 years. In contrast, even if the state longevities of the second two cases are maximized they have average state longevities of only three years.

**Roadmap for Examination**

Chapters 2 and 3 will examine cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where governance had been completely erased—*tabula rasa* (The Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010). The Philippines represents the case of high embeddedness and Iraq the case of low embeddedness. These cases will determine if there is a correlation between degree of embeddedness and state longevity in the course of U.S. third-party COIN interventions where the state has completely failed or been erased. In contrast, Chapters 4 and 5 will examine cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where the state was not yet failed, but was on the verge of failure when the U.S. intervened (Nicaragua 1927-1933 and Vietnam 1965-1972). Nica-

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25 This measurement of seventy-one years accepts the possible critique that the Philippine Islands was invaded by the Japanese when the U.S. conducted a strategic retreat. However, for the purposes of creating states able to handle threats apart from invasion by a global power, the Philippine security forces have actually been able to successfully defeat insurgent threats without U.S. combat formations for over 104 years.
ragua will represent the case of high embeddedness and Vietnam the case of low embeddedness. These cases will determine if there is a correlation between degree of embeddedness and state longevity in the course of U.S. third-party COIN interventions where the state has not completely failed yet or been erased.

The U.S. intervention in the Philippines, Chapter 2, was chosen as the most representative case of *Institution Inhabiting* methods of intervention. The U.S. intervention in the Philippines was the U.S.’s first large-scale attempt at conducting COIN on foreign shores. U.S. intervention in the Philippines inherited the U.S.’s strategy of *moderation and reprisal* from the U.S. Civil War and adapted this to the Philippine Island context in the form of *attraction and chastisement*. It is out of the U.S intervention in the Philippines that the U.S. began nation building activities as part and parcel to winning hearts and minds in foreign COIN. The Philippine intervention developed much of what would become population centric COIN and really the more hybridized version advocated by the latest COIN field manual and Rand studies (Paul, Clarke, & Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, 2010; Paul, Clarke, Grill, & Dunigan, *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*, 2013; *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5*, 2014).

In contrast, Iraq, Chapter 3, is the most representative of *Institution Influencing* cases. While U.S. operations in Iraq share almost every characteristic of U.S. operations in the Philippines, it differs dramatically on how it developed the Iraqi government and security forces to continue to secure and govern Iraq after U.S. conventional forces withdrew. The Iraq War, was in many ways, is the culmination of 105 years of COIN intervention experience. U.S. military leaders operating in Iraq “learned” not only from the
U.S.’s experience in the Philippines and the so-called Banana Wars, but also from the U.S.’s mistakes in Vietnam and the lessons learned from decades of European colonial COIN theory. In Iraq, we see these best practices applied in significant measure. We see a completely voluntary and professional military (a critique from Vietnam’s conscript military), the ubiquitous use of COIN academies, new doctrine, and leadership that believed in and was schooled in COIN theory, practice, and doctrine.

The U.S.’s operations in the Philippines and in Iraq are ideally suited to method of difference comparison. Both made use of an entirely volunteer U.S. military. Both operated within diverse and sectarian social cleavages. Both were the result of catastrophic and unplanned for success. Additionally, neither had any plan for how to rebuild a state that was erased by their success in conventional war. Both battled nationalist conventional forces initially and these nationalist forces morphed into asymmetric insurgent forces. Finally, in both cases of Iraq and Philippines, the U.S. began with strategies focused on defeating the insurgents and evolved into population centric strategies using population control, nation building, and decapitation strategies designed to defeat the insurgency rather than destroy it.

Normally, an examination of solely the Philippines and Iraq would be sufficient to determine the strength or weakness of my hypothesis and the alternative explanations. However, the last two cases, Nicaragua and Vietnam, Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, were chosen not only for their extreme variance on independent and dependent variables, but also to complement my analysis of the impact of antecedent conditions of the host-nation at the start of U.S. intervention. Nicaragua represents America’s final pre-1950 COIN in-
tervention with combat formations. Nicaragua is unique among the other three cases because unlike the Philippines, the U.S. only employed an institution inhabiting strategy in the creation of the Nicaraguan security forces. This chapter provides a contrast not only with Nicaragua’s paired case study-Vietnam in the case of existing host-nation government at intervention. It also provides contrast in both method and outcome to the Philippines where the U.S. used institution inhabiting strategies in both host-nation governance and security institutions.

The final case study, Vietnam, represents the case of low embeddedness during U.S. intervention in an existing host-nation government. The Vietnam case study is unique among the other three cases because it was the first major test of the institution influencing strategies to develop host-nation institutions. It also provides substantial similarity in both method and outcome to the U.S.’s intervention in Iraq.

**Addressing Bias**

In developing and testing a theory of state centric COIN I address confirmation bias, omitted variable bias, and concerns with determination of antecedent conditions. I account for these through diversity in sources, process tracing, case selection, and employment of multiple cases compared to the universe of those available. I address confirmation bias by relying on a wide diversity in secondary sources, military and national archives, surveys from personnel who served in Iraq and Vietnam, and interviews with key U.S. military leadership. I seek to mitigate the chances of omitted variable bias through process tracing by establishing a causal link from antecedent conditions through to Institution Inhabiting or Influencing strategies, and ultimately to state longevity. I also address omitted variable bias through case selection based primarily on extreme variance on
the independent variable, most representativeness, and antecedent conditions. Finally, one of the concerns with small-N case study methodologies is correctly determining what antecedent conditions the theory would operate under. I address this concern by examining multiple cases to analyze and conduct detailed process tracing of.

**Explanatory Range**

Because this study looks longitudinally at all instances of U.S. conventional COIN intervention, this study has high internal validity in the development and implementation of future U.S. foreign policy. Furthermore, because it transcends any one historically or contextually bound period, it has greater explanatory value across the potential universe of COIN interventions requiring the use of combat formations contemplated in the future. It provides generalizable predictions for the development of host-nation institutions in the course of COIN interventions that outstrip any single, contextually bound theory. Additionally, this study will also exhibit a higher degree of external validity through proximal similarity as advanced by Donald Campbell (Campbell, 1986). This external validity stems from the nature of the U.S. government and the U.S. military as representatives of the policies and military doctrine of many western liberal democracies. It particularly represents policies and doctrine of those states whom the U.S. exchanges officers for professional military education, conducts bi-lateral training, or have some instrument of shared security such as NATO.

In my conclusion, Chapter 8, I will leverage the combination of controlled comparison, Delphi method, process tracing, and strong tests to eliminate unsatisfactory ex-
planations for increasing state longevity in the course of COIN interventions. Employing what I have learned, I will advance or refute a theory of state centric counterinsurgency.
Chapter 2: The U.S. in the Philippines-A Harsh and Philanthropic War

“The vision for the American colony in the Philippines did have some difference from those of the Europeans and the Japanese. It was conceptualized as a grand and progressive public works project. The American’s plans were always placed in a ‘tutelage’ framework rather than the ‘peace, order, and justice’ mantras of the British and French imperialists. The tutorial was publicized as an attempt to prepare the Filipinos for eventual self-rule, not as a means to perform maintenance on an empire.” David Ekbladh (2010)

“a harsh and philanthropic war...” John Bass, Harpers, June 1899 (Karnow, 1989, p. 155)

By lunchtime on 1 May 1898, after a little over four hours of battle, the United States Asiatic Squadron under the command of Commodore George Dewey lay at harbor in Manila Bay, the Philippines. Six days after declaring war,26 the U.S. had sailed its Pacific Squadron to Manila Bay and destroyed the entire Spanish Fleet in the Far East. Surrounding the American naval squadron was the wreckage of the Spanish Pacific Squadron and the remains of 300 hundred years of Spanish Empire in the Far East. On the close of 1 May 1898, the Spanish lowered their ensign on the flagship of the Spanish squadron and Americans replaced it with their colors.

In 2004, President George W. Bush would coin a phrase, catastrophic success, in Iraq to describe a military success the U.S. was entirely unprepared to exploit or secure (Bush Calls Iraq Invasion a 'Catastrophic Success', 2004). Similarly, in the Philippines, by 1 May 1898, the U.S. found itself subject to a catastrophic success. There was no interna-

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26 25 April 1898. The official declaration backdates the date of the start of the war to 21 April 1898.
tional power that thought the immature U.S. fleet had a remote chance against a legendary naval world empire. However, just two and a half months later, the U.S. found itself in possession of a foreign capital with the responsibility to govern and recreate the state.

The “harsh and philanthropic war” described by John Bass of Harpers Weekly (June 1898) would result in what Kipling described as a “savage war of peace” in his ode to the Philippine War (Kipling, 1899). This intervention would produce a Philippine state that would endure longer than any other state developed by the U.S. as a result of COIN intervention by U.S. combat formations. It also produced something else entirely unique for its time. Regarding the Jones Bill of August 1916 that first promised Philippine independence, Stanley Karnow relates, “However flawed, it was a landmark gesture. No other western power at that stage had conceded autonomy to a colony, much less promised it independence” (Karnow, 1989, p. 247). Similarly, Sergio Osmena, the future first vice president of the Philippines, congratulated future president Manuel Quezon, “Your sincere and steadfast efforts have saved your country centuries of suffering that other peoples have to go through on their way to final emancipation” (Ibid). This early promise of independence distinguished American trusteeships from more permanent European versions.

27 In fact, Europeans who saw Dewey sail off to battle the Spanish were certain that they had seen the naval commander and his fleet for the last time (Karnow, 1989).
Case Representativeness in Third-Party COIN: The Philippines

From 1898-1913 U.S. civilian and military officers deeply embedded within and inhabited Philippine security and governance institutions. The use of *inhabiting strategies* resulted in what this examination terms a *stumbling state*, characterized by low democracy, and high stability (see Figure 2.1 below). The U.S. civilian and military officers employed trusteeship forms of relations to develop the governance of the Philippines. The U.S. began its trusteeship with an American military government. Later governance was developed through American civilian governors, until they were replaced from the village to the national level.

Likewise, U.S. military officers developed Philippine security initially through unilateral operations and then through encadrement. As the Philippine security forces were developed, American officers were transitioned out of the Philippine security forces in the same fashion as the Philippine government was transitioned. Junior American officers were replaced earliest, and eventually all U.S. officers were replaced by Filipino officers from smaller units proceeding to national level command. The application of U.S. *institution inhabiting strategies* facilitated the establishment of the first freely elected indigenous legislature in the Far-East and the first supreme court in the Far East judged by native citizens. *Institution inhabiting strategies* also produced Philippine security forces capable of leading security efforts in four years and able to defeat an indigenous insurgency nine years after that with little U.S. combat support. Moreover, the Philippine military was a valuable ally and performed as well as, and sometimes better than, U.S. forces early in World War II. Lastly, if one excludes the discontinuity of World
War II, it is reasonable to assert that once the Philippine security forces defeated Muslim insurgents in 1913, they brought about sustained state stability for over a century.

The result of the U.S. intervention in the Philippines 1898-1913 was a stumbling state. The Philippines was obliged to recover from state failure, but nevertheless has been able to provide semi-effective and persistent governance albeit beset by routine but non-existent shortfalls. The *compradrazgo system* mixed with American democratic liberalism produced what this examination terms a *low democracy.* The patronage-clientelism *compradrazgo system* operated within and often weakened the democratic institutions of the Philippines. An example of this was the systemic conditions which made an extended Marcos led regime possible.

The Philippines is a *low democracy* due to its inability to address core grievances that have led to communist uprisings and Muslim insurgencies. The Philippine status as a *low democracy* has been evident in the Philippines’ challenges with Muslim terrorism and drug wars under President Rodrigo Duterte. These political challenges have been exacerbated by the fact that the Philippines is the fourth most-vulnerable state in the world to natural disasters ((UNISDR) & Centre on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), 2016). Yet, the Philippine security forces have also provided a state of *high stability.*

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28 World War II is an aberration because global conflagrations are aberrations and the development of a Philippine Security force that could defeat the Japanese Empire when the U.S., another global hegemon of the day, could not is unlikely and probably not useful to discussions regarding development of HNG and HNSFs in general.

29 See Chapter 1-I define *low democracy* as an environment where democratic institutions persist indefinitely but are restrained by systemic corruption and strong patronage systems.
Philippine security forces have been able to consistently act as the senior partner in an oligopoly of violence since 1913. Philippine security forces constrained the Sakdalista revolts in 1927, the Hukbalahap Rebellion in the 1950s, and Muslim insurgencies. The latest of these associated with the U.S.’s Global War on Terror. The blending of these historical instances uniquely describes a stumbling state. That is, a state recovering from failure or frailty but nevertheless providing semi-effective and persistent governance albeit beset by routine but non-existential shortfalls.

**Figure 2.1 - State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security**

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30 With the obvious exception of World War II, where even the full capacity of the U.S. military was unable to resist the initial Japanese offensive.
31 See discussion on stumbling states in Chapter 1.
Alternative Competing Explanations

Contemporary COIN theories provide unsatisfying explanations for why the Philippine state continued to endure as long as it did after U.S. withdrawal of combat forces. The Philippines case presents with evidence of population centric, enemy centric, and what is really the amalgamation of the two-hybrid COIN. The U.S. began the intervention as a conventional war of maneuver against what Mao would have described as a Phase III guerilla force. U.S. forces vacillated between population centric methods of village protection operations and state building and enemy centric punitive expeditions. These hybrid COIN tactics help explain the U.S.’s short-term ability to defeat the Tagalog insurgency. They do not explain how U.S. led Filipino forces defeated the Muslim insurgency in 1913. Nor do they explain how an all-Filipino security force defeated a communist insurgency in 1954.

Contemporary theory regarding troop ratios, adversary sanctuaries, and continued U.S. support after withdrawal demonstrate that the U.S. troops and Filipino security forces overperformed predictions. U.S. troop ratios were far lower than would otherwise be predicted by current planning guidelines in U.S. COIN doctrine (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13). Troop ratios fall short of explaining how the U.S. developed a Philippine state and security force capable of this overperformance. The Philippine case demonstrates effective penetration but not interdiction of insurgent

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32 “Following Phase I (organization, consolidation, and preservation) and Phase II (progressive expansion) comes Phase III: decision, or destruction of the enemy. It is during this period that a significant percentage of the active guerrilla force completes its transformation into an orthodox establishment capable of engaging the enemy in conventional battle” (Tung, 1961, p. 21).
sanctuaries by U.S. and Filipino COIN forces. Despite failing to completely interdict Tagalog sanctuaries, the American forces were still able to defeat the Filipino Nationalist insurgency by 1902. Likewise, the Philippine forces were able to defeat the Muslim and communist insurgencies in 1913 and 1956 even as insurgent sanctuaries persisted. Lastly, in contrast to hypotheses that U.S. failures in Iraq and Vietnam were caused by the withholding of continual combat and economic support, the Philippines received no direct combat support and comparatively little economic aid during the Hukbalahap Rebellion. Yet, the Philippine state has been able to defend itself far longer than either following the U.S. withdrawal.

**Method of Examining the Philippine Case**

This paper’s analysis of the U.S. intervention in the Philippines will provide a case of high embeddedness in both host-nation governance and security institutions. This case study will afford a contextually constrained historical comparison to the Iraq case. Both represent cases of intervention in *tabula rasa* governance. These cases will also furnish contextually constrained historical comparisons to the two other cases of U.S. intervention in existing governance and security institutions.

This case study will begin with an overview of the U.S. intervention from 1898-1913 and the first significant test of the Philippine state in 1948, The Hukbalahap Rebellion. Next, this case study will look at governance development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed by the U.S. to develop Philippine institutions. Then, the case study will scrutinize security development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Finally, the case study will meld these observations
to further develop a theory of state centric counterinsurgency in third-party COIN interventions.

**Overview of the Case**

This examination will be divided into four phases from 1898-1954. The first phase is the Spanish-American War and War of Intrigue between the U.S. and Filipino Nationalists\(^{33}\) from May-December 1898. The second phase consists of the U.S. defeat of the Filipino Nationalists from January 1899-June 1902. Muslim Moros initially challenged U.S. forces at the same time as the Filipino Nationalists in 1898. However, a low order détente developed between U.S. forces and the Moros from 1898-1902. Once the Filipino Nationalists were defeated, the U.S. and newly developed Filipino security forces began a to confront the Moro insurgency. This ultimately resulted in the defeat of the Moro rebellion in 1913. The fourth and final phase this case will look at is the period of transition from 1913-1954 as the Philippine government and security forces underwent several tests. The most severe of these being the Hukbalahap Rebellion from 1948-1954.

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\(^{33}\) I use Filipino Nationalists to identify those parties, largely confederated under Emilio Aguinaldo who fought to establish an at least semi-independent state free from direct U.S. control but not support. I distinguish Filipino Nationalists from the Muslim Moro insurgents who wanted autonomy not only from the Americans but also from the majority Roman Catholic Filipino Nationalists.

\(^{34}\) This case study will deliberately exclude a detailed analysis of World War II as previously expressed due to the fact that even the full capacity of the U.S. military was unable to resist the initial Japanese offensive. Thus the case would have little to do with Filipino capacity to defend itself against a global power and everything to do with U.S. capacity to defeat the Japanese.
Intervention

Filipino nationalism has its origins in a crillo uprising of 1872, when the Spanish rounded up many illustrados and indigenous priests. After the martyrdom of three influential Filipino priests in February 1872, known to Filipinos as the GOMBURZA, the Philippines experienced “the beginning of a nationalist consciousness” (Karnow, 1989, p. 67). In perhaps the single most seminal moment in Filipino nationalist history, Filipino patriot Jose Rizal was executed on 30 December 1896 (Laubach, 1936). This greatly enflaming the burgeoning Filipino nationalist movement.

Rizal’s death gave particular energy to Andres Bonafacio’s Kataastaasang Kagalangalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (KKK), or Katipunan, for short. The KKK would be a central element in the Filipino Nationalist movement, but Bonafacio, born into the lower castes and unsupported by the illustrados, was forced to garner their support through intrigue. In contrast, Emilio Aguinaldo, scion of a wealthy illustrado, was able to draw on the support of the Filipino upper class, and became generalissimo of the Filipino Nationalist movement in 1897. By late 1897, the Spanish could not penetrate

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35 The Spanish had numerous classes or really castes within which all inhabitants of the Philippines belonged. At the top of this caste system were the peninsulares or full blood Spanish born in Spain. The crillo were Spaniards born in the Philippines, and while being superior in caste to all other indigenous persons, they were nonetheless of suspect loyalty to the Spanish crown and monastic orders (Karnow, 1989, p. 66).

36 Refers to wealthy, educated, and landowning indigenous elites most often of mixed racial heritage or mestizo.

37 In 1887 Jose Rizal wrote Noli Me Tangere, or Touch Me Not which warned of revolution in the absence of substantive reform and even from his exile, Rizal laid the foundation of future uprising. Upon his return from exile, Rizal inaugurated the Liga Filipina or Philippine League in 1892. Rizal was exiled as punishment for this, but before he could depart, another Filipino nationalist had begun. Rizal’s role was assumed even if there was no evidence of its existence.

38 Bonafacio caused fake intelligence to be “captured” by the Spanish authorities which falsely implicated those wealthy illustrados who had refused to support the Katipunan. The repression of the wealthy Filipinos forced them to make common cause with Bonafacio which resulted in the addition of Emilio Aguinaldo to the ranks for the revolution.
Aguinaldo’s fortress in the Biancabato valley of Luzon. But neither could Aguinaldo’s forces leave it. In December 1897, the Spanish negotiated Aguinaldo’s exile to Hong Kong along with an indemnity of 800,000 pesos. This negotiation allowed the Spanish to remove Aguinaldo as a threat without having to acquiesce to reforms of any meaningful consequence. Nor would they have to divert substantial resources from the empire’s war with Cuban insurgents.

Concurrent with the growing Filipino Nationalist conflicts that began to take shape in 1872 were similar revolutionary conflicts between Spain and its colony in Cuba. The revolutions in Cuba against Spain in 1879-1880, 1868-1878, and its final conflict from 1895-1898, were more visible to the U.S. and of greater concern. The greater concern stemmed from their proximity to the U.S., Spain’s authoritarian COIN operations in Cuba, and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor in the spring of 1898. These were the pretexts for the U.S. declaration of war against Spain. Thus, when the U.S. entered into a war with a global superpower, it found itself unexpectedly concerned with operations not only in Cuba, but also in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

Surprised by the catastrophic success of defeating the Spanish so completely at sea, the U.S. was completely unprepared to land forces to engage Spanish forces ashore or hold ground. On May 19, 1898, in what seemed a pragmatic solution, the U.S. unwittingly created and equipped the insurgency it would later fight for control of the Philippines (Aguinaldo, 2009; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007). The U.S. had no material ground

39 The Spanish military governor realized the principal quandary of authoritarian counterinsurgency: the need for combat power not only to defeat the insurgency but to garrison all territory and suppress all vestiges of revolt in perpetuity (Ucko D., Regimes and Revolt: Authoritarian Ways of Counterinsurgency, 2016; Byman, 2016).
combat power immediately available to challenge the Spanish forces ashore in the Philippines.\footnote{40} In the weeks before May 19th, Commodore Dewey’s surrogates recruited and transported Aguinaldo from Hong Kong to the Philippines. They provided him with confiscated Spanish weapons and Dewey sent Aguinaldo ashore to accomplish on the land what Dewey could only do at sea at the time (Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 11).

Once ashore, Aguinaldo began work immediately. On 24 May 1898, Aguinaldo issued a proclamation creating the Philippine Dictatorial Government.\footnote{41} On 28 May, the Philippine Dictatorial Government had its first major success in combat of the war, defeating and capturing about 270 Spanish Naval Infantry.\footnote{42} By June, before the first American soldier arrived from Major General Wesley Merritt’s expeditionary force,\footnote{43} the remaining Spanish garrisons had been trapped inside their outposts.\footnote{44} Those in Manila

\footnote{40 Under the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan and the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt America had focused on the construction of a world class Navy in order to control of the access to and from a foreign capital. However, the U.S. Army had been allowed to atrophy to only 26,000 soldiers and 2,000 officers and these were largely engaged in duties ranging from securing postal/telegraph lines to guerilla actions against American Indians (Birtle, 1998; Boot, 2002; Silbey, 2007).}

\footnote{41 Aguinaldo immediately sent directives to insurgent leaders in “Manilla, Laguna, Batangas, Morong, Pampanga, Tarlak, Newva [sic] Ecija and other northern provinces” to initiate uprisings in all these provinces (Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 13). Less than a week later and with the further receipt of nearly 2,000 modern Mausers, 200,000, rounds of ammunition, and the obvious political support of the U.S., Aguinaldo fixed the date of a general attack against the Spanish forces.}

\footnote{42 During a chance encounter, the Filipino Nationalist Forces fought them to a stalemate and forced them to surrender when the Spaniards’ ammunition ran out.}

\footnote{43 U.S. Marines had been ashore for some time but only to guard the Cavite arsenal. The 2,000 troops Dewey had aboard his fleet were insufficient to the task of major conventional operations.}

\footnote{44 June 1898 would consist of a rapid succession of victories and throughout the Philippines for the Dictatorial Government. In addition to early victories in Binakayan and Bakoor, Filipinos serving in the Spanish forces began to defect en masse. This defection, along with the weapons and ammunition they defectors brought with them, not only precipitated the demise of the Spanish forces in the Philippines, but did so at an exponential rate. What had been previously impossible in years of fighting was now taking only days. By mid-June Spanish garrisons were cut off and overrun. As the uprising took on speed, new insurgents joined the cause based on the spectacular gains and desire for land accumulation or reform. To make matters worse for the Spaniards, the Spanish relief force sailing from Spain was redirected to Cuba and the Spanish in the Philippines, like those in Guam, were left to fend for themselves.}
were entirely besieged on all sides by Aguinaldo’s General, Antonio Luna, and his 30,000 troops (Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 15).

Unclear Goals

With the catastrophic success of Manila Bay, U.S. civilian and military leaders began promulgating policy in extremis from May to October 1898. Aguinaldo reported that Dewey had verbally supported Filipino independence in July 1898, by relating that the U.S. had no need for further land acquisitions (Ibid). Further, Dewey was operating without any concrete policy guidelines from President McKinley other than defeating the Spanish. And McKinley did not provide any until October 1898, during the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris.

Nevertheless, Dewey, and later General Elwell Otis, were required to defeat the Spanish trapped inside Manila and throughout the archipelago. The U.S. forces that arrived in July 1898 were woefully unprepared to assume the brunt of the fighting with either the Spanish or the Filipino Nationalists. U.S. forces were overwhelmed early on by the climate and were thrown back by Spanish counterattacks (Aguinaldo, 2009; Karnow, 1989; Silbey, 2007; Linn, 2000). Further, positions and weapons the early U.S. forces lost as a result of tactical retreats were often recovered and begrudgingly returned by Filipino rebels (Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 25). Still, on August 13th 1898, Spanish and U.S. forces conferred and contrived a sham battle that would allow the Spanish to surrender to the Americans. The Spanish feared the vengeance of the Filipinos they had oppressed for a little over three centuries (Karnow, 1989; Silbey, 2007; Linn, 2000). On 17 August 1898, U.S. and Spanish forces performed their sham battle, and U.S. troops entered Manila almost entirely without a fight while forcing the Filipino forces to remain outside the city.
On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo’s government declared its independence. While U.S. forces deployed into theater and negotiations between the U.S. and Spain took place, Aguinaldo undertook a coordinated strategy. He built political credibility and maneuvered tactically to achieve positions of advantage. Aguinaldo called for a national assembly in September 1898 to draft a Philippine constitution. The national assembly ultimately settled on a version of the constitution written by wealthy *ilustrados*, Felipe Calderon and Felipe Buencamino. This instrument created an ostensibly Filipino version of the old Spanish system and rejected the egalitarian and more populist constitution written by Apolinario Mabini. Calderon termed the government formed by the *ilustrado constitution* an “oligarchy of intelligence” in contrast to the more plebian Mabini constitution (Anastacio, 2016, p. 165). The Calderon and Buencamino constitution ultimately made it far easier for the U.S. to exploit the social cleavages between the wealthy Filipino elite and the poorer peasantry. The Calderon and Buencamino constitution also established Aguinaldo as the president of a new Philippine Republic on 23 January 1899, but did little to gain international recognition and much to lose the support of Filipino peasants.

From August to December 1898, Aguinaldo began preparing for war with the U.S. concurrent to Aguinaldo’s political maneuvers he also set in motion operational preparations for conflict with the U.S. First, Aguinaldo began to disperse his forces to key outposts throughout Luzon and to stage weapons and material. Second, he infiltrated a *sandatahan* or a “fifth column” of insurgent commandos into Manila in January 1899 designed to tie down U.S. forces in the rear. Lastly, on 3 January 1899 Aguinaldo threatened immediate violent conflict if U.S. forces landed forces in Iloilo. Given these maneuvers, it is clear that at least a state of “cold war” existed between the U.S. forces on the ground and the

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45 Apolinario Mabini. Aguinaldo called Mabini the “brains of the revolution.” Mabini authored the Philippine Declaration of Independence (Foreman, 1906).

46 Mabini was the author of the Filipino Declaration of Independence. He was also one of the original architects of the original Philippine Constitution or *Malalos Constitution*. His initial contributions were intensely egalitarian and therefore passionately rejected by the wealthy *ilustrados*. While Mabini’s contributions were repudiated by the wealthy Filipino elite, they had the greatest potential to motivate the largely disenfranchised Filipino masses—a body politic that the U.S. would later be able to co-opt because of this.

47 Concurrent to Aguinaldo’s political maneuvers he also set in motion operational preparations for conflict with the U.S. First, Aguinaldo began to disperse his forces to key outposts throughout Luzon and to stage weapons and material. Second, he infiltrated a *sandatahan* or a “fifth column” of insurgent commandos into Manila in January 1899 designed to tie down U.S. forces in the rear. Lastly, on 3 January 1899 Aguinaldo threatened immediate violent conflict if U.S. forces landed forces in Iloilo. Given these maneuvers, it is clear that at least a state of “cold war” existed between the U.S. forces on the ground and the
The turning point in U.S. policy came earlier in October 1898 when President McKinley, after months of vacillation, finally decided that the U.S. would take the Philippines as part of the negotiations that resulted in the Treaty of Paris with Spain in December 1898. President McKinley and Secretary of War Elihu Root did not believe the Philippines were capable of self-governance in 1898. Root, who was the principal policy agent for what would constitute post-war governance in the Philippines, investigated and ultimately rejected European and Japanese forms of colonization and imperialism. While he did not believe that Filipinos were able to govern themselves at the time, he did believe that they deserved the same rights as American citizens. He also insisted that U.S. intervention and occupation should be temporary. President McKinley confirmed the temporary nature of the intervention and the need to affirm U.S. sovereignty. However, he also encouraged U.S. officers to adapt this American rule to local customs and even prejudices (Karnow, p. 170).

From October 1898 until February 1899, U.S. negotiations and maneuvers with the Philippine Republic were designed to buy time for the remaining four battalions of scheduled forces to arrive in theater in late January 1899. President McKinley’s policy of Benevolent Assimilation was published to the Filipino people in December 1898. By this
policy, the U.S. claimed sovereign control of the Philippines ostensibly to work for the good of the Philippine people in much the same way the U.S. was doing in Cuba.  

**U.S. COIN Operations**

On 2 February 1899, Nebraskan Private William Grayson’s patrol had a chance encounter at night with a Filipino Nationalist patrol. This contact left several Filipinos dead and began open hostilities between the U.S. and Filipino Nationalist forces. After five months of increasing tensions and positioning, and just two days before the U.S. Congress ratified the 1898 Treaty of Paris, U.S. forces in Manila began a general offensive. For the next ten months, Filipino forces could not keep pace with U.S. operations once the Americans had the initiative. This despite possessing solid Filipino leadership, significant numerical advantage and better small arms, at least initially (Karnow, 1989; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007).

The U.S. forces in the Philippines evolved through different tactical methodologies in the course of the intervention. U.S. forces began the war by prosecuting a very successful conventional war of maneuver against the Filipino Nationalists from January 1899 until the Battle of Tirad Pass in December. After Tirad Pass, Aguinaldo realized that he could not compete with the U.S. forces conventionally, and reverted to a version

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50 The U.S.’s efforts in Cuba were ostensibly a work around of the Teller Amendment’s prohibition from annexing Cuba.

51 The first American offensive would last three months until American lines of communication became stretched too thin and required an operational pause. In what was hoped to be a decapitation blow, Major General Elwell Otis’ 8th Corps and forces under his Brigadier General Arthur MacArthur seized the town of Malalos on March 29th. In the western sense, seizing the enemy’s capital was synonymous with victory. In the nascent Philippine government’s understanding, it simply meant it was time to move (Linn, 2000, p. 99).
of what Mao would describe as a Phase II guerilla force.\footnote{“Following Phase I (organization, consolidation, and preservation) and Phase II (progressive expansion) comes Phase III: decision, or destruction of the enemy. It is during this period that a significant percentage of the active guerrilla force completes its transformation into an orthodox establishment capable of engaging the enemy in conventional battle.” (Tung, 1961, p. 21)} U.S. forces under General Elwell Otis continued to execute fruitless large scale offensive operations despite the Filipino Nationalist turn to smaller scale guerilla operations.\footnote{May 1899 represented an initiative switch from the American forces to the Filipino forces, but not a decisive one. While the Nationalist Forces were even more disorganized and fatigued than their U.S. counterparts, General Tomas Mascardo was able to take advantage of the overextended U.S. lines of communication. He conducted regular raids, ambushes, sabotage, and sniper attacks.} Nevertheless, from 1899-1900 General Otis not only pursued Aguinaldo’s forces, but he established local governing councils and a national judiciary. In April 1899, Aguinaldo reached out to Otis to discuss terms for a truce. Otis highlighted/demonstrated to the Filipino Nationalist delegates U.S. intentions for predominantly self-rule under U.S. supervision. Otis showed the delegates what was already being done to effect it, and this caused an irreparable rift within the Nationalist leadership and led to the defection of key ilustrados, like Pedro Paterno (Karnow, 1989, p. 158). Similarly, in June 1899, the Schurman Commission investigated Philippine governance, nominating a series of liberal “regulative principles” designed to move the Philippine state toward self-rule as expeditiously as possible (Jacob Gould Schurman, Dewey, Otis, & Denby, 1900, p. 5).

**The Decisive Summer Stalemate**

Linn calls the period from roughly June 1899-to early fall 1899, “The Summer Stalemate,” and from a purely military and tactical viewpoint, this is an apt description. (Linn, 2000). However, in trying to comprehend what enables a state to endure after U.S. forces have withdrawn, this “Summer Stalemate” was anything but. It was not only the
turning point of the U.S.-Philippine War, but also the turning point of the history of the modern Philippine state. First, it represents the advent of Filipino governance institutions like the Manila magistrates, Supreme Court, and the local governing councils. With these institutions, the Philippine state took its first steps toward self-governance with Americans in the lead. This period constitutes the practical end of the ability of the Filipino Nationalist forces to demonstrate empirical sovereignty. This timeframe would see the grassroots inauguration of the Philippine military institutions which would endure long after U.S. military forces ceased unilateral combat operations.

In addition to radical changes in governance, the final military outcome from the “Summer Stalemate” was the evolution of a capable indigenous military force: the Philippine Scouts. McGrath, in his work on necessary force ratios for success in COIN, places great emphasis on the near exponential impact of indigenous forces compared to foreign forces engaged in COIN and he is joined by Nagl and Kilcullen (McGrath, 2006; Killcullen, 2009; Nagl, 2005). The Macabebe Scouts were the earliest iteration of an indigenous military force developed by U.S. forces. The Macabebe Scouts would later become the Philippine Scouts and, when synthesized into larger U.S. operations, this force would create an effect far greater than the individual sum of its parts.

**Changing of Leadership and Capture of Aguinaldo**

June 1900 brought with it arrival of the Taft Commission as well as a change in tactics, including martial law under General Arthur MacArthur. Taft and MacArthur’s combined policies of *attraction and chastisement* proved a potent hybrid COIN strategy (Ekbladh, 2010; Boot, 2002; Karnow, 1989; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007). Under Taft’s ci-
vilian oversight, additional guidelines were added to the Schurman Commission’s principles and state building efforts expanded exponentially. This included massive vaccination and sewage programs, as well as the construction of ports, roads, hospitals, and schools. In parallel, MacArthur had foreseen the turn to a “filthy guerilla war of surprise and guile.” Subsequently, he proclaimed a strategy of amnesty to those who would surrender and severe chastisement to those who did not (Karnow, 1989, p. 157). Taft’s policies of attraction were executed simultaneously with MacArthur’s relentless pursuit of insurgents and the mass resettlement of Filipino citizens into centralized camps. The mass resettlement of the rural Filipino population cut off insurgents from their popular base of support.

The Taft Commission was given broad powers to establish the Philippine Constabulary, create a new tax structure. It had the authority to collect taxes, provide for universal education, make and enforce laws, and appropriate funds. The application of these powers was heavily influenced by the advice of Felipe Calderon, who advised that Filipino elites could not be brought along by force. They could however be attracted. From Calderon’s advice, Taft articulated his policy of attraction. As Karnow observes, “A credible native opposition would deflate Aguinaldo’s movement. Over the long run, too, the participation of able Filipinos in the colonial administration would spare the United States the stigma of outright imperialism…From start to finish of America’s rule, the Filipinos essentially governed themselves under increasingly light U.S. supervision” (Karnow, 1989, p. 174). Nevertheless, in the short-term, the capture of Aguinaldo had the most pronounced impact on the Filipino Nationalist insurgency.
Capture of Aguinaldo-End of the Filipino Nationalist Insurgency

On the morning of 14 March 1901, Brigadier General Fredrick Funston, four other U.S. officers, and eighty Macabebe Scouts executed one of the most ambitious raids in modern warfare. American forces had intercepted a dispatch from Aguinaldo and felt certain they could ascertain the location of his command post from it. The patrol conducted an amphibious insertion on the east side of Luzon and began a one-hundred-mile trek through mountainous jungle. They employed a ruse pretending that the Macabebe Scouts were actually insurgents who were bringing Funston and the other American officers as captives to Aguinaldo. The risk to the lives of the U.S. officers and the Macabebes if captured cannot be overstated. This shared risk and trust testifies to the loyalty developed between the Americans and the Macabebe Scouts. Despite near starvation and incalculable risks, the force penetrated Aguinaldo’s camp and the Americans and Macabebes captured Aguinaldo and marched him back through insurgent territory and to friendly lines. The capture of Aguinaldo did not end the war immediately, but it deflated the insurgency decisively. By July 4, 1902 President Theodore Roosevelt was able to legitimately declare an end to the conflict with the Filipino Nationalists only three-and-a-half years after it had started.

Transition to Self-Rule and Security

54 The Macabebes were able to solicit the support of a former rebel leader who knew Aguinaldo personally and travel through insurgent territory. Ultimately, it was not the Americans who captured Aguinaldo but the Macabebes. The Americans were not allowed into the command post headquarters until the Macabebes had captured Aguinaldo. After close to ten days of walking and near starvation, the ruse of the Macabebes and the “prisoners of war” was sufficient to gain access to the command post of Aguinaldo, capture him and then transport him again through insurgent territory back to friendly lines. This is the heritage that the Philippine Scouts and Philippine military at large would inherit.
The initial testing period of the Philippine state began in 1899 and ended in 1954. This is not to say that the Philippine state, and indeed every other state, is not tested on a daily basis *ad infinitum*. Rather, the Philippine state underwent a gradual transitional testing over this period, beginning with little to no material sovereignty after the fall of the Spanish colonial government in 1898, to full juridical and empirical sovereignty by 1933. In 1899, with the creation of the Macabebe Scouts, Manila magistrates, Supreme Court, and the local governing councils, the Philippine state took its first steps toward self-governance. The Philippine state saw the creation of local governing councils as early as 1899 under General Order #43 (Linn, 2000, p. 130). By 1902, the Philippine state had a bicameral legislature created by the U.S., and by 1907 the Philippines possessed the first popularly-elected parliament in Asia. Moreover, from 1907 until 1946, the Philippines would have non-voting representatives in the U.S. Congress. By August 1916, as a result of the Jones Bill, the Philippines would be the first Western colony to be promised its independence (Kramer, 2006). The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 set a ten-year mark/limit for Filipino independence, and the Philippines became a commonwealth with its own constitution and president in 1935. Although delayed by World War II, the archipelago gained its full independence by 1946.

The first military tests of these organs of state came with the capture of Aguinaldo and the defeat of the Filipino Nationalist insurgency in 1902. The Philippine state’s next test would be the Moro Rebellion from 1902-1913. In August 1899, the U.S. pursued a policy of rapprochement with the Moros under Brigadier General J.C. Bates that protected the Moro’s from Tagalog aggression and allowed the U.S. to focus its attention on the Filipino Nationalists. On 20 August, Bates signed a treaty with the Sultan of Sulu wherein
the Sultan accepted U.S. garrisons in Jolo, Zamboanga, Siassi, and American sovereignty. This allowed the U.S. forces, to concentrate their forces on defeating Aguinaldo rather than dissipating them across a number of fronts and efforts (Ibid, p. 130). After defeating Aguinaldo, the U.S. and nascent Filipino security forces could focus their efforts on the burgeoning Moro rebellion. The Moros were reluctant to accept U.S. rule that took in the Sulu Sultanate. The Moro’s resented U.S. efforts to collect national taxes and curb the slave trading and raiding (Hagedorn, 1931, p. 64).

The next tests of Philippine institutions came during the Moro revolt. What is most consequential about this test though was the transition of combat forces from almost exclusively American to almost entirely Filipino. Only a handful of the forces that defeated the Filipino Nationalist insurgency in 1902 were populated by Filipinos. By 1903, forty percent of the Philippine security forces were comprised of Filipinos (Coffman, 1977, p. 72). By the Battle of Bud Dago in 1906, Americans still made up a slight majority of the Philippine combat forces, but Filipinos had neared parity in terms of overall numbers. By 1913 though, Philippine units were entirely populated by Filipino troops, except for their U.S. officers. These forces conclusively defeated the Moros in 1913 at Bud Bagsak, and this signaled a transition from U.S. responsibility for internal Philippine security to a focus on exclusively external security.

Gradually, U.S. military and civilian officers, politicians, and bureaucrats were replaced by Filipino citizens in a bottom-up fashion. This bottom-up process began with village level councils, and led up to the national legislature, judiciary, and ultimately commonwealth status. Militarily, U.S. combat formations were initially supported by Macabebe Scouts. They were subsequently replaced by the U.S. officered Philippine Scouts,
and ultimately, after World War II, replaced altogether in all leadership positions. By 1946, all Philippine state organs were in full Filipino control when the state faced its first violent challenge on its own.

**The Hukbalahap Rebellion 1948-1954**

By 1933, the Philippine Commonwealth would be responsible for putting down the internal *Sakdalista* revolt without U.S. assistance (Sturtevant, 1962). Externally however, the U.S. would continue to play a role in developing the Philippine military until the start of the war with Japan. The loss of the Philippines to Japan should be seen as a strategic retreat by the U.S. and not a failure of the Philippine security forces. The U.S. made deliberate decisions to focus its early efforts on Europe at the expense of U.S. operations in the Far East. Therefore, the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese had more to do with U.S. planning and operations than Philippine institutional competence. However, institutional competence is the most appropriate focus of assessment in analyzing the Philippine state’s first truly independent test, the Hukbalahap Rebellion.

**The First Real Test-The Hukbalahap Rebellion**

The *Hukbalahap bong Mapagalayang Bayan*55, *Hukbalahap*, or Hukbalahap Rebellion began in August 1948. The *Hukbalahap bong Mapagalayang Bayan* derived its origins from the early formation of the Filipino communist party in 1930 by American communists who infiltrated the U.S. mission to the Philippines in the early Twentieth Century. However, the party was forced underground after the Philippine legislature declared it illegal in 1932. In 1938, the Filipino socialist and communist parties unified to later

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55 People’s Liberation Army.
become the *Hukbalahap bong Mapagalayang Bayan*. In many ways, rural Hukbalahap communist forces had limited ideological awareness and were more profoundly concerned with the need for agrarian land reform. The U.S. war with the Japanese formed the basis for rapprochement between U.S. forces and the Hukbalahap communist guerillas fighting against the Japanese.

In a fashion similar to the *illustados* of the Filipino Nationalist movement, the Hukbalahap *intelligentsia* was disproportionately made up of wealthy and educated elites. However, its most important military leader, Luis Taruc, was a genuine peasant leader. It would not be until 1948 that the elites within the Filipino Communist Party would belatedly recognize the peasant revolution as its center of gravity (Karnow, 1989, p. 340). Despite being led by communist and socialist elites, it is unclear to what degree the Hukbalahap Rebellion received support from Moscow or Beijing. What is clear is that the Hukbalahaps appropriated, by design or default, many of the successes and excesses of the Filipino Nationalists under Aguinaldo. Similarly, the Philippine state did the same as it replicated U.S. counterinsurgency methods from half a century prior.

After World War II, the Hukbalahaps were seen as dangerous communist insurgents by U.S. forces. American intelligence relied on the assessment of U.S. guerilla leaders and other Filipino elites and the growing control of communism in China and North Korean were concerning (Lapham & Norling, 1996). From 1946 to 1948, Philippine government forces, Hukbalahaps, and vigilantes took turns conducting violent strikes against one another. Despite being rejected by General Douglas MacArthur during World War II, the Hukbalahaps had operated very effectively in support of U.S. efforts to liberate Luzon in 1945. They were not however accorded the same trust as other Filipino guerilla forces.
because of their ties to communism. Still, the group participated in the 1946 elections and won six seats to the Philippine legislature (Karnow, 1989, p. 340). This election, however, did not end the threat of violence, and President Roxas officially declared the Hukbalahap movement illegal and subversive just before his death in 1948.

From August 1948 to early 1951, the Hukbalahap Rebellion grew to between 11,000 to 17,000 active insurgents, 50,000 reservists, and potentially 2,000,000 peasant supporters depending on different estimates (McClintock, 1992; Karnow, 1989; Agoncillo, 1997; Lachica, 1971; Kerkvliet, 1977). Hukbalahap forces possessed an almost entirely regionally cellular organization in much the same way Aguinaldo’s forces had half a century prior. This helps explain the difficulty the Philippine state had in decapitating Hukbalahap leadership. It also explains the Hukbalahap’s inability to become a significant national force.

The Hukbalahap Rebellion had its most significant operational year in 1950. President Roxas’ “Mailed Fist,” enemy centric COIN strategy in 1948 increased popular bitterness toward the Philippine government and support for the Hukbalahaps (Kerkvliet, 1977). Philippine security force use of indiscriminate force quickly alienated much of the rural populace. In contrast to Roxas’ excesses, the next Philippine President, Elpidio Quirino’s overly accommodating policies did little to convincingly attract insurgents with promised reforms, or chastise them through tactical operations. As this battle for legitimacy continued, the U.S. began to leverage its diplomatic pressure to compel the Philippine government to change course.
As early as 1949, and certainly by time of the publication of a report commissioned by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in May 1950, the U.S. saw the collapse of the nascent Philippine government as potentially imminent (McClintock, 1992). Despite investing close to $2 billion dollars from 1945-1950, the Truman Administration threatened to back away from the Philippine government unless it undertook radical reforms (Karnow, 1989, p. 345; McClintock, 1992). While President Quirino was loathe to pursue genuine reforms, even in the face of an existential internal threat, he realized that U.S. aid depended on his acquiescence. Acquiescence to this coercive influence gave rise to Ramon Magsaysay and Edward Lansdale.

In a replay of attraction and chastisement, which was itself a replay of moderation and reprisal in the U.S. Civil War, Landsdale, a CIA operative, acted as a strategic advisor to Secretary of National Defense Ramon Magsaysay. On Landsdale’s advice, Magsaysay eschewed large scale conventional operations that disaffected the populace and had little to show for defeating the insurgents. Instead, Magsaysay leveraged surgical special forces operations like those of Force X and the C Company of the 7th Brigade Combat Team to target key insurgent leaders for capture/kill missions (McClintock, 1992). He also made it a point to tour Philippine military and police positions constantly and demonstrate leadership from the front. The increased supervision allowed Magsaysay to get rid of incompetent and predatory officers. It also increased morale by demonstrating wise use of U.S. military aid to modernize the Philippine forces. The improvement of army morale and pay

\[\text{\footnotesize 56 Or approximately the equivalent of $2 billion in 2017 dollars dollartimes.com.}\]
moved the Philippine Army away from many of its previous excesses and provided a stark contrast to the continued Hukbalahap excesses.

Magsaysay combined targeted military operations and improvement in Army capacity (*chastisement*) with genuine attempts at reform (*attraction*). While some of these reforms were derided as mere propaganda, they were nevertheless received and believed by the populace (Karnow, 1989; Kerkvliet, 1977). Hukbalahaps who surrendered did in fact receive plots of land. However, in order to take ownership of the land they had to actively work against their former Hukbalahap comrades. Only a small percentage of those Hukbalahaps who surrendered actually received land. Magsaysay’s land reform courts, clinics and other development projects won a great deal of goodwill to the cause of the Philippine government in the short-term.\(^{57}\) This goodwill was evident in the 1951 elections when, despite intense Hukbalahap pressure encouraging a general peasant boycott, a record 4,000,000 voters nevertheless participated (Karnow, 1989, p. 351).

The combination of *attraction* and *chastisement* by the Philippine government, under the direct leadership of Magsaysay, had a decisive effect on insurgent morale. Many former insurgents surrendered and turned against their former comrades in much the same way the Filipino Nationalist forces had when fighting the Americans. Moreover, just as the internecine fighting among the Filipino Nationalists had severely crippled their efforts, differences between the communist elites and Luis Taruc weakened the Hukbalahap. Fearing the communist elites might liquidate him, Taruc began overtures to Magsaysay.\(^{58}\) Upon

\(^{57}\) This, despite the fact that they ultimately languished in the years after Magsaysay died in a plane crash in March 1957.

\(^{58}\) Luis Taruc, the dedicated rural field commander of the Hukbalahap Rebellion, fell out of favor with the party elites. The elites favored following in General Luna’s footsteps during the American-Filipino War.
his election to the Presidency in 1953, Magsaysay pounded the final nail in the Hukbalahap coffin. Magsaysay encouraged the populace to share their grievances with the government, which delegitimized the Hukbalahap’s role as arbiter between the government and the people. This, and rumors of communist plots against his life, compelled Taruc to surrender to Philippine forces in May 1954. Taruc submitted to the Philippine government and accepted three lifetime sentences, of which he only served fourteen years (Karnow, 1989, p. 354).

Without the direct intervention of U.S. combat forces or the provision of combat support, or substantial combat service support, the Philippine government successfully defeated an internal insurgency. The Philippine government did this at the cost of approximately $18.8 billion\(^{59}\) in aid in 2017 dollars for nine years from 1945-1954. To provide context, the Obama Administration requested $44 billion just for Fiscal Year 2017 in Afghanistan, even though only a fraction of U.S. military remain there at this time of this writing (Crawford, 2016, p. 3). While the inaugural test of Philippine independence was a convoluted one, it was no more so than the U.S.’s own COIN efforts in the U.S.-Philippine War. In fact, the Hukbalahap Rebellion might well be considered a mere replay of the American and Filipino Nationalist story arcs from half a century prior.

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Ramon Magsaysay and the Philippine government defeated a guerilla movement that had been in operation for six years longer than the newly independent Philippine government, including four years fighting against the Japanese. The Philippine government succeeded with only a handful of U.S. advisors, minimal economic support, and no U.S. combat support. From 1933 on, the Philippine government demonstrated a capacity for governance and empirical sovereignty unique among the states the U.S. has intervened in and withdrawn from. Philippine security forces, developed by American officers, have been able to provide a high degree of stability for over 100 years. 60

Competing Explanations for State Longevity

Coin Theories Observed

While U.S.’s intervention in the Philippines provides numerous observations of COIN theories at work, none adequately explains the survival of the Philippine state after cessation of combat operations by U.S. formations. Population centric COIN methods are evident in the efforts by the U.S. and later the Philippine government to isolate the population from the insurgents. The U.S. and Philippine forces isolated the insurgents geographically, ideologically, and/or morally from their bases of support by relocating populace, addressing grievances, and protecting the populace. Both the Filipino Nationalists and later the Hukbalahaps relied on local and regional peasant support for logistics, recruiting, and intelligence. Both were starved and/or marginalized into irrelevance by population centric policies.

60 1913-present. With the aforementioned exception of World War II.
The U.S. and Philippine leadership co-opted the Philippine populace in 1899-1913 and again in 1945-1954. They did this by demonstrating greater legitimacy and empirical sovereignty. The U.S. provided better schools, roads, ports, governance, and essential services. The Magsaysay government directly addressed popular grievances, made genuine attempts to curb military excesses, and fund rural clinics. Both cases, the U.S. in 1899 and the Philippine state in 1950 sought to provide economic development while also either moving the population to defendable enclaves or garrisoning population centers. This is observable in the co-option of the hemp trade, protection of personal property rights, opening of trade overseas, and the use of relocation camps during the U.S.-Philippine War. During the Hukbalahap Rebellion, the nascent Philippine government appropriated many of these same tactics to undermine Hukbalahap political, ideological, and social connections to the populace.

Enemy centric or authoritarian COIN is also observable as well. Under Generals Otis and MacArthur we see this policy at work against the Filipino Nationalist forces particularly with the reapplication of General Order 100 from the U.S. Civil War. According to Francis Lieber’s Guerilla Parties, the order prescribed what treatment might be permitted for different classifications of combatants, non-combatants, and brigands (Lieber, 1862). While General Order 100 allowed for summary execution and mass detentions, it also proscribed this treatment to a broad array of combatant and non-combatant statuses. Operations under General Order 100 focused on decapitation strikes, clearing operations, raids, ambushes, and surgical strikes. Later, against the Hukbalahap, President Roxas followed a similar “mailed first” approach to COIN before his death. In
both cases, U.S. and Philippine enemy centric/authoritarian COIN operations placed intense pressure and imposed high costs on the Filipino Nationalist and Hukbalahap insurgencies. These offensive operations required Filipino insurgents to pay a very high price for continued rebellion.

The efficacy of U.S. COIN efforts is best attested to by the outcomes. First, the evaluation by an ardent foe, Manuel Quezon, is important. He lamented, “Damn the Americans, why don’t they tyrannize us more” (Karnow, 1989). COIN is essentially warfare among the populace and it is particularly harsh on those caught in the crossfire. The Philippines, like every other COIN operation the U.S. participated in thereafter, produced some degree of atrocities from both sides. Yet authors like Leon Wolff (1961), Stuart Creighton Miller (1982), and Paul Kramer (2006) tend to overstate the racial intolerances/prejudices of the day and American missteps while failing to also address insurgent excesses. They tend to side-step Quezon’s evaluation. These authors also ignore the fact that perhaps the most noteworthy thing U.S. solders from 1899-1913 are remembered for by the Filipino populace is teaching them to read and write (Boot, 2002; Karnow, 1989; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007). Silbey goes to great length to point out that, in spite of the excesses on both sides, what is remarkable is the enduring amity that evolved after the war between Filipinos and Americans (Silbey, 2007). Lastly, in just three and a half years the U.S. had utterly defeated a local insurgency with far less troops than would typically be expected to be required. Still, while this explains American success in the short-term, it is unsatisfying in explaining the success of the Philippine state in the long-term.
Troop Ratios

While troop ratios provide another source of contemporary theorization when trying to understand success in COIN they provide unsatisfying explanations for SLAW. They are important for planners trying to predict the minimum force requirements to wage successful counterinsurgencies in the short-term. The general range of minimal counterinsurgent to population ratios range between 1:50 and 1:91 (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13; Quinlivan, 1995-96; Goode, 2010; McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Lewis, 2010; Brown J. S., 2006). At its height, the U.S. Philippine War saw 74,000 American troops stationed in the Philippines, or one U.S. soldier for every 115 Filipinos. Just two years after that, only 15,000 U.S. troops remained (Deady, 2005, p. 66). With a Philippine population of 7,409,000 in 1902, this provides a force ratio of close to 1:100 U.S. troops to Filipino citizens. However, with the Filipino population spread out over 7,000 islands and 115,000 square miles of land, that ratio provided only 1 U.S. troop per 1.55 square miles. Further, this provided for approximately one U.S. soldier for every insurgent, estimated at a max strength of 80,000-100,000 (Linn, 2000, p. 325).

Linn points out though that this peak number does not take into account the average troop strength in theater was only around 40,000 U.S. soldiers. This would provide an average troop to population ratio of 1:185 and troop to insurgent ratio of 1:2-2.5.

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61 www.popstat.info
62 40,000:7,409,000 U.S. troops to Filipino populace
63 40,000:80,000-100,000 U.S. troops to insurgents.
Moreover, Linn points out that this average number of 40,000 U.S. troops also fails to account for those who were in transit into and out of theater, or in some other non-operational status such as sick-call. He argues that this would leave only a best-case estimate of 60% of total force, or 24,000 operational troops to either hold terrain or conduct operations in the field (Ibid). Krepinevich calls this *foxhole strength* (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 236). This is important because this lowers the actual useful percentage of U.S. troop to Filipino citizens from 1:100 at the peak and possibly as low as 1:308 on average. Moreover, this provides a further ratio of U.S. troops to square miles of coverage of 1:2.6 at the peak and 1:4.8 square miles on average. McGrath estimates that there was an average of 61 Filipino citizens per square mile (McGrath, 2006, p. 8).

The Philippine case seems to considerably outperform the expected troop rations typically identified as minimums. In 34 of the 77 provinces (44%), there were no U.S. military operations while other areas were under constant attack (Linn, 2000, p. 185). It appears for instance that the U.S. Philippine War was every bit as violent as Iraq, given the casualty ratios. However, the force ratio for troop to population density was 1:100 at the peak of the war and 1:309 on average. Considering that the most frequently quoted minimum troop to population ratio is between 1:50-1:91, the troop ratios in the Philippines falls well short. McGrath does point out the multiplicative impact of indigenous

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64 Insurgents would most likely have some undetermined portion of their force in a non-operational status as well.
65 This does not factor in Wounded in Action (WIA) as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI was not a measurable statistic in 1902 which would significantly adjust the numbers).
forces as a replacement or amplifying effect of U.S. troop ratios. However, also is of little use in explaining the U.S.’s success in terms of SLAW because it was not until 1903, after the defeat of the Filipino Nationalist, that 40% of the combat forces were made up of Filipinos (Coffman, 1977, p. 72).

**Presence of Sanctuaries and Continued Combat Support**

The U.S. never foreclosed completely on insurgent sanctuaries in the Philippines. The U.S. and Philippine government *did* have success in penetrating insurgent sanctuaries, but they never completely interdicted their use by insurgents. The Philippines archipelago consists of over 7,000 islands. Of these, 1,000 islands are inhabited representing 115,000 square miles of land. It would be a virtual impossibility to entirely foreclose on insurgent sanctuaries. With only 24,000-40,000 U.S. soldiers to fight and hold ground, securing 1,000 islands is even more imporable.

While the U.S. and Philippine forces were not successful at foreclosing the insurgent sanctuaries in Luzon and the Sulu Sultanate, they were able to penetrate these on occasion. The capture of Aguinaldo indicated the ability of the U.S. and Macabebe Scouts to penetrate Aguinaldo’s sanctuaries on Luzon, but not to interdict them permanently. Further, U.S. and Philippine Scouts were able to penetrate the Sulu Sultanate on several occasions culminating in the Battles of Bud Dajo in 1906 and Bagsak in 1913. Despite these successes at penetrating these sanctuaries, insurgent sanctuaries continued to persist. Therefore, the presence of insurgent sanctuaries do not convincingly correlate to increased or decreased SLAW.
Continued Support After Withdrawal

Continued U.S. support after withdrawal or cessation of U.S. combat operations falls short of explaining the long-term success of the Philippine state after withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from combat operations. After World War II, the U.S. did not provide combat support nor combat troops to help defeat the Hukbalahap insurgents.

In terms of money spent during the 1899-1902 conflict, the U.S.-Philippine War cost the U.S. approximately $10.9 billion\(^\text{66}\) in 2017 dollars for the three years of conflict or approximately $3.63 billion per year on average (Millett & Maslowski, 1994, pp. 316-317; Linn, 2000, p. 219). U.S. direct support to the Philippine government during the Hukbalahap Rebellion cost approximately $18.8 billion\(^\text{67}\) in military spending from 1948-1954 and non-military spending from 1951-1954 in 2017 dollars (Gerlach, 2010, p. 216). If these direct conflict costs are totaled, then what amounts to ten years of conflict cost approximately $29.7 billion in 2017 dollars, or approximately $2.97 per year. The costs to support the Philippine government after withdrawal and during the Hukbalahap Rebellion, is only $18.8 billion in 2017 dollars for seven years of conflict, or $2.69 billion per year. To put this into perspective once again, in just FY 2017, the Obama Administration requested $44 billion for just one year in Afghanistan (Crawford, 2016, p. 3).\(^\text{68}\) Therefore, massive economic support after withdrawal was not a precondition for extending Philippine SLAW.

\(^{66}\) $400 million adjusted for inflation at a $1 : $27.18 1902: 2017 dollars www.in2013dollars.com.


\(^{68}\) The cost in terms of U.S. lives lost is also a concern when choosing to intervene in foreign COIN. In the U.S. Philippine War, the U.S. lost 4,200 killed in action (KIA) and 2,900 wounded (Millett & Maslowski, 1994). Another 130 U.S. troops were KIA and another 270 WIA during the Moro Rebellion (Arnold, 2011, p. 248). The upside-down nature of these numbers reflects the fact that many of the wounded died of...
Degree of Embeddedness: Governance and Security Force Development

COIN methodologies, troop ratios, enduring presence of insurgent sanctuaries are valuable in understanding tactical methodology in COIN interventions. However, they are unsatisfying when trying to comprehend generalizable and strategic elements that contribute to the extension of SLAW. In the Philippines, U.S. civilian and military officers embedded deeply within and inhabited Philippine institutions. The U.S. also transitioned these institutions from U.S. to Filipino control from bottom-up.

Developing HN Governance

From 1898-1935, the U.S. used institution inhabiting strategies replace the Spanish colonial governing institutions. Initially, U.S. agents leveraged trusteeship relationships at the national level politically and at the strategic and tactical levels militarily. These institutions evolved from the Spanish colonial models. U.S. officers adapted these colonial institutions into uniquely American-Filipino institutions as seen for instance in the evolution of the Philippine Supreme Court. The U.S. initially employed American military government from February 1899 until June 1900 and initiated the creation of a significant portion of the HN governance institutions during this period. From the start, U.S. military and civilian officers encouraged local governance and sought to allow for self-rule to the greatest degree possible. Later, the U.S. agents transitioned into shared wounds that may not have been life threatening today. To provide some perspective, in Iraq, there have been 4,424 U.S. KIA from March 2003- June 2016, but 31,952 WIA (defense.gov/casualty.pdf). So, while the number of U.S. KIA for both conflicts is nearly the same, the number of WIA in Iraq seem to indicate that the number of KIA would have been much higher if adjusted for the use of modern body armor and military medicine. This might produce a number perhaps as much as twice as much if we applied the Iraq ratio to service in Vietnam and perhaps double that again or more to comparing service in the Philippines to that in Vietnam (Knickerbocker, 2006).
sovereignty arrangements at the local levels of government and governance. This provided local councils with great autonomy but also U.S. oversight and veto authority. After the creation of the Philippine legislature and promises of independence as early as 1916, U.S. agents transitioned into shared sovereignty arrangements at every level of government. Finally, Philippine government has imperfectly maintained sovereignty over the archipelago for over seventy-one years or eighteen times longer than the U.S. supported state in Iraq.

**Initial Governance Assumptions**

In October 1898, during the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris, President McKinley and Secretary Root doubted the capacity of Filipino elites to govern effectively and secure the Philippines. Filipino elites, like future Supreme Court Justice Cayetano Arellano, and others who had fought against Spanish colonial rule also argued that the Philippines were not ready (Karnow, 1989). Aguinaldo himself acknowledged the real and present danger presented by the German and French warships that appeared on the scene immediately following the demise of the Spanish Fleet. Aguinaldo had remarked on several occasions his gratitude to U.S. naval forces, which secured the right of Filipinos to

69 Despite Aguinaldo’s passionate combat and sacrifice for the independence of the Philippine Republic, his goals for independence from the start were qualified goals at best. Both Aguinaldo and numerous *ilustrados* argued that the Philippine Republic was not ready for complete international independence and sovereignty. In his own treatment of the subject Aguinaldo recognized in fact what George Kennan postulated in theory. Kennan argued that *contingent necessity*, or the need to manifest claims to points of access, produced a zero-sum game for international powers. If the U.S. did not fill the void left by the Spanish, some other European power would. This was demonstrated in Aguinaldo’s own writing on the subject where he recounted not only German warships circling like birds of prey but also French warships actually interdicting Filipino vessels that were not protected by the U.S. Even the most ardent Filipino Nationalist realized it required an international patron. While *contingent necessity* has been challenged by anti-imperialists, they ignore the de facto state of affairs in and around Manila Bay in 1898-1899 where there was near combat between U.S. and German warships, challenges made by French warships against Philippine flagged vessels, and near run ins with Japanese men-of-war. (Karnow, 1989, p. 125; Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 17 & 19).
operate Filipino flagged vessels. He was particularly grateful when U.S. ships prevented harassment and boarding by German, French, and Japanese warships, which almost led to naval battles between the U.S. and these global powers (Karnow, 1989, p. 125; Aguinaldo, 2009, p. 17 & 19). It is evident that in these statements as well as others made by Aguinaldo and other *illustros*, that they never envisioned an entirely independent Philippine state. Instead, they envisioned a protectorate relationship with the U.S. where they were insulated from international threat by the U.S. but possessed an ultimate sovereign veto power. In essence, Filipino Nationalists wanted sovereignty without responsibility. They wanted U.S. protection without U.S. authority.

U.S. promises of self-rule from the earliest part of the intervention distinguished American trusteeship from European and Japanese versions. These promises also had a deleterious effect on the strength of the insurgency (Linn, 2000). President McKinley, promised that the Philippine Islands would be largely self-governed albeit under the tutelage of the U.S. in his proclamation of *Benevolent Assimilation* in late 1898. Moreover, McKinley asserted that U.S. tutelage would persist only until such a time as the Philippine state could demonstrate capable self-governance. An essential element of this tutelage though would be acceptance of unchallenged U.S. sovereignty during the tutoring period. In effect, the U.S. would not accept responsibility without agency. Less than four months after McKinley’s “Benevolent Assimilation” proclamation, the U.S. would specifically articulate the principles that would lead to eventual Filipino self-rule.

In April 1899, the Schurman Commission provided a list of “regulative principles” that were to guide conduct of the U.S. military government in the short-term. These prin-
ciples instructed that U.S. agents should attempt to provide a modicum of political autonomy to Filipino citizens as soon as possible, a fair justice system, capable civil servants, and reliable public works. Alongside these provisions, the U.S. would also expect acceptance of their complete sovereignty in order to bring about this state building regimen (Karnow, 1989, p. 151). The Schurman Commission report stressed that American agents and Filipinos should make common cause in the provision of religious freedom, maintenance and protection of personal property rights, and the “largest practicable measure of home rule” (Ibid, p. 152). This report established a shared sovereignty arrangement where the native populace would exercise day-to-day local self-rule while a U.S. officer would possess veto authority (Daase, 2011). At the national level, the U.S. would maintain its trusteeship until replaced by a capable indigenous authority.

A testament to the seismic impact of this report is in the reaction of Apolinario Mabini, Aguinaldo’s “brains behind the revolution.” Mabini considered the report to be an ingenious and duplicitous scheme to dupe unsuspecting and gullible natives (Ibid, p.152). The Schurman Commission seemed too good to be true as it promised a degree of self-governance that was not terribly far removed from what Mabini and the revolution was already fighting to achieve. Mabini described the report as an offer of, “the amplest autonomy and the fullest political liberty” as a vehicle to allow the U.S. to oppress them at will later (Ibid, p. 152). The Schurman Commission’s principles would transcend their tenure and would provide the undergirding assumptions for U.S. governance in the Philippines for the next thirty-six years. Ultimately, the Schurman principles would be appropriated and expounded upon by the Taft Commission which arrived in June of 1900.
Local Governance Less Than Thirty-Three Days After Start of War

Almost immediately after the surrender of Manila by the Spanish, U.S. forces under Major General Otis began to designate indigenous magistrates. Only thirty-three days after start of the war, Lawton’s General Field Order # 8, issued at Baliuag, established the first local representative government in areas under US control, electing a mayor and council. Otis would continue this practice from this point on and even expand it (Agoncillo, 1997, p. 390; Linn, 2000, p. 114; Karnow, 1989). By August 8th of 1899, General Otis, relying on the work of William A. Kobbe, produced the first practical plan for civil government and published this as General Order # 43. General Order # 43 directed the president, vice president, and members of town and provincial councils to collect light taxes. These taxes were for the purpose of establishing schools and public works projects; these councils were required to provide a monthly accounting to U.S. garrison commanders to prevent corruption (Linn, 2000, p. 130).

A Philippine Judiciary Less Than Five Months After Start of War

Revolutionary change also took place among the previously non-existent Philippine judiciary. In recording its own history, the Philippine Supreme Court relates that, “Secretary of State John Hay, on May 12, 1899, proposed a plan for a colonial government of the Philippine Islands which would give Filipinos the largest measure of self-government” (sc.judicary.gov.ph). It goes on to relate that, “On May 29, 1899, General Elwell Stephen Otis, Military Governor for the Philippines, issued General Order No. 20, reestablishing the Audiencia Teritorial de Manila… Thus, the reestablished Audiencia became the first agency of the new insular government where Filipinos were appointed side by side with Americans” (ibid). The new Supreme Court consisted of American and Filipino jurists
under the leadership of its first Chief Justice a Filipino jurist-Cayetano Arellano. This was particularly astounding in light of the fact that Spanish colonization prohibited even the service of indigenous priests, much less Filipino service as a member of the Spanish Supreme Court as the highest court in the land.

**A Filipino Legal System Less Than Seven Months After Start of War**

General Otis, as military governor, was a lawyer by profession and did not solely provide for the re-establishment of a judicial system but for a larger legal system with Filipinos operating within it. General Otis had prescribed the deputization of an indigenous police force beginning in Manila in July 1899. According to a Report of War Department record in 1900, these native police began with 426 constables and grew to 625 by year’s end. This force made 7,442 arrests and among these were three insurgent generals (Linn, 2000, p. 128). With the support of this native police force, insurgents could not move about in Manila without fear of capture not by American forces, but by Filipino police.

**National Legislature and Indigenous Judiciary**

June 1900 was a watershed moment where the Philippine state transitioned from an American military government to an American civilian trusteeship under U.S. Governor William Howard Taft. Several critical events took place during and after this transition that would solidify the existence of the modern Philippine state. First, the Spanish-era Supreme Court transitioned into its modern form in June 1901 (sc.judicary.gov.ph). The second event, in 1907, was the creation of the Philippine Legislature, the first popularly elected national legislature in the Far East. Third, with the appointment of Governor Francis Burton Harrison in 1913, much of the bureaucracy of the Philippine government began to be dominated by Filipinos and in 1916, the U.S. Congress began to construct a pledge of
eventual independence for the Philippine state. Fourth, in an unusual turn of events, the U.S. Congress voted to grant the Philippines full independence in 1933, which the Philippine legislature ironically rejected. Fifth, in September 1935, President Quezon was elected as the first president of the Philippine commonwealth, and finally, the Philippines gained their independence in 1946. With these transitions, the U.S. had gradually relocated sovereignty into Filipino hands from the grassroots level up.

It is hard to overstate how revolutionary these trends toward self-government were for the times. Particularly compared to European and Japanese alternatives of the day. The Spanish friars had refused Filipinos entry into the priestly orders and had discouraged the promulgation of Spanish as a lingua franca to prevent archipelagic unity and indigenous authority for 300 years (Karnow, 1989). The French did not allow for Vietnamese to be commissioned higher than junior officers in its Indochinese colonial forces from 1887-1951 (Collins, 1974). As late as 1994, indigenous military forces like the Ghurkas were still commanded by British officers. Additionally, independence of European and Japanese colonies was most often granted only after armed revolt and protest and these did not really begin to take shape until the late 1940’s and 1950s, (Fearon & Laitin, 2004; Miller P. D., 2013). Lastly, European colonial relationships were designed to create a permanent dependence because European colonization was designed

70 1994 is based on the author’s personal training with the Ghurkas in 1994 in Hong Kong and briefs provided by Ghurka regimental officers. For another discussion concerning the transition of Ghurka leaders to commissioned officer status see J.P Cross & Buddhiman Gurung’s Gurkhas at War: Eyewitness Accounts from World War II to Iraq (2002) Greenhill Books.
with no termination in view. This was effected by keeping native bureaucrats and political leaders outside key roles in many of the state’s institutions with no plan to transition these until forced to do so.

**Developing Security**

From 1898-1913, the U.S. military officers deeply embedded themselves in the Philippine security forces. The forces these U.S. officers developed would maintain a high degree of stability for over a century afterward. The most impressive aspect of the U.S.’s efforts was the ability to amalgamate Filipinos from backgrounds riven with sectarian strife who would willingly work together in a uniquely Filipino organization led by a U.S. officer. This evolved into a Philippine military led and populated by Filipinos but advised by U.S. officers. The Philippine military has been able to defeat several significant internal threats and is considered one of the most trusted organs of the Philippine state. Initially, U.S. agents leveraged trusteeship relationships at the national level politically and at the strategic and tactical levels militarily. The Philippine security forces were created from scratch as *encadred* units comprised of Filipino soldiers and constables led by U.S. officers. While there were formal mechanisms of training such as the Philippine Military Academy and the U.S. Military Academy, the bulk of American martial culture was transferred and leadership taught through daily interaction and example.  

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71 Even during the challenges like the communist uprisings of the 1980’s and Marcos authoritarianism, the military maintained a high degree of confidence, see Marites Danguilan-Vitug, “Filipino Military Rides Popularity Wave…”, The Christian Science Monitor, 18 March 1986.

72 This is very much the model at places like the U.S. Marine Corps Officer Candidates School where students are given some classes on leadership but the bulk of their learning is by watching the example of the leaders in charge of them.
The Macabebe scouts doing excellent service and are proving model soldiers for this service. They are worth twice their number of our inexperienced men. Should we not employ them when they may be had for the asking at half the cost of one of our own soldiers, particularly when we need their services so badly at this time. I can secure a regiment in 48 hours, and should have them. At least let me have a full battalion.” -Telegram from MGen Lawton to his Chief of Staff, 18 Oct 1899

The Macabebe and later the Philippine Scouts were very well regarded by every level of the U.S. military command. They were not only disproportionately responsible for the ultimate capture of Aguinaldo, but also the destruction of the Filipino Nationalist forces and the crushing of the Moro revolt. Yet, the creation of this force was not by design, but was a ground level adaptation led by an unusual U.S. Army lieutenant.

1st Lieutenant Matthew A. Batson was certain it would take 100,000 U.S. soldiers just to hold the island of Luzon, to say nothing of the other 999 inhabited islands. Batson already had a profound respect for the Filipinos and upon his positive reception in the province of Pampanga by the Macabebes, he began to develop a potential opportunity. The Macabebes were, like so many indigenous forces who support foreign forces, an ethnic minority with significant enemies among the majority Tagalogs. The perpetual discord between these two groups led the Macabebes to support the Spanish first and later the Americans. For their service to the Americans, many of the Macabebe villages were destroyed and the villagers raped and murdered by Tagalog nationalists (Coffman, 1977). Lt. Batson was the first to proposed the incorporation of the Macabebes into U.S. operations.

Batson initially received little encouraging feedback, but by September 1899 Otis’ 8th Corps was running short of combat power. Between pursuing Aguinaldo, and having
to defend previously cleared areas, the American leadership was open to novel approaches. On 10 September 1899, Batson raised his first company of 108 Macabebe Scouts (Coffman, 1977, p. 71; Linn, 2000, p. 128). These scouts were of such superlative quality that he was ordered to raise another company on 21 September and a third company on 6 October (Ibid). Despite numerous critiques of U.S. forces by U.S. officers in the archives, there appear to be no negative references to the capacity and bravery of these indigenous forces in the historical record. U.S. officers in the Philippines did not always agree on the capacity of many other U.S. troops or units, but they seem to unanimously agree on the capacity of the Macabebe Scouts led by Batson and his fellow American officers (Boot, 2002; Coffman, 1977; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007). What is more, as Major General Lawton noted, the Macabebe Scouts began a tradition of excellence such that they were often seen as better than the average American soldier (Coffman, 1977).

Led by American officers, the ad hoc Macabebe Scouts, about the size of a small battalion, destroyed a Filipino Nationalist battalion and defeated another company on 29 October 1899 by themselves. The Scouts would form the core of what would later be designated the Philippine Scouts in August of 1901. They would make up 40% of the U.S. combat forces in the Philippines by 1903, and would be the force that ended the war for all intents and purposes by capturing Emilio Aguinaldo. Lastly, these would be

\[73\] Or at least none that the author has been able to find.
the forces that, upon entry into World War II would so impress their American counterparts that American officers serving with them would feel compelled to venerate them through poetry (1st Lt. Henry Lee, 1942).

By August of 1901, a single ethnic Macabebe composition of the Philippine Scouts was no longer desirable given the incorporation of Tagalog civilians into the Philippine government’s service. Moreover, with Aguinaldo’s capture and subsequent acceptance of U.S. sovereignty, many other insurgents surrendered and were added to the rolls of the Scouts. One key example of this is General Cailles, who took over for Aguinaldo, but was captured on 1 June 1901 and joined the U.S. operations against his former comrades (Karnow, 1989, p. 180). As such, the Philippine Scouts began to take on the broad array of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds within the Archipelago. Despite his initial reticence to recruit indigenous forces, General Arthur MacArthur relented and by January 1902 the Scouts had over 5,500 members (Linn, 2000).

The diversity of the Philippine Scouts beginning in 1901 is significant for the understanding of how a foreign force might recruit, man, train, and equip an indigenous military in the face of significant sectarian strife. The Scouts were originally made up of an ethnic minority, the Macabebes. The Tagalog majority had formerly oppressed the Macabebes so they had reason to loathe the Tagalogs. The Tagalogs also had good reason to hate the Macabebes for their collaboration first with the Spanish and then with the Americans. The ability to amalgamate these two ethnicities into a disciplined fighting force became even more impressive when Moro Muslims were also added to the rolls. Moro Muslims had been at war on and off with both the Spanish and the majority Catholic Tagalogs before the U.S. intervention. Nevertheless, under the leadership of foreign
American officers, this heterogenous force was able to fight a complex COIN campaign against the Moro rebels in the Sulu Sultanate. The Philippine Scouts were instrumental in defeating the Moro Rebellion at Bud Bagsak in 1913 (Coffman, 1977). This provides some insight into the potential value of American officers commanding these extremely diverse military units in the face of bloody sectarian strife. The neutral American officers appear to have been able to unite combat formations despite historic ethnic and religious sectarian strife in ways that indigenous officers might have been unable to do.

On 18 August 1901, as a result of Act #175 of the 2nd Philippine Commission, the Philippine Constabulary became operational; similar to French gendarmes, they combined the powers of police officer and soldier depending on the threat (Emerson, 1996). This is remarkable because the U.S. officers in the Philippines had no prior experience with a gendarmerie or constabulary but only with discrete military and police forces. What is also remarkable is that from the start, the Philippine Constabulary allowed Filipinos to serve as commissioned officers and immediately commissioned two such officers upon the inauguration of the organization74 (Hurley, 2011). By way of comparison, the British did not begin to Asianize or transition the officer corps of their colonial forces like the Royal Malaysian Special Branch until the Malaysian Emergency in 1948-1960; over a century after they began to colonize Malaysia (Ongkili, 1985, p. 79). By the end of 1901, or only half a year later, the Philippine Constabulary had grown to 180 constabularies and was one of the most effective forces in distinguishing between insurgents and non-combatants and aided the effort of separating insurgents from their base of support (Boot, 2002).

74 Two Filipino officers began serving right away: Jose Velasquez and Felix Liorente.
By 1906, U.S. units and a small detachment of Philippine Constabulary defeated the Moros during the Bud Dajo campaign. The U.S. still provided the bulk of the combat forces but the percentage of Filipino troops was nearing parity. While reports are divergent as to the number of actual Moro combatants who fought at Bud Dajo, what is clear is the outcome of the battle was severely lopsided. The Americans only lost a handful of soldiers but the Moros, lost between 800-1000 Moro warriors, women, and children as they barricaded themselves in earthen works and fought to the death (Coffman, 1977).

By the end of the Moro Rebellion with the Battle of Bud Bagsak in 1913, 1,200 Moro Scouts, Philippine Scouts, and Philippine Constabularies defeated a Moro force of around 500 Moros. General Pershing later remarked to his wife that this was some of the fiercest fighting he had ever witnessed despite his long combat record, including combat in the trenches of World War I. Nevertheless, led by the American officers, the combined force acquitted itself well. The result of this action was to bring the Sultanate of Sulu under American control. From 1913 on it would be an almost entirely Philippine military and constabulary operation to maintain the peace without U.S. combat formations nor combat support. Again, the enduring success of these Filipino forces is impressive given the sectarian violence that separated them in daily life before the Spanish American War.

Another method the U.S. military employed to develop the Philippine military and transfer martial culture was the creation of the Philippine Military Academy. The Philip-

75 The official record is unclear as to how many of those killed at Bud Bagsak were avowed combatants and how many were, non-combatants, women, and children.
pine Military Academy operated largely along the same lines as the U.S. Military Academy. In 1905, an officers academy was established as a school for the Philippine Constabulary and over the years it routinely moved locations until it became the Philippine Military Academy in 1936. From 1905 to 1936, what would become the Philippine Military Academy was led by sixty-one superintendents. Of these, the first thirty superintendents were all American officers. This produced an enduring degree of integration between the U.S. and the Philippines even to the degree that it is still enshrined in U.S. law.\textsuperscript{76}

U.S. law regarding Filipino appointments to the U.S. Military Academy is instructive. The law describes the appointment not only of U.S. officer cadets but also foreign officer cadets in general to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The law gives specific instructions on the selection of different categories of U.S. cadets and limits the number of foreign cadets who may attend. It is very vague as to which foreign countries may enroll officer cadets, with one exception. The law specifically reserves a seat in every class for a cadet who is hand selected by the president of the Philippines. This is the only country to be explicitly mentioned by name in the U.S. law:

“There are two major categories of nomination (Congressional/Gubernatorial and Service-Connected) and two minor categories (Filipino and Foreign Cadets)... (c) Filipino cadets. The Secretary of the Army may permit each entering class one Filipino, designated by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, to receive instruction at the United States Military Academy.” 32 CFR 575.3

\textsuperscript{76} 32 CFR 575.3 - Appointments; sources of nominations (https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/32/575.3).
Thus, the Philippine Military Academy and U.S. Military Academy both provided further opportunity for enduring symbiotic adaptation even as U.S. officers transitioned out of embedded roles within the Philippine security forces.

The outcome of U.S. efforts to develop Philippine governance and security institutions through institution inhabiting strategies is impressive. Without the Macabebe Scouts, led by U.S. officers, the capture of Aguinaldo would have been impossible. Additionally, U.S. efforts to create a system of self-rule from the start of its intervention were entirely novel for their time. As a result, the Philippine security forces began to police Manila within months of the start of the war and even captured three insurgent generals. Within only four years, the Philippine Scouts and Constabulary had replaced forty percent of U.S. forces from the bottom up. By 1906, combined Filipino American forces were able to penetrate the Sulu Archipelago and defeat the Moro insurgents. Within thirteen years, the Philippine security forces were almost entirely comprised of Filipino citizens and officered by Americans. Lastly, despite the devastation of World War II, within one year afterward, the Philippine state and Philippine security forces were able to defeat a Filipino communist insurgency without U.S. troops. Moreover, the government and security institutions created by the American intervention have been able to survive since 1946 in spite of challenges by further communist and Muslim insurgencies.

Conclusion

From 1898-1913 the U.S. deployed trustee forms of institution inhabiting strategies such as military governance, American civilian governorships, and encadrement to develop both the Philippine security and governance institutions. These institution inhabiting strategies comprised relationships of high degrees of embeddedness. The result was
to produce host-nation security forces who were able to act as the senior partner in an oligopoly of violence for over a century. The Philippine state has also been able to weather an incredible number of natural and man-made disasters and insurgencies. This has produced what this examination delineates as a *stumbling state*, characterized by *low democracy*, and high stability. Ultimately, American civilian and military officers were replaced in a grassroots fashion which ensured the continuity of the martial culture symbiotically produced from the combination of American culture and the Filipino *compradrazgo* system.

**Analysis of Alternate Explanations**

In the short-term and at the tactical level, the alternate explanations for COIN success were crucial. However, in the long-term, these alternate explanations fall short when trying to explain what contributes to state longevity after U.S. withdrawal. The U.S. COIN strategy of *attraction and chastisement* was a potent combination. It demonstrated what contemporary COIN theory would describe as a balanced or hybrid form of COIN tactic that relies upon dynamic measures of population centric and enemy centric COIN. This methodology decisively defeated the Filipino Nationalist insurgency in 1902 as well as two more Muslim insurgencies in 1906 and 1913. However, what is impressive about the success of the Philippine state against the Hukbalahap Rebellion of 1948-1955 was that this was the first instance where the nascent Philippine state had to win without U.S. leadership or combat support. The simple application of COIN tactics does not explain this.

Similarly, the other tactical concerns of troop ratios, interdiction of adversary sanctuaries, and continued combat and economic support also fall short in explaining
Philippine state longevity after withdrawal. U.S. troops either had parity with the insurgents or, more often, were significantly outnumbered. The technological gap between these two forces did not provide the U.S. with much of an advantage. The rifles and machine guns were not substantially different. The U.S. did possess naval gunfire assets. However, this was only valuable along the coast. The U.S. also had limited artillery. However, given the difficulty of transporting artillery pieces across the inhospitable terrain of Luzon and the dispersed tactics of the Filipino insurgents, U.S. artillery does not appear to have been a decisive element in the U.S. success. Furthermore, the ratio of U.S. troops to population was substantially below the levels predicted to be required for successful COIN. And yet, the Philippine state persisted. Moreover, insurgent sanctuaries, though penetrated, nevertheless were never fully interdicted. And still, the Philippine state persisted. Lastly, during the Hukbalahap Rebellion, U.S. support was reduced to a handful of advisors and only a fraction of the cost of the U.S.’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.  

The Campradrazgo System and Governance Adaptations

In contrast, governance and security force development strategies utilizing high degrees of embeddedness created institutions able to persist long after withdrawal of U.S. units from combat roles. The leveraging of institution influencing strategies in developing governance institutions resulted in a more competitive government than the insurgents could provide. It also either modified or entirely replaced colonial institutions in

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77 The amount provided to the Philippine state is a pittance compared to what we would later spend in COIN interventions after 1950 in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
local governance, the rule of law, and legislative, judicial and executive functions of government. The use of trusteeship forms of relationships initially produced a system of government that, while not perfect, could outperform the system the Filipino Nationalists could provide at the same time. When the *illustrados* of the Filipino Nationalists rejected agrarian reform and the more egalitarian Mabini Constitution in favor of the elitist Calde-rion Constitution, this provided a significant opportunity for the American led government. With the promise of eventual national self-rule and a demonstrated preference of U.S. leaders for village and provincial self-rule, the American system offered Filipinos better, if not perfect opportunities for democratic representation and participation.

While some scholars have pointed out that despite years spent developing Philippine organs of governance and security that the U.S. failed to produce an exact clone of American representative democracy (Wolff, 1961, p. xi; Miller S. C., 1982, p. 3; Karnow, 1989). This stems from a fundamental misunderstanding of the goals of the U.S. and the specious assumption that it would ever be possible at all. President McKinley’s stated goal was to provide the Philippines with the best government possible, bring them peace and prosperity, to “do our best to help our little brown brothers” and “to take the archipel-ago and ‘to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them, and by God’s grace do the very best we could by them…”” (Karnow, 1989, p. 128 & 174). While McKinley’s language is decidedly patronizing, condescending, and anachronistic, he was also uniquely farsighted for his time. McKinley ordered his agents to do conform American political and military cultures to the “local customs and even prejudices” (Ibid 170). Therefore, from the Head of State down, the goal was not to create an *American clone*, but rather an *Filipino version* of American political and military cultures.
American officers embedded within the Philippine organs of government and security forces were compelled to *symbiotically adapt* American political, economic, and martial culture within the *compradrazgo system*; the unique Filipino patronage system. Fulfilling McKinley’s mandate to adapt U.S. democracy and martial culture required a *symbiosis* of U.S. officers and Filipino soldiers and bureaucrats *within* Filipino institutions. Authors like Karnow (1982), Stuart Miller (1982), and Gregg Jones (2012) seem to argue that anything short of an American democratic and capitalist clone should be considered an American failure to export itself. Yet, McKinley’s stated goal from the start was a *version* of U.S. democracy, capitalism, and martial culture that had been discretely adapted to “local customs and even prejudices.”

Politically, the American-*campradrazgo system* in the Philippines looks at its worst like the Tammany Hall system in New York. The *campradrazgo system* was built on centuries of clan and family lines through marriage and other relations rather than strictly political, ethnic, or ideological connections. American officers were able to embed within this system and amalgamate political and military cultures. Resultantly, the persistence of the Philippine state *after* the U.S. ceased combat operations is impressive. Unlike instances of COIN intervention after 1950, the U.S. effort in the Philippines produced a capable albeit *stumbling state* and host-nation government that has persisted for over seventy-one years.

**Degree of Embeddedness and Security Force Development**

Sectarian strife is ubiquitous in internal war and the ability for a foreign military to integrate diverse and acrimonious groups into one cohesive security force is remarkable. Moreover, the ability to create host-nation security forces who were able to provide
security for over a century is also noteworthy. This is particularly so in light of the inability of U.S. trained host-nation security forces after 1950 to do this for longer than four years.

U.S forces developed these host-nation security forces through a trusteeship form of relationship called *encadrement*. The combination of U.S. leadership with local cultural knowledge afforded an efficacious combination. What is even more impressive was the addition of formerly bitter sectarian enemies the Taglogs and the Macabebes, into the same organization. This is further made even more impressive by the addition of Muslims from the Moro lands into the same fighting force and their ability, under U.S. officership, to decisively defeat the Moros at Bud Bagsak in 1913.

With respect to the impact of the *campradrazgo system* on the military, its effects can be observed in several important instances. Despite being the son of the general who had defeated the Filipino Nationalist movement, General Douglas MacArthur was genuinely revered by the Filipino people and his promise to return after the loss of Bataan was a powerful element influencing Filipino resistance. According to Karnow (1989), he was seen as the patrón of the Filipino people. This patronage system also presented itself again in the relationship between Colonel Edward Geary Landsdale and Ramon Mag-saysay during the Hukbalahap Rebellion. The result of the symbiotic adaptation between the Americans and Filipinos resulted in creation of a constabulary organization which the U.S. forces had no previous experience with.
Outcomes and State Longevity

In analyzing the U.S.’s efforts to develop the government of the Philippines and its security forces, four outcomes are visible: 1-The U.S. succeeded in securing a high degree of stability of significant duration; 2-The U.S. succeeded in creating an effective government albeit, beset by the cultural constraints of the *compradrazgo* patronage system; 3-This produced a semi-effective-*low democracy*; 4-The U.S. produced what this paper describes as a *stumbling state*. The concept of a *stumbling state* is consequential because it elucidates an idea of an imperfect democracy, constrained by natural and man-made disasters, but persisting and governing nonetheless. While it would be difficult to argue that the Philippines has *arrived at Denmark*\(^{78}\), it has produced dramatically better results than states the U.S. has intervened in after 1950. Given this, the Philippine case warrants analysis for what lessons it might offer for interventions after 2017.

Chapter 3: Iraq-State Creation After Catastrophic Success

"Had we had to do it [the invasion of Iraq] over again, we would look at the consequences of catastrophic success - being so successful so fast that an enemy that should have surrendered or been done in escaped and lived to fight another day."

-President George W. Bush *Time*, August 29, 2004

Around 4:30 p.m. on 9 April 2003, U.S. Marines of Regimental Combat Team 7 (RCT 7) entered Fidros Square in Baghdad. They were led by M1A1 Abrams tanks and amphibious armored personnel carriers and were completely unopposed by Iraqi military forces. For the previous twenty days, the U.S. Marines had fought through contact with Iraqi forces of varying degrees of intensity. They expected the last few blocks to the city’s center to be the most difficult and bloody (Maass, 2011; West & Smith, 2003).

Yet, upon entry into Fidros Square they failed to encounter any Iraqi soldiers defending from complex interlocking urban fortifications that they had anticipated. Instead, the Marines found Iraqi civilians like Kadhim Sharif Hassan Al-Jabbouri, a local mechanic, who was slamming the base of a Saddam Hussein statue with a sledgehammer, while other Iraqis tried to pull the statue down with ropes and chains (bbc.com, 2016). Amazed with the ease with which they had entered the city center of Baghdad, the U.S. Marines then turned their hands to aiding Iraqis in pulling down Saddam’s statue. For all intents and purposes this signified the fall of Baghdad and the end of the majority of conventional combat operations. It also signaled the commencement of a part of the war in Iraq that would cost more, last longer, and be responsible for far more deaths than the twenty days it took to capture Baghdad. Forty-four days later, the U.S. envoy to Iraq would not only oversee the removal of a dictator, but also the entire Iraqi state.
By July 2014, less than four years after the last American troops left, a relative handful of ISIS soldiers seized Fallujah, Ramadi, Baji, and Tikrit. They had also routed the two Iraqi infantry divisions, or 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, and seized the city of Mosul with more than 650,000 residents. At the time, Iraqi forces altogether numbered nearly 300,000 active duty soldiers and over 500,000 reservists. Iraq possesses nearly 300 M1A1 modern main battle tanks, over 100 self-propelled artillery pieces and 130 pieces of towed artillery, almost 60 multiple launch rocket systems, 14 attack helicopters, and over 150 assault support helicopters (Current Military Capabilities and Available Firepower for 2016 Detailed, 2016). In contrast, ISIS only had around 1,500 ISIS fighters in Mosul arriving piecemeal in pickup trucks, 21,000-200,000 troops organization wide, no major combat assets\(^79\), and were simultaneously fighting on two to three fronts\(^80\) (theguardian.com, 2014; Gartenstein-Ross, 2015).

What accounts for the collapse of U.S. supported Iraqi security forces numbering as much as 30,000 in Mosul in the face of a 1,500 rag-tag militia in just four days? At the time, the Iraqi forces in and around Mosul possessed a 30:1 advantage\(^81\) in manpower, they were defending from within complex urban terrain, and were supported by armor and artillery? Conversely, how did it take Iraqi forces three years to re-take the same city back with nine months of bloody street to street fighting (Cockburn, 2017)? What accounts for the apparent failure of the U.S. counterinsurgency and reconstruction program

\(^79\) Such as main battle tanks, artillery, or close air support.
\(^80\) ISIS was not exclusively fighting in Al Anbar but was also fighting several Syrian groups and Kurds on several fronts in Syria as well.
\(^81\) Estimates of ISIS fighters are around 1,000-5,500 and Iraqi Army (not including police) of approximately 30,000 (theguardian.com, 2014; Gartenstein-Ross, 2015).
in Iraq? A program that cost $820 billion, lasted 8 years, 9 months, and 3 days, and cost the lives of 4,474 servicemen and women (Iraq by the Numbers, 2011)? Lastly, how did the U.S. produce a state that only has 10 other countries considered more corrupt than itself out of the 175 countries in the world (transparency.org, 2017)?

**Case Representativeness in Third-Party COIN: Iraq**

This chapter is the second of four and is used to compare cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where governance had been completely erased- *tabula rasa* (The Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010). In contrast, Nicaragua and Vietnam, will examine cases of high and low embeddedness in interventions where the state was not yet completely failed or erased. Iraq represents the case of low embeddedness, whereas the Philippines demonstrated high embeddedness. The comparison of these two cases will determine if there is a correlation between how deeply U.S. officers embedded within host-nation institutions and state longevity where the state has completely failed or been erased.

From 2003-2010 the U.S. employed *institution influencing strategies* of develop both the Iraqi security and governance institutions from outside or in parallel to these institutions. This intervention resulted in an Iraqi state that was able to only maintain empirical sovereignty over the entire country for little over three years. From 2003-2010, the U.S. intervention produced a *strategic rentier state*. As long as Iraq continued to receive *strategic rents* in the form of fire support, advising, and military assistance, it was able to control its full juridical territory. Ultimately, once U.S. *strategic rents ended* in 2010, large swaths of Iraq devolved into a *crumbling state*. These large swaths of Iraq
were characterized by no democracy, and no stability starting in 2014 (see Figure 3.1 below). U.S. civilian and military officers employed coercive influencing forms of relations to develop the governance and security force of Iraq. They effected this initially through a short-lived trusteeship that rushed the transition of governance to a mostly figurehead regime.

This Iraqi figurehead regime approximates what Luciani and Beblawi term a kafil in Arabic societies and in the study of rentier states. According to Luciani and Beblawi, a kafil is a local sponsor who is employed by a foreign entity to legitimate its independent operations in another state (1990, p. 92). The Iraqi government created by the Coalition Provisional Authority began with no control of U.S. forces operating unilaterally within its boundaries, little to no contact with its constituents, no security forces, no budget, and no intermediate nor local governing bodies at the provincial and local levels. The application of U.S. institution influencing strategies produced a top down governance and liberal governance adaptations that had no cultural basis in Iraq and would be considered impossible to suffer even in the U.S.

U.S. military officers developed Iraqi security initially through unilateral operations and ultimately through Advise and Assist operations. Throughout the conflict, the U.S. military adapted to the Iraqi insurgency within its own martial culture and was constrained only by its considerable economic, industrial, and political capacity. While U.S. forces were present, Iraqi forces were only used to secure areas that had already been largely pacified. U.S. advisors transferred uniquely American lessons learned artificially to the nascent Iraqi forces. U.S. efforts to develop Iraqi security forces through advice and influence produced an Iraqi military that was unable to defend itself even when it
possessed a nearly 30:1 advantage, was defending from inside complex urban terrain, in possession of world class tanks, artillery, and aircraft, and fighting against a mélange of militia.

The result of the U.S. intervention in Iraq from 2003-2010 was initially a strategic rentier state. Once the U.S.’s strategic rents were withheld, Iraq became a crumbling state from 2011-2014. Only the re-building of the Iraqi military and the re-introduction of U.S. advisors and airpower in 2014 staunched the implosion of Iraq. The depiction of a crumbling state describes an eventuality where neither the host-nation governance nor security institutions have been adequately developed to demonstrate empirical sovereignty after U.S. withdrawal. Large portions of Iraq fell into a state of no democracy due to the inability or unwillingness of the majority Shia government to address core Sunni grievances. Additionally, Iraqi security forces, despite billions of dollars in American support and years of training, have provided only a state of low stability in the largely Sunni areas. There appears to be a correlation between the degrees of embeddedness that the U.S. relied upon to develop Iraqi institutions and the ephemeral duration of Iraqi empirical sovereignty over all its territory.
Alternative Competing Explanations

Contemporary COIN theories, as well as those regarding troop ratios, and presence of insurgent sanctuaries fail to explain the collapse of the Iraqi security forces in 2014 after nine years of war and reconstruction. The cessation of continued U.S. combat support does help explain this failure. If the capturing or killing of enemy high value individuals are an indicator of successful enemy centric COIN, then the U.S. should have been very successful in Iraq. Of all the original high-value individuals identified as targets by the U.S. military before the start of the invasion of Iraq, only ten remained alive and uncaptured as late as 2010 (Iraq’s Most Wanted - Where Are They Now?, 2010).

Moreover, insurgent leaders who have progressively arisen to take leadership roles have also been rapidly neutralized by U.S. direct action. Yet these successful direct action
strikes, by themselves, did not arrest the spiraling instability that necessitated *The Surge* begging in late 2006, nor did they prevent the rise of ISIS.

If state longevity could have been extended by the application of successful population centric COIN methods, then the U.S.’s efforts from 2006-2008 should have been effective. *The Iraq Surge* led by General David Petraeus from 2006-2008 represented the penultimate application of contemporary COIN doctrine and methods. *The Surge’s strategy* integrated classical population centric COIN theory with an impressive amalgam of contemporary academia and praxis. *The Iraq Surge* was executed with nearly unconstrained economic and combat support resources by the most educated and effective American military force the U.S. has possessed. Even *The Surge’s initial opponents* were obliged to acknowledge its success (Feaver, 2015; Ricks, 2011). However, the boon of this success was short-lived and bound to the U.S.’s continued presence.

Troop ratios are inadequate to comprehending the success of the Surge in the short-term and the Iraqi government’s failure in 2014. Despite the ubiquitous discussion of a *surge* in troops on the ground, the real increase in troops on the ground in Iraq was minimal. Troop levels pre-surge, when total U.S., coalition, and Iraqi troops and military contractors are added together, were already within the recommended ranges (Belasco, 2009; McGrath, 2006; Petraeus, Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 2007; Quinlivan, 1995-96; FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006; Brown J. S., 2006; U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). Moreover, with the start of *The Surge*, the addition of U.S. troops was small and in fact smaller than the number of coalition troops who redeployed home (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). Therefore, the strategy em-
ployed by General Petraeus during the Surge is a better explanation for its short-term success. But neither adequately explain the long-term failure of the Iraqi government in 2014.

The presence of insurgent sanctuaries had an impact on the survival of ISIS but fails to explain why the Government of Iraq could not defend itself after the U.S. withdrew. Insurgent and foreign fighter sanctuaries and infiltration routes existed from Iran and Syria throughout the U.S. led portion of the Iraq war (Gordon & Lehren, 2010; Mohammed, 2009; Abdul-Ahad, 2005). Yet, the enduring presence of these sanctuaries and infiltration routes did not impinge upon the short-term success of The Surge. Indeed, by default, insurgents voluntarily separated insurgents from their popular support through the use of these sanctuaries—a key element of population centric COIN. Still, these sanctuaries did allow insurgent and foreign fighters to survive until the U.S. withdrew. Therefore, the continuing existence of these sanctuaries are important. However, they fall short of explaining why the GOI could not defend itself after the U.S. withdrew.

Levels of U.S. military combat support does help explain the U.S. production of a strategic rentier state in Iraq. It also helps explain how Iraq became a crumbling state once strategic rents in the form of U.S. combat support\(^\text{82}\) ceased to be provided. The reduction in military economic assistance had minimal effect on Iraq’s overall budget (Al-Khatteeb, 2015; U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). The colossal U.S. increase in mili-

\(^\text{82}\) Combat support refers to direct assistance provided to maneuver units allowing them to directly engage with and maneuver against enemy maneuver elements. Combat support might include artillery, tactical air support, engineering, intelligence and communications. Combat service support is related to the provision of sustaining functions such as logistics, supply, maintenance, transportation etc.
tary economic assistance since 2014 has not been used to equip and train a new Iraqi security force. Rather, it has been used to re-equip and retrain a military that the U.S. already equipped and trained (Morris & Ryan, 2016). The most significant change after the U.S.’s departure in 2010, was the withholding of U.S. supervision, advisors, and close air support. The Iraqi military had been trained to fight like a fire power intensive and economically unconstrained American fighting force. The Iraqi government had also been held in check by U.S. agents relying on coercive influence to retrain Shiite abuses of the Sunni minority (Petraeus D., 2015). Once American supervision and combat support were removed, the state of Iraq began to crumble until U.S. advisors re-intervened.

**Method of Examining the Iraq Case**

The analysis of the U.S. intervention in Iraq will provide an examination of a case development using low embeddedness in both host-nation governance and security institutions. This examination will be employed alongside the Philippines case study to provide a contextually constrained historical comparison between cases of intervention in tabula rasa governance. This examination will also conduct a contextually constrained historical comparison of these two cases and the two other cases of U.S. intervention in existing governance and security institutions. This examination relies on interviews and surveys of U.S. military leaders and military advisors to the Iraqi security forces as primary sources for this case study. It also relies on a variety of secondary sources. This examination utilizes processing tracing between the antecedent conditions pre-intervention through to Iraq’s first major test of sovereignty to attempt to identify any correlation between degrees of embeddedness and SLAW. The product of this case study will be compared to the other three case studies. This examination will employ Stuart Mill’s
most similar method used to analyze potential causal mechanisms for increasing or decreasing SLAW in the course of these conventional COIN interventions.

This case study will begin with an overview of the U.S. intervention from 2003-2010 and the first significant test of the new Iraqi state in 2014—the invasion of ISIS. Next, this case study will look at governance development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Then, the case study will scrutinize security development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Finally, the case study will meld these observations to further develop a theory of state centric counterinsurgency in third-party COIN interventions.

Conflict Overview

Pre-intervention and Intervention: 2001-April 2003 and goals

As a result of the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the ensuing anarchy, there has arisen an argument that stability and security phase, or “Phase IV” operations, had not been planned for by U.S. military planners. However, as a 2008 Rand study relates, “several U.S. government organizations, particularly the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the State Department (USDOS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the National Security Council (NSC) conducted separate studies of post-war possibilities” (Bensahel, et al., 2008). The problem, therefore, was not a paucity of thought about the challenges of post-Saddam Iraq. Rather, many of the complications

83 Phase I-Shaping, Phase II-Seize the Initiative, Phase III-Dominate, Phase IV-Security and Stabilization (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2003; Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2017, pp. V-8).
that evolved after the invasion were the result of flawed planning assumptions. Iraq planners could not comprehend how the \textit{security and stabilization} phase of an invasion could be more complex and costly than the offensive phases. This is evident in statements like that of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in February 2003, “It’s hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam’s security forces and his army” (Ibid, p. xx). The basis for this flawed estimate was predicated on assumptions that were proved invalid. Namely, 1-that the Iraqi security forces would surrender en masse\textsuperscript{84}, 2-that the Iraqi security forces, especially the Iraqi police, could be relied upon to help secure Iraq after the invasion, and 3-the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces would continue to govern and provide security to some degree until their leaders could be transitioned out slowly.

The first assumption—that Iraq would maintain a residual capacity to govern and provide internal security after being defeated—was a fundamental assumption made by U.S. military planners. The presence of an effective Iraqi Security Force would greatly lower the number of U.S. troops required to secure the country and would speed the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Indeed, even in speeches to troops getting ready to invade Iraq,

\textsuperscript{84} Maneuver war borrows the philosophical underpinnings of the German \textit{blitzkrieg} from World War II. Maneuver warfare emphasizes the destruction of the enemy’s \textit{will} to resist and his \textit{will} to continue to make war. Maneuver warfare seeks the collapse of the enemy system \textit{rather than the enemy’s capacity}. This style of warfare seeks enemy weaknesses and avoids enemy strengths. Ultimately, the enemy is beaten not by the destruction of his \textit{capacity} to fight, but by the overwhelming of his decision making and command and control system. When a maneuver warfare style army bypasses an enemy strength, or \textit{surface}, and exploits enemy weaknesses, or \textit{gaps}, they leave behind combat effective but cut off enemy elements. This type of operation collapses the enemy commander’s ability to effectively command and control these cut off forces but nevertheless leaves them generally intact and un molested. These are the forces American planners thought would surrender en masse.
leaders like General Mattis told soldiers and Marines that the forces involved in the invasion would not be required to hold the ground they had seized. Rather, they would turn it over initially to large U.S. Army formations and then to the Iraqi forces. The leaders of these Iraqi formations were also being told that if they did not engage U.S. forces, they would remain the security forces of Iraq after the invasion. Therefore, any bypassed Iraqi troops and munitions remaining unsecured by U.S. forces racing to Baghdad were not a grave concern of U.S. military planners. They had assumed that these munitions and troops would continue to be maintained by the Iraqi forces themselves and would be used to secure in Iraq post-invasion. However, the first of several key assumptions proved invalid. The Iraqi Army, unlike European armies, did not surrender en masse but rather evaporated entirely. Additionally, this left an entire nation’s allotment of weapons and munitions completely unsecured.

The second assumption—that the Iraqi Security Forces, and particularly the Iraqi police, could be relied upon to maintain the peace after invasion—was also invalidated. The Iraqi police had been corrupt and ineffective in the years preceding the U.S. invasion in 2003 (Bensahel, et al., 2008). Indeed, the uniformed police were only the most visible arm of the Iraqi security state that kept Saddam Hussein in power. When the Iraqi security state was overthrown, the true day-to-day security apparatus, oppressive as it had been, was also overthrown. This left in charge the feckless and anemic face of the former

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85 Speech given to Marines at Life Support Area 1 (LSA 1) in Kuwait, March 2003.
86 This is based on discussions between the author and Iraqi citizens in both Shia areas (Sadr City and Hillah in 2003) and Sunni areas (Ramadi 2008-2009) about what it was like to live under Saddam’s security state. Many had stories and physical scars of the layers and layers of mukhabarat or Iraqi intelligence service and staqbarat or secret police.
Iraqi security state, the Iraqi police (Ibid). The Iraqi police were not prepared nor equipped to handle the massive societal challenges of thirty plus million people being released at one time from an oppressive security state. Iraq and the American forces in Iraq were faced with rampant, nationwide looting and anarchy but possessed insufficient forces to fill the void.

The third assumption— the Iraqi government would continue to govern and the Iraqi Security Forces continue to provide security—was not invalidated by force majeure, but by Coalition dictate. The American organization responsible for Phase IV operations was initially the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) led by retired Army General Jay Garner. On 20 January 2003, National Security Presidential Directive 24 (NPSD 24) gave the DoD the lead for post-war operations. ORHA was established as a result of this directive but was largely kept out of the planning for the invasion. ORHA’s and Garner’s tenures in Iraq were brief. Jay Garner had been a vehement opponent of mass de-Baathification. Garner operated from a mental construct more in lines with a Pattonian or MacArthurian view of reconstruction from World War II (Dobbins, et al., 2003; Mueller, 2017). Garner preferred to leverage the existing Iraqi state organs in the short-term in order to maintain stability immediately following the

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87 ORHA was kept separate of the rest of the CENTCOM planners all the way up to and through the fall of Baghdad. General Franks mentally manufactured an arbitrary line, that existed in no other previous American war such that his responsibility as a military commander led only up to the defeat of the Iraqi military and that it was a largely civilian affair to deal with the aftermath. On 17 March 2003 Franks said as much in correspondence, “You pay attention to the day after and I will pay attention to the day of” (Franks, 2004, p. 441). General Garner and ORHA had not been allowed to move to Baghdad until 21 April and almost two weeks after the rampant looting an anarchy began to take hold.

88 The mass removal of former Baathist bureaucrats and officers from governmental and security offices.
conflict. He would then proceed in a measured fashion to transition out the former nefarious power brokers while maintaining the potentially good bureaucrats and security agents. However, Garner had two major strikes against him. First, his opposition to mass de-Baathification made him anathema to Rumsfeld’s Defense Department. Second, ORHA’s lack of a significant budget made it nearly ineffectual. Garner was notified of his impending replacement literally seventy-two hours after arriving in Baghdad and starting his work (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle, & Mohandas, 2009).

Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2-23 May 2003

It is not too strong a statement to argue that the scale of the insurgency that followed the invasion was largely one of the U.S.’s own manufacture. Flawed planning assumptions and the issuance of Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2 produced a pool of militarily trained and bitter future insurgents, the removal of the only effective security force, the removal of the only effective bureaucrats, and the provision of ample weapons and munitions to a nascent insurgency.

On 6 May 2003 L. Paul Bremmer, the Presidential Envoy to Iraq, arrived and took over for Jay Garner and ORHA on 12 May 2003. Mr. Bremmer led the Coalition Provisional Authority and was charged with the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483. UNSCR 1483 authorized the occupation of Iraq by the U.S. and the U.K. It also required these two countries to re-establish stability and security and transition power back to the Iraqi people as expeditiously as possible (United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483, 2003).
Bremmer issued Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2 on 23 May 2003. This directive ordered the mass de-Baathification of the Iraqi government and dissolution of Iraqi security forces (Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), 2003). This left Iraq and the Coalition Provisional Authority with 250,000+ unemployed former soldiers who had no income and no way to feed their families. These quarter million disgruntled former soldiers were further augmented by the 50,000 criminals released by Saddam before the invasion (Ibid). To compound the matter further, this array of former soldiers and criminals had access to massive quantities of munitions and weapons bypassed and left unsecured by U.S. forces blitzing to Baghdad. Jay Garner and Tommy Franks had specifically advised against mass de-Baathification and dissolution of the Iraqi military (Bensahel, et al., 2008). Therefore, it is not too strong a statement to argue that the scale of the insurgency that followed the invasion was largely one of the U.S.’s own creation.

Early Operations and Focus on LOCs

As the 2008 Rand report argued, the U.S. troops were in Iraq in sufficient numbers to be seen as occupiers but in insufficient numbers to actually secure the country (Bensahel, et al., 2008). By the end of the invasion U.S. units were very dispersed across Iraq in company size defensive positions. In May and June of 2003, these com-

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89 CPA Order Number 2: “The entities (the “Dissolved Entities”) listed in the attached Annex are hereby dissolved. Additional entities may be added to this list in the future…. Any military or other rank, title, or status granted to a former employee or functionary of a Dissolved Entity by the former Regime is hereby cancelled…. Any person employed by a Dissolved Entity in any form or capacity, is dismissed effective as of April 16, 2003…” (Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), 2003).

90 General Tommy Franks in his autobiography laments encouraging President Bush to publicly declare the end to major combat operations in Iraq on May 1st, 2003 (Franks, 2004, pp. 523-524). The unfortunate scene of President Bush landing on the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln seemed incongruous with the violence that began to spiral.
pany sized elements began to be pulled back into larger bases that required less force protection. Nevertheless, the “lines of communication” or LOCs necessary to supply these massive bases from Kuwait had to be secured. As violence and looting became rampant, U.S. units found it difficult to do much more than secure the thousands of miles of LOCs necessary just to maintain their own presence. U.S. leaders were also reluctant to deploy U.S. combat formations in major urban centers across Iraq. They feared inciting Muslim tensions due to the presence of Western military forces occupying major population centers (Mueller, 2017). As such, the U.S. military leadership initially pursued restricted U.S. forces to massive bases and conducted surgical decapitation strikes and major offensive operations to defeat the burgeoning Iraqi insurgency.

**Enemy Centric COIN**

Decapitation strikes are a common tool in irregular warfare and COIN. The impact of the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo in the U.S.-Philippine War had a decisive effect on its outcome. In Iraq, the pursuit of Saddam Hussein, former fedayeen, former Baathist leadership, and insurgent leadership were designed to decapitate insurgent leadership. Secretary Donald Rumsfeld argued in June 2003 that the threat being faced by the U.S. at that time was not an insurgency but small pockets of “former regime ‘dead-enders’”

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91 Force protection is a definitional term that the U.S. military employs to describe measures that keep the force not only from direct harm from attack but also injury due to illness such as drinking from polluted water, or exposure to disease. It also ties into force preservation which adds additional components of morale and welfare with connections to home, phones, recreation etc.

92 The U.S. military would describe major roadways, railroads, telephone lines, etc as “lines of communication.” While lines of communication historically originated in days when messages actually traveled physically along these roads, trails, railways etc., they now refer to any physical means of connection between friendly forces.
Of the original fifty-five high-value individuals identified in 2003, only ten would remain unaccounted for by the U.S.’s direct combat involvement in 2010 (Iraq's Most Wanted - Where Are They Now?, 2010). On 31 July 2003, in Mosul, Iraq, Saddam’s sons Uday and Qusay were surrounded by soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division and killed in an hours-long stand-off. In the early evening of 13 December 2003 in Al Dawr, Iraq, U.S. special operations forces and U.S. 4th Infantry Division soldiers captured Saddam Hussein. Hussein was later hanged for crimes against the Iraqi people at 6 a.m. on the morning of Eid Al-Adha, 30 December 2006. Even with Saddam’s death, and the death or capture of most of the high-value individuals on the U.S. targeting list, violence continued to increase 600% from a 2003 baseline (see Figure 3.2) (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009, p. 24).

By 2004, it became clear that the U.S. was no longer dealing exclusively with former regime dead-enders. Instead, the U.S. led Coalition faced an array of sectarian insurgent groups. As a result, the U.S. shifted its surgical decapitation strikes to target leadership among Shiite and Sunni insurgent groups. The U.S. employed different methods for targeting Sunni and Shia leadership. The U.S. generally employed capture-kill raids, to

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93 “Asked at Pentagon press conference about the Iraqi resistance, Rumsfeld described it as "small elements" of 10 to 20 people, not large military formations or networks of attackers. He said there "is a little debate" in the administration over whether there is any central control to the resistance, which officials say is coming from Saddam’s former Baath Party, Fedayeen paramilitary, and other loyalists. "In those regions where pockets of dead-enders are trying to reconstitute, Gen. (Tommy) Franks and his team are rooting them out," Rumsfeld said, referring to the U.S. commander in Iraq. "In short, the coalition is making good progress" (usatoday.com, 2003).

94 An informant had reported the sons’ whereabouts in his villa and collected the $30 million-dollar reward after multiple U.S. close air strike runs on the villa killed Uday and Qusay and dental records confirmed their identities.
neutralize Sunni leadership. Perhaps the most famous of these strikes was the pursuit and killing of Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. Zarqawi was tracked and subsequently killed by a U.S. precision guided bomb on June 8, 2006. This did little to curb the violence in Iraq from 2006-2008 (see Figure 3.2).

Shia militia leader Moqtada Al Sadr was handled very differently by the U.S. led Coalition compared to Sunni insurgent leadership. Al Sadr, as the leader of the Jayish Al-Mahdi (JAM), or the Mahdi Army, began to target U.S. forces as a result of the Coalition’s closing of his newspaper Al-Hawza in the spring of 2004. The Coalition Provisional Authority sought to marginalize Al Sadr by labeling him an outlaw. However, the Coalition refused to seriously attempt to arrest or kill him. U.S. forces feared upsetting the majority Shia who venerated Sadr’s martyred father, Mohammad (Prothero, 2004; Cockburn, Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq, 2008, p. 202). Instead, U.S. forces began instead to target the JAM members instead of its senior leadership like Al Sadr. With the Battle of An Najaf in 2004, the JAM forces absorbed a costly blow from the U.S. formations. The battle caused Al Sadr to rein in his militia to a degree but it did not remove the JAM nor Al Sadr. The violence only continued to increase.

**Major Named Operations**

After the U.S. invasion, the principal security focus for U.S. forces was to secure the LOCs between major bases and to root out major enemy strongholds through massive clearing operations (Shultz, 2013; Green & Mullen III, 2014; Ardolino, 2013). The earliest expectations of rapid withdrawal made larger bases more practical and safer for staging large formations waiting to redeploy. Also, keeping U.S. Marines and soldiers on the big bases kept them out of the big cities and urban areas. This reflected the erroneous fear that
the presence of too many U.S. troops being visible to Iraqis in urban centers would increase unrest (Bensahel, et al., 2008; Mueller, 2017). U.S. forces tried in vain to secure their LOCs by establishing interconnected observation posts every few hundred meters. However, given the thousands of miles of Iraqi roads, U.S. forces could only cover small portions of these major routes. Second, as the insurgents began attacking small Coalition formations, the Coalition began to regulate the size of units that were allowed to leave the security of the bases. By late 2003, the Coalition began directing that units could not “leave the wire” in patrols smaller than four vehicle convoys, or dismounted patrols smaller than eight troops. This focus on reducing risk by employing larger formations did provide the enemy with harder targets, but for the most part, it failed to significantly reduce violence against Coalition forces.

Operation Al Fajr in Fallujah, Iraq is perhaps the preeminent example of a major American clearing operation to destroy insurgent strongholds from 2004-2006. In early 2004, the U.S. Army in Fallujah evacuated all soldiers from Fallujah due to violent protests that resulted in as many as fifteen dead Iraqi citizens. Thereafter, U.S. soldiers

95 This was also represented to the author during his deployment to Iraq in 2003 where his entire battalion was pulled out of Sadr city back to big bases for fear of inciting unrest by Iraqis seeing Marines everywhere.

96 “Leave the wire” is a colloquialism employed by troops to denote leaving the security of larger U.S. Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), or smaller Combat Outposts (COPs).

97 Pre-deployment training guidance delivered during training at Marine Corps Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MCAGCC), 29 Palms, California, 2005.

98 In late April 2003 that U.S. forces from the 82nd Airborne Division began to garrison positions in Fallujah. U.S. soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the 325th Infantry Regiment (Airborne) occupied a company combat outpost in a former primary school. Only five days after the arrival of these garrisoning U.S. soldiers, Fallujah residents began to protest the use of the primary school as a military base of operations. They demanded the U.S. forces withdraw from it. On 28 April 2003, the 82nd Airborne soldiers claim that the protests outside their position became violent. The soldiers reported that they had received fire from the crowd and returned fire. As a result, 15 Iraqi residents were killed and 65 more were wounded (Fisher, 2003). No U.S. soldiers were wounded or killed but 3 more Iraqis were killed in another protest a few days later. By June, U.S. soldiers were going so far as to confiscate Iraqi motorcycles as they were associated
only conducted raids and patrols into the city. These operations resulted in skirmishes which did little to diminish the insurgency. By March 2004, responsibility for Al Anbar province was transferred to the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF). Before the end of the first month of responsibility for Fallujah and Al Anbar province, the U.S. Marines were compelled by the Bush Administration to react precipitously to the ambush of Blackwater contractors in *Operation Vigilant Resolve*. Receiving instructions from the highest levels of the Bush Administration, and against their advice, Marine generals assembled an ill-prepared urban offensive. The assault stalled when the U.S. Marines lacked sufficient combat power to cordon off the city and clear through the complex urban defense. The U.S. effort also stalled psychologically as insurgent propaganda dominated all the narratives coming out of the battle. In order to save face, U.S. commanders experimented with the *Fallujah Brigade*, an ad hoc unit led by former insurgents and Baathists to provide security for Fallujah. Once the Marines withdrew, this ad hoc force melted away.

This 1st Battle of Fallujah became a pyrrhic victory for the insurgents. It was a clear tactical and propaganda victory for the insurgents. However, it also made the U.S. effort during the 2nd Battle of Fallujah that much more effective. The Sunni insurgents had provided a major, static target upon which the U.S. could bring its massive firepower advantage to bear. After the 1st Battle of Fallujah, U.S. commanders immediately began

with operations against U.S. forces (bbc.co, 2003). Relations between U.S. forces and Iraqis in Fallujah got progressively worse.

99 I MEF was under the command of future Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway.
100 On March 31, 2004 Blackwater contractors were killed while escorting a resupply convoy and their bodies were burned and hung from the bridge in Fallujah that crosses the Euphrates River.
preparing to retake Fallujah. They began assembling sufficient force to clear and hold a major urban center of 275,000 Iraqi citizens. By 7 November 2004, the U.S. ammassed assault and cordon forces of approximately 9,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops. These were organized into two Regimental Combat Teams (RCT 1 and RCT 7). The assault force was supported by tanks, armored personnel carriers, close air support, and combat engineering and breaching assets for clearing through and/or avoiding insurgent major obstacles. On 7 November 2004, Operation Al Fajr (the Dawn)\(^{101}\) commenced. Two days before Christmas 2004, the assault force had cleared Fallujah. The operation killed an estimated 2,000 insurgents, captured around 1,200 suspected insurgents, and routed an estimated 3,500-4,000 insurgents (Ricks, 2007, p. 400; Sample, 2004; Lowry, 2010). While costing 107 Coalition lives, the operation was a tactical success as well as a moral victory (Ricks, 2007, p. 400). Still, despite the short-term victory, Fallujah would once again return to high levels of insurgent control by 2006. The situation would become so severe that Fallujah would require yet another major population centric COIN operation to pacify it in 2007-2008 (Green & Mullen III, 2014).

Fallujah was by no means the only major battle/clearing operation during this time. After a firefight between the JAM and U.S. Marines from 1st Battalion, 4th Marines on 5 August 2004, a major pitched battle ensued in vicinity of the Imam Ali Mosque. Similar to Fallujah, Shia insurgents provided U.S. forces with static targets for American fire support assets. Insurgents were cordoned, targeted by close air support and artillery,

\(^{101}\) The Operation was alternatively known to American Marines as Operation Phantom Fury.
and closed upon by infantry. The JAM was severely punished as a result of the Battle of An Najaf.

As a result of the perceived successes of decapitation strikes and major named operations in Fallujah and An Najaf, the U.S. continued from 2004-2006. Major clearing operations like: the Battle of Samarra in September 2004, the Battle of Abu Ghraib in April 2005, the Battle of Al Qaim in May 2005, the Battle of Tal Afar in September 2005, Operation Steel Curtain November 2005, and the Battle of Ramadi June 2006, all sought major pitched battles and results similar to Fallujah and An Najaf.

However, after Fallujah and An Najaf in 2004, insurgents no longer provided large static targets for U.S. firepower. From 2005-2006, the insurgents shifted away from providing the U.S. large insurgent formations that were easier to cordon, target, and close with. Insurgents adapted and side-stepped major offensive operations in favor of IED strikes, ambushes, sniping, targeted killings of Coalition supporters, and small-scale raids. However, as the U.S. continued to use fruitless major clearing operations and short duration patrolling of LOCs, this allowed the insurgents nearly unfettered freedom of maneuver. This freedom of movement allowed the insurgents incredible amounts of time to prepare intricate ambushes and IEDs. It also allowed them to terrorize Iraqi citizens who were and murdered for suspected support of U.S. operations.

102 Insurgents in some locales were able to build massive IEDs, dig through asphalt roads, excavate the ground under the asphalt, bury the massive IED, refill the hole, and re-lay the asphalt before an American patrol would pass over it. This was the style of IED that blew a Marine Corps HMMWV or Humvee and its driver in half and inspired the rage induced massacre in Haditha on 19 November 2005 by Marines from 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment (Langewiesche, 2007).

103 One example reported by U.S. forces in Al Anbar is indicative. Marines from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines in Fallujah in 2004, reported finding the head and corpse of an Iraqi man known to them as a local Iraqi
U.S. Tactical and Technological Adaptations

Early in the war, the principal IED threat was isolated to the enormous supply of former Iraqi Army ordnance left unsecured at the end of the invasion. The first IEDs that appeared were modified artillery and mortar rounds. The insurgents had a near endless supply of effective, cheap, and easy to employ devices\(^{104}\) which were ideal against the unarmored U.S. vehicles. With the U.S. forces largely “commuting to work”\(^{105}\) and bound to roads, they became especially vulnerable to “road-side” bombs or IEDs hidden on or near the roads. As U.S. forces got better at spotting the electrical firing wires, or the triggerman’s hiding place, the insurgents also adapted.\(^{106}\) Insurgents began to move away from wired devices to wireless devices, which made detection and defeat of the triggerman far more difficult.\(^{107}\)

In response, U.S. forces employed snipers, as well as technological solutions to IEDs and ambushes. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) like the RQ/MQ-1 Predator, MQ-9 Reaper, RQ-7 Shadow, and RQ-11 Raven were used to cover thousands of miles

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\(^{104}\) Insurgents only had to remove mortar or artillery the fuzes from the noses of these rounds, prime them with electrical blasting caps, and string out electrical firing wire.

\(^{105}\) A slang term used by critics of the enemy centric operations of the first part of the war used to denote, sallying forth from big U.S. bases, driving to their patrol areas, conducting their missions, and then driving back to safety-or “commuting to work” where the work was to protect the Iraqi populace.

\(^{106}\) First, insurgents began using dummy IEDs to draw the attention of U.S. forces away from the actual devices. Second, insurgents began to target first responders. Having watched the U.S. response to numerous IED strikes, they began planting double IEDs. The fist would cause minimal damage. Then, as U.S. troops helped injured and killed troops, the insurgents would detonate the second IED causing far more damage than the first. Later, as U.S. troops began to implement tactics to prevent these catastrophic strikes and to capture more triggermen, the insurgents began to employ more advanced IED technology only previously seen in Israel.

\(^{107}\) Initially, firing devices were fairly simple. Car alarm key-fobs were among the first tools used. However, these did not provide much stand-off. Later, insurgents began to use wireless home-phone base stations. Compared to the key fobs, these added significant range for the triggerman. Ultimately, the insurgents began to use cellphones as their firing devices. This provided maximum stand-off for the triggerman and made it nearly impossible to identify his location.
of Iraqi roads and neighborhoods. U.S. industry also provided stationary long-range cameras such as the Ground-Based Operational Surveillance System, or GBOSS, and the Aerostat Persistent Threat Detection Systems to identify IEDs being placed (Bowley, 2012). U.S. industry provided electronic countermeasures to defeat the imitation systems of wireless IEDs. Further, U.S. industry also provided mine rollers, *up-armored* HMMWVs, and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. Vehicles were not the only ones to receive better armor, jammers, and IED detectors in response to insurgent attacks. Dismounted soldiers and Marines also became armored in ways the U.S. military had never experienced in its history. U.S. industry also provided a variety of biometric systems like the Biometric Automated Toolset System/Hand-held Interagency Identity Detection Equipment, or BATS/HIIDES, systems that allowed U.S. troops to do

108 Ultimately, UAVs would become so ubiquitous that they would be part of the inventory of ordinary infantry battalions and normal riflemen would be taught to fly tiny UAVs such as the Wasp IIIs.

109 During the Iraq and Afghan wars U.S. industry fielded an enormous variety of jamming systems. The first systems were mounted in aircraft but on-station time made them only effective for narrow periods of time. Later, systems such as the Duke counter radio-controlled electronic warfare (CREW) jamming system, began to appear on vehicles designed for route clearance or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD). Eventually, systems like the CVRJ and Chameleon mounted electronic warfare jamming systems would be distributed down to most if not all convoys and U.S. industry even produced systems for dismounted troops like the Thor systems. Thus, electronic jammers were deployed down to the very lowest in a fantastically expensive system. These electronic warfare jammers were extremely effective but also required an army of contractors to maintain and repair them.

110 The height of the vehicles off the ground made them nearly useless in major conventional combat, but protected the soldiers inside them from the explosive effects of IEDs. Moreover, the MRAP armor was a great improvement over HMMWV improvisations. However, these MRAPs also required yet another army of contractors to maintain and repair.

111 The armor provided to U.S. soldiers and Marines during Desert Storm weighed approximately 7-8 pounds and would not stop even .22 caliber rifle rounds nor 9 mm pistol rounds. (based on tests witnessed by the author). At the start of the Iraq invasion some units had improved body armor with ceramic plates capable of stopping 7.62mm assault rifle rounds. However, in units like Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT 1), these were in short enough supply that there were not enough for every Marine to have a full complement (two plates front and back). By 2005 though, sufficient ceramic plates were procured and eventually U.S. troops would have a total of four ceramic plates in addition to their normal Kevlar body armor. This complete system, vest and plates alone would weigh in excess of thirty-five pounds not including weapons, helmets, ammunition, water, etc. (Based on author’s personal observations in Hilah, 2003 and Ramadi 2008).
field fingerprinting and retina scans. With these, U.S. troops conducted census operations and could biometrically scan individual Iraqi citizens into a massive interagency database. This database was used to make identity cards for average Iraqis and to link fingerprints from IEDs to bomb makers.

While much more could be said on this subject, it suffices to demonstrate that for every adaptation by the U.S., insurgents were able to make additional adaptations. By the end of the war U.S. soldiers would experience very technologically advanced explosively formed projectiles (EFPs) imported by Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Russian made anti-armor hand grenades (RKG3’s), and complex cellphone initiated IEDs. By the end of the war, the Iraqi insurgency had been forced to adapt in competition with the most technologically advanced COIN force on earth—the U.S. military. For those insurgents who survived, their lessons learned would provide a substantial advantage over the Iraqi government and its security forces.

During this same period, 2003-2006, U.S. civilian officers oversaw the development of the Government of Iraq. An Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law would provide the framework to create the Iraqi Interim Government and end the American occupation on 1 June 2004—but not really. The end of the occupation and establishment of the Iraqi Interim Government did little to change the reality on the ground. Beginning in 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority oversaw the creation of an Iraqi Governing Council. The Iraqi Governing Council was given until 28 February 2004 to establish a

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112 Based on author’s personal experiences in Iraq in 2003 and 2008.
working, or interim constitution. In spite of a de jure interim Iraqi constitution and interim government in 2004, U.S. forces still made all the tactical decisions and Iraqi Interim Government lacked the security forces and budget to demonstrate any semblance of empirical sovereignty. On 30 January 2005, Iraq voted for its first parliament since the invasion, although most Sunnis boycotted the election and there existed no real local governance below the national level. February to October 2005 was devoted to the creation of a more permanent Iraq Constitution. This was drafted with minimal Sunni participation, and approved via national referendum on 15 October 2005. Next, parliamentary elections were conducted on 15 December 2015 and, as a result, Nuri Al Maliki was seated as Prime Minister. Jalal Talabani, of the Kurdish Alliance was seated as President.

Results of Early Operations-Defeat Trigger

From 2004 to 2007 violence exploded nearly 700% (see Figure 3.2). From just the start of 2004 to the summer of that same year, SIGACTS increased over 150% and remained steady until the early fall. By the fall of 2004, sectarian violence began to take shape as local militias began to fill the void emptied by the U.S. and the Iraqi Security Forces. Violence swelled, increasing to almost 200% more than early 2004, and remained at almost 600 SIGACTS per month until late summer 2005 (Figure 3.2). Following the constitutional referendum in October 2005 and the parliamentary elections of December 2005, violence continued to increase to nearly 300% from the 2004 baseline. By

113 SIGACTS in military jargon refers to any reported violent event such as IED strikes, sniping, ambushes, targeted killings, mortar attacks etc. They also generally include insurgent attempted attacks which were detected and foiled (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009).
February 2006, with the bombing of the Shiite Golden Mosque in Samarra, violence further escalated 400% from 2004 levels as a result of the de facto civil war between Sunnis and Shia—even as both sides continued to attack American forces. This was the environment confronting the Coalition Provisional Authority and Combined Joint Task Force 7/Multinational Force Iraqi just prior to *The Surge*.

(Figure 3.2—VIOLENT SIGACTS FROM 2001-2009)

**The Iraq Study Group**

The Iraq Study Group was formed on 15 March, 2006 at the direction of a bipartisan group of U.S. congressional representatives lead by Representative Frank Wolf
The Iraq Study Group concluded in its report on 6 December 2006, “The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. There is no path that can guarantee success, but the prospects can be improved” (James A. Baker, et al., 2006). The Iraq Study Group made two important recommendations, “Our most important recommendations call for new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly. We believe that these two recommendations are equally important and reinforce one another” (James A. Baker, et al., 2006). The Iraq Study Group saw sectarian strife as the most formidable obstacle to stability and more U.S troops as a key requirement to address this.

Around the same timeframe that the Iraq Study Group was creating and making public its report, the U.S. Department of Defense was also assessing the situation in Iraq and reporting this to Congress. In August 2006, the Department of Defense released its report titled, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*. The report provided a holistic outlook of Iraq’s political, diplomatic, infrastructure, and militarily status. Politically, the Government of Iraq had filled all cabinet positions as of June 2006. Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki had presented an initiative toward national reconciliation to the Iraqi Council of Representatives (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). Diplomaticaly, with

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114 The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), at the request of Congressman Frank Wolf acted as the facilitating agency for the Iraq Study Group (ISG) from March-December 2006 looking at the situation in Iraq. The members of the ISG included two co-chairs, James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton, as well as former secretaries of state, a supreme court justice, an attorney general, White House Chiefs of Staff, and U.S. senators. It also included forty-four subject matter experts on topics ranging from economics, to security, to political development (usip.org, 2006).
the help of the U.S. government, in July 2006, 80% of Iraq’s $125 billion pre-war foreign
debt was forgiven by seventeen of eighteen Paris Club creditors (Ibid, p. 14).115

The Iraq Study Group’s recommended approaches to dealing with these challenges
were externally and internally focused. The external approach sought to gain a greater
international consensus on stability in Iraq and the region.116 The Iraq Study Group’s
internal approach would not be drastically different than what General Petraeus called for
in his plan. First, the Iraq Study Group recommended speeding up the transfer of greater
responsibility to the Government of Iraq for Iraqi security. This would be accomplished
by U.S. advisors and the Iraqi government producing more army brigades. Second, the
Study Group recommended temporarily increasing U.S. troop end strengths so as to
purchase operational space for the growth of the Iraqi Army. Third, the Iraq Study Group
optimistically anticipated that all U.S. combat brigades could be withdrawn from Iraq as
early as March 2008 (Ibid, xvi). Finally, the Study Group recommended that the U.S.
make future U.S. support conditioned upon the performance of Iraqi governance to U.S.
standards. The Iraq Study Group recommended that,

115 The impact of this debt forgiveness on the Iraqi economy cannot be overstated. Even with greater ex-
ports from Iraq’s northern region and higher oil prices, the debt and interest on this debt had created an un-
sustainable economic situation for the Government of Iraq by 2004. Still, even with 90% of the Govern-
ment of Iraq revenues coming from oil sales, with increased exports, and with higher oil prices, the infra-
structure of Iraq had been so devastated before and during the war that key measures like electricity, while
improving, had not yet returned to pre-war levels which were already low to begin with.
116 The external approach addressed the problem of stability in concentric rings radiating out from Iraq.
First, the Iraq Study Group saw Syria and Iran as key potential beneficiaries of a stable Iraq. However, the
ISG also correctly diagnosed both states as key facilitators of the continued violence. The Iraq Study
Group charged Syria with failing to control the flow of insurgents and financing into and out of Iraq, and
Iran with equipping and training of Shiite militias and the conduct Iranian operations within Iraqi territory
(James A. Baker, et al., 2006, p. xv). The Iraq Study Group also rolled into this strategic approach to Iraq
the need for pressure by the U.N. to restrain Iran’s nuclear program, the need for multi-lateral direct Arab-
Israeli negotiations, and even additional military support for the war in Afghanistan.
“If the Iraqi government demonstrates political will and makes substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliation, security, and governance, the United States should make clear its willingness to continue training, assistance, and support for Iraq’s security forces and to continue political, military, and economic support. If the Iraqi government does not make substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliation, security, and governance, the United States should reduce its political, military, or economic support for the Iraqi government” (Ibid, xvii).

**The Surge-U.S. Military Adaptations**

*The Surge* is an unfortunate name for the successful COIN operations that turned around the Iraq War from 2006-2009. As previously mentioned, *The Surge* had less to do with the number of U.S. troops “surged” into Iraq and more to do with a sea change in how the war was being fought. Indeed, even assuming the most extreme increase in U.S. troop numbers, this accounts for only 17,600 more troops. A significant portion of this increase came not from adding more troops but by extending troops already in theater. This also fails to account for the simultaneous reduction in troop level from other Coalition countries. This will be discussed in greater detail under *Troop Ratios*. Nevertheless, the increase in troop levels cannot account for the dramatic changes brought on by Operation Together Forward.

As previously mentioned, from 2003-2006, most of the adaptations of U.S. forces were heavily reliant on industrial and technological improvements and some tactical modifications. However, these adaptations were almost exclusively reactive to attacks by insurgents against U.S. forces and did little or nothing to decrease the size of the insurgency. In fact, after three years of major clearing operations, securing LOCs, and decapitation strikes, the number of violent acts by insurgents continued to increase—not decrease. Moreover, the strategy from 2003-2006 had little to do with protecting the population or
winning their support away from the insurgents. This is not to say that there were no areas where U.S. forces were effective in applying hybrid COIN strategy, but it is a fact that this was not the over-arching strategy for the larger U.S. effort.

One of the most important military adaptations of the Iraq War was the 2006 Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24), Counterinsurgency. The implementation of FM 3-24 (2006) is credited with both guiding COIN strategy under Petraeus and for the initial successes in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2007. The 2006 FM 3-24 is peculiar not only because of its reinterpretation of classical COIN theory, but also because of its provenance from the intersection of military and academic professionals.

The focus Petraeus’s new strategy would be protecting the population and separating the insurgents from their support among the population (Petraeus D., 2015). The most common historical means of physically separating the populace and insurgency during the U.S. Civil War, the U.S.-Philippine War, and the Vietnam War, was to relocate the population itself into more defendable locations. The U.S. forces could then protect

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117 Early in General Petraeus’ first deployment to Iraq in 2004, his troops were already beginning to employ what would be termed population centric/hybrid COIN practices. Moreover, in many of the Marine Corps areas of operations there was a reinvigoration of the tenets of the Small Wars Manual and basic COIN theory.

118 It has been downloaded from the University of Chicago website more than 200,000 times as of 2008 (Kalyvas, 2008).

119 In his book, The Insurgents, relative to many of the key primogenitors of the 2006 version of FM 3-24, Fred Kaplan describes how warrior-scholars like David Petraeus, H.R. McMaster, John Nagl, and David Killcullen successfully led an organizational insurgency from within the U.S. military from places like the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. They effected radical change in U.S. COIN doctrine. Kaplan argues that the creation of this organizational insurgency began long before the Iraq War. He opines that it began with the U.S. failure in Vietnam and the advent of the “Sosh” or Social Science department at West Point after World War II. But what is truly novel about the creation of the 2006, FM 3-24 is the diminution of previously impenetrable wall between academia and the military.
the populace and control the movement of the insurgents among the populace. By isolating the insurgency, the COIN force could thereby literally starve the insurgency of its logistical, intelligence, and recruiting support (Khalili L., 2016). However, in Iraq, the mass relocation of hundreds of thousands of residents from densely populated urban areas was not a realistic option.

Rather than relocating hundreds of thousands of civilians, U.S. forces in Iraq employed a combination of static and dynamic means to physically isolate the insurgents from the populace. Using the concept of a “gated community,” U.S. forces erected static barriers around all the major population centers.\textsuperscript{120} To the barriers, the U.S. forces added biometric identification systems\textsuperscript{121} to help identify innocent Iraqi civilians from insurgents. To solve the problem of persistent observation around the communities, U.S. forces transitioned UAVs, snipers, and cameras away from watching LOCs to monitoring access into, inside, and outside population centers. To these physical assets, U.S. forces added dynamic operations to isolate the insurgency.

These dynamic operations included patrolling, random vehicle checkpoints, and entry control points to scan and search everyone entering a population center. Once inside a population center, U.S. troops further separated insurgents from the populace by

\begin{itemize}
\item[A wide variety of concrete barriers began to enter the lexicon of U.S. forces in Iraq. Jersey Barriers (3 feet high) were the smaller of the concrete barriers and they ranged in size further to Texas Barriers (12 feet high) up to Alaska Barriers (20 feet high). These barriers were extremely useful due to the ease with which they could be emplaced and moved around using cranes, forklifts, and other heavy equipment. They could also be easily adjusted depending on the changes in civilian and/or insurgent movement patterns. These mobile concrete barriers, reinforced with dirt berms in more rural approaches to population centers allowed U.S. and Iraqi forces to control the entry points and exit points into and out of major population centers in a few key points.]
\item[BATS/HIIDES- Biometric Automated Toolset System/ Hand-held Interagency Identity Detection Equipment.]
\end{itemize}
targeting them with a spectrum of human, signals, and ground intelligence collections. This intelligence could then be followed up by targeted raids to capture or kill these insurgents while seeking to limit collateral damage. These capture-kill operations also evolved with the publication of FM 3-24 (2006) away from aggressive “cordon and search” raids, to “cordon and knock”\textsuperscript{122} operations. These newer cordon operations began to rely increasingly on Iraqi forces and American female service members to conduct the searches. The Iraqis, and U.S. female units like those in the Lioness Program and Female Engagement Teams, had access to Iraqi men and women that American males could not gain.

Lastly, U.S. forces could no longer afford to dwell in massive U.S. bases and physically isolate the insurgents from the populace. Under General Petraeus, U.S. forces gradually began to accept greater risks associated with distributing forces in smaller and smaller sizes over greater and greater areas. The full extent of this was reached by mid-2007. It was not uncommon to have tiny U.S. forces of six-twelve U.S. troops and a handful of Iraqi police or soldiers in Joint Security Stations (JSSs) spread out in densely populated urban areas. This allowed these troops to develop a beat cop mentality where they would get to know the streets and residents in their neighborhood to determine who or what did or did not belong. These efforts to physically isolate the insurgency from the population were complimented by moral isolation of the insurgents as well.

\textsuperscript{122} The primary difference being the method of entry. Cordon and search implies a more aggressive entry method with or without the inhabitants’ permission. Cordon and knock is more permissive in that it attempts to gain inhabitant permission before entering. Or alternatively conducting a call out where the inhabitants of the structure are asked to come out and allow their structure to be searched.
FM 3-24 (2006) describes insurgency and counterinsurgency as battles for legitimacy between insurgents and counterinsurgents among the population. Both sides seek to isolate the population *morally as well as physically* from the other. In support of this effort, U.S. forces under Petraeus developed *lines of effort/lines of operation* to synchronize their efforts to legitimize U.S. and Iraqi government operations while also delegitimizing insurgent operations. These *lines of effort/lines of operation* included security, governance, rule of law, essential services, economic development, and security force development.\(^\text{123}\) Security was devoted to the aforementioned physical isolation of the insurgents from the population. Governance and rule of law was executed through military assistance to governance operations whereby U.S. officers would operate with local and provincial councils to advise them on rule of law and governance issues. Essential services were described in FM 3-24 as: SWEAT—sewage, water, electricity, and trash.

It is important to that these *lines of effort/lines of operation* were American adaptations. As Nagl notes with respect to the Commanders Emergency Response Program or CERP funds, U.S. commanders could readily pay for essential and immediate local Iraqi needs. Nagl notes that programs like CERP went a long way toward winning Iraqi *hearts and minds* to U.S. forces (Nagl, 2005, p. xiii). Thereafter, the problem became the wrong people winning the wrong hearts and minds. The U.S. forces who were leaving won the hearts and minds of people who could not come with them. The Iraqi government and security forces were either unwilling or unable to continue these practices on their own after the U.S. left (Petraeus D., 2015).

\(^\text{123}\) Based on author’s operational notes from 2008-2009.
Perhaps the most consequential adaptation in isolating and protecting the populace was the cooption of disaffected Sunni tribes to combat Sunni insurgents in Al Anbar. *Al Sahwah*, or The Awakening movement, began with Sheik Satar’s Albu Risha tribe outside Ramadi, Iraq in 2006. The Al Anbar Awakening exploded principally as a response to the atrocities against Iraqi citizens inflicted by Sunni and Shi insurgents. The severity of these atrocities by Sunni insurgents cannot be overstated. It was not uncommon for U.S. forces to be taken to Sunni insurgent torture chambers by brutalized Iraqi citizens and Iraqi Security Forces after an area had been secured from insurgents.

By mid-2006 Al Qaeda in Iraq and Islamic State excesses had become so egregious that former suspected insurgent leaders like Sheik Sattar encouraged tribal members to work with U.S. forces. By November 2006, Al Qaeda in Iraq began targeted assassinations against rebellious Sunni sheiks. Al Qaeda in Iraq had been able to maintain control of the tribes in 2005 by a similar targeted campaign of murder and intimidation. However, Al Qaeda in Iraq murdered and then decapitated a tribal leader’s sister in 2006. Tribes throughout Al Anbar Province began to join the *Mejlis Inqad Al-Anbar* or Anbar Salvation Council. At the same time former insurgents were encouraged by their Sunni tribal leaders to work with American forces. With the death of Zarqawi, Al Qaeda in Iraq leaders refashioned the group into *Dawlah Islamiyah Iraqiyah*, or the Islamic State of Iraq (Rollins & Peters, 2015). From 2006 to 2008, the Islamic State of Iraq gradually lost military ground to U.S., Iraqi, and local Sunni tribal forces.

The isolation and protection of the Sunni populace, the securing of Baghdad’s neighborhoods, and the defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq opened the door to Sunni participation in the Iraqi Government (DeYoung, 2008). By the time of Zarqawi’s death in June 2006,
violent SIGACTS numbered at over 1,000 per month just as the surged U.S. forces began to arrive. Just before the start of the Surge Offensives began in mid-2007, the violent SIGACT rate was the highest of the entire war at just under 1,600 per month. Impressively, in less than six months, the number of SIGACTS would be more than halved, and within a year’s time the number would drop to 2004 levels (Figure 3.2). In less than a year and a half, SIGACTS would be further reduced to nationwide levels not seen since the start of the invasion. However, the reduction of SIGACTs was not the only positive outcome. By the provincial elections of 2009, many Sunnis had been brought successfully into the democratic process. Moreover, civilian deaths declined by 45% and ethno-sectarian deaths were down a further 55% (Petraeus, Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 2007).

Transition and Test

“What we have now achieved is an Iraq that is self-governing, that is inclusive and that has enormous potential.”

- President Barack Obama Dec 12, 2011

“As somebody who voted for President Obama, I was deeply disappointed because I knew those words were going to go back and haunt him.”


On 12 December 2011, President Obama and Prime Minister Al Maliki held a joint press conference to announce the end of the Iraq War. Hours after this announcement, Maliki began using the organs of the state to target his Sunni political adversaries, beginning with Vice President Tariq Al Hashimi, a Sunni (Frontline, 2014). As Jack Healy observed in the New York Times, “The accusations against Vice President Tariq
al-Hashimi also underlined fears that Iraq’s leaders may now be using the very institutions America has spent millions of dollars trying to strengthen — the police, the courts, the media — as a cudgel to batter their political enemies and consolidate power” (Healy, 2011). Shortly after the 12 December press conference Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari\textsuperscript{124} asserts that Maliki felt like he either President Obama’s approval or apathy to target Al Hashimi’s (Frontline, 2014). When asked how Prime Minister Maliki most likely interpreted President Obama’s response, Vali Nasr, Dean, Johns Hopkins, opines that, “The response he got from the president was that this is an internal Iraqi affair. And that, to Maliki, was a green light in terms of what he can do with the Sunnis because the United States is not going to stand in his way” (Ibid). Mr. Zebari argues that it was at this point, that Iraq unraveling began unraveling.

President Barack Obama campaigned on ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and sought a political victory in the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq (Rogin, 2011). Josh Rogin argued that the Obama Administration bungled negotiations for an enduring status of forces agreement similar to those produced after World War II in Germany and Japan. Resultantly, President Obama ordered the complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces according to the timeline established in 2008 in legislation passed by the Iraqi parliament. By 2010, Iraq held parliamentary elections and by 18 August 2010, the last U.S. combat brigade departed Iraq. On 18 December 2011, the last U.S. troops left Iraqi soil.

\textsuperscript{124} Hoshyar Zebari was the Iraq Foreign Minister from 2003-2014.
**First Test: ISIS 2014**

At around 9:30 p.m. on the evening of 22 July 2013, guards at Taji Prison near Baghdad and Abu Ghraib Prison came under coordinated assaults. At Taji, the attack was stopped cold (bbc.com, 2013). The raid in Abu Ghraib, however, facilitated the release of between 500-1,000 senior Al Qaeda operatives (Abbas, 2013). In response, Maliki’s interior ministry issued a statement that, “A preliminary investigation conducted by the crisis cell proved that there had been collusion between some of the correctional guards and terrorist gangs that attacked the prisons” (Ibid). Whether proven or not, this claim was to be among the first of many indications that “Some of the country's minority Sunni population feel increasingly marginalised by Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's Shia-led government” and were willing to work with ISIS to address it (bbc.com, 2013).

On 28 December 2013, Maliki’s government arrested another Sunni minister, Ahmad Al-Alwani, a member of the largest tribe in Al Anbar Province, the Dulaimi Tribal Confederation. The arrest took place at Alwani’s home in Ramadi after nearly a year of Sunni protests against Maliki’s regime. Many of these protests were led by the Dulaimi Tribal Confederation against what was seen as Shia repressive policies in Al Anbar. As a result of the arrest, some Sunni tribal militias began openly operating alongside Islamic State soldiers against Iraqi Army forces. By January 2014 ISIS forces and tribal militias

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125 These assaults were designed to secure the release of senior Al Qaeda leaders. The result of the two attacks were starkly different. Both were taken under intense mortar fire and subsequent suicide vehicle born IEDs (SVBIEDs) attacks. Suicide attackers sought to force the main gates of the prisons by ramming the gates with their trucks and blowing themselves up. Once the main gates had been compromised, the gates and defensive positions around the gates came under direct infantry attack coordinated with suicide bombers wearing explosive vests. At the same time, prisoners in the prisons began to riot and burn blankets. Taji Prison was hit by 3 SVBIEDs and 9 suicide bombers (bbc.com, 2013).
had taken Fallujah and much of Ramadi. In June 2014, ISIS officially declared their reconstitution of the Islamic caliphate under Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi as its religious and secular head (Rollins & Peters, 2015).

From 4-10 June 2014, perhaps no one was more surprised than the ISIS fighters themselves when they seized Mosul with only a handful of ISIS fighters against a garrison of two divisions, or nearly 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, not including Iraqi police. ISIS militants did not have to cordon the city and clear it with tens of thousands of fighters, tanks, artillery, and airpower. Rather, ISIS militants arrived at the city’s outskirts in pick-up trucks and overran police checkpoints. ISIS militants then terrorized, mutilated, hanged, and beheaded police officers. Early in the fight, on 5 June 2014, Iraqi officers reportedly requested tank support. But when they refused to pay a sufficient bribe, they received an ancient Soviet Era tank with an untrained Iraqi crew instead of a U.S. M1A1 main battle tank with U.S. trained crew (Morris & Ryan, After More Than $1.6 Billion in U.S. Aid, Iraq’s Army Still Struggles, 2016).

As ISIS flags began going up on roof tops, panic struck the Iraqi forces. Frontline Iraqi accounts do not describe observing more than a few thousand ISIS fighters (bbc.com, 2013; theguardian.com, 2014). However, rumors of former Ba’athist officers helping ISIS sabotage the defense of Mosul was enough to cause Iraqi officers to abandon their posts en masse (Beck, 2014). With the officers gone and Baghdad refusing to send material support, enlisted soldiers also fled: “Iraqi officials told the Guardian that two divisions of Iraqi soldiers – roughly 30,000 men – simply turned and ran in the face of the assault by an insurgent force of just 800 fighters” (theguardian.com, 2014).
Surprised by their own success, ISIS forces exploited the weakness of the Iraqi Security Forces and began seizing more territory once Mosul fell. The day after Mosul’s fall, ISIS forces entered Tikrit unopposed and ransacked the town. They also seized Baji, Iraq--home to Iraq’s largest refinery. As more and more of Al Anbar fell to ISIS, the Baghdad government was incredulous and accused the Iraqi Army of betrayal. And in an unpredictable turn, ISIS not only continued to fight, they also began to govern. While ISIS’s style of government was particularly barbaric, “U.S. officials have noted that … the Islamic State’s decision to hold and govern territory is a financial burden for the group, and thus a vulnerability that the United States could potentially exploit” (Humud, Pirog, & Rosen, 2015).

By the end of 2010, Al Qaeda in Iraq had been defeated and Islamic State was at least marginalized. The U.S had created an Iraqi Security Force of approximately 350,000 troops with a large complement of modern military equipment and training. Yet, by mid-2014, with two divisions of Iraqi troops in Mosul, the city was overrun in days and held for years. What accounts for this?

Competing Explanations for State Longevity

COIN Theories Observed

Contemporary counterinsurgency (COIN) theories, troop ratios, and interdiction of insurgent sanctuaries are insufficient explanations for the failure of the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces in 2014. From 2004 to 2007, the major period of U.S. enemy centric COIN methods, such as decapitation strikes and major offensive operations, violence exploded nearly 700% (see Figure 3.2). Targeted decapitation strikes did not end with Zarqawi in 2006. In April 2006, Al Qaeda in Iraq morphed into the Islamic
State of Iraq. Later, as the Islamic State of Iraq became the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or (ISIS) (al Dawla al Islamiya al Iraq wa al Sham) the U.S. killed other ISIS leaders Abu Hamza al Baghdadi, Abu Omar al Baghdadi, and Abu Ayyub Al Masri in 2010. Therefore, enemy centric methods failed to reduce violence and failed to increase state longevity after U.S. withdrawal.

If population centric COIN conducted by a foreign military was able to produce a state capable of supporting itself after the U.S. has withdrawn, then the U.S.’s effort in Iraq should have done this. The Surge led by General David Petraeus from 2006-2008 represents one of the most dramatic reversals of fortune for most any modern COIN fight. While initially undercut by political opponents in the run up to The Surge, even its most intransigent opponents like Secretary Hilary Clinton and President Obama had to acknowledge its success (Feaver, 2015; Ricks, 2011).

From the start of the Surge in late 2006, to the implementation of the Baghdad Security Plan in February 2007, and the Anbar Awakening, the Iraqi population had been effectively isolated from the Iraqi insurgents. Over 1,000 violent SIGACTS were occurring just prior to the arrival of the first surged units. By the advent of the Surge Offensives began in mid-2007 the violent SIGACT rate was the highest of the entire war at just under 1,600 per month. In less than 180 days, this number would be more than halved. Then, less than a year after that SIGACTS would be reduced to the earliest levels immediately following the invasion (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009, p. 24). However, the reduction of SIGACTs was not the only positive outcome. By 2009, Sunnis would begin to participate in the democratic process (DeYoung, 2008). Moreover, civilian deaths declined by 45% and ethno-sectarian deaths were down a further 55% (Petraeus, Report to
Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 2007). While The Surge and population centric COIN operations were unmitigated successes while U.S. troops were present, they provide no satisfying explanation for Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Force failure in 2014.

**Troop Ratios**

Troop ratios also fall short of understanding the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Force failure in 2014. Before The Surge, with Iraq’s 33.4 million citizens and the maximum number of U.S. boots on the ground of 141,100 (FY 2006), this provides a ratio of 237:1, populace to counterinsurgents (Belasco, 2009).

Further, if the 15,000 other Coalition members are added to the total force along with the Iraqi Security Force members (227,600) then there were a total Coalition 383,700 troops on the ground just before The Surge (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). Lastly, the other 78,000 contractors increase the total counterinsurgent force to 461,700 troops approximately. This results in a 72:1 ratio of populace to counterinsurgents for the country or roughly 2.74 troops per square mile (McGrath, 2006, p. 193; Petraeus, Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq, 2007).

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126 33,400,000/141,100=236.711.  
127 33,400,000/461,700=72.341.  
128 461,700/ 168,754 square miles=2.7359.
The difference between FY2006 and the peak of FY 2008 is only 16,700 troops, or one additional U.S. soldier or Marine for every 2,000 Iraqi citizens\(^{129}\) (Belasco, 2009). Moreover, the number of non-U.S. Coalition forces\(^{130}\) actually dropped from 18-23,000 just before *The Surge*, down to only 15,000 in early 2006. Therefore, with the additional 16,700 U.S. forces and the loss of some Coalition support, by FY2008, the total Coalition force was 478,400, for a population to counterinsurgent ratio of 70:1.\(^{131}\)

The increase in U.S. boots on the ground is an unsatisfactory explanation for the success of *The Surge* in the short-term. It is also an unsatisfactory explanation for the failure of the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces against ISIS 2014. The ratio of population to counterinsurgents only changed from a 72:1 ratio to 70:1 by FY 2008.

\(^{129}\) 33,400,000/16,700=2000.
\(^{130}\) These forces refer to non-U.S. and non-Iraqi members of the international Coalition fighting in Iraq but exclude security contractors.
\(^{131}\) 33,400,000/ 478,400=69.816.
when the significant decrease in violence occurred. In other words, a Coalition soldier’s responsibility only decreased from 72 citizens to 70. This delta of the ratio is an unsatisfying answer to the question of why *The Surge* worked in the short-term and why the U.S.’s efforts failed in the long-term.

Typically, the most oft quoted troop ratios for planning successful COIN operations are between 1:50 and 1:91 (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13; Quinlivan, 1995-96; Goode, 2010; McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Lewis, 2010; Brown J. S., 2006). The 70:1 population to counterinsurgent ratio is significantly more than the 1:50 recommended by Quinlivan, but well within tolerances of McGrath and Brown. However, if the same standard is relied upon that Linn and Krepinevich argue for regarding *foxhole strength* — sickness, transitioning into or out of theater, or base security requirements — then the number of combat effectives of the Coalition force must be reduced to 60% (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 236; Linn, 2000, p. 325).132 This results in 277,020 in FY2006133 and 121 Iraqi citizens to every counterinsurgent.134 In FY2008 this results in 287,040 total effective Coalition troops FY 2008 and 116 Iraqi citizens to every counterinsurgent.135 Both of these numbers are well outside even McGrath and Brown’s tolerances.

The change in actual troop levels during the Surge was almost negligible. And whether combat ineffectives are adjusted for or not, the total force size before and after 2006 were similarly inside or outside planning tolerances. Therefore, troop ratios do not

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132 Due to sickness, transitioning into or out of theater, or base security requirements.
133 \(461,700 \times 0.6 = 277,020\).
134 \(33,400,000 / 277,020 = 120.569\).
135 \(33,400,000 / 287,040 = 116.36\).

**Enduring Insurgent Sanctuaries**

Insurgent sanctuaries, training centers, and infiltration routes for Iraqi and foreign fighters existed in Iran and Syria throughout the U.S. led portion of the Iraq war (Gordon & Lehren, 2010; Mohammed, 2009; Abdul-Ahad, 2005). While these were an enduring concern for military planners throughout the war, their presence was not sufficient to prevent the success of *The Surge*. Indeed, a key element of population centric COIN is separating the insurgents from their popular support. In some ways, these insurgent sanctuaries worked in favor of the Coalition forces by voluntarily separating insurgents from population centers in Iraq. This is not to say that sanctuaries are not a legitimate concern in most COIN operations; adversary sanctuaries, for example, were used in Vietnam to train and equip Phase III guerilla forces.\(^{136}\) Sanctuaries in Iran and Syria do not appear to have been used as such until at least the start of the Syrian civil war. The idea of sanctuaries does have some relevance to ISIS’ preparations for its 2013-2014 invasion of Iraq. However, Syria is hardly a *sanctuary* in the sense that ISIS uses it as an un-molested space within which to train and prepare. ISIS had to contend not only with moderate Syrian forces backed by the U.S. but also Syrian regime forces backed by Iran and Russia. Therefore, Syria does not really provide the maneuver space and rehabilitation areas akin

\(^{136}\) This relies on Mao’s understanding of *People’s War* where Phase I guerilla forces were insipient, clandestine building phase, Phase II began guerilla operations covertly. Phase III, always the ultimate goal of Mao’s conception of People’s War, was the transition point from guerilla warfare and conventional war, from guerilla army to conventional force.
to those employed by North Vietnam. Thus, the continued presence of insurgent sanctuaries in and around Iraq do not help understand the inability of the Iraqi government and security forces to compete effectively with ISIS in 2014.

**Continued Support After Withdrawal**

Levels of U.S. military and economic aid to Iraq from 2011-2014 also fail to explain the failure of the Iraqi government and security forces in the face of pressure by ISIS from 2014-2017. Alternatively though, the absence of U.S. combat support and advisors does help explain this failure. While U.S. economic assistance dropped initially from $811 million in 2012 to $383 million in 2013, that assistance has remained fairly steady ever since (see Table 3.2). Moreover, Iraqi GDP growth has actually grown 10% since the U.S.’s withdrawal and in 2013-2014 was at its highest in Iraq’s history (World Bank, 2017; U.S. Foreign Assistance to Iraq, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Total U.S. Economic</td>
<td>$811.2 m</td>
<td>$383.7m</td>
<td>$392.0m</td>
<td>$394.4m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total U.S. Military</td>
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<td>$62.2 mil</td>
<td>$22.1 m</td>
<td>$180.3m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>$218 b</td>
<td>$234.6b</td>
<td>$228.7 b</td>
<td>$180.7 b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table compiled by author from:*

**Table 3.2-TOTAL U.S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE 2012-2015**

The biggest drop in Government of Iraq revenues came from U.S. military assistance, which dropped from around $1.2 billion in 2012 to just $22.1 million in 2014 (U.S.
Agency for International Development (USAID), 2015). This reduction in military assistance apparently had little to no effect on the Government of Iraq’s overall budget. According to Luay Al-Khatteeb of the Brookings Doha Center, “Iraq’s federal budget has increased to five times its size between 2004 and 2015. No matter how much oil revenue enters the treasury, budgets always have a deficit of around 20 percent, while actual spending always amounts to 70 percent or more. This leaves less than 30 percent for investment and development” (Al-Khatteeb, 2015). Iraq is producing more oil today than it has since the start of the Iraq War in 2003. Despite a drop in global oil prices, the Government of Iraq still receives 90-95% of its revenues from its sale of oil (Cordesman & Khazai, 2012; U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). Therefore, it does not seem probable that the reduction in U.S. economic support was the cause of the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Force failure in 2014.

Additionally, the lack of continued military economic support fails to explain the Iraqi government and security force failure in 2014. The $1.6 billion in U.S. military assistance provided after 2014 was used to *retrain and re-equip* a military that had already *trained and equipped* at a cost of more than $20 billion over nine years (Morris & Ryan, 2016). Therefore, the $1.6 billion in military assistance was not used to create a military capacity that did not already exist. It was used to *replace* a capacity that had been lost. Many of the key shortfalls and issues that U.S. advisors have been trying to address since 2014 are the very same ones U.S. advisors noted 2003-2010: intelligence, logistics, corruption, and leadership.\(^\text{137}\) In many ways, the money, time, and effort spent by the U.S. in Iraq

\(^{137}\) These survey results will be covered in detail later in this chapter.
since 2014 has been to get Iraq militarily back to where it was when it was first overrun by ISIS in 2014.

Based on reports from Iraqi troops on the front lines in Mosul, the issue was not that the Iraqi Army lacked resources. Rather, the problem appears to be how the Iraqi Army used the forces it had. One Iraqi commander related that he had requested tank support and he got a Soviet era antique T54/55 tank with an untrained driver, instead of a U.S. supplied M1A1 modern main battle tank and American trained driver. The commander claims that this was because he says he was not willing to send along a $2,000 bribe (Morris & Ryan, 2016). Even when Iraqi troops are willing and well led, the most basic logistical operations hamper continued operations. American advisors observing operations in Iraq in 2016 were frustrated watching entire assaults halted because Iraqi troops could not get sufficient water to operate in the stifling heat (Ibid). This is an obvious requirement for desert operations and particularly so within a state’s own territory.

Lastly, even the best led Iraqi units “have struggled to hold on to a series of hamlets, while soldiers admit that they have largely relied on U.S. air support to advance. The situation was similar in larger victories, from Ramadi to northern Sinjar, where U.S.-led strikes flattened the way for ground forces” (Ibid). Therefore, the failure of the Iraqi government and security forces in 2014 cannot be attributed to a failure of economic support. It does however point to the fact that the U.S. had trained the Iraqi forces to rely on U.S. offensive air support and supervision.
Degree of Embeddedness: Governance and Security Force Development

U.S. Adaptations in Governance

“Indeed, the American occupation created a context in which ... pushed some Iraqis who might otherwise have been co-opted into the new system toward violent resistance...”

-Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004

From 2003-2010, U.S. chiefly relied on institution influencing strategies to develop the Government of Iraq. The exception to the larger strategy of low embeddedness was the Coalition Provisional Authority’s control of Iraq from April 2003-June 2004. Nevertheless, the primary means the U.S. employed to develop governance in Iraq was through Advise and Assist forms of relationships with the Government of Iraq.

“Through various offices and mechanisms...the CPA presided over an ambitious effort to promote pluralist democracy in Iraq. Some financial assistance and technical support was delivered very quickly and sensitively to emerging Iraqi civil society organizations, such as women's groups, youth organizations, professional associations, and think tanks working to expand and stimulate democratic participation. These contributions proved very helpful in some cases, allowing the Iraqi Higher Women's Council, for example, to establish a minimum quota (25 percent) for the representation of women in parliament.”

-Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004

The pluralist democracy that Larry Diamond, senior advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, speaks of was not one that was built upward from ground level constituencies. Nor was this new democracy a combined institutional adaptation shared by American and Iraqi officials over years like that which the U.S created in the Philippines 1898-1913. Rather, it was a rushed, faux-democratic pretense designed to impose exclusively American progressive adaptations that emphasized national divisions and distinctions rather than unity (Jawad, 2013). According to Saad Jawad of the London School of Economics, the U.S. led constitutional effort liberalized an as yet un-democratic society
well beyond the tolerances for progressivism that even an established democracy like the U.S. could handle (Ibid).

The U.S. spent the better part of eight years in the lead for the military effort to secure Iraq. In contrast, it only spent fourteen months artificially imposing a completely alien and constituent-less form of government from the top down. The Coalition imposed this alien form of representative government during a period of the Iraq War when deteriorating security situation prevented even the most basic connections between Iraqi politicians and Iraqi citizens.

The period of 2003-2004 was so dangerous that the Coalition Provisional Authority could not spend the bulk of the $18.6 billion allocated for Iraqi reconstruction because it could not leave the Green Zone safely to do it. Diamond reinforces this in that, “In post-conflict situations in which the state has collapsed, security trumps everything…Without security, a country has nothing but disorder, distrust, and desperation—an utterly Hobbesian situation in which fear pervades and raw force dominates” (Diamond, 2004). Indeed, the Iraqi situation was so unstable that in 2004, “Insecurity drove the political occupation into a physical and psychological bunker. Already separated from Iraqis by the formidable security around the three-square-mile ‘Green Zone’…coalition officials began to travel less and less with every passing month. By the early spring of this year, foreign officials and contractors could no longer safely move around the country without an armored car and a well-armed escort” (Ibid).
The Pretense of Self-Rule: The Iraqi Governing Council

In 2003, British officials in Basra requested Coalition permission to hold direct local elections. This would have allowed citizens in the British area of responsibility to elect their own local governing councils. These local governments would have facilitated the creation of grassroots constituencies to represent local citizens on the provincial and nation levels as these structures began to take shape. Throughout Iraq’s provinces, and in most cities and towns, local Coalition military commanders worked with Iraqis to form representative councils. Yet, the Coalition Provisional Authority repudiated any forms of direct local elections for fear that these would undermine the Coalition Provisional Authority’s argument that direct elections could not be organized so soon (Diamond, 2004). This rejection of local representation would remain a consistent theme by the Coalition Provisional Authority and later the Iraqi Government even as late as 2008. By then, councils who had helped force Al Qaeda out of places like Ramadi would be marginalized by less representative provincial and national bodies.138

Instead of building Iraqi governance from the local to the national level, the Coalition Provisional Authority installed a figurehead Iraqi governing body to act as a kafil and lend legitimacy to its efforts.139 To this end, the Coalition Provisional Authority created the Iraqi Governing Council in July 2003. The Iraqi Governing Council was a multi-ethnic organization dominated by former Iraqi exiles and Kurdish representatives (Bensahel, et al., 2008, p. xxiii).

138 Author’s personal observations as a military representative to the North Ramadi, South Ramadi, and East Ramadi city councils from September 2008-March 2009.
139 According to Luciani and Beblawi, a kafil is a local sponsor in a rentier state who is employed by a foreign entity to legitimate its independent operations in another state (1990, p. 92).
The twenty-five members of the Iraqi Governing Council were selected by quotas related to their ethnicity and their loyalty to the U.S. On its surface, appointment based on ethnic quotas seems logical in terms of their ability to represent previously marginalized ethnic constituencies. However, according to Jawad, this was the first time in Iraq that representation was based solely on a sectarian and ethnic basis. Also, Iraqi Governing Council lacked any real sense of representativeness as apart from the Kurdish leaders “only five members of the Iraqi Governing Council were living in Iraq before 2003. Sixty-five per cent of the Iraqi Governing Council also held other nationalities” (Jawad, 2013). Not only were these former expats out of touch with their supposed constituents, the violent security situation also that prevented any meaningful contact with their citizens. Indeed, most Iraqis never saw any of their council members (Bensahel, et al., 2008, p. xxiii).

One of the first steps towards transitioning Iraq back to self-rule, as prescribed by UNSCR 1483, was to establish a basic law under which a new constitution could be created. Under the supervision and direction of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Governing Council was given until 28 February 2004 to develop an interim constitution. The Transitional Administrative Law was received by some like Jawad as the work of a rushed, unelected, constituentless body. The Transitional Administrative Law called for an unelected Iraqi Interim Government to be created by the unelected Iraqi Governing Council, based on consultation with the U.N. mission to Iraq. The document made strong provisions for individual rights, and began to address the thorniest issues: deciding how to divide power within the government and the regions.
Jawad points out a unique distinguishing feature to the Transitional Administrative Law. “It is important to add here that constitutions drafted for disunited countries tend to concentrate on points of unity rather than division. For example, the US constitution, in an attempt to create a united country, stressed the importance of unity. The fact that ‘sect’ was mentioned in Iraq’s constitution became a strong argument for those demanding an expansion of the quota system” (Jawad, 2013). He argues that from the onset, the U.S. led effort to create a unified central government and represent every ethnicity and constituency was compromised by divisional and sectarian language built into the Transitional Administrative Law. The Transitional Administrative Law appeared to be relying less the unifying language of the U.S. Constitution and more on U.S. Twenty-first Century micro-sectarian advocacy politics. In its rush to complete the Transitional Administrative Law without national debate and without any local consensus, the Iraqi Governing Council papered over genuine societal rifts that could not be legislated away. When the Coalition Provisional Authority delayed its efforts to advertise and advocate for the Transitional Administrative Law, local political groups denounced the document as an “unfair, unrepresentative, and undemocratic dictatorship of the minorities” (Diamond, 2009). Nevertheless, under Bremmer’s pressure, the Governing Council worked into the late hours of February 28th and signed the Transitional Administrative Law on 1 March 2003.

**The “End” of the Occupation**

On 1 June 2004, the Iraqi Interim Government was formed in large measure from members of the former Governing Council. During the month of June 2004, a new cabinet was selected, the former chair of the Governing Council’s security committee, Iyad
Allawi, was chosen as prime minister, and Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawer was chosen as president (Bensahel, et al., 2008, p. xxiv). The actual transfer of authority from the CPA to the Iraqi Interim Government took place on 28 June 2004. The U.S.’s official occupation of Iraq ended and L. Paul Bremmer flew home hours afterward. The rushed transfer of authority was designed to steal the political initiative away from terrorists in Baghdad (theguardian.com, 2004). However, since the affair was largely hidden from public view and behind layers of American security, it did little to build support among the populace.

President George Bush relished the opportunity to declare that, "Fifteen months after the liberation of Iraq, and two days ahead of schedule, the world witnessed the arrival of a full sovereign and free Iraq” (theguardian.com, 2004). President Bush’s claim of full Iraqi sovereignty hardly described the situation on the ground in 2004. The Iraqi Interim Government had no control over the massive U.S. forces in Iraq. The Iraqi Interim Government did not possess an Iraqi security force with which to guarantee security. It had no method of extractive power to collect taxes to fund the government. It was barred from making any long term unilateral policy decisions (Ibid). This calls into question of the utility of such a perfunctory and baseless political statement.

**The Adaptation of a Constitution and a Government**

“The exhilaration soon gave way to exasperation. Few of us had anticipated how protracted and fractious the post-election process of forming an Iraqi government would be. With both that vote and the one that followed in December of that year, an immediate lull in violence gave way to intense wrangling between and within parties over the nature and composition of the government. In 2006, the political vacuum produced a security vacuum, and when the new government was sworn in, it faced a situation that was significantly more violent and volatile than before.”
On January 30th, 2005 Iraqis voted for the transitional Iraqi parliament. In largely Sunni Al Anbar province, the turnout was very low. In fact, while the election saw the ad hoc creation of more than 120 parties, less than 2% of Sunni Arabs participated (Population Estimates and Voter Turnout for Iraq's 18 Provinces, 2005; Iraq Election At-A-Glance, 2005). Nevertheless, the election was a boon for Iraqi Shia, Kurdish Iraqis, and the U.S. The Shia, as expected, were the big winners. With the Sunnis out of the election, Shia parties were able to gain more seats than would have otherwise been possible. Moreover, the Kurds also benefitted from the Sunni boycott with more seats and their first meaningful representation in Iraq at a national level. Finally, the U.S. was also a big winner, at least internationally.

Some of the successes Diamond (2004) identifies as wins include support to emerging society organizations, imposition of gender and ethnic legislature quotas, training programs for political parties, and development of humanistic studies centers. Diamond notes that “the CPA presided over an ambitious effort to promote pluralist democracy in Iraq.” In support of this ambitious project, financial assistance and technical support was provided to women’s groups and think tanks to stimulate democratic participation. Perhaps one of the best examples of this uniquely American adaptation is the arbitrary establishment of a female legislative quota. The Transitional Administrative Law required that, “Every third name must be a woman's, to ensure that at least 25% of the seats in the assembly go to women” (Iraq Election At-A-Glance, 2005). Additionally,
Diamond reports that millions of dollars were spent creating a network of eighteen democracy centers in Iraq’s primarily Shia south and central provinces. These were created to advance human rights, women’s rights, and assist Iraqis to “mobilize and organize” politically. This same financial and technical assistance was used to build a university for humanistic studies in Shia dominated Hillah, Iraq.

Saad Jawad interprets these efforts at mobilized pluralism differently. He argues that the U.S. spent great energy ensuring the ability of human rights groups and minorities to mobilize even as the political process continued without a significant majority group--the Sunnis. Jawad also observes that the Coalition Provisional Authority tried to impose contemporary American micro-sectarian political advocacy even as it disenfranchised the Sunnis, a huge political constituency. Lastly, both Jawad and Diamond note that these radical democratic initiatives were being done sequestered behind American Green Zone security and with little or no contact with average Iraqis. This they argue because of the menacing security situation.

February to October 2005 was devoted, in large measure, to the creation of an Iraq Constitution and the conduct of a national referendum on this instrument. The Constitution was drafted with minimal Sunni participation and approved via national referendum on 15 October 2005. Next, parliamentary elections, as described in the new Constitution, were conducted on 15 December 2015 and as a result, Nuri Al Maliki was seated as Prime Minister. Jalal Talabani, of the Kurdish Alliance was seated as President. Shia Arabs make up over half of the population of Iraq, so not surprisingly, out of the 275 seats in the National Assembly in 2005, over 180 went to Shia political groups, or roughly 65% (Population Estimates and Voter Turnout for Iraq's 18 Provinces , 2005;
Iraq Election At-A-Glance, 2005). However, the Kurdish population is only half that of the Sunnis or about 10-15% or the total populace, and they nevertheless earned 75 of the 275 seats available, or 27% (Ibid). Despite its apparent successes, Jawad takes issue with the haste and shortfalls of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution.

There was a legitimate argument in 2005 to be made that the failure of the Sunnis to participate in the elections resulted in a self-imposed disenfranchisement. However, there is another argument that benefits from hindsight which would militate against a democratic process that excludes a quarter of the population. There was little chance of fair and equitable elections and representation of the majority of the country where 25% of the electorate refused to participate. To make matters worse, this boycotting 25% had already demonstrated a willingness achieve through violence what they could not achieve through democracy. Moreover, when Sunnis observed the election of even Shia insurgent leader Muqtada Al Sadr’s party, especially given the liquidation of so many of their own insurgent leaders, there should have been little surprise that the Sunni insurgents would resort to violence force.

Unlike the manner in which American style governance was taught in the Philippines, in Iraq, responsibility was shifted to the Iraqis ostensibly, well before there was any demonstration of capacity. The administration of a completely novel form of government was taught on the job through the U.S. Embassy’s Ministerial Assistance Teams. According to the DoD’s report to Congress in August 2006, “These teams, composed of civilian and military experts in governance and organizational development, mentor and train both the Iraqi ministers and their senior staffs…” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). In addition to Ministerial Assistance Teams, U.S. governance advisors constituted
the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office in order to advise the Iraqi government on policy matters related to essential services and energy. However, these groups, the Ministerial Assistance Teams and the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, operated with the Iraqi government cloistered in the Green Zone and alienated from their constituents.

U.S. legal advisors helped re-build the Iraqi legal system. However, their efforts were hampered by an overburdened prison system and the confusing authorities of the Iraqi legal system and U.S. military detention system. Any pretense of Iraqi sovereignty was already repudiated by the need for U.S. forces to conduct lethal operations and detentions against Iraqi citizens on behalf of the Iraqi government. By July 2006, Coalition forces held 12,388 security internees outside of the Iraqi legal system, who had to be transferred officially into the Iraqi system or be released. (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006, p. 11). The Iraqi system lacked legal authority to hold these security internees outside of the judicial system and the Coalition could not hold onto them indefinitely either.

To compound the problem, the Iraqi judicial system in 2006 only had about half of the 1,500 judges required and only anticipated an increase to about 60% of those required by 2007 (Ibid). With the deliberate targeting of judges who were not protected inside the Green Zone, there existed only twelve panels to handle over 100 insurgency related cases per month. Because of these stressors U.S. units throughout Iraq were forced to conduct massive detainee releases from 2007 through to the end of the war. This was mitigated somewhat by the fact that many of those released from places like Camp Bucca were either innocent or had made professions of loyalty to the Iraqi Government. However, because ISIS used places like Camp Bucca for recruiting and training jihadists, there were quite a
few dangerous individuals released also. Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi was one of those (Parks, 2015).

Outside the Green Zone, the U.S. operated four Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in 2006 to assist in developing provincial level governance. These PRTs grew to twenty-five teams before the last PRT was disestablished in 2011. In Iraq, PRTs were “civilian-military organizations designed to operate in semi-permissive environments. PRTs were intended to achieve political objectives, counterterrorism and promote social and economic development” (USIP, 2013). The term semi-permissive reflects the difference between the PRTs and elements like the Ministerial Advisor Teams and Iraq Reconstruction Management Office. PRTs were able to operate in areas where some risk was possible. The first PRT was established in Mosul in late 2005 and, in Iraq, the PRTs were constituted in nearly inverse fashion to the later Afghanistan PRTs. In Iraq, the PRTs were almost exclusively comprised of civilian personnel and led by a U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Officer (Ibid). Later, in Afghanistan, the PRTs would be made up almost entirely of military personnel and a small contingent of civilian professionals. In Iraq, only a small fraction of the PRT was military and the teams were tied to large U.S. bases unless they could negotiate military transportation and protection. Therefore, while the PRTs in Iraq were closer to where the reconstruction efforts were actually taking place, they were only slightly more capable of direct engagement than US elements in the Green Zone (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006, p. 10).

A key governance adaptation of The Surge was the modification to ePRTs or embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams. In early 2007, with the announcement of The Surge, ten new ePRTs were established. These would be embedded within U.S. brigade
sized elements as part of their staffs rather than operating alongside combat forces. Rather than parallel and disjointed efforts to advise Iraqi governance, rule of law, economic development, and essential services, U.S. military and civilian efforts were combined at the brigade level. Military officers had little expertise or training to advise provincial governments with respect to agriculture, policing, or, “assisting newly elected provincial governments to prepare budgets and development plans, to obtain funding from the central government and to implement effective programs” (Ibid). In contrast, Civilian professionals possessed these skills, but lacked the ability to safely access the provincial administrators.

By the provincial elections of 2009, the Government of Iraq had benefitted from the reduction in violence brought on by The Surge. However, by 2010, on the eve of U.S. withdrawal, there was much the Iraqi Government was ill-prepared to handle. The reintroduction of the Sunni populace into the political process challenged the power of the Shia and Kurdish politicians. Also, despite advising by U.S. officials and military, corruption remained rampant within the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces.

Moreover, one of the key shortfalls of Iraqi governance was its inability to program, apportion, and allocate budgets. Lack of experience and clear authority as well as corruption siphoned off or froze tens of millions of dollars necessary for reconstruction (U.S. Department of Defense, 2006). It was within this dysfunction that Iraqi and U.S. negotiators agreed the U.S. would complete its withdrawal of Iraq by 2011 unless a subsequent status of forces agreement (SOFA) could be decided.

The Government of Iraq was developed through advise and assist forms of relations relying on coercive influence. The U.S. used the influence of Ministerial Advisor Teams,
the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, PRTs, and ePRTs to develop Iraqi governance. Yet, the Iraqi Constitution and structure of the Iraqi government were liberal American instruments imposed on a conservative Muslim nation through *coercive influence*. The Iraqi Governing Council and Iraqi Interim Government, were designed to give American political adaptations the façade of Iraqi self-rule even as they were staffed almost entirely by ex-pat Iraqis. These mostly ex-pat members had little or no connection with their constituencies due to the security situation, no budget, no control over foreign forces fighting in the country, no security forces initially, and no means to extract taxes from the population. The Transitional Administrative Law and Iraqi Constitution these two bodies produced were not just American political adaptations, but contemporary American political adaptations. They were uniquely American adaptations artificially imposed on an Iraqi context. The use of gender and ethnic quotas in the legislature were American adaptations that would even be too liberal for contemporary America. Finally, American political advisors sought to teach advocacy democracy but rejected grassroots, bottom up local representation. The result produced an unrepresentative democracy the failed against a militia force little over three years after U.S. withdrawal.

**Degrees of Embeddedness in Security Force Development**

From 2003-2010, U.S. forces relied on *institution influencing* strategies to develop Iraqi security forces. U.S. forces employed Advise and Assist operations to develop security forces in Iraq. The result was an Iraqi Security Force that was unable to secure a large swath of its juridical territory in little over three years after U.S. withdrawal.
From 2003 to the start of *The Surge*, Iraqi Security Force development proceeded through several evolutions governed by foundational pre-war planning assumptions. Initially, it was assumed that the Iraqi Security Forces could be rapidly repaired. The repair and training of the Iraqi military was seen as a temporary and uncomplicated affair that could be handed off to contractors to allow U.S. forces to withdraw rapidly (Rosenfeld, 2004). After the Iraqi Army was disbanded by Coalition Provisional Authority Order #2 and the expectations of the Iraqi police failed to materialize, the training of Iraqi Security Forces transitioned to a principally military but largely ad hoc affair initially. Later, the Iraqi military development became more institutionalized.

**Military Contractors and Retraining An Existing Iraqi Army**

In early 2003 Vinell, a defense contractor and the military training subsidiary of Northrop Grumman, correctly anticipated the need to repair and rebuild the Iraqi military after the invasion of Iraq. Vinell had previously helped train the Saudi Arabian army and won a $48 million, one-year contract in 2003 to train nine battalions of a thousand Iraqi soldiers each. Unlike Vinell’s requirement in Iraq, its training of the Saudi Arabian Army was not from *tabula rasa* conditions. Vinell’s primary interactions with the Saudi Arabian military was in training higher level officers and facilitating operational level planning and wargaming exercises (Rosenfeld, 2004). Not creating a new institution altogether.

In August 2003, just a little over three months after the end of major conventional operations and about two months after Paul Bremmer disbanded the Iraqi military, Vinell
began training the first Iraqi battalion. The training effort was subsumed under the hastily organized and deployed Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT). The nine battalions that Vinell was contracted to create in one year would constitute a light infantry division with twelve thousand soldiers with more units to be trained later (BBC, 2003). The first Vinell/CMATT trained battalions finished their initial training in October 2003. By April 2004, *Operation Vigilant Resolve*, the first battle of Fallujah was developing. This was seen as an ideal opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of these newly minted Iraqi units by having them operate alongside U.S. Marines. Indeed, the lack of sufficient U.S. forces to clear and hold Fallujah intensified the request for employment of these freshly trained and equipped Iraqi units. However, the new Iraqi battalions refused to fight in Fallujah, even alongside U.S. forces. By the end of April 2004, CMATT was disbanded.

**MNSTC-I Replaces CMATT**

The deactivation of CMATT and the establishment of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) and NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) under the same commander signaled a sea change in April 2004. The first commander of MNSTC-I and NTM-I was then Lieutenant General David Petraeus. In June 2004, the DoD’s assessment of the state of Iraqi Security Forces was bleak. It determined that de-

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140 CMATT was led by the senior U.S. Army officer for infantry training at Fort Benning, Georgia, Major General Paul Eaton.
spite nearly a year of CMATT training, no Iraqi units were able to plan, coordinate, execute, and logistically support their own operations or to assume the lead for security in any area of Iraq (defense.gov, 2015).

**Iraqi Army Grows, but Unable to Operate Independently**

By September 2005, there had been significant progress made under MNSTC-I and NTM-I as eleven Iraqi battalions were able to support Coalition forces during *Operation Restoring Rights* in Tal Afar. Iraqi forces outnumbered U.S. forces for the first time in the war and were responsible for controlling their own battlespace. *Operation Restoring Rights* would be important for its ability to facilitate parliamentary elections later that year but it was also used as a case study of COIN failure by 2007.° 141 *Restoring Rights* was held up as a success of the “clear, hold, build” methodology. However, when security elsewhere in Iraq demanded the redeployment of U.S. forces from Tal Afar, the city soon collapsed back into violence. As a result, Iraqi forces could only be expected to operate effectively alongside U.S. forces. By 2006 they were still ill-prepared to hold ground. Even ground previously cleared by U.S. forces.

Throughout the time U.S. forces advised the Iraqi Army, the chief weakness identified universally centered around logistics. This problem would not be ameliorated even as late as the writing of this examination. This despite billions of dollars to develop the Iraqi logistical system. By October 2005 MNSTC-I and NTM-I reported that they were

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141 Based on author’s personal experiences transitioning into the Iraqi theater. U.S. forces coming into Iraq in 2008 were required to attend an in-country COIN academy. Tal Afar was used as a crucial case study to explain the risk associated with withdrawing U.S. forces too early as all the infrastructure investment was quickly undone when U.S. forces left and the security situation collapsed necessitating the re-intervention of U.S. forces to repair the deteriorating situation.
able to develop 115 battalions, 90 of which were evaluated as being able to plan, coordinate, execute and logistically support their own operations without U.S. support (Roggio, Training the Iraqi Army – Revisited, Again , 2005; defense.gov, 2015). In 2005, Iraqi units operating in the Al Anbar area of operations were mostly Level 3, or capable except in their ability to logistically support themselves without U.S. support (Ibid). In 2014, this institutional weakness of logistics would again be noted by fleeing Iraqi soldiers. In 2015, it would also be lamented by U.S. advisors. However, the logistical weakness of the Iraqi Security Forces was not and is not due to a lack of sufficient resources but a result of institutional corruption and systemic predation.

Throughout 2005, the Iraqi Army continued to grow, but was still unable to hold ground without U.S. forces. On 5 October 2005, Lieutenant General Petraeus reported that 197,000 Iraqi Security Force personnel were trained, equipped, and ready to serve in support of the Constitutional referendum being executed that month (Roggio, 2005). Petraeus indicated that this equated to 115 battalions, with thirty-six of those at Level 2 (In the Lead) and the remainder at Level 3 (operating embedded in U.S. units). In fact, he pointed out that seven of the trained battalions had their own areas of operation in Baghdad and sixteen battalions were operating alongside U.S. forces in Al Anbar. He also noted that Iraqi local police and the national police were also assuming greater responsibility for their areas. Despite all this success in late 2005, much of the terrain

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142 The rating of these battalions was based on a system described in levels as: Level 4-forming/untrained; Level 3-Iraqi unit embedded with a Coalition unit for its support and direction; Level 2-able to lead COIN efforts and execute independent operations but requiring U.S. support; Level 1-unit able to plan, coordinate, execute, and logistically support its own operations entirely without U.S. support (Roggio, More are on the Way, 2005).

143 This will be expanded upon in detail later in this chapter as a result of 2017 U.S. Advisor surveys conducted by the author.
where the Iraqi Security Forces was in the lead would need to be re-cleared by U.S forces during the Surge in 2006-2008.

In November 2005, there were over 212,000 Iraqi Security Forces. By May 2007, the Iraqi Security Forces numbered almost 350,000 (defense.gov, 2015). While the addition of over 100,000 more troops is not insignificant, the numbers do not properly describe the degree of progress made. By July 2007, ninety-five Iraqi battalions were in the lead for security in more than half of Iraq’s territory (Ibid). While the U.S. forces were still responsible for the bulk of the fighting in the most contested areas, Iraqi forces were able to hold the least contested areas. However, by the time the bulk of the fighting ended in Iraq in 2009, the Iraqi forces were not primarily in the lead for any of this fighting. They were shielded from failure and used to hold the least challenging terrain. This did not serve them well three years after U.S. withdrawal when the Iraqi Forces would have to fight ISIS on their own.

**Embedded-Parallel Advising**

In parts of Iraq, the U.S. military also adapted the manner in which it advised and conducted operations with the Iraqis. One of the plans under advisement prior to *The Surge* was for transitioning entire U.S. units away from pure combat and toward focusing...

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144 This includes local and national police.

145 The transition of territory over to ISF control was based on four criteria: threat level, ISF capacity, governance capacity, and Coalition ability to reinforce if needed. The appropriate threat level would only be reached in an area when, “Iraqi Provincial authorities can ensure security and domestic order through the normal use of local police, the province is ready for transfer” (defense.gov, 2015). Another requirement for the ISF taking the lead in an area was capacity in governance. Capacity in governance required that the provincial governor had to be capable of overseeing security operations and a Joint Operations Center (JOC) had to open and functioning. Lastly, in order for ISF to assume the lead in an area, that area had to be able to be reinforced by MNF-I forces in time to prevent the area from being overrun.
them on the advisory effort. While this was not employed throughout the entire theater of war, it saw great success in places like Al Anbar Province. From around 2006 until 2009 Marine Corps battalions deployed to Al Anbar began embedded partnering or parallel advising with Iraqi units. They began “training” these units by example by embedding them within U.S. operations on the job rather than by simply advising them. This embedded-parallel operating style created situations where U.S. NCOs and officers led operations with mixed elements of U.S. and Iraqi forces. U.S. units, not just individual advisors, lived, operated, ate, and planned together with their Iraqi counterparts. This did not get rid of advisor teams but it turned the advising effort into whole unit affair. This embedded advising deeply strengthened the relationships between local tribes, whom the police hailed from, and transferred U.S. military culture in a more intimate and rapid fashion. The close interaction between Marines, Sunni Tribes, and police in places like Ramadi and Fallujah was instrumental in the rapid defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq during the Awakening. 

Advisor Surveys

From December 2016-May 2017 twenty-two U.S. advisors to the Iraqi Security Forces were surveyed as part of this research. These advisors served all over Iraq. Five advisors served before 2006 and seventeen served after 2006 but before the U.S. withdrawal in 2011. The advisors are all commissioned officers serving in the U.S. Army

146 Author’s personal observation of operations in Ramadi and adjacent unit operations in Fallujah.
147 Commissioned officers were exclusively used not because the impact of the NCOs was less, if anything in many cases the impact of NCOs on the training for the Iraqi troops was greater than the commissioned officers. However, commissioned officers will tend to have access to the motives behind tactical and operational decisions made that the enlisted troops may not have access to.
and Marine Corps. The lowest ranking advisor surveyed was a first lieutenant and the highest-ranking officer interviewed or surveyed was a four-star general. The advisors were recruited either because they possessed a foreign advisor military occupational specialty or because they were members of an advisor fraternity.

Advisors’ Views

This examination’s survey of U.S. advisors in Iraq produced an unexpected result. Despite the lackluster performance of the Iraqi Forces in 2014, most advisors who served in Iraq considered the Iraqi forces they trained to be tactically competent. Further, when advisors were asked who were the better soldiers, or who had the better leadership, the Iraqi Security Forces or the insurgents, their responses were a nearly draw. While few advisors took issue with the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to operate tactically, a majority offered five common concerns which may help explain the subsequent failure of the Iraqi military in 2014: 1-Systemic corruption, predation, and selfishness by senior officers; 2-Logistical incapacity of the Iraqi military system; 3-Near universal inability to conduct lower and higher echelon maintenance; 4-Lack of understanding and ability to employ combined arms operations; 5-Premature withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Survey participants were first asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces they worked with at the time the advisor finished his tour (see Figure 3.3). Of those surveyed 72% said the Iraqi forces they worked with were “Competent-with
some exceptions,” “Generally competent,” or possessed a “High level of competence.”

Figure 3.3—Perception of ISF Competence Upon Withdrawal from Theater

These results are somewhat surprising given the reports of poor performance of the Iraqi forces facing ISIS in 2014. There exists the potential for some degree of bias on the part of advisors assessing their own success. However, the failure of the Iraqi Security Forces in 2014 does not appear to have been largely tactical in nature. In fact, when Iraqi advisors were asked how easy or difficult it was to get Iraqi officers to adhere to basic tactical disciplines, the advisors gave the most positive assessment of Iraqi capacity in patrolling and training (see Table 3.3). Over 47% of these officers said getting the Iraqis to pa-

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148 8:22 advisors reported “Competent-with some exceptions,” 7:22 “Generally competent,” and 1:22 “High level of competence.”
149 These basic tactical disciplines are the ones most often assessed by Marine and Army trainers in tactical environments such as the author’s assessment of infantry officers at the Marine Corps Infantry Officers Course. The tactical disciplines assessed here are: patrolling, training, inspections, basic maintenance, advanced maintenance, post and relief of sentries, and operational security.
trol well was possible with effort and 37% said it was either “Possible with minimal effort” or “Easy and it came natural.” The results were similar with regard to getting the Iraqi units to conduct training.

Other tactical disciplines were not rated as highly. With regard to maintenance and inspections, 46% of the advisors reported that it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to do inspections; 46% said it was “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to do basic maintenance; and 77% said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to do advanced maintenance. Lastly, 63% said it was “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to apply operational security (OPSEC) measures. These are crucial elements. First, the Iraqi forces were trained and equipped to fight as a modern technological military force. In just one tank, there are literally tens of thousands of parts that may need to be repaired or replaced. Armored vehicles and technologically advanced weapons like anti-tank missile systems require colossal man-hours of continuous labor to maintain. Failure to properly maintain weapon systems and vehicles, even those as simple as an M-16 service rifle, or a HMMVV, can have catastrophic results in a modern military. Second, failure to protect the plans of operations and intentions for future operations increases the likelihood of and vulnerability to surprise, ambush, and destruction of a friendly force.

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150 10:22 advisors reported “Possible with effort”, 6:22 “Possible with minimal effort”, 2:22 “Easy-it came natural.”
TABLE 3.3- IRAQI OFFICERS AND TACTICAL DISCIPLINES

Unlike tactical disciplines which deal with lower level tactical concerns, tactical concepts are more abstract philosophies or doctrinal warfighting concepts. Advisors were asked to rate how easy or difficult it was to get their Iraqi forces to internalize American tactical concepts such as: mission command\textsuperscript{151}, maneuver warfare\textsuperscript{152}, combined arms\textsuperscript{153}, and fire and maneuver\textsuperscript{154} (see Table 3.4 below). While these more abstract

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\# & Field & Impossible & Extremely difficult & Possible with effort & Possible with minimal effort & Easy-it came natural & Total \\
\hline
1 & Patrolling & 0.00\% & 14.29\% & 3 & 47.62\% & 10 & 28.57\% & 6 & 9.52\% & 2 & 21 \\
2 & Training & 0.00\% & 27.27\% & 6 & 45.45\% & 10 & 22.73\% & 5 & 4.55\% & 1 & 22 \\
3 & Inspections & 4.05\% & 40.91\% & 9 & 31.82\% & 7 & 13.64\% & 3 & 9.09\% & 2 & 22 \\
4 & Basic Maintenance (weapons and vehicles etc) & 9.09\% & 36.36\% & 8 & 36.36\% & 8 & 13.64\% & 3 & 4.55\% & 1 & 22 \\
5 & Advanced Maintenance (weapon, equipment, or vehicle repair) & 31.82\% & 40.91\% & 10 & 16.18\% & 4 & 4.55\% & 1 & 0.00\% & 0 & 22 \\
6 & Post and Relief of Guards & 13.64\% & 18.18\% & 4 & 50.00\% & 11 & 13.64\% & 3 & 4.55\% & 1 & 22 \\
7 & Operational Security & 27.27\% & 36.36\% & 8 & 36.36\% & 8 & 13.64\% & 3 & 4.55\% & 1 & 22 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{151}“Mission tactics is just as the name implies: the tactics of assigning a subordinate mission without specifying how the mission must be accomplished. We leave the manner of accomplishing the mission to the subordinate, thereby allowing the freedom—and establishing the duty—for the subordinate to take whatever steps deemed necessary based on the situation. Mission tactics relies on a subordinate’s exercise of initiative framed by proper guidance and understanding” Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 (MCDP 1, pg. 87). This requires significant initiative on the part of the subordinate and trust on the part of the commander.

\textsuperscript{152}American style of warfare that seeks to out maneuver the adversary through the decision making cycle and requires substantial amounts of initiative and accepts chaos in order to attack the logic of the enemy system rather than destroying the system itself. “Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy’s cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope” Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 (MCDP 1, pg. 73)

\textsuperscript{153}Combined arms refer to the synergistic application of direct and indirect fires to achieve an effect where the enemy’s attempt to avoid one arm exposes the enemy to another arm and places the enemy in a “combined arms dilemma.” “Combined arms is the full integration of arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. We pose the enemy not just with a problem, but with a dilemma—a no win situation” (MCDP 1, pg. 94)

\textsuperscript{154}Fire and maneuver refers to the dependent application of direct and indirect fires to support maneuver of forces and application of maneuver to create opportunities for more effective fires. Again, the enemy is placed in a dilemma if they hide from the fire support they become vulnerable to maneuver and if they try to attack the maneuver forces they become exposed to fire support.
concepts are difficult to assess precisely, it is instructive to note where advisors felt that teaching a particular concept was “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible.” Of the advisors surveyed, 50% assessed that it was “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to internalize Mission Command concepts. And 62% thought the same of their ability to internalize Maneuver Warfare concepts. Moreover, 60% of advisors felt it was “Extremely difficult” for Iraqi officers to internalize Combined Arms concepts. The only concept that a significant majority of advisors estimated the Iraqi officers internalized well was Fire and Maneuver concepts with 80% saying it was “Possible with effort,” “Possible with minimal effort,” or “Easy it came naturally.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Extremely difficult</th>
<th>Possible with effort</th>
<th>Possible with minimal effort</th>
<th>Easy—it came natural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mission Command</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maneuver Warfare</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Combined Arms</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fire and Maneuver</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4—Ability to Internalize U.S. Warfighting Concepts**

The U.S. style of war that was taught to the Iraqi military is based on maneuver warfare, which relies on centralized planning and decentralized execution. This decentralized execution depends heavily on the character and integrity of officers to build trust between superiors and subordinates throughout the entire organization. In order to develop the style of leadership necessary to execute this decentralized form of warfare, the leadership of officers and NCOs is developed and evaluated against sets of leadership
traits\textsuperscript{155} and leadership principles.\textsuperscript{156} Among these traits and principles, advisors assessed Iraqi officers most positively with respect to their judgment\textsuperscript{157}, courage\textsuperscript{158}, and endurance\textsuperscript{159} (see Table 3.5 below). When asked, almost 82% of respondents said it was “Possible with effort”, or “Possible with minimal effort” to get Iraqi officers to display sound judgment. And 59% said it was “Possible with effort”, or “Possible with minimal effort” to get Iraqi officers to display endurance. Moreover, 73% said it was “Possible with effort”, or “possible with minimal effort”, or “Easy-it came natural” for Iraqi officers to display courage. These qualities are crucial to effective leadership given the need for commanders to make rapid life and death decisions under duress.

Conversely, the two leadership traits the U.S. advisors assessed Iraqi officers lowest in were in integrity\textsuperscript{160} and unselfishness\textsuperscript{161} (see Table 3.5 below). Almost 55% of respondents said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to display the quality of unselfishness. This may be possibly offset slightly by 41% saying

\textsuperscript{155} Leadership traits, as referenced by the Marine Corps are: bearing, loyalty, unselfishness, enthusiasm, endurance, decisiveness, dependability, integrity, courage, knowledge, justice, judgement, tact, initiative.
\textsuperscript{156} Leadership principles: Know yourself and seek self-improvement. Be technically and tactically proficient. Develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates. Make sound and timely decisions. Set the example. Know your People and look out for their welfare. Keep your People informed. Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions. Ensure assigned tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished. Train your People as a team. Employ your command in accordance with its capabilities.
\textsuperscript{157} Judgment: “The ability to weigh facts and possible solutions on which to base sound decisions.” (marines.mil)
\textsuperscript{158} Courage: “The mental quality that recognizes fear of danger or criticism, but enables a man to proceed in the face of it with calmness and firmness.” (marines.mil)
\textsuperscript{159} Endurance: “The mental and physical stamina measured by the ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress and hardship.” (marines.mil)
\textsuperscript{160} Integrity: “Uprightness of character and soundness of moral principles; includes the qualities of truthfulness and honesty.” (marines.mil)
\textsuperscript{161} Unselfishness: “Avoidance of providing for one’s own comfort and personal advancement at the expense of others.” (marines.mil)
it was “Possible with effort.” With respect to integrity, 50% said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to internalize the quality of integrity. The qualities of integrity and unselfishness are essential for the creation of trust between subordinates and superiors. Unselfishness is a critical element in developing faith between a commander and subordinates, such that the commander is willing to sacrifice his/her welfare and comfort for his/her subordinates. In the confusing and often terrifying context of combat, commanders who display the quality of unselfishness engender the willingness of subordinates to sacrifice. Where unselfishness engenders trust with one’s subordinates, integrity is crucial for trust between an officer and his superiors. No superior could invest great faith and stock in the report of an officer who could not be trusted. This is particularly dangerous when the officer is claiming that he/she needs reinforcement, resupply, or permission to retreat. This quality of integrity is considered vital to the U.S. military in its initial selection and development of officers. This, to the degree that while failures in physical and mental tests can often be remediated, lapses in integrity in officer selection and training often result in immediate disenrollment and prohibition from re-enrollment.162

U.S. advisors had the most severe assessment of Iraqi officers’ technical proficiency, example setting, concern for their troops, and ability to conduct self-assessment (see Table 3.5 below). About 55% of those advisors surveyed said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to know their people and look out

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162 Based on author’s personal experience serving as a student and instructor for Marine Officer Candidates School (OCS) and the Basic Officers Course. As based on experience working with American military service academies.
for their welfare. Additionally, 46% of advisors assessed that it was “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to demonstrate tactical and technical proficiency. Further, 68% said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to seek responsibility and to take responsibility for their actions. Most severely though, 82% of U.S. advisors surveyed said it was either “Extremely difficult” or “Impossible” to get Iraqi officers to conduct self-assessment and to seek self-improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Extremely difficult</th>
<th>Possible with effort</th>
<th>Possible with minimal effort</th>
<th>Easy-It came natural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Judgement</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>34.55%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unselfishness</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Know yourself and seek self-improvement</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Be technically and tactically proficient.</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Set the example</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Know your people and look out for their welfare</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.5-Iraqi Officers’ Abilities to Internalize U.S. Leadership Traits and Principles**

Given the poor performance of the Iraqi Security Forces against ISIS from 2014-2015, this research had previously assumed that U.S. advisors would evaluate the insurgents as more capable than the ISF. However, this was not born out by the research.
When the advisors were asked who were better the insurgents or the Iraqi forces, the results were a near draw. However, one particularly convincing point was made by an advisor regarding what happened when an Iraqi soldier defected to the insurgents.

“The soldiers/police were better soldiers because they possessed a semblance of formal training and command compared to insurgents. Moreover, it is relatively common for a small percentage soldiers/police to leave their organization and join the insurgents but when they do so, they are almost always a key leader in their local insurgent group. This serves as a key indicator that they are perceived as being better than a standard insurgent.”

This is important because if the Iraqi forces were better trained by the U.S. and perceived as better even among the insurgents, then what accounts for their failure in 2014?

There is little from the surveys to definitively argue that the insurgents are individually any better or worse than their opponents in the ISF. Some advisors pointed out that both insurgents and Iraqi forces were both recruited from the same pool of Iraqi citizens. Therefore, there was nothing intrinsically better about one group or the other. However, some advisors argued that the liberal rotation policies of Iraqi officers made it difficult to sustain an operation while the insurgents did not appear to take leave.

What is conclusive from the research is the near universal assessment of the corruption and predation of Iraqi officers. The U.S. advisors were asked about their perceptions regarding the possible corruption or predation of Iraqi officers targeted toward their subordinates, the government, or the Iraqi populace (see Figures 3.4 & 3.5). Surveyed U.S. officers assessed that 55% of them perceived Iraqi officer conduct toward their subordinates to be “More corrupt than what would be tolerated in the U.S. military but not criminally so.” And 63% described Iraqi officer conduct towards their subordinates as “More selfish than predatory.” However, 36% saw Iraqi officer treatment of Iraqi troops
as criminally corrupt by U.S. standards and 18% saw it as predatory. With respect to their actions toward the government, 55% saw Iraqi officer conduct as “More corrupt than what would be tolerated in the U.S. military but not criminally so.” And 36% felt the conduct rose to the level of criminal corruption by U.S. standards. With regard to predation toward the government, 73% of U.S. advisors surveyed saw the Iraqi officer behavior as more selfish than predatory and only 9% saw it as predatory. Finally, in their treatment of the Iraqi populace: 41% saw Iraqi officers as “More corrupt than what would be tolerated in the U.S. military but not criminally so”; 41% saw their conduct as criminally corrupt; 55% saw their behavior as more selfish than predatory; and, 18% saw it is predatory.
Figure 3.4 - Perception of Corruption Among Iraqi Officers

- **Not corrupt at all**
- **More corrupt than what is tolerable in US military but not criminal**
- **Criminally corrupt by US military standards**

Legend:
- Red: Dealings with subordinates
- Purple: Dealings with the local populace
- Blue: Dealings with the government
FiguRe 3.5- Perception of Predation Among Iraqi Officers

Follow up questions were asked of the advisors asking them to describe the nature of any corruption or predation they witnessed. What is instructive in the advisors’ responses is the difficulty many had in translating their experiences with the Iraqi officers into their own cultural paradigm. While significant numbers of those polled described Iraqi officer behavior as either “More corrupt than what would be tolerated in the U.S. military but not criminally so” or “More selfish than predatory,” almost all narrative responses provided would normally be considered as criminally corrupt in the U.S. military.
For instance, the most common anecdotal example of corruption and predation was the “skimming,” “scalping,” or “stealing” of subordinates’ pay. In many cases though, this behavior was contextualized by the advisors citing that very often Iraqi logistics failed to reach the units and officers had to pay for food, fuel, ammunition, weapons, etc. out of their own pockets. To pay for these necessities, officers often skimmed pay off of soldiers’ pay for the support of those same soldiers. Based on reports of the failed logistical system, this is almost certainly true. However, it is illegal by U.S. military standards.163 Other experiences of corruption or predation included:

- Treating younger solders as servants;
- “Selling weapons, ammunition and supplies, sometimes to the enemy, for personal profit;”
- Stealing food and supplies;
- Failure to fire incompetent officers;
- Receiving bribes and kickbacks;
- Collecting pay for fictitious soldiers;
- Forcing tolls on locals; and,
- “Stealing, assault, manipulation, blackmail” and “torture and murder.”

This critique of the differences between American and Iraqi cultures with regard to corruption is important. U.S. advisors were called on to effect evolutionary change in the Iraqi Army in a revolutionary timeline. To do this these advisors would have been required to materially change Iraqi culture within the military ranks in eight years time.

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163 Article 121 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice-larceny and wrongful appropriation.
U.S. advisors were asked about what happened when conflicts arose between them and the Iraqis they were training. Unlike their predecessors before 1950, U.S. advisors in Iraq had no command authority over those they were training. Prior to 1950, training of host-nation forces was done *from inside* the host-nation organizations and U.S. officers and NCOs had command authority. Command authority is the authority to promote, demote, reward, lawfully compel action, or punish. In contrast, U.S. officers and NCOs in Iraq had to negotiate with or *influence* the compliance of those they were advising. Many of those surveyed were complimentary of their relationships with those they advised. However, if there was a disagreement, most of the advisors said that they were there only to advise and had no authority to compel those they trained:

- “As an advisor, I only advise. The tactical commander for the host-nation has to make the decision. There were times in joint planning where we could withdraw other support, such as air, if a COA was chosen that was off the reservation.”
- “During the first two tours, we carried them with us to do the right things and to follow our lead, which they did to a small degree. During the third tour, they had the ability to say no and frequently did, they in a few instances, took our advice and made it look like it was their idea. Mostly, they were polite, but ignored what we tried to get them to do.”
- “It didn't happen very often but if needed we would just tell them we wouldn't go on a mission that we weren't comfortable with. Sometimes they would execute the missions without us which wasn't a bad thing at all.”

All the advisors surveyed acknowledged their inability to compel adherence to U.S. standards of conduct.

Finally, the U.S. advisors who participated in this research were asked, “What one thing could have been done better by the U.S. in Iraq?” The question was designed to be deliberately open ended and slightly vague. Given that, it was instructive to observe how common certain responses were. Half, in some fashion or another, felt the U.S. had withdrawn precipitously before the *evolutionary changes* brought on by the U.S. had a chance
to take hold. The next three most common responses were represented by equal numbers of responses. The first, was that the U.S. had made a critical error in disbanding the Iraqi military. The second, was that the Iraqi government had not received sufficient U.S. civilian support. Finally, an equal number of respondents argued that the U.S. had instructed the Iraqi forces in a style of war for which the Iraqi military was unable to support with its own fire support and logistics. As a result, this made the Iraqi Security Forces permanently dependent on U.S. support if they were to continue to fight as trained.

The Iraqi Army and security forces were developed through Advise and Assist operations relying on coercive influence. The U.S. used military advisors, training academies, and embedded-parallel advising to develop the Iraqi Security Forces. Where advisor and Iraqi opinions differed, the U.S. advisors negotiated and/or leveraged coercive influence to encourage Iraqis to follow their lead. The adaptations U.S. advisors trained Iraqi forces in were uniquely American adaptations to insurgent innovations. These American adaptations relied heavily on technological and industrial innovations as much as tactical. The technological innovations were not sustainable within the Iraqi system and the tactical innovations required a martial culture shift that did not take place. The result produced a low-no stability situation in 2014 until U.S. forces re-intervened.

**Conclusion**

“And it explains why a country must first have a state before it can become a democracy. The primary requirement of a state is that it hold a monopoly on the use of violence. By that measure, the body that the United States transferred power to in Baghdad on June 28 may have been a government—but it was not a state.” -Larry Diamond, Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004
From 2003-2010 the U.S. deployed relied on *institution influencing strategies* such as Advise and Assist and embedded-parallel advising to develop Iraqi security and governance institutions. U.S. advisors were required to effect *evolutionary change* in a *revolutionary* timeframe. They were required to do this through influence and encouragement but had no ability to compel. The result was to produce Iraqi Security Forces who were able to act as the senior partner in an oligopoly of violence for little over three years.

The U.S. produced a *strategic rentier state in Iraq*. As long as Iraq continued to receive *strategic rents* in the form of close air support, advisors, and political supervision, it persevered. This was demonstrated from 2006-2010 and again since the U.S.’s re-intervention in 2014. However, once the U.S. withheld *strategic rents* from 2010-2014, Iraq became what this examination terms a *crumbling state*, characterized by low-no *democracy*, and low-no stability until U.S. forces re-intervened to stabilize Iraq in 2014. And should the U.S.’s provision of *strategic rents* be withheld again in the future, it is likely that Iraq will revert back to a *crumbling state* unless the Government of Iraq changes or all threats to Iraqi governance dissipate.

**Degrees of Embeddedness in Governance Development**

The U.S. developed the Government of Iraq through Advise and Assist operations and transferred unilateral U.S. political adaptations *artificially* in a top-down, and outside-in fashion. The government that the U.S. imposed on Iraq was far more liberal than
even a more progressive state like the U.S. could have tolerated at the time. The U.S. instituted this alien government and transferred it in only the first fifteen months of a war that lasted eight years. The U.S. transferred this government without any pretense of an oligopoly of the use of violence and without access to local constituencies due to the deteriorating security situation. The Coalition Provisional Authority rejected direct local elections and later, the Government of Iraq also repudiated local governing councils.

For fifteen months from April 2003-July 2005, the U.S.’s Coalition Provisional Authority exercised unilateral legislative and executive control over Iraq. During this time, the Coalition Provisional Authority directed the establishment of the Iraqi Interim Government and the writing of an interim constitution or Temporary Administrative Law. As Saad Jawad notes, the U.S. coercively liberalized a previously un-democratic society well beyond even the tolerances of an even more liberalized state like the U.S. The establishment of this transitional government was effected under the pretense of Iraqi participation when the majority of leaders were expatriates, selected by the U.S., with no constituencies, and no access to the Iraqi population (Jawad, 2013).

When the Coalition Provisional Authority rushed the precipitous handover of the Iraqi government, this government lacked several crucial elements. First, the Iraqi Interim Government existed on paper only. It had no army or police at its disposal to enforce its laws. The Iraqi Interim Government had no real capacity to extract taxes from its populace or to coerce citizens in the payment of these taxes. The Iraqi Interim Government had only the budget that it was given to it by the U.S. The Iraqi Interim Government also had no access to the citizens that it theoretically governed. And the representativeness of the Iraqi Interim Government was made even more illusory when nearly a
quarter of the Iraqi population boycotted the political process. The Iraqi Interim Government in many ways was not dissimilar from a government in exile, as it existed behind, and rarely sallied forth beyond, the cloistered protection of the U.S Green Zone. Not only did the Iraqi Interim Government have no access to the populace, it had no governance below the national level through which to govern locally. The U.S. created a head of government that lacked any body. The U.S. had created a kafil to provide the pretense of Iraqi sovereignty and legitimate its unilateral actions instead of taking direct control transparently as it had during interventions before 1950.

Even after the successful elections of 2009, the Iraqi government only governed fairly and well until the U.S. forces left. Almost immediately upon withdrawal of U.S. forces, the Shia led government began using state security organs to target Sunni political opponents. Little over three years later, the Shia majority government had disenfranchised significant portions of Sunni citizens in Al Anbar and these began to align with ISIS and Al Qaeda.

**Degrees of Embeddedness in Security Force Development**

The U.S. military and the Iraqi insurgents had been forced to adapt and negotiate in ways that the Iraqi government and security forces had not been forced to. In the face of potential defeat, U.S. operations required continuous adaptation, exploration, and improvement that the Iraqi forces were not compelled to undertake. U.S. forces also had to negotiate with the Shia and Sunni citizens directly as a result of a complex COIN strategy in ways that the Iraqi Government was shielded from having to.
Likewise, the Sunni insurgents had been compelled to continuously adapt as well. Even while the Sunni insurgents of Al Qaeda in Iraq and ISIS had been largely marginalized and defeated in many areas of Iraq by 2009, they were not completely destroyed nor did they completely disappear. The Iraqi insurgents who would become ISIS had done battle with the world’s most powerful military for years and were not completely destroyed. Therefore, while the insurgents were diminished in physical and material capacity by 2009, they had been forced to compete with and in a sense benefitted from what Michael Lewis of the Marine Corps University calls a training effect.

Only the Iraqi Security Forces and Government of Iraq were shielded from these intense negotiations, competitions, and adaptations. In contrast to the U.S. forces and insurgents, the Iraqi Security Forces only took the lead in areas that had been largely secured by already by the U.S. Therefore, the Iraqi forces were largely shielded from the crucible of competition that existed between the U.S. and the Iraqi insurgents by which both sides were forced to adapt and innovate. Pyrrhically, the U.S. victory and unilateral adaptation, much of it technological and industrial, had a training effect on the Sunni insurgents who survived and would become ISIS, and it had a retarding effect on the Iraqi Security Forces and Government of Iraq which would become obvious upon U.S. withdrawal.

The U.S. style of war that U.S. advisors artificially transferred to the Iraqi Security Forces requires a martial culture that depends on large amounts of trust, initiative, unity of effort, and individual capacity among officers. The U.S. military has built this martial culture after decades of civilian oversight and strict enforcement of standards of conduct. Indeed, military officers are still punished for infractions, such as adultery, that
are not infractions in any other line of work in the U.S.\textsuperscript{164} In contrast, U.S. advisors were tasked with fundamentally changing an Iraqi military culture that had systematized what American military culture would describe as corruption and predatory behavior. U.S. advisors were further tasked with effecting this change strictly through advising and coercive influence. The advisors could only withhold their presence, fire support, logistics, etc. but could not command and enforce standards. Finally, the U.S. advisors were tasked with teaching a style of war that relies on unity of effort to a deeply divided and sectarian force.

The U.S. style of war and its unique material and tactical adaptations made American adaptations difficult to sustain without perpetual U.S. support. Many of the U.S.’s adaptations were supported by massive infusions of technological innovations such as biometrics, UAVs, electronic warfare, armored vehicles, persistent camera support, etc. The style of U.S. warfare taught to the Iraqis was heavily reliant on combined arms operations. The U.S.’s unique application of combined arms is heavily dependent on close air support which requires an industrial, technological, and tax base which are well outside the capacity of the Government of Iraq and most of the world’s states. Unseen by most who observe the American war machine are also the tens of thousands of maintainers, trillions of dollars, and the colossal supply chain required keep up main battle tanks, MRAPs, HMMVVs, and plush command posts. All things the Iraqi Security Forces got used to associating with the US war effort.

\textsuperscript{164} Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
Iraq-A Strategic Rentier State

Iraq is a resource rentier state in the most basic understanding of the term.\textsuperscript{165} Iraq is also a \textit{strategic rentier state}. A \textit{strategic rentier state} is one that relies on strategic rents based on its strategic location or geo-political situation to generate rents from a patron state (Schwarz, 2008, p. 604). Iraq stands to continue to receive strategic rents \textit{as long as the security situation in Iraq deteriorates} and as long as the U.S. is willing to pay them. This creates a \textit{moral hazard} where the Iraqi Government only continues to receive these strategic rents so long as the security situation continues to deteriorate. The Iraqis actually lose these \textit{strategic rents} if the security situation improves. This situation will continue until one of two things transpire:

1. The U.S. tires of paying these strategic rents in the form of combat air support, troops, and financing and allows Iraq to implode as it did in Vietnam; or,

2. The GOI and ISF unilaterally decide to make fundamental governmental and societal changes.

The last U.S. forces left Iraq in December 2010. By mid-2014 large swaths of Iraq in the Al Anbar Province fell to a relative handful of ISIS fighters in a matter of days. Further, ISIS fighters were able to hold this territory for over three years against

\textsuperscript{165} That is, Iraq’s economy relies on substantial external rents as a result of its oil production, only a small portion of the Iraqi populace is involved in generating these oil rents, and the Iraqi government is the principal recipient of these resource rents (Beblawi, 1987; Mahdavy, 1970). The effect of these rents act to distance the government from having to negotiate with the population through the normal process of extractive taxation. As Schwarz explains, “rentier States stand in contrast to states that have to rely on domestic resource extraction. They enjoy a degree of autonomy from society due to the availability of abundant natural resources. Rentier States display a particular path to State formation that by and large divide the European path” (The Political Economy of State-Formation in the Arab Middle East: Rentier States, Economic Reform, and Democratization, 2008, p. 602) However, Iraq is also a strategic rentier state.
much larger Iraqi Army and security forces. From 2003-2010, the U.S. employed *institution influencing strategies* and produced a *strategic rentier state* that was only able to endure for a short period without U.S. support. Thereafter, Iraq became a *crumbling state* once *strategic rents* were withheld and until U.S. forces re-intervened. As of 2017, Iraq is once again a *strategic rentier state*. Unless something changes, there is a reasonable expectation that it will become a *crumbling state* once again if and when U.S. *strategic rents* are withheld.
Chapter 4: Nicaragua-State Longevity and the Guardia Nacional

The U.S. made the mistake in its original concept to create a supposedly nonpartisan constabulary in Nicaragua... It assumed that, by breaking the ties between the political leaders and the military and by giving both officers and men professional training and status, revolutions would be discouraged, fiscal responsibility advanced, and democracy made possible. The United States failed to realize that the traditional army in Nicaragua had developed in response to local conditions and political realities. Any attempt to create an honest, non-political military force without changing the nation’s basic social and economic situation was probably impossible.”

-Richard Millet, Guardians of the Dynasty (1978), pg 183

On 2 January, 1933 in the port of Corinto, Nicaragua, United States Marines boarded ships and brought Marine Corps leadership of the Guardia Nacional De Nicaragua (GN) to an end. This, after five years of direct combat, and twenty-one years of intermittent intervention in Nicaraguan security. The conflict resulted in: 510 reported contacts, 75 Marines and Guardia killed in action, 122 Marines and Guardia wounded in action, an estimated 1,115 Sandinistas killed in action, 525 Sandinistas wounded, and another 75 Sandinistas captured (Headquarters Guardia National, 1927-1933). The outcome though, according to Richard Millett, was that, “The United States had given Nicaragua the best trained and equipped army it had ever known. But it also gave the nation an instrument potentially capable of crushing political opposition with greater efficiency than ever before” (Millett, 1978, p. 139). What accounts for the creation of a Nicaraguan constabulary that effectively prevented major armed revolt for forty-six years? What accounts for this success in a country that had averaged approximately one major armed

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166 The number of civilians killed or wounded was not scrupulously recorded by either side.
167 From the end of Sandino’s fight 2 February 1933 until the Frente Sandinista capture of Managua on 17 July 1979.
revolt or battle every three years since independence? Further, what accounts for the failure of the U.S. to achieve its goal of creating a nonpartisan Guardia Nacional? What accounts for the failure of the U.S to change the oligarchical and kleptocratic political culture at the root of Nicaragua’s revolutions?

While the Somoza dynasty was every bit as corrupt as its opponents allege, a valid question remains: how was the Guardia Nacional able to underwrite the stability of Nicaragua’s longest period without violent armed revolt? It would be hard to argue that the U.S. supported regimes in Vietnam and Iraq were much less corrupt than the Nicaraguan regimes. And yet, Iraq and Vietnam, were only able to maintain internal security for an average of 3.25 years after U.S. withdrawal. In contrast, the U.S. supported Nicaraguan government was able to do this for forty-six years. Lastly, what accounts for the U.S.’s ability to create a technically proficient security force while failing to imbue this force with a nonpartisan demeanor? What accounts for the U.S.’s inability to change the fundamental political culture that was the cause for Nicaragua’s numerous violent revolutions?

**Case Representativeness in Third-Party COIN: Nicaragua**

Previous chapters examined cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where governance had been completely erased- *tabula rasa* (The Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010). In contrast, the next two case studies, Nicaragua and Vietnam will examine cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where the state was on the verge of failure and governance had not been completely erased. Nicaragua will represent the case of high embeddedness and Vietnam the case of low embeddedness. These cases will determine if there is a correlation between
degree of embeddedness and state longevity in the course of U.S. third party COIN interventions where the state has not completely failed yet nor governance erased.

The U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Department of State pursued divergent strategies to develop the Nicaraguan security forces and government respectively. The Marines deeply embedded within and inhabited the Guardia Nacional while U.S. diplomats remained outside the Nicaraguan government and advised it through coercive influence. The disparity between the different degrees of embeddedness used by U.S. Marines and diplomats better explains the divergent outcomes between the Nicaraguan government and security forces. This disparity also explains the U.S.’s failure to create a nonpartisan security force and to change the underlying political culture. The Marines’ method of developing the Guardia Nacional demonstrated a high degree of embeddedness using a trusteeship form of relationship called encadrement. Marines assumed all officership roles within the Guardia to develop its technical and tactical capacity, ensure its nonpartisan nature, and make these changes directly through personal leadership. They created a constabulary which combined normal policing and military functions into one force in a manner similar to French gendarmes. Before the Marines departed, the Guardia Nacional was given duties well in excess of normal policing and military duties. The addition of these added responsibilities stemmed from the Guardia’s effectiveness and low levels of corruption while Marines were present. These additional duties included maintaining the collection of treasury dues, protecting the postal system, and managing the Nicaraguan sewage and waste systems among other tasks.
By contrast, the U.S. Department of State developed the Nicaraguan government by relying on an *institution influencing* strategy and by perpetuating the pretense of Nicaraguan sovereignty. The U.S. diplomats advised Nicaraguan politicians from outside Nicaraguan institutions in order to maintain a semblance of Nicaraguan sovereignty. Fear of imperialist critiques drove the American diplomats to perpetuate this pretense of Nicaraguan sovereignty (Millett R., 1978; Walker & Wade, 2011). However, this fiction of Nicaraguan sovereignty is inconsistent with reality. The façade of Nicaraguan sovereignty is disqualified by the reality of the U.S. Marine Corps’ unilateral authority, afforded it by the Nicaraguan leaders, to kill rebellious Nicaraguan citizens on behalf of the Nicaraguan government. Moreover, the U.S. ministers to Nicaragua possessed a de facto veto power over most Nicaraguan political and military decisions. The U.S. Department of State used a customs receivership to help collect Nicaraguan customs dues. However, other than this singular case of a shared sovereignty arrangement, U.S. Department of State exclusively used *coercive influencing* relationships to development of the Nicaraguan government. The result of the U.S. intervention was high-stability, *faux democracy*\(^\text{168}\), and a *tumbling state*\(^\text{169}\) where stability was predicated only on successful suppression of armed revolt rather than provision of good governance (See Figure 4.1 below).

\(^{168}\) Faux democracy is the author’s term used to describe the pretense of democracy maintained by constantly abrogating old laws or fabricating new ones to justify the currently illegal and democratically corrupt.

\(^{169}\) Tumbling state is the author’s term used to describe a state where at least one element of either state security forces or the political government is effective. This state continues to be stable where the state is able to repress significant and intractable social turbulence. Once this security force falters or the state is no longer able to mollify the social turbulence, the state becomes a crumbling state.
The result of the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua from 1927-1933 was a *tumbling state*. As long as the *Guardia Nacional* remained effective, the Somoza regimes were secure. However, decades of top-down corruption and the 1972 Managua earthquake erased what remained of *Guardia Nacional* discipline. This provided the opportunity for a wide confederation of anti-Somoza forces to coalesce. Evidence of a *faux democracy* is observed as the Somoza regimes were perpetuated by annulling disadvantageous laws or fabricating other undemocratic laws designed to disadvantage political enemies.

![Diagram of State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security](image)

**Figure 4.1 - State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security**

**Alternative Competing Explanations**

Contemporary COIN and irregular warfare theories fail to adequately explain Nicaragua’s forty-six-year state longevity after U.S. withdrawal. Evidence of population and
enemy centric COIN, essentially hybrid COIN strategies, are replete throughout the Nicaraguan case study. These however fail to explain the quality of the Guardia Nacional and the un-democratic quality of Nicaraguan governance after U.S. withdrawal. COIN theories cannot explain how the U.S. could fail to defeat the Sandinistas and yet produce a host-nation security force who did after the U.S. withdrew. Similarly, the presence of insurgent sanctuaries fails to explain the relative successes and failures of the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. The sanctuaries available to the Sandinistas along the Honduran and Costa Rican borders were never conclusively interdicted. Yet, while they did much to keep the Sandinistas from being destroyed, they also isolated them from the population centers. This increased Sandinista survival but diminished their influence among the Nicaraguan population at large.

Additionally, theories regarding sufficient troop ratios and maintenance of support also fail to explain the endurance of the U.S. supported state for over four and a half decades after U.S. withdrawal. The level of security the U.S. and the Guardia Nacional were able to provide from 1927-1933 and even after the U.S. withdrew, demonstrates no correlation between troop ratios and increased state longevity. The U.S. Marines and the Guardia had less troops available than even the most liberal estimates would predict were necessary. Further, U.S. combat support was not an essential requirement to Nicaraguan state survival after U.S. withdrawal. The U.S. support that Nicaragua did receive after 1933 was mostly associated with keeping Nicaragua on the U.S. side during World War II and the Cold War rather than to offset a specific threat indigenous to Nicaragua.
Method of Examining the Nicaraguan Case

This paper’s analysis of the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua will provide a case of high embeddedness in security force development and low embeddedness in governance development. This examination will employ this case study alongside the Vietnam case study to provide a contextually constrained historical comparison between cases of intervention in existing governance. This examination will also compare these two cases and the two other cases of U.S. intervention in tabula rasa governance. This case study relies on the U.S. Marine Corps Archives as primary sources for this case study and a variety of secondary sources. This case study utilizes processing tracing between the antecedent conditions pre-intervention through to the Nicaragua’s first major test of sovereignty to attempt to identify any correlation between degrees of embeddedness and SLAW. The product of this case study will be compared to the other three case studies. This examination will employ Stuart Mill’s most similar method used to analyze potential causal mechanisms for increasing or decreasing SLAW in the course of these COIN interventions by U.S. combat formations.

This case study will begin with an overview of the historical context that led to the U.S. intervention from 1853-1927 and examine the period until the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1933. Next, this case study will look at governance development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Then, the case study will scrutinize security development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Finally, the case study will meld the observations of strategies employed to develop governance and security and their outcomes. This will further supplement a theory of state centric counterinsurgency.
Historical Overview

Intervention

Seven years before the start of the U.S. Civil War, the U.S. would begin an eighty-year period of cyclical U.S. interventions in Nicaragua. In February 1853 a detachment of U.S. Marines and sailors from the *USS Cyane* landed for the first time in San Juan Del Norte, Nicaragua to “protect American lives and property” (Gravatt, 1973). *Protection of American lives and property* would be a common U.S. Marine Corps and Navy mission during interventions in Nicaragua in 1853, 1854, 1857, 1867, 1894, 1896, 1898, 1899, and 1910, and would culminate in the maintenance of a Marine Corps Legation Guard\(^{170}\) of 130 Marines for fourteen years from 1912-1926 (Ibid). From 1821-1927, except for the thirteen years of the Marine Corps Legation Guard, Nicaragua experienced over thirty-four armed revolutions or major battles over a period of ninety-three years. This roughly constitutes large-scale political violence every three years from 1821-1927. Indeed, in 1925 a supporter of the conservative party in Nicaragua told American Minister to Nicaragua, Charles Eberhardt, that it was *only* by revolution that a party opposed to the government might hope to gain proper recognition (Millett, 1978, p. 42).

From 1821-1928, violent revolution was the de facto means by which the phenomenon of *continuismo*, or indefinite self-perpetuation in office in Nicaragua, was terminated since Nicaraguan independence. The only non-violent transfers of national political power during this period was the U.S. supervised elections in 1928 and 1932, and

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\(^{170}\) The modern equivalent of an Embassy Guard as maintained by U.S. Marines at every embassy around the world today. The Legation Guard of the day in 1912 however was not the norm and was used to discourage further internal conflict in Nicaragua even in spite of its relatively small size.
power transitions within the major political parties of Nicaragua. Conservative executives turned over to other conservatives, and liberal executives turned over to other liberals. In fact, from 1821 until 1990 power only switched hands between liberal and conservative parties through violent armed revolt with the exception of the brief period of U.S. intervention between 1927-1933. It was into this context that the U.S. inserted itself. It was for the express purpose of ending these perpetual violent transitions of power that the U.S. created the Guardia Nacional. The results of their efforts would be a better trained, better disciplined, and better organized native military establishment than Nicaragua had ever possessed (Boot, 2002; Crawley, 2007; Library of Congress, 1993; Munro, 1974; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008; Walker & Wade, 2011). Unfortunately, the Americans’ best efforts to create a nonpartisan, modern professional military and police force was most likely impossible. Apart from a corresponding change to the innate political culture of Nicaragua the creation of capable Guardia merely equipped Nicaragua’s future dictators with a more lethal tool to maintain power.

Perpetual Internal Revolt-Granada Versus Leon: Oligarchical Kleptocracy

From independence in 1821 until the 1990 elections, where the Sandinistas were largely voted out of power, power typically changed hands in Nicaragua in a violent and predictable pattern. The pattern generally consisted of a party, liberal or conservative, perpetuating itself in power with transitions of leadership internal to its party only. Simultaneously, the party out of power at the time would work vigorously to violently remove the incumbent party from power. Often, the party out of power would lack sufficient force to unseat the incumbent party. The incumbent regime would remain in power until riven by infighting when an incumbent executive refused to transfer power to other
party members in their turn. The incumbent’s unwillingness to share power even within his own party would instigate the rise of a military leader within the incumbent party. Without sufficient power to unseat the incumbent of his own power, the military leader would often reach out to the opposition party and/or a foreign ally to help unseat the current dictator. The current dictator would then be replaced by another incumbent party leader. However, the process of unseating the dictator invariably exposed divisions within the incumbent party. Seizing upon this weakness, the opposition party would then rise up and violently unseat the disunited incumbent party. Then, the process would begin again almost immediately with the old incumbent party working to violently unseat the new authority. This pattern may be observed beginning immediately following Nicaraguan independence.

The antipathy between Nicaraguan Liberals and Conservatives did not simply evolve from clearly defined ideological differences. Their antipathy results from a confused jumble of geography, economics, politics, and especially control over state graft. The ideologies of Nicaraguan Liberals and Conservatives bear little resemblance to the contemporary understandings of liberalism and conservatism. Indeed, the U.S. supported both Liberal and Conservative regimes for long periods at different points of Nicaragua’s history. Instead, the bitterness between the two parties has its origins under Spanish colonialism. The Spanish aristocrats who settled in Granada were the forerunners of Nicaragua’s Conservatives; Spanish soldiers and middle-class craftsmen who settled Leon were
the primogenitors of the Liberals’. Neither group is particularly representative of the peasantry any more than the other\textsuperscript{171} (Walker & Wade, 2011).

**Goals of Intervention**

U.S. policy makers saw Nicaraguan stability as a U.S. national interest, which orbited around three core constellations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: 1-uninterrupted access to markets, 2-dominance over any transisthmian canal, and 3-prevention of European and Japanese intervention (Gravatt, 1973; McPherson, 1988; Musicant, 1990; Millett, 1978). Understanding how the U.S. understood Nicaraguan stability with respect to these elements is critical to comprehending why and how the U.S. intervened and what goals underwrote the intervention.

U.S. concerns with Nicaraguan stability were inextricably linked to U.S. transisthmian canal policies. According to Duke University’s Brent Gravatt:

“Briefly stated, the Panama or Isthmian policy sought to promote political stability in Central America (and the Caribbean) based on the following rationale: instability leads to foreign intervention! Foreign intervention could result in continuing foreign control and continuing foreign control would be a threat to the existent Panama Canal and to the proposed Nicaragua Canal; such a threat would endanger U.S. security and commerce. Political stability would obviate this chain of events” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 7).\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{171} One could argue that Sandino’s forces were disproportionately peasants but Michel Gobat’s argument (Gobat, 2007) that he led something of a peasant revolt ignores the history of the Nicaraguan oligarchs using what amounts to feudal forces to battle one another from the time of Independence on. Both the government and the Sandinistas impressed fighters into their causes. Moreover, by the time of the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1978 we see the peasants more aligned with the Conservatives than the Liberals, of which Sandino was one and so was Somoza.

\textsuperscript{172} Based on the influence of naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, the importance of any transisthmian cannot be overstated. Mahan theorized that any genuine historical global power was essentially a sea-faring nation and required the ability to dominate and secure vital sea lines of communication. In the Western Hemisphere, no sea line of communication was more vital than a canal through either Panama or Nicaragua. Indeed, Mahan himself argues that, without a transisthmian canal, the U.S. fleet would be halved and thereby inferior in both oceans.
Naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that possession of a first-rate navy was a precondition to U.S. ascendance as a world power. He also argued that apart from U.S. control of a transisthmian canal any American fleet could be effectively halved and defeated in detail\(^{173}\) by rival European powers (Mahan, 1914). Therefore, it was in the U.S.’s interests to keep European powers out of the Western Hemisphere and to control any transisthmian canal. If Nicaraguan instability increased the chances of European and Japanese foreign\(^ {174}\) intervention and control of the transisthmian canal, then Nicaraguan stability was a U.S. national interest.\(^ {175}\)

National insolvency was handled differently before World War II than it is today.\(^ {176}\) Invasion and punitive expeditions were accepted means of collecting national debts in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Therefore, given the universally kleptocratic nature of most Nicaraguan regimes and their near perpetual foreign indebtedness, the likelihood of European debt collection interventions was significant (Boot, 1935).

\(^{173}\) _Defeat in detail_ refers to the isolation of and piecemeal destruction of large force into smaller, more easily defeatable portions where the smaller elements cannot mutually support each other.

\(^{174}\) I use _foreign_ here to denote extra-hemispheric influence or those influences originating from other than North or South America.

\(^{175}\) In the 19th Century there was significant European and Japanese interest in the transisthmian canal prospects. British marauders had been raiding the eastern, Miskito Coast of Nicaragua for some time during the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. Additionally, the British had largely colonized the area of Bluefields on the Miskito Coast and decisively defeated Nicaraguan attempts to expel them in 1848. British operations in the San Juan Del Norte region alarmed U.S. policy makers sufficiently to cause U.S. and British diplomats to negotiate the Clayton—Bulwer Treaty (1850) ensuring neither the U.S. nor the U.K. would dominate a transisthmian canal to the other’s detriment. Moreover, the Germans and Japanese had worked with Nicaraguan leaders at different times to negotiate potential canals. Therefore, U.S. concerns of foreign intervention in vicinity potential canal sites were not unjustified. However, this was not the only concern for U.S. policy makers.

\(^{176}\) This desire to further prohibit foreign intervention due to debt default led to what the Taft Administration termed _Dollar Diplomacy_. Working with Secretary of State, Philander C. Knox, the Taft Administration sought to substitute dollars for bullets, that is to effect change in Latin American states through economic influence rather than armed intervention. This policy has been attacked as the Taft administration placing U.S. foreign policy in the pockets of Wall Street investors by individuals such as Marine Corps legend Smedley Butler’s scathing rebuke of this policy in _War is a Racket_ (1935).
2002; Gravatt, 1973). As Max Boot argues, European states did routinely invade as a means of debt collection and if the U.S. was to prevent this, it would have to do the lending. The desire to forestall European intervention was the basis for President Taft’s Dollar Diplomacy. With this, America now had a strategic and an economic interest in Nicaraguan stability (Boot, 2002; Musicant, 1990; Gravatt, 1973).

After intervening numerous times from 1821-1927, U.S. policy makers mistakenly identified the source of Nicaragua’s perpetual armed revolt as the Nicaraguan security forces themselves. These American policy makers were not ignorant of the kleptocratic oligarchical political culture that governed Nicaragua under both conservative and liberal leaders. However, under the severe critique of imperialism emanating after the Spanish American War, U.S. policy makers were reticent to assume full control of a foreign state as it had during interventions like the Philippines (Leuchtenburg, 1952; Tompkins, 1970).

Violence in Nicaragua: Co-opting the Army and Seeking International Allies

“In order to deprive Mena of the support of the army, Estrada proposed a radical change in the very nature of Nicaragua’s armed forces. Admitting that the present army’s major functions were either to attack neighboring states or to use force to perpetuate a government in power, the Nicaraguan president proposed using United States advisors to reduce the military to little more than an internal police force.


The use of violence to effect transitions of power in Nicaragua have as their roots battles before Nicaraguan Independence, and battles under the Mexican Iturbide’s Empire and the Central American Federation. When Nicaragua gained its independence from Spain, Leon aligned itself initially with the Mexican Iturbide’s Empire from 1821-1823
and then with the Central American Federation (CAF) from 1823 to the collapse of the CAF in 1838 (Walker & Wade, 2011). During this volatile time, Conservatives had been working constantly to overthrow the Liberals resulting in seventeen major battles, casing 1,203 casualties, and the Liberal Party cycling through eighteen executives during this period (Millett, 1978, p. 16). Liberal rule would end in a pattern that would be repeated numerous times from 1821-1925.

Conservative rule in Nicaragua began in 1845 with the help of conservative allies in Honduras and El Salvador. Once out of power, Liberals immediately set to work to unseat the upstart Conservatives. A larger skirmish throughout Central America began after unsuccessful Liberal revolts in 1854 that employed Honduran liberals. The cross-border fighting instigated a Guatemalan conservative backlash against the Honduran government. It also kept the Nicaraguan Liberals from overthrowing the entrenched Conservatives. As a result, the Liberals looked north for a new ally to help depose the Conservatives (Wall, 1961).

Nicaraguan Liberals would successfully secure American mercenary support. However, the reprehensible conduct of the American mercenaries supporting the Liberals would taint the reputation of the Nicaraguan Liberal party. It would lead to the diminution of Liberal power for decades. Having failed to unseat Nicaraguan Conservatives with the support of Honduran liberals, Liberals recruited the American mercenary William Walker and fifty-eight other Americans to assist them.
Walker arrived on 1 June 1855 with what would only constitute a contemporary reinforced platoon of U.S. troops today. Walker was only further reinforced with a handful of additional Americans and Europeans upon arrival in Nicaragua. For their parts, the Liberals and Conservatives had also “swelled their ranks with sympathizers and conscripts.” Both sides were able to muster 1,000 troops with the Liberals taking in an additional 200 Hondurans and a handful of Americans (Wall, 1961, p. xvi). Despite the diminutive size of Walker’s force, he was nevertheless able to rapidly defeat the Conservatives. Walker and his small band of mercenaries were also able to seize the Conservatives’ home city of Granada in less than one hundred and thirty-five days.

As will be demonstrated later, Walker’s success had less to do with the Americans’ military prowess and more to do with the manner in which the Nicaraguan military was recruited and trained (Scroggs, 1916). However, by December 1856, Walker’s mercenaries, or filibusters, along with his Liberal allies, were surrounded by a coalition of Central American armies and forced to withdraw and escape under U.S. naval protection. The associated embarrassment of the Liberal party kept them out of political favor for almost four decades. During this nearly forty-year period, the traditional pattern reasserted itself as Conservative executives passed off power from one to another until 1893.

The pattern of violent revolt began again when Conservative General Francisco Gutierrez sought to drive out his fellow Conservative President Roberto Sacasa. Because Gutierrez lacked sufficient force to depose Sacasa within the Conservative party, he sought a temporary alliance with the Liberals. While Gutierrez only meant to unseat his fellow Conservative and install himself, his revolt ultimately led to the violent overthrow
of the Conservatives once again. On 28 April 1893, Gutierrez worked with future nationalist dictator and hero Liberal General Jose Santos Zelaya to overthrow Sacasa. However, once Gutierrez had successfully deposed Sacasa and replaced him with Conservative Salvador Machado, less than eight weeks hence, his former Liberal allies staged a further revolt. This new revolt deposed Machado in a single week. On 25 July 1893, Zelaya became president and the Conservatives in turn immediately began to plot the violent overthrow of Zelaya (Millett, 1978). Conservatives organized a series of revolts against Zelaya in 1896, 1899, and 1903. Yet Zelaya’s effective combination of ruthless suppression of these revolts and farcical elections, allowed him to maintain power for sixteen years until 1909.

In a repetition of past revolutions, the Conservatives, unable to violently unseat Zelaya without help, again looked north for American support. Zelaya, had endeared himself to Nicaraguans by battling both Americans and British to defend Nicaraguan sovereignty. He had also professionalized the Nicaraguan military as a core element in retention of power (Millett, 1978; Musicant, 1990). The Nicaraguan Army under Zelaya became capable enough it became nearly impossible for the Conservatives to remove Zelaya without a Liberal military defection or foreign assistance. The latter became a real potential as Zelaya began to challenge U.S. transisthmian policy. Zelaya broke with the U.S. after the U.S. transitioned its efforts toward a Panamanian Canal in 1904. In addition to promoting a Nicaraguan canal to compete with the U.S.’s canal in Panama, Zelaya also reached out to Germany and Japan to build this competing canal.
With failed revolutions in 1896, 1899, and 1903, the Conservatives repeated the previous pattern of recruiting an ally from the opposing party and seeking foreign assistance to violently unseat the party in power. The 1909 revolt may have ended in the same fashion as the previous Conservative revolts in 1896, 1899, and 1903, except that Conservatives and Anti-Zelaya Liberal forces sought U.S. intervention to protect them.

When U.S. Marines landed at Bluefields, ostensibly in order to protect American lives, this created a safe-zone within which anti-Zelaya forces were protected. When Zelaya realized he could not crush the revolt while it hid behind the Americans, and in order to forestall a full-scale U.S. intervention, Zelaya resigned. He then installed a temporary Liberal executive, Dr. Jose Madriz, and went into exile in Spain. Next, Liberal General Estrada replaced Madriz, and then Liberal General Luis Mena deposed Estrada. Once again, with the incumbent party divided, the upstart party, this time the Conservatives, lobbied the U.S. As a result of this lobbying effort, the U.S. minister to Nicaragua encouraged the establishment of a Nicaraguan constituent assembly. This constituent assembly subsequently installed a Conservative president, Adolfo Diaz in 1912 (Library of Congress, 1993).

Again, in repeating the perpetual pattern, the Liberals immediately began efforts to violently unseat the party that had violently unseated them. However, this time the pattern would result in a thirteen-year garrisoning of U.S. Marines in an effort to break the perpetual pattern of coup and counter coup. With Diaz seated as President, General Luis Mena persuaded yet another constituent assembly to name him to replace Diaz in 1913. When the U.S. refused to recognize Mena’s selection, Mena aligned with Liberal
General Benjamin Zelaydón. According to Tim Merrill’s account for the Library of Congress, “Díaz, relying on what was becoming a time-honored tradition, requested assistance from the United States. In August 1912, a force of 2,700 United States Marines once again landed at the ports of Corinto and Bluefields. Mena fled the country, and Zelaydón was killed” (Library of Congress, 1993).

This last revolution brought about several unique elements that broke with previous Nicaraguan political patterns. During the period of American garrisoning, the more professionalized, though not entirely professional Nicaraguan Army had been allowed to atrophy deliberately. The U.S. Marine Legation Guard was sufficient to forestall armed revolt so a competent Nicaraguan military was unnecessary. This is particularly impressive as the Legation Guard consisted only of four Marine officers, one first sergeant, one quartermaster sergeant, five sergeants, nine corporals, two musicians, and eighty-three privates and never grew to more than 130 total after being originally posted on January 9, 1913 (Cablegram from Mahoney, 1913). The Legation Guard exerted an impact on Nicaraguan politics disproportionate to its size. The presence of the Legation Guard was a persistent reminder to Nicaraguans of the U.S.’s willingness to intervene in order to prevent armed revolution, especially as the Panamanian Canal neared completion in 1914 (Library of Congress, 1993; Millett, 1978; Neimeyer, 2008; Musicant, 1990).

**Treating the Symptom to Eliminate the Cause: Nonpartisan Security to Fix Poor Governance**

Anchored by their own experience, the U.S. policy makers wanted a nonpartisan security force for Nicaragua. American policy makers hypothesized that a nonpartisan Nicaraguan security force would remain above the political fray much as the American
military and police are required by law to do. What U.S. policy makers failed to realize was that nonpartisan American security forces were not the cause of good governance. Good governance and peaceful democratic transitions of power produced nonpartisan security forces (Gravatt, 1973; Millet, 2010). The Liberal General Juan Estrada, came to power by overthrowing the sitting dictator with elements of the Nicaraguan Army. Even he theorized that a small police force would be better than a large army which was mostly employed to attack Nicaragua’s neighbors, or violently unseat the current party in power (Millett, 1978, p. 28). U.S. policy makers and Nicaraguan politicians grappled over a nonpartisan security force. The Americans desired this in order to facilitate their withdrawal and continued stability. Nicaraguans currently out of power shared the American desire for a nonpartisan security force. They however, had little use for a nonpartisan security force once in power. The leading Liberal newspaper, La Noticia, whose party was in power at the time, actually argued against the idea of creating a nonpartisan Army (Millett R., 1978, pp. 54, 151; Matthews G., 1932; Musicant, 1990).

1st Attempt at a Nonpartisan Security Force: Scull's Managua Metropolitan Police

"Most often when training indigenous security forces we find ourselves asking, 'Are we training the coup force or the counter-coup force?' However, even knowing which you are teaching today is of little value as one quickly becomes the other as the political fortunes of the country change."

-Anonymous Colonel, United States Marine Corps, Quantico Virginia, 2014

The first American effort to create a nonpartisan Nicaraguan security force began with the Managua Metropolitan Police Force. The U.S. Marines’ landing in 1910 was the

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177 This quote was captured during discussions on Quantico Marine Corps Base at Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps University attended by the author. The discussions regarded the development of host-nation security forces by U.S. advisors in 2014.
ninth such in fifty-six years. Marines would now be stationed at the American Legation in Managua from 1912-1926 to forestall the need for another such landing. However, early on the question arose as to how the Legation Marines could eventually withdraw without precipitating a return to the previous cycle of violence? To effect this change, the U.S. Department of State demanded a U.S. agent be assigned to the Managua Metropolitan Police Force. The Nicaraguan police were largely seen as strictly instruments of political repression designed not to enforce law but to repress political opposition. Greg Scull, a former member of Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, was selected for the task of professionalizing this force. Scull assumed the role of Inspector General and Instructor on 5 February 1912. In less than ninety days, he resigned in embarrassment and frustration (Millett, 1978).

Scull’s frustration was due to the immense responsibility but and lack of authority associated with his billet as Inspector General. Scull was expected to reform the Managua Police Force from the inside out. One of his more rudimentary tasks was to address sources of continual disorder. Scull identified as the Albion Café as one of the perineal sources of disorder an moved to close it (Millett, 1978, p. 30). Scull realized the full measure of his impotence when he ordered the Albion Café closed and his order was countermanded by one of his subordinates—police Colonel Mena.

According to Millett, Scull’s predicament and the refusal of President Adolfo Diaz to back him up were symptomatic of a larger problem than a rogue police colonel. Millett captures the concerns of the American Minister to Nicaragua, George T. Weitzel, which he reported to Secretary of State Knox, 10 April 1912 regarding the Scull affair. Weitzel notes that, “The American Minister noted that had [President] Diaz backed up
Scull, giving him the powers needed to carry out his mission, this might have, ‘precipitated a struggle for the political control of the country’” (Millett, 1978, p. 30). Weitzel realized that unless and until the political climate changed, there would be little hope of genuine change in the Nicaraguan security forces.

As a result of the failure of the Scull affair and the presence of the Legation Guard, the Nicaraguan security forces not only stagnated but they nearly disintegrated altogether from 1912-1925. A report from the Marine commander of the Legation Guard to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, dated 26 August 1924, related that Nicaragua had the smallest military budget of any Central American state. On its face, this fact seems indicative of the relative stability achieved during the tenure of the Legation Marines. However, Neimeyer, Gravatt, and Millett report that the stability produced during this period was artificial and temporary (Neimeyer, 2008; Millett R., 1978; Gravatt, 1973). They argue that because the Legation Marines were the real source of security, once they were withdrawn, the Nicaraguan police and army were incapable of securing Nicaragua.

2nd Attempt: The Constabulary

“U.S. diplomats and military officials took a page from their counterinsurgency experience in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and even the Philippines and created an internal Nicaraguan security force called the Guardia Nacional. The creation of "national guards" in Central American states had long been a favorite theme of U.S. diplomats in the 1920s. Dr. Dana G. Munro, a former charge d’affaires in Nicaragua, noted: The establishment of non-partisan constabularies in the Caribbean states was one of the chief objectives of our policy from the time it became clear that the customs collectorships wouldn’t assure stability by themselves”

-Charles Neimeyer, Marine Corps University (Neimeyer, 2008)
The U.S. Department of State agreed to a postponement of the Marine withdrawal scheduled for 1926. This delay was conditioned on Nicaragua agreeing to the creation of a nonpartisan constabulary. On 1 January 1925, Carlos Solórzano and Juan Bautista Sacasa took office together as President and Vice President respectively. They did so under the first combined Conservative and Liberal Party ticket. The election was designed to offset the power of outgoing President Emiliano Chamorro. However, with the imminent withdrawal of the Marines, it was clear that Chamorro intended to overthrow his fellow Conservative Solórzano as soon as the Marines left. As a result, Solórzano pressed the U.S. Department of State to extend the presence of the Marine Legation Guard. The U.S. Department of State refused to delay the withdrawal of the Legation guard but acceded to an extension of a diminutive American training cadre to create a nonpartisan constabulary.

The Nicaraguan government contracted Calvin Carter, a U.S. Army major, to act as Jefe Director of a *Guardia Nacional*. In spite of significant obstacles, Major Carter and his four American assistants made significant progress in developing this *Guardia* from July to October 1925. Carter arrived and began work on 16 July 1925. His initial obstacles came as Nicaraguan politicians demanded that the *Guardia Nacional* be maintained under the Ministry of War and the quartermaster department.\(^\text{178}\) Major Carter and the U.S. Department of State vigorously resisted this. They were concerned by the considerable opportunity for graft if Nicaraguan officers were given control of U.S. logistics provided to the *Guardia* (Neimeyer, 2008). Losing this battle, Carter went on to demand

\(^{178}\) Quartermaster is equivalent to modern supply and logistics sections in modern military parlance.
that recruits be volunteers, be professionally trained, and be provided uniforms, regular pay, and subsistence. While Carter won these battles, he was beset by another problem-how to procure quality recruits. The middle and upper classes in Nicaraguan society had little interest in enlisting and among the lower classes the army was poorly regarded (Millett R., 1978; Walker & Wade, 2011). Therefore, among Carter’s initial pool of 200 recruits, almost half could not pass the baseline physical examination (Boot, 2002). Making matters worse, the Guardia Nacional had an inadequate budget and no machine guns. These were already staples of any modern military of the day. Still, Carter made solid progress until the start of the Chamorro-Rivas Revolt in October 1925.

Carter’s constabularies had done an admirable job of resisting partisan subversion by the current President’s relatives. This despite the fact that Carter and his trainers only had little over three months to bring this about. Nevertheless, the Guardia was simply not ready to play a decisive role in preventing armed revolt. By the time the Legation Marines withdrew in August 1925, Carter’s Guardia had increased in size to eighteen officer cadets and 225 enlisted men. Carter had originally assumed he would have two years to develop this force. However, his nascent Guardia Nacional was thrown into battle less than three months after being formed. In October 1925, when Generals Rivas and Chamorro compelled President Solorzano to purge all Liberal cabinet members, Major Carter requested permission to put down this revolt. Carter was told to stand down because General Rivas was Solorzano’s brother-in-law. Then, when Chamorro seized the La Loma Fort and the Campo de Marte, Major Carter was again told to stand the Guardia down. President Solorzano then unconstitutionally removed all Liberals from all govern-
ment posts and even agreed to pay the Conservative rebels for their costs incurred in vio-
lently attacking the government. While Solorzano officially remained President,
Chamorro would actually dictate policy.

Chamorro had been intensely antagonistic toward the Guardia before coming to
power; when the Guardia prevented him from taking control. Before coming to power,
Chamorro had aggressively tried to defund the Guardia and remove a consequential im-
pediment to his plans for armed revolt. Once in power though, Chamorro began strength-
ening the Guardia with the same fervor with which he had formerly tried to weaken it.
Still, with the Marines withdrawal the old pattern of violent revolt had begun again. The
Liberals fought back against the Conservatives’ removal of Liberal officer holders.

Millett argues the creation of the Guardia Nacional “signaled a turning point in
Nicaraguan military history. Nonpartisan it was not, but it was better disciplined, better
trained, and better led than any previous Nicaraguan force” (Millett, 1978, p. 48). By
May 1926, Chamorro had deposed his fellow Conservative Solorzano and Liberal Vice
President Sacasa had fled the country. Chamorro expanded the size of the Army to 5,000
and depended increasingly on the loyalty of the Guardia Nacional as Liberals began open
revolt. Chamorro ensured the loyalty of the Guardia Nacional by screening all recruits
for their political loyalties. Any pretense of a nonpartisan force was completely done
away with. During the May uprising, the Guardia Nacional was sent into battle along-
side the Nicaraguan Army. The Army was twenty-five times the size of the Guardia
Nacional, but, the Guardia was employed to such a degree that it suffered casualties at a
rate of fifty-two times that of the Army. This, for all intents and purposes, was the end of
the Guardia Nacional until the arrival of the Marines again in 1927.
Pact of Espino Negro: The Stimson Peace Plan and the End of the Nicaraguan Army

Almost a year to the date after the advent of the Liberal uprising in 1926, all the Liberal Generals had signed the pact alternately known as the Stimson Peace Plan or the Pact of Espino Negro. After months of negotiating from September 1926 until U.S. minister State Henry L. Stimson’s arrival in April 1927, Nicaragua had slipped deeper into anarchy. Nicaragua risked national famine if the wheat harvest was not brought in by June. By May 1927, the Nicaraguan government was bankrupt and Chamorro had been forced to resign. On 12 May 1927, all the Liberal generals signed the Pact under the conditions of a U.S. supervised election that the Liberals would ultimately win. All Liberal generals signed except one Augusto Cesar Sandino. Under the terms of the Pact of Espino Negro all parties but Sandino agreed to three key terms. First, all non-official state security forces would disarm. Second, all parties would accept the results of elections to be held in 1928. Third, all parties would support the creation of a nonpartisan military force under U.S. supervision (Library of Congress, 1993).

179 While the Liberals had been crushed during the early revolts of May 1926 where the Guardia participated, they had other minor successes in August 1926. These however were preempted by the landing of Marines in Bluefields to protect the Nicaraguan government forces. The U.S had taken the side of the Conservatives only in response to the support of the former Vice President Sacasa by communist parties and the Mexican government (Library of Congress, 1993). Still, the U.S. refused to lend Nicaragua any money as long as Chamorro was in power.

180 Sandino had been fighting from 1926 to 1927 for the installation of a Liberal regime in the same violent manner Liberal and Conservative regimes had been installed since 1821. Now, it seems likely that Sandino was genuinely dubious of the potential fairness of any election where the Conservatives held power. As a result, Sandino is reported to have asked for a temporary U.S. military government as an alternative to the Conservative Diaz regime in power at the time (Boot, 2002, p. 236). On its face, this sounds antithetical to Sandino’s later expressed purpose of removing American imperialists. However, upon closer examination, it seems entirely reasonable. Given Nicaragua’s electoral history to that point, Sandino had no reason to suspect that there could be a fair election, even with U.S. supervision. However, if the Americans were to supervise the election, the only way Sandino could be sure it was not tampered with by the Diaz regime would be to have Diaz’s hands completely removed from the affair. This was refused by the U.S. Department of State. Nonetheless, with the election of his former commander, General Moncada, to the Presidency, Sandino had less reason to continue to resist, and yet he did even though it would be his own party in power for the next fifty plus years.
Inhabiting the Guardia and Influencing the Government

“The old armies were or seemed to be one of the principal causes of disorder and financial disorganization. They consumed most of the government's revenue, chiefly in graft, and they gave nothing, but disorder and oppression in return. We thought that a disciplined force, trained by Americans, would do away with the petty local oppression that was responsible for much of the disorder.”

-Dr Dana Munro, charge d’affaires in Nicaragua, (Neimeyer, 2008)

From 1927-1933, the United Stated employed divergent strategies to effect evolutionary change in the Nicaraguan government and security forces in a revolutionary timeline. These divergent strategies produced dissimilar results. During this period, the U.S. Department of State employed coercive influence and advising to the Nicaraguan government to effect change. It did this to maintain at least the pretense of Nicaraguan sovereignty. In contrast, the U.S. Marines, under the direction of the U.S. Department of State, inhabited the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua. They subsequently brought about radical change through a trusteeship form of relationship called encadrement. After five years, the political culture of Nicaragua was little changed as a result of the U.S. Department of State’s influence. In contrast, when the Marines departed they left behind a fundamentally transformed security force. The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua was a better trained, better disciplined, and better organized native military establishment than Nicaragua had ever possessed (Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008).

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181 I rely on this idea of evolutionary change in a revolutionary timeframe from Colonel Michael Lewis (USA, ret) from the Marine Corps University.
However, in contravention of the stated goals, the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua would never become the nonpartisan force that U.S. policy makers had envisioned.

**Unilateral Marine Corps Operations: Breathing Space for 1928 Elections**

By 1927 U.S. agents feared that the security situation in Nicaragua had deteriorated such that only the immediate insertion of a large number of U.S. forces could buy space and time for the 1928 elections. Nicaraguan security forces had so diminished that they could not protect the elections nor provide even the most basic security responsibilities. In 1928, the Marine Corps landed a series of ground combat, artillery, and aviation units\(^{182}\) under the 2nd Marine Brigade. This represented the largest deployment of Marines since the end of World War I (Neimeyer, 2008). The Marines began immediate combat operations with Carter’s former Guardia embedded within their ranks.

**War of Maneuver**

From the onset of the conflict, Sandino’s forces demonstrated a complete inability to compete conventionally. However, they demonstrated tactical savvy in guerilla warfare. In the very first fight against the Marines and Guardia, Sandino’s forces outnumbered\(^{183}\) the three Marine officers and fifty new Guardia. Nevertheless, the Sandinistas were soundly beaten by the tiny Marine and Guardia force (Headquarters Guardia

\[^{182}\] According to Neimeyer, “In response to increased Sandinista guerrilla activity, by January 1927 the Marines had landed most of the 5th Marine Regiment and other assorted detachments to include the Marine observation aviation squadron (VO-IM). In May 1927, VO-6M was reinforced with the addition of six more aircraft from VO-7M, and the combined squadrons were now called Aircraft Squadrons, 2d Brigade. The 11th Marine Regiment was also eventually added. The growing force was placed under the command of World War I Marine hero BGen Logan Feland” (Neimeyer, 2008).

\[^{183}\] Sandinista losses to ground combat here were fifty and to aviation strikes in excess of 300. Generally, a force is considered destroyed for tactical purposes is 30% losses are recorded. Therefore, that Sandino was able to make a tactical withdrawal indicates he must have possessed forces comfortably of around 600-900 troops at this time.
Furthermore, during contacts on 19 September, 9 October, 26-27 October, 1 November, and 5 December 1927, and 1 January 1928, the Sandinistas lost 260 fighters killed in action. And in every case they far outnumbered their Marine and Guardia Nacional foes. In contrast, the Marines and Guardia only lost eight Marines and six Guardia killed in action (Headquarters Guardia Nationale, 1927-1933, pp. 2-21). While the Sandinista losses are estimates and may suffer from exaggeration, they nevertheless correspond well to Sandino’s decision to move away from costly conventional warfare and toward guerilla warfare.

Guerilla Warfare

Sandino and his forces showed noteworthy talent in guerilla warfare. After his conventional losses, Sandino adopted the tactics of protraction and guerilla warfare to “win” in the long-term by remaining relevant and not being destroyed. Therefore, during the Marine and Guardia offensives in support of the 1928 elections, Sandino avoided their main forces and struck in undefended regions. This did little to defeat the Guardia strategically. However, the constant operational level strikes maintained Sandino as a relevant threat. One example of Sandinista tactical acumen comes from Guardia Contact Report 309 on 25 November 1931. The patrol commander reported that the Sandinistas were able to conduct a three sided or “U-Shaped” ambush effectively against Guardia forces. This type of ambush typically requires substantial fire control measures to set up, execute, and withdraw safely from. Without these measures, the ambushing force risks

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184 The roundness of these numbers call into question the degree of their precision. However, even as they are merely estimates, there are indicative of the Marines and Guardia getting the better of the initial conventional fights and aligns with Sandino’s switch to guerilla operations.
causing more casualties to its own force than the enemy’s. Additionally, the insurgents were also able to mass up to battalion size the very next day and carry out a four-hour firefight with Guardia and Marines before withdrawing (Headquarters Guardia Nationale, 1927-1933). In addition to tactical skill, the Sandinistas were also able to gain the local population’s support in their remote areas through a combination of generosity and terror. This provided Sandino with an outstanding intelligence network that was rivaled only by Company M of the Guardia Nacional, under Captain Lewis Puller (Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Neimeyer, 2008).

**Growth of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua in Size and Capacity**

From 1927 to the end of the elections in 1928, the growth of the Guardia Nacional was impressive in every respect except one. The Marines initially conducted the preponderance of combat operations against Sandino until the end of the 1928 elections. From that point on and until 1933, the Guardia Nacional would gradually assume responsibility for most operations. Within only a year of establishment, the Guardia Nacional would never again have difficulty recruiting and training enlisted men. Additionally, from 1927-1933 the Guardia Nacional’s desertion rate would significantly decrease and Marines would only experience mutinies\(^{185}\) in a handful of remote locations. Moreover, great strides would be made in overcoming the Nicaraguan penchant for personalismo, at least while the Marines were present. Personalismo is the inordinate loyalty of junior Guardia troops to their leaders even superseding loyalty to the state (Millett R., 1978). A victim of their own success, the Guardia and Marines would not only assume military

\(^{185}\) Or what the U.S. Department of Defense terms *green on blue* attacks today in Iraq and Afghanistan
and police roles but would also be tasked with duties well beyond their original mandate (Boot, 2002; Matthews C., 1932). Finally, the Marines would successfully fend off politicization of the Guardia while they were present. However, the Marines’ failure to create sufficient numbers of nonpartisan field and flag grade officers would eventually lead to the complete politicization of the Guardia Nacional after the Marines’ withdrawal.

The Marines were able to grow the Guardia Nacional 500% from the disbanding the Army in 1927 to a full complement of enlisted Guardia by December 1932 (Gravatt, 1973). This, despite continuous contact with a capable foe and constrained by perpetual budget battles. In 1919, the Nicaraguan Army only consisted of 500 officers and enlisted men. By 1924, this number decreased to only 366 with 934 members of the National Police. These numbers were sufficient to repress other political parties but not much else (Millett, 1978, p. 34). The Guardia Nacional needed to grow quickly and professionally and under a number of extenuating circumstances. One of the more challenging circumstances was the fact that the majority of the early Guardia Nacional recruits in 1927 could not pass basic physical exams or literacy tests. The matter became so problematic that American Marines had to establish Spanish schools to improve the literacy of Guardia recruits in their own native tongue of Spanish (Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968). To further compound the matter of recruiting and training, syphilis was rampant not only among recruits, but young Guardia. This syphilis epidemic had a profound effect on maintaining the Guardia’s combat effectiveness.

Growth in Guardia Enlisted

Despite its diminutive size, the relatively small force of Guardia the Marines left behind in 1933 was able to maintain stability in Nicaragua for over forty years. When the
Marines landed in 1927 Lieutenant Colonel Elias Beadle was promoted to the rank of Major General and Jefe Director of the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua*. By October, the *Guardia Nacional* had grown to 438 Guardia (see Figure 4.2). A year later, and in preparation for assuming the duties of the 2nd Marine Brigade after the 1928 elections, the *Guardia* grew 400%. By the end of 1928, there were 1,637 *Guardia*. The *Guardia* remained at this manning level from 1928 to 1930. The *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* experienced its final substantial growth in enlisted troops between 1930-1931. During this time, the *Guardia Nacional* grew to 2,150. This was a response to U.S. Secretary of State Philander C. Knox’s warning that Marines of the 2nd Brigade would be reduced in 1931 from 1,500 to only 500. Finally, in 1932 the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* stood at 2,274 troops on the eve of the Marines withdrawal. However, this number does not count the 1,409 *auxiliares*, or reservists, who could be called up in an emergency (Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968).

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186 A portion of which were holdovers from Major Carter’s Constabulary who had to be discharged first and then screened and re-enlisted.
Combat Support and Combat Service Support

Often missed in analyzing the construction of a modern military force is the combat support and combat service support enablers without which modern warfare is nearly impossible.\textsuperscript{187} Marines brought both along with military technological innovations including: cutting edge innovations in the medical corps, communications, and supply. An important result of the Marines’ efforts was that the Guardia was able to sustain these ad-

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\caption{GUARDIA GROWTH 1927-1932}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{187} Fire support and operational assistance provided to combat elements. Joint Publication 1-02 DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JP 1-02) (2016), p. 39. These consist of primarily sustainment and/or logistical functions such as transportation, supply, rations, ammunition, etc. The essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of all operating forces in theaters at all levels of war. Joint Publication 1-02 DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JP 1-02) (2016), p. 39. These consist primarily of fire support, close air support, communications, and intelligence functions.
aptations after the Marines withdrew. Close air support was the only innovation the Marines employed in Nicaragua that the Guardia lacked the economic, technological, and industrial infrastructure to sustain.

According to Millett, “the Marines laid the basis for the most efficient communications system Nicaragua had ever known. Unfortunately, they also left a heritage of military control over communications, a heritage which has continued up until the present” (Millett, 1978, p. 76). The impetus for this military upgrade to the Nicaragua’s communication systems was the ease with which insurgents cut the physical telegraph lines of the Nicaraguan government. Wireless communications were still in a nascent stage in the late 1920’s and yet the Marines established the first reliable transisthmian wireless communication system in September 1931 (Ibid). The Marines also trained Nicaraguan communicators to run the network after the Marines withdrew.

In addition to communication, the Marines made a significant impact on the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua’s medical and logistical service. Overcoming Nicaraguan medical and logistical shortfalls occupied a significant portion of Marine attention immediately upon arrival. The Guardia was constantly burdened by the continuous threat of syphilis, malaria, dysentery, and typhoid epidemics among the Marines and the Nicaraguan troops. To address these threats, the Marines of the Guardia initially secured the services of U.S. Navy medical corps personnel. Later, the Marines had the American medical corps personnel run local corpsmen courses and assisted in the establishment of several military hospitals. These rudimentary services would most likely have been considered woefully inadequate by even U.S. domestic standards of the time. They nonethe-
less represented a remarkable improvement over what was previously available to Nicaraguan troops (Millett, 1978). Lastly, the Marines provided the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua with formal quartermaster regulations and modern transportation systems. These new systems professionalized the ability of the Guardia to sustain itself in operations.

Effective Policing: An Effectiveness that Was Largely Unwanted

Despite the lack of any specific training for it, Marines nevertheless had tangible successes in creating effective police. In American political culture, there is a clear distinction between military and policing duties. From the start of the intervention Marines were well equipped to teach the basics of military tactics. They had little to no experience in training police officers. Immediately upon taking the Managua Police, Marines realized that Nicaraguan police had even less experience. In some cases, Managua police did not even know the laws they were supposed to enforce (Millett, 1978, p. 74). Captain Herbert S. Keimling, the first Marine to assume the role of the Managua Police Chief, noted that Managua police did not know what laws were then in force (Keimling, 1933). Previously, the Managua police simply arrested those whom they bore a grudge against or those who refused to pay bribes. Keimling relates that he stood up policing schools to instruct police on what laws were in force and proper enforcement of these laws. As a result of his efforts, revenue from fines and arrests increased for legitimate offenses. Millett observes, “in Managua the amount collected in fines jumped from $40 per month to over $500 when the Guardia replaced the Municipal Police. In Chantal, the local police made 14 arrests and collected $30.80 in fines from September 1927 to February 1928. They were replaced by the Guardia who, from September 1928 to November 1928, made
334 arrests and collected $717.60 in fines along with confiscating 132 rifles, 42 pistols, 53 shotguns” (Ibid).

Corruption took many forms in the Nicaraguan police and this was a key issue Marines had to address when training the Guardia. One of the most persistent forms of corruption was *ghost police*. Marines found police rolls littered with non-existent police for whom the commander drew pay on behalf of. This exacerbated two perennial problems with Nicaraguan security. First, ghost police siphoned off much needed funds that could have been used elsewhere. Second, they provided a false impression of the degree to which the police force was able to provide security (Boot, 2002). Cleaning up these rolls also proved particularly difficult as police were spread out over significant distances or used different duty statuses to reported in. These different statuses made accountability a challenge. Nevertheless, because the individual commanders reported directly to Marine officers, the Marines were able to gain some degree of oversight through formations, station visits, and reporting requirements (Millett, 1978).

**Expanded Duties**

By the time the Marines withdrew in January 1933, the *Guardia* would be assigned to manage a wide array of services beyond normal military and policing functions. The Marines and *Guardia* operated Nicaragua’s prisons, sewage and waste functions, control of arms sales, liquor sales during elections, and humanitarian assistance operations. What is noteworthy is that despite receiving little to no formal training in any of these areas, Marines nevertheless executed their tasks with aplomb (Gravatt, 1973; Boot, 2002; Nalty, 1968; Millett, 1978).
Marines instituted efforts to reform Nicaragua’s prisons, treasury guards, and to police the sale of controlled materials. Marines sought to make the Nicaraguan penal system more humane and to reduce recidivism. Marines in the *Guardia* allowed prisoners to have visitors, and made the prisons nearly self-supporting. Nicaraguan prisoners were allowed to raise their own cattle and crops. Further, Marines in the *Guardia* sought to reduce recidivism by teaching the Nicaraguan prisoners trades. Because of their success, the Marines and *Guardia* were also called upon to replace the notoriously corrupt *Hacienda Guards* or treasury guards. Furthermore, Marines and the *Guardia Nacional* were given responsibility to control the sales and transport of arms within the borders of Nicaragua. While these tasks mentioned here are loosely associated with the charter of the *Guardia* as both a military and police force, the *Guardia Nacional* was also given other tasks well outside their normal policing-military mandates.

Among the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua*’s extra and unusual details were sewage and waste collection supervision, assisting in humanitarian assistance operations, and securing elections. *Guardia* were frequently tasked with supervising waste disposal. Moreover, *Guardia* and Marines also found themselves compelling citizens, under threat of force, to dispose of human waste and garbage properly. These sanitation responsibilities, along with universal vaccination programs led by the *Guardia Nacional*, had a measurable impact on the general welfare of the populace. This was particularly important during the 1931 Managua earthquake that killed 2,500 Nicaraguans. *Guardia* were responsible for saving lives, burying the dead, preventing looting, and distributing food and clean water. Their impact can be observed by the fact that sixteen *Guardia* officers were
awarded Presidential Gold Medals of Merit for their efforts (Boot, 2002; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968).

In line with these non-security related tasks, the Guardia Nacional also had weighty responsibilities in securing and ensuring the neutrality of the 1928 and 1932 elections. First, the Guardia were instrumental in maintaining the neutrality and security of the democratic process in the 1928 and 1932 elections. Major General Matthews, in a letter of instruction dated 27 July 1932, reinforced the immense responsibility the Guardia Nacional had to avoid politicization. He also issued specific directions for Guardia operations around polling sites in September 1932. His directives stated that, “officers of the Guardia will assure all prospective voters that the approaching registration and elections in Nicaragua be free, just and impartial…in other words attempt to convince the voters that methods of intimidation or interference will not be tolerated…” (Headquaters Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, 1932). In a circular letter dated 27 August 1932, the Guardia Nacional were also charged with prohibiting the sale of alcohol in the days leading up to the election. This was one of Matthews’ more unorthodox directives designed to prevent inebriation from unduly influencing the election (Matthews C., 1932).

Attempts to Politicize GN: Budgets and Alternatives

Attempts to politicize the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua began almost immediately during the first negotiations for the establishment of a nonpartisan security force. When Major Carter’s constabulary was initially formed in 1926, its most passionate political enemy was Emiliano Chamorro. He saw a tactically effective Guardia as an impediment to revolution. He worked to delay passage of a bill recognizing and funding the force (Millett, 1978; Munro, 1974). Yet, once he gained power, he was all too content to
invest in and support the development of the force. However, with the attrition the Guardia Nacional suffered before 1927, Chamorro was not able to reap significant benefit from his support for the Guardia.

Prior to his election, President Moncada wanted not only a very capable, but also a very nonpartisan security force to secure this election. However, immediately following his election, Moncada began to try to politicize the force (Gravatt, 1973; Boot, 2002). He began by trying to co-opt the Marines leading the Guardia. While he was successful at sowing divisions that led to the firing of the Marine Jefe Director, the commander of the Navy Special Service Squadron, and the American Minister, Moncada thereafter lost his sway with the Americans (Library of Congress, 1993). In 1929, 1930, and 1931, President Moncada, the former insurgent, demanded the Guardia Nacional arrest his political opponents (Millett, 1978). When the Guardia resisted, he attempted to place the regional forces under the control of local jefe politicos, the political bosses, who were entirely partisan and politically reliable. When the Marines of the Guardia Nacional resisted that effort, Moncada began to target the Guardia’s budget. From 1930-1931, Moncada had some success at reducing the Guardia Nacional’s budget. However, the force was rescued by increased Sandinista threat which prevented the intended cuts. Finally, Moncada attempted to create his own personal forces in the form of auxiliaries and civicos. However, the Marines of the Guardia Nacional were successful in encouraging legislative support to keep these reserve forces non-partisan and under the training and authority of the Marines of the Guardia Nacional. While Moncada had been successfully prevented from turning the Guardia Nacional into his personal force, this nevertheless placed an inordinate amount of power in the hands of one man-the Jefe Director of
the Guardia. This would be a significant problem once the Americans left. The Marines had laudable success at maintaining the nonpartisan nature of the Guardia Nacional while they were present. However, their failure to grow sufficient field and flag grade officers early enough would doom the Guardia Nacional initially to bipartisanship and ultimately into unmitigated partisanship.

The Big Fail: Officer Production

The Marines inexplicably waited until three years into the intervention to begin to formally develop a Nicaraguan officer corps. By the time the Marines departed, the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua could barely fill its requirement for company grade officers\(^{188}\) and did not have a single professional field grade officer (see Figure 4.3). According to Gravatt, “more than three-quarters of all academy officers graduated in 1932, the last year of the intervention. For field grade officers, there was no training whatsoever — neither formal nor informal. There were no Nicaraguan officers above the rank of first lieutenant until November 1932” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 3). According to contemporary U.S. Code regarding the officership of the U.S. military, Title X, the minimum time in service required to become a major\(^{189}\) is ten years and the minimum is twenty-two years for a full colonel. Therefore, it takes in excess of twenty-two years to produce an American general or flag grade officer in the U.S. military. The Marines responsible for developing the Guardia may have assumed they had more time to develop officers given the thirteen-year duration of their previous intervention. Even still, they would still be just

\(^{188}\) Those in the junior ranks of junior and senior lieutenants and captain.

\(^{189}\) Major is the lowest of the field grade officers. Field grade is a term representing those ranks of majors, lieutenant colonels, and full colonels. These are between company grade (below) and flag grade (above).
beyond the cusp of growing the lowest field grade officers if they had begun their officer
training efforts immediately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth of Guardia Nacional</th>
<th>1927</th>
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<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
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<tr>
<td>Field or Flag Grade Officers</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>15*</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>1,637</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>2,274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*1930 1st Formal Effort to Create GN Officers
Table compiled from (Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968)

**TABLE 4.1- GUARDIA GROWTH 1927-1932**

The primary means of creating officers in the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* was via the *Academia Militare*. The *Academia* had three Marine officers in charge of in-
struction. The *Academia* turned out nine cadets in its first class in June 1930. By Sep-
tember 1930, combining *Academia* graduates with officers who were formerly enlisted
*Guardia* brought the total of Nicaraguan officers to fifteen out of a 220 officer cohort.

The *Guardia’s* officer corps began to increase dramatically with U.S. Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson’s\(^\text{190}\) warning that the U.S. would withdraw 1,000 of the 1,500 Marines in Nicaragua in 1931 (Millett, 1978). However, the challenge was still in finding capable
officer candidates. Of the ninety-seven Nicaraguans who applied for the November 1930
class, only thirty-seven were accepted. The bulk of the officer candidates hailed from

\(^{190}\) Stimson had been a presidential emissary when he first negotiated the *Pact of Espino Negra* in 1927. Stimson then served as the U.S. Governor of the Philippines from 1927-1929. Subsequently he became the U.S. Secretary of State from 1929-1933 (Schmitz, 2000).
middle class families because as Millett argues, “the wealthy were uninterested and the poor were unqualified” (Millett, 1978, p. 126). Marines would also experience firsthand the power of partisanship in officer candidate selection. President Moncada had to personally approve each candidate to the Academia. He therefore disproportionately approved applications from known Liberal families over Conservatives.

Even with increased training of junior officers, American representatives began to realize by mid-1932 that there was not enough time remaining to train enough field grade officers before the Marines departed. Additionally, Secretary Stimson would not permit Marine officers to remain in Nicaragua after 1933. General Matthews, the last Marine commander of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, suggested that both Conservatives and Liberals draw up lists of potential field grade officers split evenly between the two parties. Each party’s list had to have both Liberal and Conservative officers on them. Then, the outgoing president would appoint all the names from the winner candidate’s list. This did three key things. First, it surrendered any hope of a nonpartisan force settling instead for a bi-partisan force. Second, since the names for these officers were aligned with the political elites, they would only include those officers considered politically reliable. Third, once the Jefe Director was selected by the winning party, he would gradually eject all of the officers of the losing party and create an entirely partisan force (Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968). As a result, initially, three of five colonels and six of eight majors were Liberals. The Marines only had two weeks to train these brand-new field grade officers for their new roles (Gravatt, 1973).
Bipartisan to Entirely Partisan

In November 1932, President Juan Buatista Sacasa was elected President. With the imminent withdrawal of the Marines, Sandino promised to end his fighting. This was a potential boon for a country torn apart by strife for over six years. Another boon, at least for the Liberal party, was that Sacasa would get to select the first Nicaraguan Jefe Director of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua. With the insurgency ending and the control of the Guardia Nacional in hands supportive of the current regime, there was reason to be optimistic. And yet, few were. In particular, Lawrence Duggan, of the State Department’s Division of Latin American Affairs, predicted, “upon the withdrawal of the Marine officers in the Guardia next fall, the forces of disintegration will be set into action” (Crawley, 2007, p. 22).

The failure to create field grade officers led to the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua becoming bipartisan. The failure to develop a nonpartisan senior executive guaranteed that Guardia Nacional would quickly become entirely partisan. The only Guardia who were even superficially imbued with a requirement for nonpartisanship were the enlisted and the junior officers. However, they would have little influence in the Guardia. The field grade officers were at least selected on a bipartisan basis, giving some measure of neutrality. However, the one office of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua that was exempt of the need for nonpartisanship or even bipartisanship was the office of Jefe Director. This was chosen entirely by political loyalty in hopes that the incoming president would at least have the support of the military and the police to govern the state (Munro, 1974). The Americans who worked with Anastacio Somoza preferred him to the other candidates, General Jose Maria Zelaya and General Gustavo Abaunza. The Liberals had
little reason to protest his selection as he was a devoted Liberal and had originally fought the Conservatives and Americans. However, Somoza’s personal ambition and the manner in which Sandino was welcomed back into the government set the conditions that would lead to Somoza’s reign.

The deal that Sandino negotiated with President Sacasa at midnight on 2 February 1933 for his surrender was a very generous but dangerous one. The negotiations held out the promise of peace. They also served to grate the nerves of not only Somoza, but Guardia who had lost fellow troops to the Sandinistas. Sandino was allowed to maintain a private militia of 100 men who would act as his personal security force. They would control the territory ceded to Sandino in Neuvo Segovia, keep their weapons, and the government would actually have to bear the cost of their service. Moreover, the Nicaraguan government would provide contracts for public works projects in Sandino’s territory for which only Sandino loyalists could compete. (Crawley, 2007, pp. 30-32). In return, Sandino would completely disarm the rest of his forces and submit to government control. What is clear is that while Sandino’s force did turn in some of their weapons, Sandino kept far more than 100 armed men. In less than a year after supposed disarmament, he offered the services of his 600 Sandinistas to the exclusive service of President Sacasa (Ibid, p. 45). All of these accommodations to the Sandinistas were onerous to the Guardia in general and to Somoza in particular. Yet, it was Sandino’s refusal to disarm according to the agreement, and Sacasa’s decision to consider elevating a former Sandinista over the Guardia, that precipitated Somoza’s assassination of Sandino.
Somoza demanded that Sandino surrender his weapons on 4 February 1934 in accordance with the surrender agreement of 2 February 1933. Yet, not only did Sandino refuse to abide the agreement, he convinced President Sacasa to appoint a presidential delegate to govern Nicaragua’s northern provinces. This delegate would “protect the interests of Sandino and his followers” and thereby place the Guardia in these provinces under a former insurgent officer and under Sandino’s direct control (Millett, 1978, p. 155). By way of analogy, this would have as popular a decision for the Guardia as if President Lincoln had appointed Robert E. Lee to command Union forces after the U.S. Civil War.

The situation came to a head when President Sacasa held a party on behalf of Sandino and his insurgents on 21 February 1934. Immediately following the party, Somoza and his officers arrested Sandino and had him and his officers executed and buried in unmarked graves. (Crawley, 2007, p. 46). The following day, Sandino’s forces at Wiwilli were given one opportunity to disarm as required by the 1933 surrender agreement. When the Sandinistas refused, the entire camp was wiped out, killing between 22-300 Sandinistas depending on differing accounts (Millett, 1978, p. 159). Somoza and the Guardia Nacional were able to do in two days what had previously been impossible for five years. Furthermore, while there would be some half-hearted attempts to reconstitute the Sandinista movement, no real threat to the Nicaraguan government would present itself again for another forty-eight years. Within a month of Sandino’s execution, Sacasa

191 Accounts also vary as to whether or not women and children were involved as well (Millett R., 1978; Gravatt, 1973; Nalty, 1968)
would begin replacing *Guardia* officers with his own relatives. Within two years, Somoza would pressure Sacasa to resign and Somoza’s family would begin its forty-six-year dynastic rule.

**High Stability-Faux Democracy**

From May 1936 until July 1979, Somoza and his sons were able to maintain stability and perpetuate their own rule without any further deployments of U.S. forces.\(^{192}\) The Somozas’ tenure in power required them to demonstrate legerdemain, political acumen, and ruthlessness, while maintaining the support of a strong patron.\(^{193}\) They did this by disbanding legislatures and changing laws to suit their needs at the time.\(^{194}\) Somoza and his sons also kept the *Guardia Nacional* sufficiently trained, equipped, and content. The Somoza regimes took great pains to provide the *Guardia* and their families first priority on all state run benefits. Moreover, officers of all ranks were allowed to carve out their own slice of the larger kleptocracy (Millett, 1978). By 1978, the *Guardia Nacional* and Nicaraguan government had become thoroughly corrupt and increasingly ineffective. Revolt in Nicaragua had historically been limited between oligarchical battles among elites (Walker & Wade, 2011). After the 1972 Managua earthquake, the rebellion be-

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\(^{192}\) Other than training missions, the U.S. only deployed U.S. Marines to Nicaragua in 1972 after the devastating Managua earthquake in a crisis response and humanitarian assistance role—not a combat role.

\(^{193}\) On April 30, 1936, a month before Somoza confiscated power from President Sacasa, the U.S. recognized President Martinez of El Salvador who came to power by extra-legal means. The U.S.’s recognition of Martinez rescinded the previous policy that had evolved as a result of the *Central American Peace Conference of 1907* whereby the U.S. and Central American States agreed to refuse recognition to regimes who came to power by force. The U.S.’s de facto, if not de jure rescinding of this policy opened the door for Somoza’s move to power. Somoza realized it would cost him little and ultimately he would most likely receive U.S. recognition.

\(^{194}\) Two examples are Article 141 that prohibited soldiers on active duty from obtaining public office by popular election and Article 105 of Title 1 which prohibited the succession of relatives in executive office.
came a nationwide grassroots movement. Disparate social classes and political and religious organizations aligned themselves under the communist led *Frente Sandanista* movement and overthrew the Somoza dynasty in 1979.

**Competing Explanations for State Longevity**

**COIN Theories Observed**

Thomas Walker and Christine Wade, note in *Living in the Shadow of the Eagle* (2011) that “Throughout Nicaraguan history, a small elite controlled most of the means of production and garnered most of the benefits. The country’s rulers--whether openly dictatorial or ostensibly democratic--almost always governed on behalf of the privileged few” (Walker & Wade, 2011, p. 3). Walker and Wade’s analysis of the Nicaraguan populace is valuable because it gives some idea as to how such relatively small governmental and revolutionary forces, never more than 5,000 on either side, could easily dictate the fortunes of almost 700,000 Nicaraguans.\(^{195}\) They point out that unlike other Latin American states, Nicaragua is not overpopulated and it has “no major racial, ethnic, linguistic, or religious divisions” (Walker & Wade, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, Walker and Wade argue that the majority of the populous are Spanish Mestizos,\(^{196}\) there is little racial prejudice, and nearly all Nicaraguans are Catholic. Therefore, with the exception of political ideology and wealth inequalities, there appear to be few other causational factors of instability\(^{197}\)


\(^{196}\) Combination of Spanish and Indian forebears.

\(^{197}\) I leverage terminology from the USAID tactical conflict analysis framework here. For more on this see [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadn621.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadn621.pdf).
typically present in intrastate wars. Yet, as previously demonstrated, Nicaragua has been continuously roiled by armed internal revolt.

Michel Gobat in *Confronting the American Dream* (2005) asserts that it was the presence of the Marine Legation Guard from 1912-1926 that precipitated the 1925 and 1927 revolts. He also argues that Sandino led a “peasant-based movement against a combined U.S.-Nicaraguan military force” (Gobat, 2007, p. 3). What Gobat’s assertion misses is that Sandino’s force was made up of the same peasants who had either been conscripted into the Nicaraguan military or hired by feudal local commanders. Moreover, these feudal commanders had already done this at least thirty-four times between Conservatives and Liberals from 1821-1927 (Wall, 1961; Millett, 1978). Moreover, the peasants who joined Sandino’s force initially were not involved in a nationalist movement. Rather, they were part of a feudal force fighting to support their padrone and his party.

This understanding of who constituted Sandino’s supporters or “The Army for the Defense of Nicaraguan Sovereignty (*Ejército Defensor de la Soberanía de Nicaragua-EDSN*)” is essential to analyzing the U.S. intervention from a COIN perspective (Library of Congress, 1993). First, the bulk of Sandino’s support was anchored disproportionately in Neuvo Segovia. This support was precipitated in the same manner many insurgent movements gain support. Some of Sandino’s supporters were genuine volunteers supporting Sandino against the Conservatives. The rest of Sandino’s troops were feudal conscripted forced to serve the regional master as their forbears had been forced to in previous revolts from 1821-1933 (Wall, 1961, p. xvi; Millett R., 1978). Later though, once the Conservative party had been removed from power, Sandino and his supporters found
themselves fighting the democratically elected Liberal government. President Moncada had formerly been Sandino’s commander and was a fellow Liberal. This is unusual because the installation of a Liberal executive and government was the original goal of the revolt. Moncada’s installation came about as a result of non-violent power transfer that even the losers agreed was fair (Boot, 2002; Millett R., 1978). Even if Sandino did not agree with the method by which the Liberals came to power, he should have agreed with the outcome. Improbably, Sandino had originally requested American military government as a condition in the 1926 negotiations the led to the Pact of Espino Negra (Boot, 2002, p. 236). Somehow the presence of American Marines for thirteen years in the Legation Guard and under the Conservatives did not move Sandino to violence. But the election of a fellow Liberal convinced him to continue to pursue violence.

What is also clear is that Sandino and his followers had little national support. With the exception of the feudal popular support of the populace of Nuevo Segovia, Sandino was not able to extend substantial influence beyond this region nationally. As Millett notes, “In five years of fighting the Marines failed to eliminate Sandino but, Sandino, except for an occasional daring raid had largely been confined to isolated and thinly populated sections and Nicaragua and had never taken a major city” (Millett, 1978, p. 98). While this, in and of itself does not demonstrate effective population centric COIN methods, it does demonstrate the ability of the Guardia and Marines to marginalize the insurgents. This is not to say that the Sandinistas did not represent a real threat to nascent Liberal regimes in 1928 and 1932. Rather, it means that the most crucial element of an insurgency or counterinsurgency, the populace, was largely ambivalent to Sandino and his supporters.
Hybrid Examples of COIN

While Marines had also attempted early on to pursue Sandino using large scale maneuvers from 1927-1930, they also had to adapt to his move to guerilla warfare. The Marines may have not been familiar with the language and culture specific to Nicaragua, but they were very familiar with insurgency and counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Panama. As such, Area Order-3, 1931, issued by the Chief of Staff for the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, Colonel Julian C. Smith demonstrates the strict balance required in hybrid COIN. While the area was deemed to be under martial law, Smith admonishes Marines and Guardia that,

“Practically all of the rule inhabitants of this area, particularly those living near the unsettled sections are subject to bandit attacks and depredations, which it is impossible for the Guardia to completely prevent. Many of these inhabitants, no matter where they're real sympathies may lie, are compelled, for fear of their lives, to maintain a friendly attitude toward the bandits. Every effort will be made to assure them of the friendliness of the Guardia toward all peaceable citizens and to extend such protection as will enable them to carry on peaceful occupations without molestation, and to accumulate property without fear of robbery. No effort will be spared to demonstrate the advantages of Law & Order and to secure their cooperation. In no case will their property be taken without proper compensation and even then, care must be exercised to see that they are left with sufficient quantities of food for their needs, and that their breeding stocks and fowls and live stocks are not depleted. Their houses will in no case be burned nor their property destroyed because of assistance they may have been compelled to give bandits or because of failure to give information to the Guardia.” (Smith, 1931)

This demonstrates an advanced understanding of COIN, particularly that locals may or may not support the insurgents because they want to. And, that treating locals poorly has a good chance of driving them into the hands of the insurgents. The Marines and Guardia Nacional also attempted to effect the mass relocation of population in Sandino’s areas of influence. The poorly executed nature of this plan in August 1929,
however, actually rejuvenated the then faltering Sandinista movement (Millett, 1978, p. 91).

In line with the tenets of *General Order 100*, Marines and *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* worked to combat normal criminal activity, such as murder and theft. They also targeted activities and those actions “approximating organized warfare” (Smith, 1931). Martial law gave the Marines and *Guardia* authority to impress local guides. It also allowed them to arrest or detain not only insurgents, but also those who provided material support. Finally, the Marines and Guardia were authorized to confiscate or destroy such personal property and take any measures that will “injure the cause of the bandits and lead to their defeat” or cause insurgents to forsake their “banditry” (Ibid).

**Troop Ratios**

Troop ratios in Nicaragua between 1927-1933 do little to explain the long-term success of the *Guardia* after U.S. withdrawal. The *Guardia* and Marine troop ratios to the Nicaraguan populace never got within even the most liberal estimates of forces required. Contemporary estimates of required counterinsurgent ratios to population range between 1:50 as the most conservative and 1:91 as the most liberal (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13; Quinlivan, 1995-96; Goode, 2010; McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Lewis, 2010; Brown J. S., 2006). There were not enough U.S. and Nicaraguan troops to hold sparsely populated areas. Moreover, the insurgents were rarely outnumbered significantly and may have even had a slight numerical advantage over the *Guardia* when the Marines left.
Counterinsurgent to terrain ratios do little to explain the long-term success of the Marine trained _Guardia_. At the height of the U.S intervention there were approximately 5,000 Marines and sailors associated with the 2nd Marine Brigade. There were 1,710 troops associated with the GN at this same time (Gravatt, 1973; Neimeyer, 2008). This provided a force of 6,710 total troops to secure the 1928 elections. The American troop levels would be shrunk however when U.S. Secretary of State Stimson announced that only 500 of the 1,500 Marines in Nicaragua would remain by 1931 (Millett, 1978, p. 94). With 6,710 troops, Marines and _Guardia_ combined at the peak troop levels, this provided 7.5 Marines or GN per square mile.\(^{198}\) This low troop to terrain ratio was further exacerbated by the use of insurgent sanctuaries across the border in Honduras and Costa Rica. U.S. and Nicaraguan troops could only pursue Sandinistas under in-extremis circumstances and could not garrison these areas.

Counterinsurgent to insurgent ratios do little to explain the long-term stability provided by the _Guardia_. The insurgents ranged in estimated size from a low of approximately 500 to an estimated high of 5,000 (2d Marine Brigade, 1932; Headquarters Guardia Nationale, 1927-1933; Millett, 1978). Based on the numbers of casualties, enemy sightings via ground and aerial reconnaissance, the number of weapons turned in, and the forces described by Sandino himself, there is reason to assume that the Sandinistas ranged between 3,000-4,000 full and/or part time troops.\(^{199}\) Even if the lower of these

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\(^{198}\)6,700 troops to cover approximately 50,338 square miles of territory.

\(^{199}\)While Sandino claimed to have 5,000 troops, he does not breakout which of these are full time insurgents and which are part-timers who may have only participated in operations local to their own houses etc. However, between those sighted by patrols, and bodies left behind after contacts, the most appropriate estimate seems to be around 3,000-4,000.
is assumed at 3,000, this provides a near parity between Marine and Guardia forces. In 1928, the Guardia and Marines would have had a 2:1 advantage. However, that advantage would have been diminished by 1930 where there were 1,870 GN and 1,500 Marines (3,370 total) giving the Guardia and Marines only a 1.3:1 advantage. Then, assuming the insurgent numbers held steady or increased there were 2,370 Guardia and 500 Marines (2,870 total) in 1931 which gave the insurgents near parity or a slight advantage. Then, in 1932, with the end of the intervention and only 2,274 Guardia remaining behind, this provided the insurgents with a solid advantage.

Lastly, Counterinsurgent to population ratios do little to explain the long-term success survival of the U.S. supported Nicaraguan state after U.S. withdrawal. This study indicates that there is little direct connection between strictly quantitative measures and long-term outcomes. A better explanation is the connection between qualitative measures of Marine and Guardia capacity.

The oft quoted standard in the U.S. military’s COIN publication identifies 1:50, counterinsurgents to populace as the optimal planning ratio. With a population of around 670,000 at the height of the intervention and a maximum troop level of 6,710 in September 1928, this gives a ratio of 1:100, counterinsurgents to population. Given the relative ability of the Guardia and Marines to secure the populated areas and isolate Sandino, this would indicate significant overperformance of predictions on the Marines and

\[200\] Based on an estimate of 3,000 Sandinistas.
\[201\] For some reason the COIN manual uses the ration of 20:1000 instead of 1:50.
\[202\] (Nohlen, 2005, p. 500) and also populstat.info/Americas/nicaragc.htm.
Guardia’s part. Recently, this number has been modified to possibly as low as 91:1, citizens to counterinsurgents, being sufficient (McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Brown, 2006). If this is the case, then using even the most optimistic estimate Marines and Guardia still lacked sufficient forces. What is more, by 1931 the ratio dropped to 1:233 and then to 1:295 counterinsurgent to population by the end of 1932. Additionally, if Krepinevich and Linn’s idea of foxhole strength are applied, the force ratios may be lowered by as much as forty percent more (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 236; Linn, 2000, p. 325). Still, even with the precipitous drop in counterinsurgent to population rations, there was no corresponding spike in violent activity nor increase in insurgent success. This seems to be supported by Neimeyer who asserts that “either due to arrogance or a dearth of Marines able to take the field, Marine forces sent against Sandino and his men were always under-strength and outnumbered” and this is borne out by the detailed listing of all 510 contacts in the List of Contacts of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua 1927-1933 (Headquarters Guardia Nationale, 1927-1933; Neimeyer, 2008).

**Enduring Insurgent Sanctuaries**

The presence of enduring insurgent sanctuaries does not correlate with the longevity of the U.S. supported Nicaraguan state after U.S. withdrawal. These insurgent sanctuaries allowed the Sandinistas to survive but prevented them from succeeding. Sandino’s forces were able to stay alive and remain relevant principally because of unsecured borders with Honduras and Costa Rica. Still, while these sanctuaries allowed the Sandinistas to remain alive, they also kept them isolated from the population as a whole.

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203 In fact, we see a large drop in insurgent activity immediately following the 1928 elections. Later, though, we see a sustained, slow bleed process rather than any major spikes.
(Neimeyer, 2008). As a result, the Sandinistas had little direct daily impacts on the 1928 and 1932 elections and the day to day functioning of the state. While sanctuaries allowed them to escape and continue to slowly bleed Marines, they prevented them from winning decisively (Millett, 1978, pp. 119-120).

**Continued Support After Withdrawal**

Enduring combat support and military economic aid were not essential in the survival of the Somoza regimes. Rather, they guaranteed perpetual Nicaraguan support of American foreign policy. The Somozas shrewdly aligned themselves against the same enemies as their patron, the U.S. In World War II, Nicaragua declared war on Germany, Italy, and Japan just days after the U.S. did. As a result, they benefitted from millions in *Lend Lease* dollars. During the Cold War, the Somoza regime became virulently anti-communist and even offered to send troops to Vietnam in support of the U.S.’s war effort there. Consequently, Nicaragua received training and military equipment. The support provided to Nicaragua was not to address a specified Nicaraguan internal threat, but prevent interference by the Axis Powers during World War II and communist powers during the Cold War.

**Degree of Embeddedness: Governance and Security Force Development**

**Sovereignty Fallacy: Developing the Nicaraguan Government**

From 1850 until the present, the U.S. Department of State has preferred to use *coercive influencing* relationships to advise and assist the Nicaraguan government in its development. Whereas the U.S. assumed full control of the governance of other former Spanish colonies such as the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico during previous interventions, the U.S. shied away from this as a policy in other interventions. In subsequent
interventions, the U.S. eschewed full political control of states it intervened in, in favor of publicly proclaiming its support for the total sovereignty of these states. However, as will be observed, this pretense of sovereignty, or sovereignty fallacy, flies in the face of the unmitigated veto power that the U.S. possessed particularly in Nicaragua over the government it supported.

During the U.S.’s 1927-1933 intervention, the U.S. employed a low degree of embeddedness within the Nicaraguan government in order to effect political change. The U.S. Department of State primarily used advising efforts to develop the Nicaraguan government during its 1928 elections and efforts to defeat the Sandinista rebels. These influencing efforts did not amount to large formal programs but are visible mostly where the Nicaraguan and American governments disagreed. It is instructive to observe whose opinion matters more in cases where the two governments differed. In almost every instance of real import, U.S. opinion carried the day. Examples of this dissonance include: selection of who would train and the lead the Guardia, formal legal authorization for the operation of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, command relationships between the Guardia and Marines operating unilaterally in Nicaragua, creating the budget for the Guardia Nacional, the training and employment of auxiliaries, civicos, and reservists, control of election machinery, and finally adding legitimacy to agreements between Nicaraguan agents.

The first example of this dissonance can be discerned even before the Stimson Peace Plan was finally approved by the Liberals. On 8 May 1927, as plans were being made to identify who would lead the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua’s training effort, U.S. agents preferred to use Marines. This was due to their history and familiarity with
Nicaragua. However, perhaps because of the legacy of their history and familiarity with Nicaragua, President Adolfo Diaz preferred to use U.S. Army personnel. Not only would Nicaraguan officials have no say over which U.S. military service trained the Guardia, they would also have no say over which Marine officers were selected for the duty. This would be wholly decided by U.S. officers. Therefore, in the end, President Diaz was over-ruled and Marines were chosen and the individual officers were selected by that service (Millett, 1978).

A second example of dissonance resulted from the need to begin development of the Guardia Nacional before the actual ratification of the Munro-Cuadra Pasos Agreement on 22 December 1928. Until this point, the U.S. Marines were required to train and lead the Guardia in combat without any formal legal authorization by the Nicaraguan government. Not until 18 June 1927, did the Marines receive their first formal guidance from President Diaz. This first guidance was only in regard to pay scales for officers. On 30 July 1927, Marines finally received a formal decree from the president regarding the legal framework under which the Guardia Nacional was to operate.\textsuperscript{204} Therefore, the Marines of the Guardia had to operate with little formal guidance from May 1927 until December 1928. In spite of this, the Marines and existing Guardia reported their first contact with the Sandinistas on 16 July 1927 in the Ocotal region of Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{205} This is important because it demonstrates a de facto control of Nicaraguan sovereignty by the

\textsuperscript{204} From the Julian C. Smith Collection as captured in Millett (1978, pg. 62).
\textsuperscript{205} During this contact, the Guardia garrison stationed at Ocotillo, commanded by Captain Hartfield, USMC was attacked by a superior number of Sandinistas in a fourteen-hour firefight. The Marines and GN lost only one Marine in this exchange but killed over fifty Sandinistas as a result of ground fire and as many as 300 as a result of close air support missions (Headquarters Guardia National, 1927-1933).
U.S. even if they claimed that de jure sovereignty rested with the Nicaraguan government. Moreover, even after the signing of the Munro-Cuadra Pasos Treaty in September of 1928, the Guardia Nacional had already exceeded its authorized manning limits due to exigencies on the ground (Millett, 1978, p. 71).

Command relationships are foundational to any military operation and a fundamental prerogative of state sovereignty in relationships between a state’s various security forces. This prerogative however, rested with the American military and not the Nicaraguan state. In mid-1927, the Nicaraguan Army was being disbanded. The municipal police were subsumed into the Guardia Nacional, and the existing Guardia were being led by Marines. Operating alongside these mostly indigenous forces was the 2nd Marine Brigade (Neimeyer, 2008). With such disparate forces operating all across Nicaragua against an ill-defined insurgent foe, there was a consequential need for clearly defined command relationships between these disparate forces. Yet, it was the commander of the U.S. Navy Special Service Squadron who established these command relationships for all these elements involved in combat and policing duties and not the Nicaraguan government.

Another foundational control a state demonstrates over its security forces is allocating the budget of these organizations. Other than being required to pay the costs of the Guardia Nacional, the Nicaraguan government had little say in how much the Guardia

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206 The interrelated responsibilities between commander, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command… Joint Publication 1-02 DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JP 1-02) (2016), p. 41. The relationships are prescribed by military law and are essential in creating unity of command and effort.
should cost and how the money should be spent. A key concern for U.S. agents in Nicaragua was systemic graft (Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008). Key areas for graft were in the allocation of contracts, the disbursement of pay, the purchase of quartermaster goods, and the like. As such, American commanders of the Guardia Nacional went to great lengths to deny Nicaraguan agents the ability to control monies allotted to the Guardia. They also required strict accounting within the Guardia Nacional for all accounts. Further, the American commanders of the Guardia estimated their required budget and submitted this to the President. The Nicaraguan president could accept this budget or negotiate a smaller budget. However, with the exception of negotiating the size of the budget and providing the money for it, the Nicaraguan government had little to do with the Guardia Nacional’s budgetary affairs.

Closely associated with budgeting for the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua, was the development of supplemental police and reserve forces such as civicos, auxiliaries, and reservists. Several of these programs were really designed to provide the sitting president with a security force that was exclusively loyal to himself. The U.S. commanders cited the Munro-Cuadra Pasos Treaty where it called for only one security force—the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua. Still, the cost of increasing the size of the all-volunteer and professional Guardia Nacional was substantial, particularly in the context of the Great Depression. When the Nicaraguan president wanted to create a partisan force loyal only to him, the U.S. officers of the Guardia and the U.S. State Department possessed a de facto veto authority. While these forces were nevertheless created, they were only allowed to exist and operate under the auspices of the Marine led Guardia Nacional.
The Conservative government under President Diaz was asked by the U.S. State Department to cede complete control of the elections over to U.S. Army General Frank McCoy. Both Sandino and his Conservative foe, President Diaz, possessed legitimate concerns about the fairness of any election. As a result, General McCoy was given complete control over the election machinery, even to deciding whether Marines or Guardia personnel would be inside the polling sites (Millett, 1978). This decision did not reflect a dispute between General McCoy and the Nicaraguan government, but rather between McCoy and Marine Corps General Elias R. Beadle. The Nicaraguan government had little say in key decisions regarding the election. As Dr. Dana G. Munro, a former charge d'affaires in Nicaragua, writes of his experience during this period, “The electoral mission had given three months’ training, in special schools in each province, to the marine and navy enlisted men who were to be chairmen of most of the 432 local electoral boards. The chairmen of the 13 departmental electoral boards were for the most part officers from the United States Army” (Munro, 1974, p. 252). The elections were a success by every measure—even by the losers’ account who, as Boot asserts, claimed it was “the cleanest in the country’s history” (Boot, 2002, p. 243; Millett R., 1978, p. 106). The turnout for the election was almost ninety percent turnout among registered voters (Nohlen, 2005). However, they were planned and executed completely independent of Nicaraguan government control.

Finally, even upon the eve of the U.S.’s departure, both major Nicaraguan political parties did not consider agreements made without U.S. cognizance to bear concrete authority. On 7 November 1932, Nicaraguan leaders Chamorro, Diaz, Sacasa, and Rod Espinosa, agreed in substance on a pact to accept the outcome of the 1932 elections and
maintain the *Guardia Nacional* as a nonpartisan force. Nonetheless, all proceeded to the American Legation. There, they requested to have the signing of their agreement supervised by Matthew Hanna, the U.S. Minister (Ministry of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Nicaragua, 1932). An argument could be made that this is a product of suzerainty and political dependency birthed by five years of military intervention. However, Millett argues it is more likely a case of continued political mistrust among Nicaraguan politicians and an effort to force the U.S. to assist in the implementation of the agreement (Millett, 1978). It is a clear signal that the U.S. government held de facto authority even as they professed Nicaraguan sovereignty.

**Degrees of Embeddedness in Security Force Development**

In the span of less than six years the U.S. Marines had created a host-nation security force largely from scratch and then transitioned complete responsibility for Nicaraguan security. From 1929 until the end of the intervention, the bulk of patrolling and operations were transferred from U.S. Marines to the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua*. By Spring 1930, less than two years after the start of the intervention, *Guardia* forces were aggressively patrolling in place of Marine units. While there would be a few major Marine operations in times of emergency, the fight was largely taken over by the *Guardia* by 1930.

To understand how far the *Guardia Nacional* had come from 1927-1933, it is important to understand the original state of affairs in the Nicaraguan security forces. First, leadership in the Nicaraguan military was *feudal* in nature. That is, officers were given
ranks according to the size of forces they could raise from their region or based on the degree of their connectedness to the current regime (Millett, 1978, pg. 21). This is not to say that gifted leaders did not exist, but rather that their promotion was not based on merit per se. Indeed, because an officer received higher rank based on the size of force he could recruit or conscript and pay, this also incentivized graft as a means of paying soldiers. Additionally, the sheer numbers of generals in the relatively tiny Nicaraguan military is suspect. For instance, in 1908 there were seventy-seven Nicaraguan Army generals (Ibid). To provide some perspective, the current size of the United States Marine Corps, the smallest Department of Defense service is 175,000 Marines.\(^{207}\) According to Title X, USC 526, the USMC was only statutorily allowed a maximum of sixty-one flag grade officers. This means that there is roughly one flag grade officer per 2,868 Marines. In comparison, while it is difficult to determine the exact size of the Nicaraguan military in 1908, it cannot have exceeded 5,000 active duty soldiers. This would result in almost a general for every platoon of soldiers, or forty-four times the number of flag grade officers as the U.S. Marines have today.

Next, members of the Nicaraguan security forces were not generally volunteers and professionals. They were rather generally conscripted and indentured serfs often serving against their will. Richard Millett records a report from the Marine Corps Historical Association that, “While the law provided for universal military service, in reality the ranks were filled by forcibly rounding up members of the lower class, tying them to-

\(^{207}\) [www.usmc.mil](http://www.usmc.mil)
gether, and shipping them off to the nearest army camp” (Millett, 1978, p. 22). Nicaraguan recruits were conscripted from the *barefoot classes* and only the poorest citizens were pressed into service. Nicaraguan soldiers generally had to subsist by looting during war. Even when they received regular pay from the government, their officers withheld portions of this ostensibly for the purchase of their rations (Ibid).

If politicized conscript security forces were seen as the cause of Nicaragua’s perpetual violent political transitions, then an all-volunteer, professional, and nonpartisan constabulary was seen as the answer. Across the board, most agree that the *Guardia Nacional* that the Marines created was more professional, capable, effective, disciplined, and well-equipped than any previous example in Nicaragua. Yet they also agree that they failed to produce a security force that was immune to politicization by Nicaraguan politicians after U.S. withdrawal (Walker & Wade, 2011; Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; Library of Congress, 1993; Millett, 1978; Munro, 1974; Musicant, 1990; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008). Indeed, as Brent Gravatt argues, “The Marines, however, were not successful in creating a nonpartisan military. Given the Nicaraguan political context, an apolitical armed force was probably an impossibility” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 3). Furthermore, from American Minister Charles Eberhart’s perspective in 1925, “that it is very apparent that the time has not yet come, if it ever will, when a nonpartisan constabulary or National Guard, organized and maintained under American ideas and ideals, will be a success in Nicaragua. It is not wanted” (Millett, 1978, p. 47). Despite the failure to create a nonpartisan security force, the *Guardia Nacional*, even in the hands of yet another Nicaraguan dictator was nonetheless able to “bring stability to Nicaragua but certainly not in the manner envisioned by the State Department. Stability was achieved not through the practice
of free elections but through General Somoza's control of organized force” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 4).

**Conclusion**

From 1927-1933 the U.S. employed encadrement, an *inhabiting* strategy to develop Nicaraguan security institutions. U.S. Marines sought to effect evolutionary change in a revolutionary timeframe and did it from within Nicaraguan institutions rather than from without. And with the exception of their officer development, they were successful. Conversely, the U.S. Department of State employed a strategy of *coercive influence*, to advise the Nicaraguan government. They sought to effect evolutionary change in a revolutionary timeframe and did it from outside the Nicaraguan institutions and failed. The combination of *inhabiting* and *influencing* strategies produced an environment of high stability but *faux democracy*. The combination of high stability and *faux democracy* describes what this examination delineates as a *tumbling state*. The Nicaraguan state supported by the U.S. was able to persist for forty-six years after U.S. withdrawal.

In analyzing the U.S.’s efforts to develop the government of Nicaragua and its security forces, four outcomes are clear: 1-The U.S. succeeded in securing long-term stability; 2-The U.S. succeeded in creating the highest caliber military force possible; 3-The U.S. failed to create a nonpartisan security force; 4-The U.S. failed to change the political culture that had previously politicized the military and police of Nicaragua. The first visible observation is that the U.S. succeeded in maintaining stability in Nicaragua. The U.S.’s intervention reduced the frequency of what had become perpetual armed revolt on an average of every three years (Boot, 2002; Crawley, 2007; Gravatt, 1973; Millet, 1978; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008).
The second observation is that the intervention produced a military force without parallel in Nicaragua to that time. Millett notes that, “despite such handicaps as well as the limitations placed on training time imposed by the demands of the campaign against Sandino, the Marines did surprisingly well, transforming their recruits within a few months into the best trained disciplined, and equipped force in Nicaraguan history” (Millett, 1978, p. 71). Whether or not their tactical skills and discipline would be used to noble ends, there is great support for the argument that the Marines created the most tactically and technically capable military force Nicaragua had ever possessed to that date (Boot, 2002; Crawley, 2007; Library of Congress, 1993; Munro, 1974; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008; Walker & Wade, 2011).

The third observation is that the U.S. failed to produce the nonpartisan security force the U.S. had thought was the solution to Nicaraguan instability. As Millett argues, “had the achievement of technical and organizational improvements been the sole objective, the Guardia’s creation would have been rated, with some qualifications, a major success. However, the Guardia did not defeat completely the Sandinistas from 1927 to 1932, and the Guardia failed to become a non-political force.” (Millett, 1978, p. 79). With the withdrawal of the Marines, Sandino surrendered to the government. Subsequently, Sandino and his movement were destroyed at the hands of the Guardia Nacional after the Marines withdrew and the Sandinistas refused to disarm per their 1933 agreement. Just as there is great support for the unrivaled military success of the Guardia Nacional, there is similar consensus on the failure of the U.S. to imbue this force with an enduring nonpartisan culture (Boot, 2002; Crawley, 2007; Library of Congress, 1993; Munro, 1974; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008; Walker & Wade, 2011).
The fourth observation is that the U.S. failed to change the oligarchical kleptocratic political culture of Nicaragua during its tenure. As Gravatt advances, “the United States was not successful in changing Nicaraguan politics where continuance in the presidency or accession thereto was accomplished by force rather than by vote. The situation in post-intervention Nicaragua, Somoza and the National Guard, exemplifies the difficulty of imposing permanent change from without” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 4). Moreover, while Walker and Wade speak positively of the Frente Sandinista led rule from 1979-1990, they also acknowledge that from 1821-1979 at least, “Throughout Nicaraguan history, a small elite controlled most of the means of production and garnered most of the benefits. The country’s rulers--whether openly dictatorial or ostensibly Democratic--almost always governed on behalf of the privileged few” (Walker & Wade, 2011, p. 3). There does not seem to have been any great difference between Liberals and Conservatives when it came to graft, corruption, or perpetuation of power or seizure of power through force. In fact, at different times, the U.S. helped perpetuate both parties for lengthy periods of time in office. It is this failure to change the oligarchical kleptocratic political culture that underwrites the other U.S. failure—failure to create a nonpartisan security force.

What this analysis means in a larger sense is that no amount of military success can overcome a corrupt political culture. Another essential learning point for modern-day Marines in developing host-nation security forces has to be to commencement the creation of host-nation officers as soon as practicable. Then, even if the intervention is of short duration, the training force must begin early to identify young leaders who might possess executive skills. These could be promoted expeditiously to prevent the need for appointments based on political reliability. However, even if the Marines in Nicaragua
had begun earlier, it is inconceivable that a handful of Guardia officers would be immune from being corrupted by a universally oligarchical kleptocracy. Failure in the political culture is failure in the entire system. The result of the U.S. intervention and training of the government and Guardia from 1927-1933 produced a very stable faux democratic and tumbling state. This state persisted only as long as conditions allowed for a capable security force, popular ambivalence, and revolutionary weakness. Once any or all of these variables changed dramatically, the tumbling state became a crumbling one.
Chapter 5: Vietnam-Nineteen Years of U.S. Advising & Three Years of Survival

“Of the resulting analyses, that of the Secretary of Defense’s Department of International Security Affairs (ISA) was the most pessimistic. Noting that although Tet had resulted in heavy VC casualties, it had also damaged the ARVN substantially, an ISA memo dated 22 February 1968 questioned the ability of the ARVN to recover...The study concluded that U.S. forces, at any level, could not win the war; only fundamental improvements in the military and political leadership of South Vietnam could defeat the insurgents.”


The U.S. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on 7 August 1964, providing legislative consent to expand U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In September 1964, the Director of Central Intelligence published the Special National Intelligence Estimate: Chances for a Stable Government in South Vietnam (SNIE 53-64) (Director for Central Intelligence, 1964). Delivered five months prior to the insertion of the first U.S. combat troops, the first two sentences of SNIE 53-64 were prescient. The first stated, “THE PROBLEM-To assess the chances for the emergence of a stable non-Communist regime in South Vietnam” (Ibid, pg. 1). The second declared, “CONCLUSION-At present the odds are against the emergence of a stable government capable of effectively prosecuting the war in South Vietnam” (Ibid).

American policy makers became convinced in 1964, that only increasing amounts of military aid to South Vietnam coupled with U.S. troop intervention could facilitate the “emergence of a stable government capable of effectively prosecuting the war in South Vietnam.” By April 1975, the U.S had invested $148.5 billion in economic aid\textsuperscript{208} and

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{208} These are 2017 dollars. (Rohn, 2014) or $28.5 billion in 1974 dollars from 1953-1975 aa using an inflation rate of $5.21:1 from 1974-2017.
\end{footnote}
$738 billion in military aid (in 2017 dollars).\textsuperscript{209} This included an estimated $20.8 billion in lost or destroyed U.S. equipment,\textsuperscript{210} and as much as $5.21 billion in equipment abandoned by the South Vietnamese to the North Vietnamese.\textsuperscript{211} In addition to colossal expenditure in treasure, the cost in terms of blood was also considerable. In addition to countless North and South Vietnamese lives lost, the U.S. invested the lives of 58,220 of its own citizens in the war.\textsuperscript{212} Moreover, in the last months of the war, there was little sign of that the perpetual payment of these rents would cease. By FY1974, the U.S. provided $3.4 billion in economic assistance\textsuperscript{213} and anticipated paying an additional $2.4 billion\textsuperscript{214} in FY1975 (in 2017 dollars) (Ellerman, The South Vietnamese Economy and U.S. Aid, 1975). Despite all this, the prognosis at the end of the war for a “stable government capable of effectively prosecuting the war in South Vietnam” was no better than the beginning. On 23 May 1974, the CIA published its analysis of the situation facing the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and the Government of (South) Vietnam (GVN) immediately preceding the final North Vietnamese offensive:

“\textit{Should a major offensive occur...ARVN might be unable to regain the initiative, and it would be questionable whether the GVN would be able to survive without combat participation by US Air Force and Navy units. At a minimum, large scale US logistic support would be required to stop the communist drive.}”

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{209} These are 2011 dollars. Or, or $111 billion in 1974 dollars adjusted for inflation covering 1965-1974 (Daggett, 2010, p. 1).
\textsuperscript{212} (NARA, 2008).
\textsuperscript{213} $650 million in 1974 dollars adjusted at a rate of $5.21.
\textsuperscript{214} $450 million in 1974 dollars adjusted at a rate of $5.21.
\end{footnotesize}
Case Representativeness in Third COIN: Vietnam

Previous chapters examined cases of high embeddedness and low embeddedness in interventions where governance had been completely erased—*tabula rasa* (The Philippines 1898-1913 and Iraq 2003-2010). The last two case studies of this examination analyze interventions where the state was fragile but not yet failed and governance had not yet been erased. Nicaragua and Vietnam represent these cases. The former represents a case of both high and low embeddedness in security force development and governance respectively. Vietnam represents a case of low embeddedness in both security force and governance development. This analysis will determine if there is a correlation between degree of embeddedness and state longevity in the course of U.S. third-party COIN interventions where the host-nation state has not yet failed or been erased.

From March of 1965 until August 1972, the U.S. intervened in Vietnam with conventional combat formations in order to arrest a degrading political and military situation. During this period, the U.S. employed *institution influencing strategies* of low degrees of embeddedness to develop both the Vietnamese security and governance institutions. The intervention resulted in a South Vietnamese government unable to maintain empirical sovereignty for less than three years after the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam.

From 1954-1972, U.S. assistance and intervention in South Vietnam produced a *strategic rentier state*. Strategic rents—close air support and military economic assistance—provided by the U.S. had staved off South Vietnamese defeat during the 1972
Easter Offensive. South Vietnam was able to defend itself from its northern foe only as long as the U.S. continued providing these strategic rents. However, with the Case-Church Amendment of May 1973, these strategic rents were withheld by a recalcitrant U.S. Congress. Once the strategic rents ended, Vietnam became what this examination terms a crumbling state, characterized by no democracy, and no stability (see Figure 5.1). In 1975, after only fifty-five days of fighting, when it became clear the U.S. would not intervene, South Vietnamese security forces imploded, despite possession of enough “aircraft, armor and artillery—to assure …a country-wide edge in firepower assets” (Director of Central Intelligence, 1974, p. 4).

U.S. civilian personnel developing South Vietnamese governance employed coercive influencing forms of relations through Advise and Assist operations. While maintaining the pretense of a sovereign South Vietnamese Government, the United States would have a major role in deposing President Ngo Dinh Diem. U.S. civilian and military officers would also design and implement the strategic hamlet program and the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program or CORDS. Similarly, U.S. military officers employed Advise and Assist and coercive influence to develop Vietnamese security forces.

The capacity of South Vietnamese forces relative to North Vietnamese forces was negatively impacted by the division of labor between U.S. and South Vietnamese units. Prior to Vietnamization, the lion’s share of major kinetic operations were conducted by U.S. forces making use of their superior mobility and firepower. South Vietnamese forces were used primarily for pacification operations. This allowed Vietnamese citizens to see South Vietnamese troops directly involved in their security. The population centric
counterinsurgency operations conducted by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were largely successful. Major U.S. unilateral conventional operations against North Vietnamese main force units were also largely successful. The North Vietnamese formations and their commanders who fought against and survived combat with American forces were compelled to adapt and learn in ways the South Vietnamese were not.

The shielding of South Vietnamese forces from major conventional operations created a *training gap* between the ARVN and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). This gap became patently obvious when North Vietnamese were able to maneuver, logistically support themselves, and provide fire support capabilities over massive distances. The Government of South Vietnam could not match these capabilities over much smaller distances without perpetual U.S. support. The result was that the U.S. failed in the goal of its intervention: to develop a “stable government capable of effectively prosecuting the war in South Vietnam” (Director for Central Intelligence, 1964). *Institution influencing strategies* failed to remediate the governance and security capacities of the South Vietnamese government and security forces sufficient to govern and defend itself without perpetual U.S. support. As such, there appears to be a correlation between the low degrees of embeddedness used to develop South Vietnamese governance and security forces and the short-lived duration of South Vietnamese empirical sovereignty after U.S. withdrawal.
Contemporary COIN theories, as well as those regarding troop ratios, and presence of insurgent sanctuaries provide unsatisfying explanations for the implosion of the South Vietnamese government and security forces in 1975. The cessation of continued U.S. combat support does help explain this failure. Enemy centric COIN helps explain the neutralization of the Viet Cong as a significant threat following the Tet Offensive of 1968. It fails however, to explain the long-term failure of the South Vietnamese state. Population centric COIN efforts help explain the estimated pacification of ninety-three percent of the rural countryside by 1970 (Lipsman & Doyle, The Vietnam Experience: Fighting for Time, 1983, pp. 74-76; White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, pp. 10-11). How-

**Figure 5.1- State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security**

**Alternative Competing Explanations**

Contemporary COIN theories, as well as those regarding troop ratios, and presence of insurgent sanctuaries provide unsatisfying explanations for the implosion of the South Vietnamese government and security forces in 1975. The cessation of continued U.S. combat support does help explain this failure. Enemy centric COIN helps explain the neutralization of the Viet Cong as a significant threat following the Tet Offensive of 1968. It fails however, to explain the long-term failure of the South Vietnamese state. Population centric COIN efforts help explain the estimated pacification of ninety-three percent of the rural countryside by 1970 (Lipsman & Doyle, The Vietnam Experience: Fighting for Time, 1983, pp. 74-76; White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, pp. 10-11). How-

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### Figure 5.1: State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security

- **Higher (Institution Inhabiting)**
  - The Philippines
  - High Stability
  - Low Democracy (Stumbling State)

- **Lower (Institution Influencing)**
  - Nicaragua*
  - Cuba*
  - Haiti*
  - Dominican Republic*
  - High Stability
  - Faux Democracy (Tumbling State)

- **Lower (Institution Influencing)**
  - Iraq***
  - Vietnam
  - Afghanistan***
  - No Stability
  - No Democracy
  - After U.S. W/D Support**
  - (Crumbling State)

Note: Includes only those counter-insurgencies where the U.S. intervened with conventional military force

*Straddling the line between low-high Gov embeddedness reflects small degree of Gov embeddedness in elements such as customs receivships

***Strategic Rentier State

***Straddling the line reflects short duration U.S. agency in Iraq and Afg Gov
ever, the advent of the CORDS program in May 1967 under General William Westmoreland blurs any strict delineation between population centric and enemy centric COIN methods. While General Westmoreland is most commonly associated with enemy centric COIN, and General Creighton Abrams with more population centric methods, the CORDS program had its genesis under Westmoreland and its payoff under Abrams. Nevertheless, both COIN methods fall short of explaining why in 1975 the NVA was able to overrun South Vietnam in less than two months. Similarly, troop ratios and infiltration rates help, in the short-term, understand the relative challenges of fighting perhaps the penultimate case of hybrid warfare. However, they do little to help understand how the South Vietnamese, while in the defense, possessing a numerical advantage, a fire support advantage, and the logistical and tactical benefits of interior lines, was so easily beaten after the U.S. forces withdrew. In contrast, continued support after U.S. withdrawal does allow us to understand the conditions under which South Vietnam might have continued to persist indefinitely as a strategic rentier state.

Methodological Approach

This paper’s analysis of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam will examine a case of low embeddedness in both host-nation governance and security institutions. This case study is established alongside the Nicaragua case study to provide a contextually constrained historical comparison between cases of intervention in failing but not erased

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215 Interior lines are a defensive methodology that confers an advantage on the defender due to the compressed distances the surrounded or nearly surrounded defender has in redeploying and resupplying forces over shorter distances than the attacker. Where the attacker has to travel a greater distance around the defensive formation to redeploy and resupply, the defender relying on interior lines is able to execute both significantly faster.
host-nation governance and security. These two cases will also be used to conduct contextually constrained historical comparisons to the two other cases of U.S. intervention in erased or tabula rasa governance and security institutions. This study relies on interviews and surveys of U.S. military leaders and military advisors to the Vietnamese security forces as primary sources for this case study. This research also benefits greatly from the recent declassification of a vast library of CIA archives related to the Vietnam War. These released archives provided this examination a more transparent view of the opaque intelligence and security context in which decisions were made. This has helped to better discern motives, assumptions made by planners and policy makers, and the understandings that practitioners based their decisions on. This examination also relies on a variety of secondary sources. This examination utilizes processing tracing to connect antecedent conditions pre-intervention through to the Government of South Vietnam’s first major tests of sovereignty in 1972 and 1975. This will help to identify any correlation between degrees of embeddedness and SLAW. The product of this case study will be compared to the other three case studies. This examination will employ Stuart Mill’s most similar method to analyze potential causal mechanisms for increasing or decreasing SLAW in the course of these conventional COIN interventions.

This case study begins with an overview of the U.S. intervention from 1954-1975 and the first significant tests of the South Vietnamese state in 1972 and 1975. Next, this case study will look at evidence for the impacts of various COIN methods, troops ratios, presence of sanctuaries, and continued support after U.S. withdrawal. Next, this examination will develop evidence for the impacts of governance development strategies and
the degree of embeddedness employed. Then, the case study will scrutinize security development strategies and evidence for the degree of embeddedness employed. Finally, the case study will meld the observations of strategies employed to develop governance and security and their outcomes to further develop a theory of degrees of embeddedness in conventional COIN interventions.

**Conflict Overview**

“No level of operational or tactical proficiency can overcome corrupt host-nation governance and national military leadership.”
- General Anthony Zinni (USMC, ret), (January 2017)

**Pre-Intervention Situation and Goals**

In 1965, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield visited Vietnam to observe the situation there firsthand, and he returned from his trip with two assessments. First, he noted that the $2 billion the U.S. had spent to develop the South Vietnamese government and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) had been wasted. Second, he assessed that the only way to arrest the deteriorating situation in South Vietnam was either through the “massive commitment of U.S. forces” or through nuclear war (Congressional Record, 1965, p. 2557). On March 8, 1965, U.S. Marines of Battalion Landing Team 3/9 waded ashore at China Beach, near Danang. These Marines represented the first combat formations to arrive in Vietnam. A few months later, elements of the 101st Airborne arrived. These forces were the first of fifty-four allied maneuver battalions\(^{216}\) requested by

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\(^{216}\) Maneuver battalions are those capable of engaging in or providing direct support for engagements with the enemy. These may be infantry, artillery, armor, cavalry units etc. They are not typically combat service support units.
Westmoreland. Westmoreland, the commander of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), firmly assessed that these forces were the only means to halt a potential collapse of the Government of South Vietnam and the RVNAF. At its height, U.S. troop levels in Vietnam were greater than the peak troop levels of all three other case studies of this examination combined. Three key factors led to the decision to intervene in such a drastic fashion after over a decade of support for the Government of South Vietnam. The first was the burgeoning strength of the Viet Cong main force units. The second was the comparative weakness of the RVNAF. And the third was fragility of the South Vietnamese government.

U.S. forces in Vietnam on 29 December 1960 observed firsthand the transition of what Mao would term a Phase I guerilla force into a Phase II force (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 56). On that day, the communist state of North Vietnam publicly announced the formation of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in Hanoi. Since the year prior, the Viet Cong (VC), the military wing of the NLF, had been establishing an extensive logistical network. Eventually, the logistical network, known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, would consist of trails and roads from North Vietnam through parts of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. Through the efforts of Group 559, delivery of VC troops and materials began by August 1959. In their first major engagement, 400 VC would do poorly against the ARVN forces at Kien Hoa in April 1961. VC forces would increase rapidly during 1961 and would grow to 17,000 troops, with eighty-nine percent of these forces locally

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217 Main Force units is a descriptor unique to Vietnam. Main Force units refer to either NVA conventional maneuver battalions or Viet Cong conventional maneuver forces. The need by MCV to differentiate between VC guerilla forces as VC irregulars and VC Main Force units tangibly demonstrate how Mao envisioned guerilla forces transitioning between insurgent forces up to Phase III conventional maneuver units.
recruited and supplied from South Vietnam. Despite their initial set-back at Kien Hoa, by the end of 1961, the VC would control a substantial portion of the Mekong River Delta (Ibid, pp. 60-61). By January 1963, the VC had grown enough in capacity to defeat ARVN forces at Ap Bac. The growth and success of the VC was not enough, by themselves, to convince U.S. policy makers to intervene in Vietnam with massive combat formations. This would require the implosion of both South Vietnamese governance and security.

In addition to a qualitative disadvantage in leadership, the RVNAF from 1954-1965 also suffered from a deficit in strategy to address the evolving insurgent threat. Upon the departure of French forces, the United States assumed the responsibility of training the South Vietnamese military forces. From 1954 to 1959, the United States anchored its training and development of the South Vietnamese military forces to its recent conflict in Korea. Fearing invasion from the North by the same forces that had defeated the French, the United States created a near replica of itself. The U.S. in some cases merely translated its own U.S. tables of organization and equipment (TO&Es) into Vietnamese (Nagl, 2005). However, U.S. advisors underestimated the swelling ranks of locally recruited Viet Cong. By 1959, Brigadier General Lawton Collins Jr., a senior U.S. advisor to the RVNAF, related that the United States was compelled to help the RVNAF adapt to the new threat. He noted that the U.S. had had substantial success through the use of special forces trainers, mobile training teams, and revised training and equipping regimes from 1959-1963. President Diem, being advised by British COIN expert Sir Robert Thompson, also began to pursue increasingly population centric COIN methods. Diem instituted the Argoville project which would eventually evolve into the strategic
hamlet program. These population centric COIN methods, particularly the strategic hamlet program, were poorly executed and created more animus from the population than they alleviated.

The anemic capacity of the South Vietnamese government also contributed to the requirement for the intervention of U.S. combat formations. The implosion of the Government of South Vietnam, after the anti-Diem coup in 1963, did not come as a surprise to U.S. policy makers (Office of National Estimates, 1960). President Diem had been an expat during the years of the Vietnamese nationalist battles against the French. As an expat, and a rejecter of both communism and colonialism, he lacked a significant constituency beyond the wealthy Vietnamese Catholics. However, the strength of South Vietnam’s economy early in his regime, buoyed by U.S. aid, assisted somewhat in rehabilitating Diem’s popularity. Despite this, Diem lacked the connection with the populace that had been forged during the war for independence. More problematically, he was also a Catholic in a majority Buddhist nation. Diem, his brother and sister, and his Can Lao party were fearful of the cooption of the Buddhist majority by the Communists.

The fear of Buddhist cooption by the Communists caused the Diem regime to be particularly repressive toward Buddhists and political rivals and increasingly distrustful of U.S. agents. He feared these American agents saw him as a liability and meant to depose him (Ibid). From June 1954 until Diem was finally overthrown in 1963, he was the target of three coup/assassination attempts; two of which failed and one which succeeded. The two failed attempts took place in 1960 and 1962 respectively by Vietnamese paratroopers and Vietnamese air force pilots. By April 1963, Diem lost support of educated South Vietnamese. While Diem’s regime had not outlawed opposition parties, including
communists, it put severe restrictions on assembly and speech. The previous coup attempts intensified the repressions by the Can Lao party led by Diem’s brother Nhu, particularly against non-Catholics. The United States had been aware of previous coups attempts but had not approved of them. By November 1963, the U.S. was aware of and assented to a final coup attempt against Diem (Prados, 2003; Office of National Estimates, 1960). President Diem was deposed by General Nguyen Khanh and eventually murdered in November 1963. General Collins asserted that the combination of the repression of Buddhists by Diem and his subsequent overthrow and murder, “led to a complete deterioration of the armed forces. Only the decision to introduce U.S. combat forces in early 1965 saved the Republic of Vietnam from total military defeat” (Collins, 1974, p. 127)

Search and Destroy and The Other War

“When General Westmoreland was asked at a press conference what the answer to insurgency was, his reply was one word: ‘Firepower.’”


From 1964-1968, the United States pursued three divergent strategies to develop a stable and capable South Vietnamese government. Operating in near simultaneity, General Westmoreland pursued the destruction of the insurgency, Robert Komer-the head of the CORDS program pursued “combined political military efforts to defeat the rural insurgency”, and small detachments of U.S. Marines pursued the protection of Vietnamese villages. Westmoreland assumed command the MACV on 20 June 1964. As such, his strategic thumbprint overshadowed these other two strategies until after the Tet Offensive in January 1968.
General Westmoreland’s predilection for massive conventional offensive operations is unsurprising. General Westmoreland began World War II as a captain in the artillery and finished as a colonel. He then commanded an Airborne regimental combat team in the largely static, trench warfare of the late Korean war. Therefore, his stress on firepower and mobility as the most effective means to address South Vietnam’s instability makes sense.

**Strategy One: Westmoreland’s Strategy**

Westmoreland envisioned the destruction of the Viet Cong and the defense of South Vietnam against North Vietnamese invasion as the optimal means to achieve U.S. goals in Vietnam. Westmoreland saw the VC and NVA main force units as bullies with crowbars who could tear down the South Vietnamese government’s “house” far more rapidly than the insurgent “termites”. Westmoreland’s distinction requires an understanding of what is meant by main force units. Main force units is a descriptor that is largely unique to Vietnam and not part of modern American military diction. Main Force units refer to either NVA conventional maneuver battalions or Viet Cong forces that had transitioned from insurgent forces up to Phase III conventional maneuver units. Westmoreland’s logic was founded upon the idea that while both conventional main force units and insurgents could tear down the Government of Vietnam’s “house,” the former could do it considerably faster than the latter. In his estimation, the Viet Cong main

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218 “Following Phase I (organization, consolidation, and preservation) and Phase II (progressive expansion) comes Phase III: decision, or destruction of the enemy. It is during this period that a significant percentage of the active guerrilla force completes its transformation into an orthodox establishment capable of engaging the enemy in conventional battle” (Tung, 1961, p. 21).

219 This is reported by historian Dale Andrade and recorded in Nicholas J. Schlosser, *In Persistent Battle: U.S. Marines in Operation Harvest Moon 8 December to 20 December 1965*, p.4.
force threat could be defeated most effectively and rapidly by leveraging considerable U.S. advantages in tactical mobility and firepower (Krepinevich, 1990; Nagl, 2005; Sorely, 2011).

Early major heliborne operations by U.S. Army and Marine forces seemed to confirm Westmoreland’s appraisal of the situation. U.S. forces had substantial early successes in Operations Starlight (17-24 August 1965?), Long Reach (October-November 1965), and Harvest Moon (8-20 December 1965). The VC main forces had difficulty adjusting to the vast mobility advantage possessed by U.S. forces and were easily isolated and then bludgeoned by U.S. firepower (Ibid). NVA and VC main force commanders had “concluded the best way forward was to crush the Americans in open battle…” (Schlosser, 2017, p. 5). After being punished by U.S. conventional advantages, the VC and NVA main forces began to deny U.S. forces large, lucrative, static targets. These forces would thereafter only gave battle when they possessed a distinct local advantage.

From 1965-1967, Westmoreland pursued an elusive crossover point in the destruction of the VC and NVA forces. Westmoreland sought to attrite the Communist ability to continue to fight. He tried to do this by destroying enough Communist forces and material at a rate that they would be unable to recoup losses at a rate sufficient to remain effective. In pursuit of this crossover point, U.S. forces conducted a numerous large scale search and destroy operations. Some of the larger of these operations include Operations Van Buren (Jan 1966), Masher (Jan-Mar 1966), Hastings (Jul-Aug 1966), Cedar Falls (Jan 1967), Junction City (Feb-May 1967), and Attleboro (Sept-Nov 1967).
April 1967, General Westmoreland, largely based on inflated body counts\textsuperscript{220} and saturation bombing by the U.S. Air Force, was convinced that the war was near the *crossover point*. His assessment would be invalidated by the Tet Offensive that took place eight months later. Intriguingly, in the same month that MACV approached its erroneous *crossover point*, Robert Komer alternately saw the need to redirect the war effort in a different direction. In April 1967, Komer asserted that in place of destruction of the VC and NVA, the U.S. effort should shift its focus toward the *pacification* of the rural population.

**Strategy Two: Komer’s Strategy**


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\textsuperscript{220} Accurate body counts and confirmed kills are difficult under the most optimal conditions. The author has been involved in tens of engagements employing direct fire and indirect fire systems. Except when U.S. forces were able to actually trap insurgents or maintain continuous video coverage of a strike, it would be extremely difficult to discern exact figures on how many enemy were hit, how many were wounded, how many died of wounds, and how many recovered. Krepinevich relates Robert Komer’s observation that “in the absence of hard intelligence on the results of their activities, artillery and air unit commanders tended to be evaluated largely on the ammo expenditures or sortie rates of their units” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 202). These expenditures were assumed to have had *some* effect, but this effect was largely left to commanders to discern. However, because their promotion was associated with quantitative measures of performance (i.e. body counts) there was substantial incentive to exaggerate these counts.
the worst, that gains were illusory (Fisher, 2006). More commonly, CORDS has been seen as either non-prioritized and under resourced (Krepinevich, 1990, pp. 215, 233), incorporated too-late (Nagl, 2005, p. 166), or inhibited by corrupt South Vietnamese officials (Jones, Blowtorch: Robert Komer and the Making of Vietnam Pacification Policy, 2005).

CORDS was the successor to the CIA’s *Revolutionary Development* program begun in 1965. The *Revolutionary Development* program had concentrated on developing territorial paramilitary forces to provide local security and *pacify* areas away from the VC. Krepinevich relates an anecdote regarding measures of success in pacification before CORDS. He recounts that when Secretary of State Henry Kissinger first came to Vinh Long, Vietnam, in 1965, an official told him the area was eighty percent pacified. However, when Kissinger returned nine months later, the same official in the same area said that the area had improved dramatically and the area was now seventy percent pacified. Before CORDS, the U.S. had difficulty in evaluating the success or failure of pacification efforts which would help direct effort and vital resources. A key part of the CORDS program was the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) that helped provide some ability to measure subjective effects.

CORDS was successful, but never a priority until after 1968. In contrast to efforts before 1967, “by early 1970, 93 percent of South Vietnamese lived in “relatively secure” villages, an increase of almost 20 percent from the middle of 1968, the year marred by the Tet Offensive” (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006, p. 17; Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) Annual Statistical Analysis, 1968-71, 1968-1971). CORDS had been extended to all
forty-four provinces of South Vietnam, and the communist insurgency was significantly weakened (White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, 2009).

CORDS and programs like the Marine Corps’ *Combined Action Platoons* (CAP) constituted sideshows from 1964-1968 to the U.S. Army’s paramount focus on attrition. These *sideshows* became disparagingly known as *The Other War*, or the war that diluted resources from the Westmoreland’s preferred war of attrition.

Under Komer’s enthusiastic and obdurate leadership, CORDS produced successes in growing the Regional Forces/Popular Forces (RF/PFs) and securing the rural hamlets. These local paramilitary forces, whose members lived in the villages they protected, attrited the VC and VC infrastructure (VCI) at rates greater than the large American battalions specifically tasked with attrition (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 221). Further, the RF/PFs killed or captured more VC and/or VCI than their sister CORDS program, *Phung Hoang* or *Phoenix Program*. This is important because the *Phoenix Program* was created precisely for the purpose of destroying the VC and VCI (Ibid, p.229). The success of the RF/PFs is made all the more remarkable by the fact that the RF/PFs did not have the same controversy associated with the Phoenix Program.\(^{221}\) Despite measurable and material successes, the pacification efforts associated with the RF/PFs never received the proportional focus that the war of attrition or the development of the ARVN received. Moreover, the RF/PFs were not only under resourced and under prioritized, those U.S. officers who preferred to focus on their success were routinely ridiculed for this.

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\(^{221}\) Phoenix was viewed with suspicion as an assassination program but in reality, suffered more from local corruption than systemic American abuses (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006; Moyar, 2007).
Strategy Three: The Marines

Like CORDS, the Marine Corps’ Combined Action Platoons saw considerable success but were deprioritized by MACV. The CAPs were initiated by Marine Captain Jim Cooper in 1965. The CAP program embedded a squad of Marines with approximately thirty RF/PF forces stationed in individual villages. The results were impressive. CAP villages received HES security scores of 2.95 on average (out of a possible 5 points max) compared to the average for other villages in I Corps of 1.6 (Ibid). Despite being left ostensibly alone in only a squad size (+/- thirteen Marines) CAP Marines suffered a casualty rate of 50% less compared to Marines in maneuver battalions. This low casualty rate is in spite of the fact that the CAPs often fought VC formations almost 300 times their size (Boot, 2002, p. 307). By 1967, there were ninety-seven CAP villages (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 174). Despite these quantifiable successes, General Westmoreland and others in MACV were exasperated by the Marines and their focus on securing the Vietnamese population and their villages. The dispersal of Marine squads across the villages of I Corps and the highly populated coastal areas left less Marines to pursue the Viet Cong main forces in the less densely populated rural areas. Ironically, the Marines’ reticence to leave the populated coastal areas undefended also worked against General Vo Nguyen Giap’s efforts to draw American forces away from the coast and into the central highlands.

Tet 1968-The Unanticipated Crossover Point

In January 1968, General Giap commenced the Tet Offensive, a blanket offensive by all VC forces in South Vietnam. Giap had erroneously assessed the Government of South Vietnam’s center of gravity as its connection with the Vietnamese people (Moore,
2006). Giap had been successful at drawing some, though not most, of the largest U.S. units away from the populated coastal regions. This left these more populated coastal areas less secure than if the larger U.S. units had not been drawn into the less populated hinterland.

With the launch of the offensive, VC main force units seized Hue City, surrounded the U.S. Marine Base at Khe Sanh, and stormed the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. From General Westmoreland’s perspective, this was the large-scale set piece battle he had sought since the early successes of 1965. Despite causing significant American and ARVN casualties and embarrassment for MACV and President Johnson, the NVA lost Hue City, were not able to overrun Khe Sanh, and the VC were largely obliterated as an effective fighting force. Still, with the offensive taking place after Westmoreland had telegraphed the achievement of an erroneous crossing point in 1967, the U.S. war effort in Vietnam was the strategic loser. The Tet Offensive would result in a seismic shift in U.S. Vietnam strategy and a change in MACV command from Westmoreland to General Creighton Abrams on 1 July 1968.

**Military Assistance to Governance**

Nationally, the South Vietnamese government was advised by U.S. diplomats and by the 1,000 civilians in the CORDS structure (and 6,500 U.S. military service members in 1967) (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 218). Yet, the primary Communist effort was taking place at the district, or grassroots level:

> “An effectively functioning local government organization is widely accepted as a sine qua non for successfully overcoming a Communist inspired "war of national liberation." In South Vietnam, the Viet Cong have long
centered their attack on the lower echelons of the government of the Republic. By late 1963, the Viet Cong, aided by government policies that sought to replace the traditional village oriented structure with one emphasizing the hamlet, had for all practical purposes destroyed the government apparatus in large regions of the countryside."


Given this dire assessment of grassroots governance, the U.S. began a pilot program in April 1964 using thirteen teams of the District Advisory Program. By 1966, the program included coverage of almost 60% of the forty-three provinces and four autonomous major cities which were subdivided into 242 South Vietnamese districts. District Advisory Teams (DATs) had grown from two-man teams to six-man teams covering “almost every aspect of governmental activity” (Montague, 1966, p. ii). Before the District Advisory Program, a gap existed between the village and provincial levels.

The District Advisory Program identified the critical factor in South Vietnamese governance as the chiefs in the provinces and the districts. U.S. planners observed that wherever these chiefs were capable and effective, the pacification effort thrived. Where the provincial and district chiefs were incompetent or ill-equipped, the Communists gained (Bowen, 1965, p. 44). According to Lieutenant Colonel Montague a DAT member, dysfunction at the district level was worse than anticipated by the advisors. By 1964, the two coups in 1960 and 1962 had paralyzed already anemic local governance.
The DATs were inserted to address three primary challenges: the profuse demands on District Chiefs, endemic corruption that bled U.S. aid to average citizens, and the political gap between the villages/hamlets and the central government. The district chiefs were responsible for a prodigious number of governance and security roles. These roles included all education, medical services, social services, infrastructure, tax collections, rule of law, military intelligence, counterintelligence, and recruiting of forces in a district. Moreover, given the breadth of these responsibilities, the opportunity for corruption and theft at every level was immense. Vast quantities of U.S. aid were siphoned off such that U.S. aid had little impact and often solely enriched the grafters and the VC (Montague, 1966, p. 23). Lastly, the bureaucratic state, necessary to connect the village to the central government, existed only on paper in governmental directives and lacked substance in reality.

The District Advisory Program’s thirteen team pilot test produced solid results primarily in strengthening the connection between the village and provincial governments. However, this connection was temporary and existed only as long at U.S. military personnel were present. Still, the program was well regarded enough that at the June 1964 Honolulu Conference, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Westmoreland expanded the program from thirteen to 100 addi-

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222 “This critical position of the district in local affairs is not part of the Vietnamese tradition but has been brought about by the product of insurgent pressure and the chronic instability and weakness of the Republic of Vietnam's top echelons of government since late 1963. Moreover, the legal authority for the district’s administrative powers, basic Ordinance 57A issued in 1956 during President Diem’s tenure, merely describes the district as a territorial subdivision of the province, operating In behalf of the province chief” (Montague, 1966, p. 14)
tional teams. These 113 teams would cover all of the 242 districts considered secure enough to insert governance advisors. Later, the program was further increased to 168 teams with more requested in 1966. The teams also increased in size. Where they had previously consisted of one major or captain and one sergeant to one major/captain, teams grew to one captain/lieutenant and three sergeants providing operations and intelligence, medical, and radio expertise. These teams received no specific training in governance and were not required to have specialized military occupational specialties. 223 Yet, they spent seventy-five percent of their time advising their district chiefs on non-military matters (Ibid, p. 25). These teams assisted in bridging the connection between hamlet and central government by virtue of their military connections with the military regional commands, not by creating sustainable bureaucratic institutions.

**Growth of the Vietnamese Military from 1954-1967**

The RVNAF were designed, trained, and equipped along American lines and grew over 100% across the board from 1954-1967. This period saw a 700% growth in the Navy, 500% growth in the Marine Corps, 400% growth in the Air Force, and 100% growth in the Army and paramilitary forces (see Table 5.1) (Collins, 1974, Appendix D). By 1967, the U.S. military had overseen the creation of South Vietnamese artillery, armor, command and staff, infantry, administration and finance, adjutant general, quarter-

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223 The MOS is the career and specialty descriptor for military personnel. By way of example, Robert Montague, the author of *Advising in Governance* was an artillery officer-hardly a specialty optimized for governance development and civil affairs. (Montague, 1966, p. 1).
master, ordnance, medical, transportation, intelligence, logistics management, and military band schools (Ibid, p.81). The bulk of the training and operations of this 643,000-man force was focused on pursuing the large VC and NVA main force units in the less populated hinterland of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Marines</th>
<th>Total Regular Forces</th>
<th>Regional Forces</th>
<th>Popular Forces</th>
<th>Total Paramilitary Forces</th>
<th>Total Force Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>177,200</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>102,000</td>
<td>279,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>136,000</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>146,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>97,000</td>
<td>243,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>96,000</td>
<td>168,000</td>
<td>264,000</td>
<td>514,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>303,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>343,000</td>
<td>151,000</td>
<td>149,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>643,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**TABLE 5.1- REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCE STRENGTH 1954-1967**

**From The Other War to One War: Abrams to Withdrawal**

If the destruction of the VC main force units in Vietnam would have been sufficient to end the U.S. war in Vietnam, the war would have ended in 1968. Instead, the war persisted beyond 1972 when the U.S. withdrew its combat formations. The war further intensified from 1972 until 1975 when the NVA conquered South Vietnam. While the VCI would persist after 1968, by the end of the Tet Offensive, the VC main force units ceased to be relevant combat forces until the end of the war. From 1968 until 1975, the NVA would thereafter have to conduct the bulk of the operations that would eventually overrun the Government of South Vietnam in 1975. As a result, from 1968-1972, the
war in Vietnam would be characterized in by three major elements: increased *pacificaiton*, *Vietnamization*, and growth of the Vietnamese military.

Under Westmoreland CORDS, the Marine Corps’ Combined Action Platoons, and the District Advisory Program were largely seen as elements of *The Other War*. In contrast, General Creighton Abrams would fuse these disparate elements into the larger kinetic fight and a single strategy, *The One War* strategy. Search and destroy missions would be replaced by pacification operations. An example of this was the pacification of Quang Dien district of Thua Thien by the 101st Airborne in April 1968. The U.S. Army rooted out the VCI by relying on intelligence from the territorial paramilitary forces rather than massive firepower (Nagl, 2005, p. 169). Using this model, Abrams attempted to hasten pacification through 1969. According to General Andrew Goodpaster, Abram’s deputy, the division of labor between U.S. and RVNAF forces during this period was, “ARVN and RF/PF secured areas we cleared. Our job was to keep the NVA Main Force away from secured areas we cleared; inside them, ARVN, RF/PF, and CORDS was essential but not sufficient; it had to be part of a coordinated whole. The fact is that it was a war for the hearts and minds of the people *and* a war against the Main Force units” (Ibid, p.170).

From 1968 to 1972, the number of large-scale operations (battalion sized or larger) decreased rapidly. From July 1968 to the end of 1969, these large operations dropped twenty percent from seventy-one to fifty-eight. By the end of 1971, the number of large scale operations had dropped fifty-six percent since July 1968 (Ibid, p.173). Despite this reduction in large-scale operations and shift toward *pacificaiton*, many com-
manders still focused on body-counts as metrics for success. Major costly attrition battles, while no longer the norm, still took place well into 1969. A prime example of this was *Hamburger Hill* in May 1969 during Operation Apache Snow in the A Shau Valley. Krepinevich describes this battle as a telling example of *non-application* of Abrams’ *One War* strategy. The battle cost approximately fifty U.S. KIA and nearly 600 enemy KIA. By attrition metrics, this was a sound thrashing of the NVA. However, having gained the summit of Ap Bia Mountain after ten days of fighting, U.S. forces relinquished the hard-fought terrain the same as they had at Khe Sanh in 1968.

**Vietnamization**

Immediately following the Tet Offensive in 1968, there began a de facto *Vietnamization* of the formerly Americanized war. From April 1968 on, Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford directed the U.S. military to begin to *Vietnamize* the war. The first phase of this transition was approved on 23 October 1968 and the second phase was approved on 18 December 1968, one month before President Nixon was elected (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 251). U.S. troop levels also began to drop rapidly from 1968-1973. U.S. troop levels had reached their peak in 1968 at 536,100. The last U.S. combat formations departed in 1972, and all U.S. military personnel were withdrawn by 1973 (gilderlehrman.org, n.d.). President Richard Nixon announced the policy of *Vietnamization* in July 1969, which was described by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird as a diminishing role for U.S. forces and a shifting of the burden of the war to the Government of South Vietnam. During this process, President Nixon directed South Vietnamese forces to attack NVA and Pathet Lao base camps in Laos in February 1971 without any U.S. personnel directly participating on the ground in Laos. The ground operations in South Vietnam
and Laos were conducted in parallel to U.S. intensified bombing of North Vietnam. The ARVN incursion into Laos was soundly defeated by the Communist forces. By 1970, the two U.S. Marine Divisions remaining in Vietnam redeployed. By 1972, there remained only two brigades of the U.S. Army and these departed Vietnam on 11 August 1972.

**Assessing North and South Vietnamese Capacities Before U.S. Withdrawal**

There were two phases to *Vietnamization*. The first was to upgrade the RVNAF with modern American combat systems and firepower such as tanks, artillery, and aircraft. The second phase would be training and advising the RVNAF in the application of these assets against the NVA and VC. An argument could be made that this was the *Americanization of the Vietnamese Style of War*. As U.S. forces were reduced from 1968-1972, the RVNAF ranks swelled with the largest growth coming from non-ARVN combat support and territorial paramilitary forces. The RVNAF went from 643,000 troops in 1967 to over a million by 1972 (see Table 5.2). In sheer numbers, the territorial paramilitary forces had the largest growth of 232,000 troops. The Republic of Vietnam Air Force tripled in manpower while the Navy grew two and a half times larger. The ARVN grew 107,000 troops but suffered from widespread desertions. Lastly, the Republic of Vietnam Marine Corps grew seventy-five percent to 14,000.

A 1972 CIA report titled *Net Assessment of North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese Military Forces* compared the quantitative capabilities between the Communist forces and RVNAF. The report found that, “In terms of equipment and

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224 The 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division.
training, as well as in terms of numbers, the South Vietnamese ground forces must be rated as equal or superior to the North Vietnamese forces they are fighting” (Central Inteligence Agency, 1972, p. 8). CIA analysts focused on the 320,000 troops in South Vietnamese maneuver battalions of the ARVN and Vietnamese Marine Corps. They compared these to the 154,000 VC/NVA maneuver forces known to be operating in South Vietnam which provided a slim, 2.1:1 advantage for South Vietnamese forces (Director of Central Intelligence, 1972, p. iii).

Despite their quantitative advantage, analysts also identified a key qualitative shortfall in the RVNAF that undercut the RVNAF’s quantitative advantages. The analysts noted that the ARVN battalions had not been used for major kinetic conventional operations against VC/NVA main force units for the most part since American combat formations arrived. South Vietnamese forces were shielded from defeat or destruction by NVA/VC main force units. U.S. units would battle the NVA/VC main force units and the ARVN would conduct pacification operations within a perimeter create by U.S. combat formations. This shielding kept South Vietnamese forces from adapting and learning at the same level that Communist forces were forced to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republic of Vietnam Armed Force Strength 1968-1972</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
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<td>1964</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The drop in forces between 1970-1972 was the result of widespread desertions due to U.S. forces withdrawing.*

**TABLE 5.2** REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCE STRENGTH 1968-1972

In terms of major combat systems, the South Vietnamese government had a solid quantitative advantage in tanks, artillery pieces, armor, and aircraft. The South Vietnamese government possessed an advantage in light artillery (105mm) and medium artillery (155mm) but were at a disadvantage in heavy artillery (175mm). Importantly, by September 1971, the RVNAF possessed almost the same number of artillery battalions as the U.S. had employed in South Vietnam at the peak of the U.S. intervention in December 1968. The RVNAF possessed 216 armored personnel carriers in 1972 and received fifty-four medium tanks in September 1972. CIA analysts were concerned with the difference between GVN and North Vietnamese heavy artillery but noted that this shortfall would be covered by the provision of GVN and U.S. tactical aviation sorties (Ibid).

CIA analysts conducting a comparative analysis between North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese forces noted three cardinal shortfalls in the RVNAF. The first was leadership. The second was the RVNAF’s inability to cover the gap between American
tactical air support and assault support. And the third was the RVNAF’s inability to logistically sustain itself without perpetual U.S. support. With regards to the RVNAF promotion system in 1972, the CIA analysts noted it was gradually becoming more meritorocratic. However, by and large the RVNAF and the Government of South Vietnam still disproportionately promoted less competent and less aggressive officers who were more politically connected.

“On the South Vietnamese side, there are leadership problems of a different kind, which at least until recently have been considerably more severe than those of the North...Limitations of social class and educational background, however, have hindered the advancement of many competent people with little formal education, and have too frequently meant that incompetents with ‘proper’ backgrounds have held high positions.... Historically, few promotions have been awarded for excellence in the field, and aggressive combat leadership has too often not helped the careers of field grade officers. Furthermore, corruption to one degree or another has been almost routine with many, perhaps most, South Vietnamese officers.”


In fact, in trying to bring about the 1971 ARVN Operation Lam Son into Laos, U.S. advisors had little luck in getting senior South Vietnamese officers to work together. Because politically connected senior South Vietnamese officers were put in charge, senior officers of the ARVN and Vietnamese Marine Corps actually delegated command of their own forces to junior officers on the front lines. This absenteeism of front line senior leadership did not presage success. Lam Son was a failure that demonstrated a principle qualitative deficiency of the RVNAF and Government of South Vietnam: senior leadership. While CIA analysts noted that corruption also existed among the North Vietnamese officer corps, it was apparently less rampant (Ibid).
As part the 1972 assessment, CIA analysts noted that in 1971, the U.S. and RVNAF had provided 463,000-armed helicopter sorties, 2,289,000 combat support sorties, 1,918,000 non-combat support sorties, and 164,000 tactical air sorties (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972, pp. VII-7 - VII-10). The RVNAF provided a miniscule portion of the total sorties in each category. By 1972, this resulted in gaps of 423,000 in armed helicopter sorties, 2,045,000 in combat support sorties, 1,744,000 in non-combat support sorties, and 121,000 in tactical air sorties. In 1972, the gap in these sorties would be closed by American sorties originating from off-shore bases. But in 1975, the RVNAF would have to close this gap by itself. The CIA’s assessment in 1972 specifically observed that while the Vietnamese Air force “has become steadily more effective …A high level of support is still required from the U.S. government and U.S. contractors…Furthermore, neither now nor in 1973 will the VNAF be capable of providing sufficient air support” (Ibid).

Lastly, while both North and South Vietnam received foreign aid, the South Vietnamese government received substantially more and depended on it more. North Vietnam received significant technical and economic/military support from the USSR and China. However, CIA analysts assessed that due to North Vietnamese stockpiling, even a reduction of fifty percent of all foreign aid received would not inhibit North Vietnamese protracted warfare throughout Indochina. The analysts also observed that:

“Neither North Vietnam nor South Vietnam has an industrial base capable of supporting the kind of war each side is now waging, and both countries are heavily dependent on military aid from abroad...without US aid the South Vietnamese war effort would quickly grind to a halt. But North Vietnam would clearly have similar problems if Soviet and Chinese aid were to cease” (Ibid, p. 10).
At the tactical level, CIA analysts noted several critical shortcomings in the South Vietnamese logistical system compared to North Vietnam’s. The South Vietnamese logistical system suffered from system-wide corruption and lacked the ability to conduct high-end maintenance on the major combat systems received from the U.S. In addition, the RVNAF also lacked the ability to repair communications and sophisticated electronic systems provided by the U.S. Supply management and inventory control were feeble and almost half of the water borne transportation of material still had to be moved by U.S. forces in 1972. In contrast,

“North Vietnam’s logistic system is one of its greatest assets…it has performed extremely well under severe pressure…It has evolved into a complex network of rail, road, trail, and waterway routes, supplemented by petroleum pipelines…Overall, the system now extends some 700-800 miles from North Vietnam deep into the southern reaches of South Vietnam. It employs tens of thousands of men and vehicles to maintain the level of support required by combat units in the forward areas” (Ibid, p. X-2).

CIA analysts judged that, as long as the U.S. interminably provided economic and military aid, tactical air support, and logistical support at 1972 levels, the Government of South Vietnam could protect itself indefinitely against invasion by the North Vietnamese. However, if support in any of these areas was diminished, it was less likely that the Government of South Vietnam could long endure. This efficacy of this assessment was born out during the Easter Offensive of 1972 and ultimately by the fall of the Government of South Vietnam in 1975.

The Pre-Test

From March to October 1972, the RVNAF, supported by 24,000 U.S. advisors, 1,161 U.S. aircraft, six aircraft carriers, and 1,300 South Vietnamese aircraft defeated a
three pronged, multi-divisional NVA invasion supported by tanks and heavy artillery (Brand, 1997; Doglione, et al., 1978; Moore, 2006). The deployment of this quantity of U.S. aircraft and naval power from an initial baseline of only 800 U.S. aircraft was unprecedented in its scale and timeliness of response. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew C. Brand, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, argues that the deployment of this much combat power at the start of the Easter Offensive constituted “a rapid global mobility response unlike any in the history of warfare up to that time” (Brand, 1997).

In April 1972, the NVA invaded South Vietnam in three phases and in three separate military regions supported by massed artillery, armor, and integrated air defense systems. In all three regions, the ARVN forces either retreated, were severely attrited, or were surrounded and cut-off until U.S. strategic and tactical air support\(^\text{225}\) broke the back of the NVA attack in each area. In the northernmost region of Military Region I, while the VNMC made an orderly retreat south, ARVN forces abandoned Quang Tri province and the entire 56\(^{th}\) ARVN Regiment surrendered \textit{en masse}. By May, the strategic bombing under Operation \textit{Linebacker} and the U.S. tactical airstrikes punished NVA main force elements and logistical networks (Doglione, et al., 1978).\(^\text{226}\) In Military Region II, the

\(^{225}\) Strategic air strikes refer to effects more than methods in Vietnam. U.S. B-52s are generally considered to be strategic bombers. However, in Vietnam they were used to achieve both tactical effects—those in support of ground maneuver objectives, and strategic events—those in support of national objectives. In the case of the Easter Offensive, strategic bombing refers to bombing in North Vietnam designed to diminish North Vietnamese capacity or will to war. And bombing in South Vietnam, even by strategic platforms like the B-52s are most properly classified as tactical bombing given their association with effects in support of tactical maneuver on the ground.

\(^{226}\) They did this in ways the Operations \textit{Rolling Thunder} or \textit{Commando Hunt} could not due to improved target sets, but also do to the conventional and massed NVA conventional forces which provided lucrative targets for strategic and tactical bombing.
ARVN 22nd Division was savaged by the NVA’s second prong, an armor and infantry offensive in the Central Highlands. Only U.S. tactical bombing and intervention by U.S. attack helicopters firing tube-launched, optically tracked, wire guided (TOW) anti-tank missiles turned back the NVA attack, killing twenty-six NVA tanks (Moore, 2006). The VC/NVA 5th Division, the third prong, attacked central portion of South Vietnam in Military Region III. This attack succeeded in cutting off ARVN forces in An Loc for ninety-five days. This became a pyrrhic victory for the VC and the NVA. The successes of these attacks forced VC/NVA main force units to expose themselves to massive U.S. air-strikes. These large-scale conventional combat operations by major North Vietnamese units provided the U.S. something it had lacked for years since the earliest parts of the U.S. intervention: fixed, massed, and easily identified targets. By July, these southernmost VC and NVA forces were decimated and compelled to retreat back into Cambodia.

From July until October 1972, ARVN forces spent the next few months not only restoring South Vietnamese territory but also seizing portions of North Vietnamese territory.

**First Real Test-Invasion 1975**

“A major communist offensive in South Vietnam is unlikely during 1974. The picture for the first half of 1975, however, is less clear, and there obviously is a substantial risk that Hanoi will opt for a major offensive during this period....Should a major offensive occur...If the Communists persisted in their offensive, this initial situation would probably be followed by a period of inconclusive fighting and, over time, further GVN losses. ARVN might be able to regain the initiative, and it would be questionable whether the GVN would be able to survive without combat participation by US Air Force and Navy units. At a minimum, large-scale US logistic support would be required to stop the Communist drive.”

After twenty-one years of U.S. training, equipping, and support of the RVNAF, South Vietnamese forces were still no match for the armed forces of North Vietnam without U.S. support. The Easter Offensive of 1972 provided a test of whether ARVN troops, supported by U.S. logistics and air support could effectively replace U.S. ground forces in defending South Vietnam. Provided they received U.S. combat support, ARVN could defeat the NVA. However, the NVA invasion that began in December 1974 would test the ability of the RVNAF to entirely replace U.S. ground, aviation, and logistics forces in its own defense.

While U.S. combat support had begun to be withheld by 1973, until it was finally overrun, the South Vietnamese government still received massive amounts of economic aid--compared to what North Vietnam received. Communist aid in 1974 had decreased from a high of $650 million in 1968 to around $200 million per year in 1970-1971 (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972, pp. XI-1). U.S. aid in FY1974, even after the passing of the Case-Church Amendment (1973), was still $650 million in economic assistance--$350 million in aid grants and $250 million in agricultural shipments (Ellerman, The South Vietnamese Economy and U.S. Aid (January 14, 1975), 1975, p. 5). The CIA, Department of State, and Department of the Treasury questioned what would be required per year to ensure South Vietnamese viability. The range these agencies promulgated anticipated that it would require U.S. spending between $500-700 million per year. This question however, never had to be answered as Saigon and South Vietnamese government fell five months before the start of FY 1975.
On 13 December 1974, less than a year after the 1973 Paris Peace Accords went into effect, North Vietnam invaded South Vietnam. The difference between this invasion and the NVA’s 1972 invasion would be the lack of U.S. air and logistical support to which the Government of South Vietnam had grown accustomed. The Government of South Vietnam still received $4.7 billion in U.S. aid annually, even in FY 1975 (in 2017 dollars). The RVNAF were over one million strong. The RVNAF possessed numerical superiority in every metric from infantry, armor, artillery, and aircraft. Initially, the NVA attack consisted of a massive probe designed to test U.S. resolve to intervene. When the U.S. abstained from intervening, the limited attack by the NVA became a full invasion. In less than five months after starting the offensive, the NVA would seize Saigon and the Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF would cease to exist.

**Competing Explanations for State Longevity**

Contemporary COIN theories, as well as those regarding troop ratios, and presence of adversary sanctuaries provide unsatisfying explanations for the implosion of the South Vietnamese government and security forces in 1975. In contrast, the withholding of continued U.S. support after withdrawal does help explain the South Vietnamese government’s failure. Enemy centric COIN explains the neutralization of the Viet Cong as a significant threat following the Tet Offensive of 1968. It fails to explain the long-term failure of the South Vietnamese state. Population centric COIN efforts explain the estimated pacification of ninety-three percent of the rural countryside by 1970 (Lipsman & Doyle, The Vietnam Experience: Fighting for Time, 1983, pp. 74-76; White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, pp. 10-11). It fails to explain why the NVA was able to overrun the
entire country of South Vietnam in less than two months. Similarly, troop ratios and infiltration rates help, in the short-term, to understand the relative challenges of fighting perhaps the most notable case of hybrid warfare. However, they do little to help understand how the South Vietnamese, while in the defense, possessing a numerical advantage, a fire support advantage, and the logistical and tactical benefits of interior lines was so easily beaten after U.S. forces withdrew. In contrast, continued support after U.S. withdrawal does help understand the conditions under which South Vietnam might have continued to persist indefinitely as a strategic rentier state.

COIN Theories Observed

“To paraphrase General of the Army Omar Bradley, the United States can look back on Vietnam as the wrong war—at the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong army” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 4)

American policy makers associated with the Vietnam War could reasonably argue that they had both defeated the insurgency militarily by 1968 (the VC main force units) and gained effective control of the South Vietnamese population by 1972. What they could not claim is that the Government of South Vietnam would be able to last more than three years after the last U.S. combat formations departed in August 1972. American commanders could reasonably argue that they had succeeded in both enemy and population centric COIN methods. The VC ceased to be militarily relevant after the Tet Offensive of 1968 (Boot, 2002, p. 308; Nagl, 2005, p. 167; Krepinevich, 1990, p. 239). Additionally, as a result of pacification and the military destruction of the VC, the HES

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227 Interior lines are a defensive methodology that confers an advantage on the defender due to the compressed distances the surrounded or nearly surrounded defender has in redeploying and resupplying forces over shorter distances than the attacker. Where the attacker has to travel a greater distance around the defensive formation to redeploy and resupply, the defender relying on interior lines is able to execute both significantly faster.
claimed 93% of South Vietnamese villages were pacified (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006, p. 17; Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) Annual Statistical Analysis, 1968-71, 1968-1971; White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, 2009). While the HES’s quantitative claims of pacification may be viewed critically\textsuperscript{228}, the material support of the South Vietnamese population was not instrumental in the successes of the North Vietnamese invasions of 1972 nor 1975. Unlike the French at Dien Bien Phu, it was not Viet Cong insurgents or guerillas who captured Saigon in April 1975. It was the conventional army of an adjacent state actor.

The U.S.’s intervention in South Vietnam provides one of the most exceptional COIN case studies possible. The American forces experienced the fullest spectrum of insurgent and conventional threats possible and sometimes simultaneously. The American forces also relied on the fullest spectrum of both enemy centric and population centric COIN methods. American forces conducted population and enemy centric COIN while also competing against the conventional army of a state actor.

Enemy centric COIN methods were evident from the start in General Westmoreland’s strategy of attrition in 1964. Westmoreland’s plan consisted of three phases that would culminate in the destruction of the VC and VCI. Phase I consisted of an investment of forty-four U.S. maneuver battalions engaged in stabilizing the deteriorating South Vietnamese situation and securing bases or defendable enclaves to operate from.

\textsuperscript{228} Krepinevich, Nagl, Fisher, and Boot question the capacity of quantitative measures of success for something like COIN that is intrinsically difficult to quantitatively measure (Boot, 2002; Krepinevich, 1990; Nagl, 2005; Fisher, 2006)
Phase II envisioned a further investment of twenty-four more maneuver battalions to resume the offense and conduct deep patrolling. Finally, Phase III would entail U.S. forces remaining in Vietnam as an operational reserve to support ARVN forces who would take the lead (Krepinevich, 1990, pp. 151, 165). From Westmoreland’s perspective, the VC had already evolved into Mao’s Phase III, or conventional force guerrillas. This was compounded by the defeat of the ARVN at Phouc Long and Quang Ngai and what he saw as the “tactical stupidity and cowardice” of ARVN officers fighting the VC in 1963 (Ibip, p. 152). The ability of the VC main force units to defeat conventional ARVN battalions conformed well to the pattern previously established by the Viet Minh, the forerunners of the VC, against the French in 1954. Resultantly, Westmoreland abandoned his 1964 request for U.S. COIN experts in favor of requesting airmobility experts be sent to Vietnam (Ibid, p. 151).

Enemy centric COIN methods are also evident from the major U.S. operations from 1965-1967. Upon receipt of the first large commitment of U.S. maneuver battalions, General Westmoreland began to pursue the destruction of the VC and the VCI. This resulted in early successful large-scale operations such as Starlight, Long Reach, and Harvest Moon (Schlosser, 2017, p. 5). It was also evident in the less successful large-scale operations from 1966-1967, including Operations Van Buren (1966), Masher (1966), Hastings (1966), Cedar Falls (1967), Junction City (1967), and Attleboro (1967), among others (Krepinevich, 1990; Nagl, 2005; Boot, 2002).

Enemy centric methods provide serviceable explanations for the tactical defeat of the VC and the pernicious impacts of early U.S. operations in Vietnamese population control and losing U.S. domestic support. These methods however do not satisfactorily
explain why the Government of South Vietnam did not survive long after the U.S. withdrawal. Tactically, Westmoreland did not arrive at his projected crossover point in April 1967. He did arrive at this crossover point in July 1968. Westmoreland’s actual crossover point actually coincided with the conclusion of the Battle of Khe Sanh and the reversal of Communist gains of the Tet Offensive.

While Tet broke the back of the VC and VCI, Krepinevich notes that the large-scale operations preceding Tet did little to secure the Vietnamese populace. Ironically, he notes that the RF/PFs pacification operations guarding villages and hamlets actually killed or captured more VC than the conventional ARVN formations (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 229). In 1968, U.S. strategy also arrived at an unanticipated political crossover point with respect to domestic support for the war. The Johnson administration, surprised by the VC’s offensive capacity and disenchanted with Westmoreland’s strategy, refused further troop increases in 1968. Similarly, U.S. media elites like Walter Cronkite declared the war unwinnable after Tet (Boot, 2002, p. 309). Westmoreland could legitimately claim a tactical military victory over the VC in 1968. However, this tactical victory was not sufficient to allow for the withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam. Nor does it explain the inability of the South Vietnamese government to long persist after U.S. withdrawal.

**Population Centric COIN Methods**

“The manifold aspects of pacification are intricately interwoven. Essentially no plan, operation, activity, or event that is part of pacification can be purely military, without civil implications, and vice versa. Every gain in winning the support of the people in the rural areas will lessen the military burden; each military victory will turn more people toward the government...pacification is a methodical person-by-person, house-by-house, hamlet-by-hamlet

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229 Where the VC could no longer viably continue to operate militarily (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 187).
process. Each of the four key requirements—eliminating the Viet Cong shadow political structure, providing 24-hour security for the village and hamlets, operating an effective system for population and resources control throughout the area, and establishing good communications with the people—must be attained and sustained until peace is restored throughout South Vietnam.”


Montague’s excellent explanation of pacification in South Vietnam notwithstanding, the results of population centric COIN methods in South Vietnam are mixed. The advent of the CORDS program in May 1967 under General Westmoreland blurs any strict delineation between population centric and enemy centric COIN methods and between Generals Westmoreland and Abrams. While Westmoreland is most commonly associated with enemy centric COIN and Abrams with a more population centric method, CORDS had its genesis under Westmoreland and its payoff under Abrams. The effects of CORDS operations from 1967-1972 are impressive. The HES claimed ninety-three percent pacification of all South Vietnamese villages by 1970 and much reduced levels of insurgency in all forty-four provinces (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006, p. 17; Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) Annual Statistical Analysis, 1968-71, 1968-1971; Moore, 2006). Similarly, the efficacy of the Phoenix Program and its targeted destruction of the VCI is attested to by Mark Moyar (1997) and Colonel Andrew Finlayson (USMC, ret) (2007), a CIA advisor to the Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) in Tay Ninh. By way of example, Finlayson asserted that in his year of association with the Program, thirty-one VCI were killed and sixty-four captured. He further notes,

“As early as December 1968, it was apparent to the Tay Ninh PRU that most of the senior VCI cadre had been either killed or captured in the months after Tet or had been driven into neighboring Cambodia. As a credible political threat, the VC had ceased to function in any meaningful way...Further proof
of the PRU’s effectiveness came in 1975, when the communists finally defeated the South Vietnamese. The NVA commander occupying Tay Ninh Province would put in a hurried request to North Vietnam for 200 civilian political cadre. He reported that there were only six local VC cadre left in the province to manage the province’s affairs” (Finlayson C. A., 2009).

Despite this effusive support for both CORDS and Phoenix, some observers have more qualified evaluations of the results of these programs. Nagl notes the success of population centric operations like the pacification of Quang Dien district by the U.S. Army. He identified this operation for its defeat of the enemy main force units and successful rooting out of the VCI (Nagl, 2005, p. 169). Nagl takes the position though that U.S. failure in Vietnam was one of glacial learning in population centric COIN. He argues that even the positives of pacification were too little, too late, and too brief to make a difference (Ibid, p. xxii, Krepinevich, 1990, p.260).

Krepinevich reasons that while the pacification began relatively early—indeed even before the U.S. combat intervention—it was never prioritized to the same degree of conventional combat operations. Due to the de-prioritization of the pacification effort, Krepinevich argues that the U.S. Army downplayed the “political and social dimensions that formed the foundation of counterinsurgency warfare. The result was high-cost, low pay-off strategy” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 233). Lastly, Boot substantiates the success of the U.S. pacification efforts by 1971. However, he argues that this success, combined with the impotence if the ARVN in 1971, actually led the North Vietnamese to relinquish efforts at insurgency and instead pursue direct conventional invasion (Boot, 2002, p. 311).
It is reasonable to argue that the U.S. *did* succeed in *its* counterinsurgency efforts from 1965-1972. This does not mean that the U.S. learned quickly, or performed optimally in COIN. However, had it not been for U.S. COIN efforts, disorganized and unnecessarily costly as they were, the South Vietnamese government would have ceased to exist as early as 1965-1968. The U.S forces in Vietnam battled the most complex hybrid conventional-irregular threat the United States has ever faced. Before 1968, the U.S and RVNAF were confronted with a predominantly organic (to South Vietnam) insurgent threat. This insurgent threat was capable of logistically supporting itself almost exclusively from the support of the South Vietnamese populace (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 263). It was also capable of massing sufficient conventional forces to overthrow the Government of South Vietnam but for massive American combat power. After the defeat of the VC in 1968, the U.S. and Government of South Vietnam were able to pacify much of South Vietnam.

Evidence of *American success* in population centric COIN (exclusive from South Vietnamese success in population centric COIN) is evidenced by North Vietnamese changes in strategy as a result. Having failed to achieve its ends through popular uprising, the North Vietnamese government began infiltrating larger numbers of conventional combat formations. Harry Summers’ argument (1995) that the U.S. Army in Vietnam was too focused on COIN and not conventional enough is unsupported by analysis of the period of 1965-1973. However, it is a valid critique of the preparation of the South Vietnamese forces to fight the North Vietnamese after 1973. Before 1968, there existed a real insurgent threat that was both capable and supported organically in South Vietnam, not
North Vietnam (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 263; Central Intelligence Agency, 1966). Therefore, Summers’ support for Westmoreland’s *OPLAN El Paso*, the creation of an extended DMZ across northern South Vietnam and into the neighboring states to cut off the insurgency from North Vietnam, would not have protected the South Vietnamese from the VC (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 263; Nagl, 2005, p. 207). Still, the relative success of U.S. COIN efforts did little to equip the Government of South Vietnam to exist longer than three years after the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces.

**Troops Ratios**

Troop ratios also fail to explain the rapid demise of the South Vietnamese government and RVNAF after the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces. At every point in the Americanized portion of the war from 1965-1972, the combined U.S. and RVNAF troop levels well exceeded even the most demanding requirements for troop to population ratios. Indeed, even before the landing of the first U.S. maneuver battalions in March 1968, the RVNAF and U.S. advisors had almost met the most conservative threshold for troop to population requirements. And at every point thereafter, the U.S. and RVNAF always maintained a significant quantitative advantage over the VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam. Despite these perpetual quantitative advantages from the start: 1-the U.S. was forced to intervene in 1965 to prevent South

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230 A 1966 CIA analysis estimated that at least 50% of VC logistics originated locally to South Vietnam (Central Intelligence Agency, 1966). Krepinevich argues that the VC received the bulk of their logistical support from South Vietnam which would have circumvented the DMZ cutting off the North (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 263).

231 *OPLAN El Paso* called for the creation of an extended DMZ across northern South Vietnam and into the neighboring states to cut off the insurgency in the south from its support in the north.
Vietnamese failure; 2-the VC were able to conduct a nationwide offensive in 1968; and, 3-the NVA were able to overrun the entire country in 1975.

There does not appear to be a direct correlation between troop to population ratios and longevity of the South Vietnamese state after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Contemporary estimates of required counterinsurgent ratios to population range between 1:50 as the most conservative and 1:91 as the most liberal (FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006, pp. 1-13; Quinlivan, 1995-96; Goode, 2010; McGrath, 2006, p. 109; Lewis, 2010; Brown J. S., 2006). Before the first Marine battalions landed in 1965, the combined force of U.S. and RVNAF forces already present in South Vietnam resulted in a 32:1 population to counterinsurgent ratio—significantly better than the even the most conservative requirement (see Table 5.3). Even if this ratio is adjusted for what Krepinevich terms foxhole strength \(^{232}\), there remains a ratio of 53:1 population to counterinsurgents able to engage directly with the populace and insurgents. This is still nearly double the most liberal estimate by Brown (2006). Therefore, if Quinlivan’s, McGrath’s, and Brown’s assessments are accurate, then the U.S. should not have had to intervene with any additional forces after 1964.

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\(^{232}\) Foxhole strength is that portion of the force the military can actually put into the field to directly engage with the populace and/or the adversary (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 236). Krepinevich argues that with the massive logistical tail the U.S. military requires since World War II, the foxhole strength could be as little as 14.5% of the total force deployed. Linn, looking at operation in the Philippines in 1898 puts the number of forces able to engage with the population and/or adversary at 60% of the force in theater, perhaps reflecting the smaller logistical tail for U.S. expeditionary operations of the day (Linn, 2000). This analysis relies on the latter as Krepinevich’s assessment tends to ignore combat enablers such as close air support, engineers, civil affairs who may also make up a significant portion of the force put in and out of theater.
The population to counterinsurgent ratio, already theoretically sufficient even before the arrival of U.S. combat formations in 1964, would further balloon to more than five times what even the most conservative estimate of troops required for successful COIN. And yet there would be no commensurate improvement in population security. By the advent of the Tet Offensive, the U.S. would have only the most tenuous control over the majority of South Vietnamese rural villages and hamlets (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 174; Director of Cnetral Intelligence, 1969, p. 5). This lack of population control is in spite of the fact that 1968 represented the peak deployment of U.S. troops for the entire war. In 1968 the RVNAF also possessed over 619,000 troops who were solely devoted to pacification. At this high point of U.S. intervention, there was one U.S. or Vietnamese counterinsurgent for every twenty South Vietnamese citizens or one for every thirty-three if foxhole strength is used. This is dramatically less population for every counterinsurgent than even the most conservative estimate requires of a max of fifty citizens to every counterinsurgent (Quinlivan, 1995-96). And yet, this impressive population to counterinsurgent ratio population security would increase after 1968 when U.S. troop levels began to decline.

Based on these numbers, the reason for the failure of population centric COIN efforts before 1968 and their relative successes after 1968 must be associated with something other than force ratios. The best explanation for the failure of pacification efforts before 1968 seems to have less to do with the numbers of forces provided and more to do with how they were employed. These forces were disproportionately employed in conventional, large-scale clearing operations from 1965-1967,
which left much of the rural villages with minimal protection. However, after the Tet Offensive, as U.S. troop levels were decreasing, pacification efforts began to be emphasized.

A more relevant concern for the South Vietnamese officials and U.S. strategists late in the war concerned the ratio of U.S. and RVNAF maneuver battalion to VC/NVA maneuver battalion in South Vietnam. According to an assessment provided to the National Security Council by the CIA in 1972, the RVNAF had a 4.8:1 maneuver battalion advantage over the NVA and VC forces operating in South Vietnam (Table 5.3). This nearly five to one ratio was adequate, when supported by U.S. logistics and air power, to defeat the NVA/VC Easter Offensive in March 1972. However, by 1975, the RVNAF still possessed in excess of over one million troops, approximately the same number it possessed in 1972. The difference in 1975 was that the U.S. was no longer supporting with logistics, close air support, or advisors. Therefore, the withholding of U.S. logistics, tactical air support, and advisors provides a better explanation for the failure of the Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF in 1975 than do troop ratios.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. Troop Levels</th>
<th>RVNAF</th>
<th>US + RVNAF (60%)</th>
<th>Pop³: Troop</th>
<th>60% Foxhole Strength</th>
<th>Terrain⁴: Troop</th>
<th>Foxhole Strength Terrain: Troop</th>
<th>VC/NVA in South Vietnam</th>
<th>Maneuver Bn. Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>23,300¹</td>
<td>514k²</td>
<td>537,300 (322,380)</td>
<td>32:1</td>
<td>53:1</td>
<td>8:1 mi²</td>
<td>5:1 mi²</td>
<td>163-183K and 260-280K⁶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>385,300¹</td>
<td>736k</td>
<td>1,121,300 (672,780)</td>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>25:1</td>
<td>17:1 mi²</td>
<td>10:1 mi²</td>
<td>500-600k total⁷</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>536,100¹</td>
<td>619k²</td>
<td>855,100 (513,060)</td>
<td>20:1</td>
<td>33:1</td>
<td>13:1 mi²</td>
<td>8:1 mi²</td>
<td>145-165k¹⁰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>24,200¹</td>
<td>1 mil²</td>
<td>1,024,200 (614,520)</td>
<td>17:1</td>
<td>28:1</td>
<td>16:1 mi²</td>
<td>9:1</td>
<td>4.8:1⁹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>182k¹¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ (gilderlehrman.org, n.d.)
² (Central Inteligence Agency, 1972)
³ Population of South Vietnam as of 1967 as estimated by CIA was 17,084,771 (Central Intelligence Agency, 1967).
⁴ Foxhole strength
⁵ Population of South Vietnam as of 1967 as estimated by CIA was 65,416 mi² (Central Intelligence Agency, 1967).
⁶ The first number is VC/NVA main force units and the second number is main force units and support staff (Director of Central Intelligence, 1966, p. 6)
⁷ CIA memorandum 18 March 1968 estimated VC/NVA total force strength in early 1968 at 500-600k troops in South Vietnam (Director of Intelligence, 1968).
⁸ CIA analysis estimated 210 VC/NVA maneuver battalions in South Vietnam in early 1968 and then 289 at the end of 1968. It estimated an average of 345 troops per battalion in January 1968 and 265 per battalion in December 1968. This does not account for guerillas or support (Director of Intelligence, 1969).
¹⁰ (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972, p. 4)
¹¹ (Director of Central Intelligence, 1974, p. iii)

**TABLE 5.3-TROOP RATIOS**
Enduring Insurgent Sanctuaries

General Anthony Zinni (2017) and Max Boot (2002) have argued that the failure of the Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF in 1975 was not due to COIN methods or troop ratios. They argue that the 1975 failure is best explained by two key factors: 1-the inability of the U.S. and the Government of South Vietnam to foreclose on adversary sanctuaries throughout the war; and, 2-the cessation of U.S. support to the South Vietnamese in 1974-1975. There seems to be considerable evidence that the termination of U.S. support to the South Vietnamese government had a decisive effect on the ability of the RVNAF to defend South Vietnam. However, the enduring presence of insurgent sanctuaries does not provide as satisfying an explanation for the rapid demise of the Government of South Vietnam and the RVNAF after withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The presence of insurgent staging bases and sanctuaries in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos do not explain the failure of the RVNAF in major conventional war in 1975. As previously mentioned, Westmoreland’s OPLAN El Paso was predicated on the erroneous assumption that the bulk of the VC support before 1968 had originated from North Vietnam. The CIA had originally signaled as much in 1964-1965. They tracked the infiltration rates from North to South Vietnam from January to May 1966 with a high of 9,350 incursions per month to a low of 210 (Director of Central Intelligence, 1966, p. 10). Westmoreland reasoned that if the U.S. could have isolated the insurgents in South Vietnam from their support in North Vietnam,
U.S. and South Vietnamese forces could have starved them out and defeated them in detail.\textsuperscript{233}

The assumption that the VC could have been defeated by cutting them off from North Vietnamese support was invalidated however by another Agency report, also in 1966. Its analysis estimated that at least 50% of VC logistics were sourced from South Vietnam and not transported from North Vietnam (Central Intelligence Agency, 1966). Krepinevich’s research also supports the assertion that most of the VC logistical support, before 1968, originated locally from within South Vietnam—not externally from North Vietnam (1990, p. 263). Therefore, even if the VC had been cut off from their support in the North, a dubious proposition given the extensive South Vietnamese border, it still would have only interdicted less than half of the men and material arriving from the North.

The use of bordering states to South Vietnam as staging bases for the 1972 and 1975 invasions of South Vietnam have little to do with insurgency and counter-insurgency. These bases should not be seen as insurgent sanctuaries, but as invasion staging bases for an adjacent state’s conventional military. The U.S. and RVNAF had previously conducted \textit{spoiling attacks}\textsuperscript{234} across these borders in 1970 and 1971 in particular. The most successful of these was the Cambodian spoiling attack in

\textsuperscript{233} Defeat in detail refers to the destruction of smaller, separate portions of an enemy force operating outside of the ability to mutually support rather than attempting to destroy the larger force at one time. For more on this see Marine Corps Reference Publication 5-12A, \textit{Operational Terms and Graphics}, (2004).

\textsuperscript{234} A spoiling attack is generally used in the defense to disrupt an imminent attack. The defender attempts to hit the attacker in his staging bases, assembly areas, attack positions, or assault positions when the attacker is least prepared. Thus, the defender is \textit{protected} by the surprise attack and the attacker’s ability to go on the offense is severely disrupted.
1970, which caught the Communist forces off guard and hit them in their staging bases. The second was less successful in Laos in 1971, but may have helped keep the Communist forces off balance and possibly delayed Communist invasion for a time (Nagl, 2005, p. 174). However, after 1973, the South Vietnamese did little to interdict the staging bases. Once the U.S. withdrew, the South Vietnamese government and RVNAF had three choices: 1-fight a mobile defense against enemy forces massing on its borders; 2-conduct spoiling attacks to interrupt pre-invasion preparations; or, 3-invade and conquer the North and reunite Vietnam. The RVNAF was ill-prepared and unmotivated to do any of these.

The presence of insurgent sanctuaries did not give the VC success during Tet, nor did they prevent the pacification of much of the South from 1968-1972. The sanctuaries kept the NVA alive and thriving, but they did not allow the NVA access to the populace. Therefore, the persistence of insurgent sanctuaries, at least in COIN, is not decisive. A more germane discussion is the use of bases inside Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam as staging bases for full-scale invasions, not COIN. The U.S. strategy, when U.S. forces were present, was to conduct spoiling attacks to preempt potential invasions. The Government of South Vietnam seems to have chosen to fight a mobile defense depending on terrain to slow the North Vietnamese advance and massive U.S. firepower to support the RVNAF’s counterattack—a repeat of 1972. Therefore, it appears that the withholding of U.S. combat support is better

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235A mobile defense is built around a powerful counterattack. A mobile defense employs fixed positions to shape the enemy, delay, and set up the enemy for a massed counterattack which is the decisive event. This defense is useful when the defender cannot successfully defend along the entire border.
Continued Support After Withdrawal

The suspension of U.S. support to the Government of South Vietnam provides appreciable evidence to explain the failure of the RVNAF after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. However, the principle difference between the relative success of 1972 and failure of 1975 would not be a result of withholding economic aid as much as it would be in U.S. cessation of combat support. The U.S. had already provided economic assistance in FY1974 to the tune of $5.875 billion in economic assistance (in 2017 dollars) (Ellerman, The South Vietnamese Economy and U.S. Aid (January 14, 1975), 1975, p. 5). The U.S. government was also debating the provision of further economic aid in FY 1975. However, discussions of the most appropriate amount of economic aid to the South Vietnamese was superseded by the NVA’s conquest of South Vietnam.

Therefore, it was the suspension of combat support, specifically logistical and offensive air support, that had the most injurious effects on the ability of the South Vietnamese to defend themselves. In their 1974 assessment of the situation in Southeast Asia, CIA analysts offered that,

“Current supply stockpiles are more than adequate for current consumption rates. Should major countrywide fighting resume, however, the South Vietnamese logistic system would be stretched to the limit...ARVN remains dependent on US civilian contractors for aircraft maintenance and port management... Serious problems still exist, however, especially those stemming from inexperience in managing, supplying, and maintaining a large force in combat” (Director of Central Intelligence, 1974, pp. v-vi).
The “serious problems” “stemming from inexperience” logistically sustaining “a large force in combat” is simply inconsistent with the history of the war to that point. By the time of this assessment, the RVNAF had been trained by the U.S. in logistics, supply, and maintenance for two decades. Moreover, at its max limit, the RVNAF only had to transport its logistics using interior lines, across decent roads a maximum of around 400 miles. In contrast, the North Vietnamese had to do the same through jungles, mountains, and trails for 700-1000 miles while under constant U.S. interdiction. One point that does lend a little credence to the CIA assessment is that despite decades of training, the U.S. was still, by even 1972, compensating for South Vietnamese logistical ineptitude.

Based on comparing the performances of the RVNAF in 1972 and in 1975, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the South Vietnamese government could have defeated the North Vietnamese offensive in 1975—but only provided they had received the same degree of combat support as in 1972. In addition to logistical gaps, the withdrawal of U.S. forces left a massive gap in aviation sorties just to maintain the level of support that kept the RVNAF alive in 1972. The withdrawal of the U.S. aviation support left an air support gap of 423,000-armed helicopter sorties, 2,045,000 combat support sorties, 1,744,000 non-combat support sorties, and 121,000 in tactical air sorties from 1972-1975 (Central Inteligence Agency, 1972, pp. VII-7, VII-10). Indeed, the South Vietnamese might have persisted indefinitely, if the U.S. had been willing to provide massive combat support indefinitely.

In contrast, the North Vietnamese government and military received a comparatively microscopic amount of economic and military aid from the Soviet Union
and the People’s Republic of China when compared to that received by the Government of South Vietnam. Additionally, the USSR and the People’s Republic of China provided no combat formations, and no frontline advisors in diametric contrast to the massive interventions by U.S. combat formations.

The CIA estimated that at its highpoint, the government of North Vietnam received a maximum of $650 million ($3.055 billion in 2017 dollars) in economic and military aid. The aid originated from the USSR and the People’s Republic of China in 1967-1968 (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972, p. 11). From 1968 on, the CIA estimated that the North Vietnamese government received around $200 million ($940 million in 2017 dollars) for the duration of the war from the same sources. North Vietnam also received a relative handful of Soviets trainers/advisors. The CIA estimated in 1965 that between 1,000-1,500 Soviet personnel were initially operating the surface-to-air missile systems in North Vietnam (Central Intelligence Agency, 1965, pp. E-1-E-2). However, the Soviet advisors appear to have rapidly turned these systems over to North Vietnamese troops. The CIA analysts believed this transition of Soviet technicians to North Vietnamese accounted a significant initial drop off in missile shoot down rates of U.S. pilots in 1965 as North Vietnamese technicians learned the systems (Ibid). Therefore, despite an exponentially greater investment in money and personnel, the U.S. was unable to create a South Vietnamese government and security force capable of defending itself against an adversary receiving the tiniest fraction of similar support.

Degree of Embeddedness: Governance and Security Force Development
U.S. Adaptations in Governance

From 1954-1973, the U.S. military and U.S. Department of State relied on *institution influencing* relationships to develop the Government of South Vietnam. These low-embedded strategies included *coercive influence* and Advise and Assist relationships to increase Government of South Vietnam capacity. Whereas the U.S. assumed full control of the governance of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Japan to develop governance in years after World War II, the U.S. eschewed this in Vietnam. The choice in U.S. methods to develop South Vietnamese governance and security were reactions to Marxist critiques both in Vietnam and globally. Lieutenant Colonel Montague specifically captures the zeitgeist concerning socialist critiques of colonialism and imperialism in Vietnam by asserting that, “…Communist propaganda was playing the theme that Khanh, like Diem before him, was a U.S. "lackey," installing district advisors would surely give Viet Cong propaganda new neo-colonial teeth” (Montague, 1966, p. 12). U.S. leaders sought to at least preserve the façade of South Vietnamese sovereignty in light of these type of critiques. Yet American efforts to rehabilitate the Diem regime resulted in what this examination terms *a sovereignty fallacy* and *democratic pretense*. The result of two decades of U.S. efforts to *advise and influence* South Vietnamese institutions from *outside* these institutions produced South Vietnamese institutions that were no more capable of defending South Vietnam in 1975 than they were in 1954.

Coercive Influence and Advise and Assist

From 1954-1973, the United States employed a combination of *coercive influence* and Advice and Assistance to develop South Vietnam’s government. President Diem’s and the Government of South Vietnam’s ideological background was both anti-colonial
and anti-communist. This made the South Vietnamese particularly sensitive to anything that approximated colonial rule by the U.S. or France (Montague, 1966, p. 12). While the Government of South Vietnam had no inhibitions accepting billions of U.S. dollars in aid and hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops operating unilaterally inside South Vietnam, South Vietnamese leaders often blanched under U.S. advice. Specifically, Montague asserts that, “To some Vietnamese leaders, advice was an anathema—something that had to be tolerated in exchange for the huge quantities of U.S. aid which their country was receiving” (Ibid, p. 11). Therefore, in order to obligate the Government of South Vietnam to accept U.S. advice, U.S. diplomats and civilian and military advisors relied on coercive influence. John Mecklin, former Director of the U.S. Information Services in Saigon, related “that economic and military assistance was a strategic government-to-government operation, especially in a struggle against guerrillas. Aid should be given only on the specific understanding that American advice on its use must be needed all the way down to the point where the last cartload of fertilizer was delivered to the peasant” (Mecklin, 1965, p. 314). Mecklin advised that receipt of U.S. aid was and should be contingent on South Vietnamese acceptance of U.S. advice.

As a result of South Vietnamese reluctance to accept U.S. efforts to advise and influence its institutions, a see-saw relationship ensued between the U.S. advisors at the senior most level and South Vietnamese leaders. While President Diem often refused U.S. advice, the CIA noted that, “Diem is too dependent upon US economic and military aid to allow any rupture in relations with the US” (Ibid, p. 6). However, the Agency also noted that Diem was “well aware of his own importance and that of a western-oriented South Vietnamese to the accomplishment of overall US objectives in Southeast Asia”
As a result, there existed a precarious balance where both the U.S. and Government of South Vietnam were intrinsically reliant on each other and both incapable of asserting complete control. As early as November 1960, U.S. Ambassador Dubrow strove to pressure President Diem into removing Diem’s brother and sister from positions of power and to “remove corruption and mismanagement, reduce press controls, give greater attention to peasant needs, and modify the more onerous aspects of the Agroville (collective village)” (Office of National Estimates, 1960). Diem refused to change. In order to gain additional support from Diem, the CIA warned the Government of South Vietnam of an impending coup by Vietnamese airborne battalion commanders on 8 November 1960 (Office of National Estimates, 1960, p. 6).

Examples of Sovereignty Fallacy

The U.S. government wanted both control over the Government of South Vietnam and the veneer of South Vietnamese sovereignty. This bifurcation produced what this examination terms a sovereignty fallacy. The most important sovereignty contradiction is also the most obvious. At the high point of the war, over 536,000 American troops operated largely unilaterally within South Vietnam liquidating thousands of rebellious Vietnamese on behalf of the South Vietnamese government. It should have been difficult for the Government of South Vietnam to claim any reasonable pretense of sovereignty while the assistance of U.S. combat formations was required to kill rebellious Vietnamese citizens (insurgents) on its behalf.

Another less obvious dissonance between U.S. control and South Vietnamese sovereignty came about as a result of the discussions regarding the structuring of the RVNAF. The Government of South Vietnam preferred territorially associated units. The
U.S. preferred strategically mobile, national forces (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 22). Since the U.S. was paying the bills, in April 1955, the decision was made for more mobile national forces.

Thirdly, the Government of South Vietnam preferred lighter forces focused on internal defense along a more French model. The U.S. advisors saw attack by the NVA as a greater threat and preferred a large conventional force that would be able to defeat North Vietnamese invasion (Ibid, p.23). The U.S. advisors’ opinions prevailed. Further, in March of 1960, COIN strategy originated not from Saigon, but from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington D.C. And implausibly, it was President Kennedy, and not President Diem, who approved an increase in the ARVN from 150,000 to 170,000 soldiers in April 1961 (Ibid, pp 26, 58). Then, even more implausibly, Diem had to proposition Kennedy to increase the size of his own RVNAF to 270,000. Kennedy, did not approve and instead limited Diem’s military to 200,000 troops (Ibid, p. 59).

Finally, President Nixon, not the Government of South Vietnam, directed the ARVN raid into Laos in February 1971. This is particularly instructive because the operation relied exclusively on Vietnamese ground forces but was directed from Washington D.C. and not Saigon (Nagl, 2005, p. 174). No U.S. ground forces were allowed on the mission into Laos due to the U.S. congressional injunctions of January 1971\(^\text{236}\) prohibiting the employment of U.S. troops outside South Vietnam. However, this did not prevent the U.S. President from ordering the foreign forces into battle in another sovereign state.

\(^{236}\text{Cooper-Church Amendment January 1970.}\)
The U.S. president directed an exclusively Vietnamese operation—not the Vietnamese president.

It is clear that even while the U.S. eschewed the use of trusteeship relationships to develop the Government of South Vietnam, South Vietnamese sovereignty was only an affectation. When deciding what type of military South Vietnam would have, it was the U.S. opinion that carried the day. When deciding to increase the size of his own military, President Diem had to request this from the U.S. president and was subsequently turned down. COIN strategy originated from the capital city of the United States, not the capital of South Vietnam. And finally, the U.S. commander in chief even went so far as to directly superintend the forces of the RVNAF, without any Americans participating, in a raid in an adjacent foreign state. This calls into the utility of this pretense of sovereignty in developing and advising the Government of South Vietnam.

Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Program (CORDS)

U.S. military and civilian officers advised and assisted the South Vietnamese government at the national and provincial levels from 1967-1973 through a program called Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development or CORDS. While CORDS has been well regarded by many observers, others see its successes as too little, too late or unable to overcome the systemic weaknesses in the South Vietnamese system. Frank L. Jones of the U.S. Army War College argues that the insufficiency in CORDS came not

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238 (Nagl, p. xxii).
239 (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011).
from its implementation or strategy but from the system it was introduced into. He argues that:

"Despite these positive outcomes... Pacification could not ‘cause a fundamental transformation of South Vietnam,’ and the ultimate goal of pacification was to transform the government structure into a system that could attain popular support. The US-backed pacification program could not overcome the South Vietnamese government’s defective execution of plans and programs, its omnipresent corruption, or its inability to develop a sturdy, self-sustaining political base” (Jones, Blowtorch: Robert Komer and the Making of Vietnam Pacification Policy, 2005, p. 116).

Still, other than the Combined Action Platoons of the Marines, CORDS remains one of the few programs to receive positive affirmation in contemporary analysis in the development of the Government of South Vietnam.

The union of the U.S. military’s access, security, and resources with the U.S. government’s civilian subject matter expertise allowed CORDS to make material progress in 1967 that had been deficient since the U.S. involvement began in 1954. One of CORD’s singular attributes was its thorough integration of U.S. civilian and military advisors into a single unified organization. Notwithstanding the disproportionate ratio of military to civilian personnel (6,500 military to 1,000 civilian), CORDS represented an unprecedented fusion of civil-military operations. The program was led by a civilian—Robert Komer—and his stature within the military’s structure was also unprecedented. Komer, though a civilian, was appointed as one of General Westmoreland’s three deputies, accorded the title of ambassador, and vouchsafed a rank equivalent to a three-star general (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006, p. 14; Scoville, 1982, p. 63). Komer recognized that the civilian
experts in governance, rule or law, economy, and infrastructure development possessed superior capacity in these areas compared to their military peers. However, these civilian subject matter experts lacked the security, access, and resources that only the U.S. military possessed in Vietnam (Nagl, 2005, p. 165). This union of civil-military operations was trained and forged at the Vietnam Training Center (VTC) located within the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia in the 1960s (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 43).

**Security First**

“Whether security is ten percent of the total problem or ninety percent, it is inescapably the first percent of the first ninety percent.”

- John Paul Vann, Senior CORDS administrator (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 43)

While the CORDS program yielded tangible results in a whole of government approach to pacification it was constrained to invest a substantial amount of time and effort toward the paramount issue of security. The core element in CORDS’ security line of effort was the territorial or paramilitary forces: The Regional Forces/Popular Forces (RF/PFs). By 1972, the U.S had trained over 532,000 RF/PFs and these would constitute over half of the total 1,048,000 strong RVNAF (Collins, 1974, p. Annex D). The RF/PFs would not only contribute disproportionately to the pacification of South Vietnamese villages and hamlets but would also exceed large conventional forces in their ability to attrite VC/NVA forces (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 229). The RF/PFs were trained and advised by a number of different U.S. efforts. The first, beginning in 1965, was the District Ad-
visors Program (DAP). Small elements of two to seven-man teams of U.S. soldiers would split their time between advising the RF/PFs and advising the District Chief (Montague, 1966). Another effort was provided by U.S. Army mobile training teams (MTTs). These would superficially develop RF/PFs by staying with them a few weeks before moving on to train the next team (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 177).

A more comprehensive method of developing the RF/PFs was embedded or parallel advising efforts under the Combined Action Platoons (CAPs). The RF/PFs were most effective when they were intimately developed by Marines living in the villages with the RF/PFs as part of this program (Boot, 2002; Krepinevich, 1990; Nagl, 2005). With only fifteen Marines and thirty-four RF/PFs, the CAPs were able to turn the tables on the VC. The CAP program forced the VC to resort to large-scale unsuccessful operations to dislodge the CAPs from villages (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 174; West, 1972). Only one village would be overrun during the entire program, despite entire VC battalions attacking the equivalent of RF/PF platoons (West, 1972). General Westmoreland would eschew the CAP concept despite the wholehearted approval of no less than the preeminent doyen of COIN of the 1960s, Sir Robert Thompson. In his opinion, “the use of CAPs is quite the best idea I have seen in Vietnam, and it worked superbly” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 174). As a result of the aversion to CAPs by the MACV commander, the program’s successes were limited to only a few villages in I Corps.
CORDS security efforts would also be advanced through the development of police, the recruiting of VC defectors as part of the Chieu Hoi program, and the destruction of the VCI. Under CORDS, the U.S. advisors would oversee the creation of 39,000 new national police (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 43). However, systemic corruption, inadequate funding, and poor recruiting resulted in a force wholly inadequate to compete with the VCI (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 228). These police were also disproportionately employed in already pacified areas rather than areas where their efforts were more desperately needed. This led to the most problematic areas being largely ignored.

A far more successful CORDS program was the Chieu Hoi, or Open Arms, insurgent amnesty program. The Chieu Hoi program encouraged the defection of former VC and was extremely successful alongside kinetic operations that devastated the VCI from 1967 to 1972. The impact of the Hoi Chanh, or the amnestied insurgents, was threefold. First, they attrited VC ranks without creating enemies of the dead VC family members. Second, it crushed morale among the VC. VC defectors generated far more propaganda value by their defection than the killing of the VC did. It did this by undermining VC and peasant belief in the cause. Thirdly, Hoi Chanh provided an intelligence coup. Hoi Chanh could deliver over their former comrades and help more effectively hunt down other VC (Finlayson, A Retrospective on Counterinsurgency Operations: The Tay Ninh Provincial Reconnaissance Unit and Its Role in the Phoenix Program, 1969-70, 2007). From the start of the program under President Diem until 1966, 48,041 Hoi Chanh surrendered. Most of these were former VC combatants rather than simply political
supporters (Barger, 2007, p. 38). By 1967, another 27,178 Hoi Chanh would be added to the rolls. These numbers of Hoi Chanh would constitute the equivalent of the surrender of two entire VC battalions in one year alone (Ibid, p. 39). The program’s shortfalls were that it was not resourced to do more and those who surrendered were stigmatized by their former associations. This stigmatization among both Americans and Vietnamese who questioned their loyalty, limited their use in some areas (Ibid).

The Phung Hoang, or Phoenix Program, unlike the national police or RF/PFs, was singularly focused on and successful in destroying the VCI. The VCI consisted of the insurgent shadow government as well as the logistical structure that supported VC combat forces in South Vietnam. While CORDS focused on security and development of South Vietnamese governance, Phoenix strove to obliterate the VCI, the GVN’s competition. Phoenix sought to destroy the VC’s ability to provide an alternative-shadow government. Where ARVN, U.S. forces, and RF/PFs targeted main force VC combatants, Phoenix targeted political cadre members, tax collectors, recruiters, and terrorists. Former Time and Reuters journalist and North Vietnamese spy, Pham Xuan An, attested to the Phoenix Program’s efficacy, relating that the VCI had been so thoroughly eviscerated in South Vietnam that the North Vietnamese had to surge Communist cadre to the south after the fall of Saigon to govern these areas (Finlayson A. R., Marine Advisors: With the Vietnamese Provincial Reconnaissance Units, 1966-1970, 2009, p. 53). According to Andrew Finlayson, two former Vietnamese Phoenix officers who escaped Vietnam in 1982 also corrob-
orated An’s observation/statement. Nevertheless, these security operations were not designed as ends unto themselves, but to facilitate the development of secure areas within which to pursue governance development.

**Non-Security Operations Under CORDS**

CORDS also pursued agricultural development, humanitarian assistance, infrastructure and economic development, and training of bureaucratic administration (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 41). In many studies, the security efforts executed under CORDS receive the lion share of attention. However, CORDS was designed as an “innovative whole-of-government approach to achieving rural pacification through development activities strategically coordinated with military operations” (Ibid, p. 49). CORDS worked through U.S. agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development to develop South Vietnamese governance capacities:

> “USAID maintained a separate traditional development assistance program in such areas as education, health, and nutrition....Standard CORDS (USAID-related) pacification work involved building schools and health centers and caring for internally displaced persons. While pacification programs had priority over traditional development activities, in reality it was difficult to differentiate between the two. A traditional USAID project would involve working with the GVN Ministry of Education to modernize curriculum, but when that curriculum was sent to the province for implementation CORDS personnel would manage this aspect. The building of schools was also handled by CORDS personnel” (Schoux, 2005, pp. 15-16).

U.S. civilians only accounted for 2,685 personnel operating in Vietnam in 1969 and over half of these were associated with CORDS (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 46). In comparison to the over 475,000 American military
personnel in Vietnam at the same time, the number of civilian experts pale in comparison. The relative paucity of civilian experts therefore necessarily limited civilian impact on governance development to strictly advising and provision of funds.

**Concerns with CORDS**

The CORDS program had two primary weaknesses: the means by which it was evaluated and the systemic corruption that pervaded every tier of the Government of South Vietnam. The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) was established due to frustration with efforts before 1966 to evaluate progress in pacification. Once created, HES collected prodigious quantities of data to show trends and attempt to measure progress (Ibid, p. 46). While it aided in reducing subjective assessments, HES results were subject to some degree of cynicism due to the *collection bias* of the Vietnamese agents assigned to collect the data. These agents had an interest in demonstrating success and this may have skewed some of the data. Moreover, even when the *collection bias* is accounted for, some authors inherently challenge the HES’s results as *illusory* (Fisher, 2006). They challenge the reality of being able to translate subjective conditions such as security, contentment, and loyalty to the government into quantitative measures of success.

Secondly, CORDS was weakened by the pervasive institutional corruption of the South Vietnamese political and military systems. “The political corruption and instability in the South Vietnamese government was a fundamental problem that hampered the success of the CORDS program as well as the U.S.’s ultimate goal of pacification. Individual CORDS workers found that many of their Vietnamese counterparts were more interested in their own personal wealth and well-
being than in pacification or the implementation of development projects” (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011, p. 48). This sentiment is echoed through the USAID assessment of CORDS as well (Schoux, 2005, p. 21). Corruption was systemic through every level of civil service. Bernard B. Fall described Communist revolutionary war as essentially political war (Fall, 2005, p. 369), and from this perspective, the cardinal vulnerability of the South Vietnamese war effort was tactics or logistics but corruption.

While initial CORDS efforts worked mostly at the provincial and national levels, the bulk of the pacification strategy was implemented at the District Chief level. Initially, there was no U.S. structure in place to advise down to the District level (Collins, 1974, p. 49). Lieutenant Colonel Montague, a District Advisor in 1965-1966, cataloged the disquiet he and other U.S. agents had regarding the situation in Vietnam in 1964. He noted that, “At that time …more and more Americans were in Vietnam, but they seemed, in ratio, to be accomplishing less and less…A similar accusation could be leveled fairly against the Government of Vietnam which with more administrators, more soldiers, and more rural cadre was unable to extend effective government to the countryside…and was doing little to promote social and economic reforms in the hamlets” (Montague, 1966, pp. 9-10).

Montague noted that by 1964 the U.S. recognized that the pacification war was being won or lost at the district level, not the provincial or national levels. He noted that where the district chief was effective, due to his access to the populace and his vast array of responsibilities, provincial governance and security efforts
were also proportionally more effective. U.S. advisors had previously only provided military assistance to governance down to the provincial levels (Collins, 1974, p. 49). However, this had done little to advance the pacification programs at the grassroots level.

District Advisory Teams were designed to close the gap between the provincial and village levels. Military personnel would directly advise the district chiefs in their wide array of responsibilities. District Advisory Team members had no unique training or special skill sets. But unlike their U.S. civilian counterparts, they were able to operate in more dangerous environs. In April 1964, the U.S. instituted a pilot District Advisory Program with thirteen two-man teams made up of one U.S. officer and one sergeant. U.S. district advisors spent three-quarters of their time advising the District Chiefs on non-military matters despite possessing no unique qualifications to do so (Montague, 1966, p. 11; Collins, 1974, p. 50).

**The District Advisory Program**

The District Advisory Teams produced significant short-term, but ultimately unsustainable results. Montague notes that the Government of South Vietnam’s logistical system reaching down to the districts was feeble, corrupt, and easily exploited. The presence of U.S. officers allowed the South Vietnamese logistical system to be artificially supported by the more robust American military system. Communications between the district and provinces improved principally because U.S. officers at the district level had to maintain continuous communications with their U.S. commanders at the provincial level. As a result, district messages could be communicated via the U.S. military system and U.S. commanders
operating at the provincial level would pressure provincial chiefs to move on district requests. Additionally, because of the need to move U.S. troops from district to provincial levels on a regular basis, this also facilitated moving district chiefs and their staffs as well. This increased the person-to-person connections between the formerly isolated districts and the provinces.

As a result of the perceived successes of the District Advisory pilot program in 1964-1965, it exploded from thirteen teams to more than 140 teams in 1966. The District Advisory Program was a topic of discussion during the 1964 Honolulu Conference between Westmoreland and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. During this conference both decided to increase the program. In addition to increasing the number of teams deployed, the size of the teams was also increased from two soldiers to six. The value of the relationships developed by the district advisors is attested to by the reliance of the district chiefs on many of their advisors, in spite of the lack of any specific civilian expertise on the part of the advisors (Ibid).

Despite the apparent successes of the DAP, it suffered from two overriding shortcomings: 1-the impermanence of the improvements brought by the advisors; and, 2-the pervasive nature of institutional corruption in the South Vietnamese system. The improvement in district and provincial communications was entirely associated with the temporary presence of the advisors. The district advisors did not ameliorate the dysfunctional institutional communication architecture, but only provided a temporary fix to an interminable problem. Similarly, U.S. military logistical systems did not repair the broken Vietnamese civilian system. Instead, it
further enfeebled the Vietnamese system as bureaucrats avoided using the decrepit Vietnamese system in favor of the robust but stop-gap U.S. system. Finally, and most consequentially, the extensive corruption in the South Vietnamese system was only mitigated, to whatever degree it was mitigated, when U.S. officers were present. Before the advent of the District Advisor Program, Montague related that the amount of U.S. aid that was siphoned off between the national and district levels left little for use at the village level. Worse, the primary benefactors of the siphoning of the aid were kleptocrats, criminals, and the Viet Cong. This siphoning off of U.S. aid was only marginally slowed by the presence of the U.S. advisors.

**Overall Assessment of Governance Development**

“*The Vietnamese allowed for the quartering of troops and we stayed with an older Vietnamese lady and she asked a poignant question, ‘What are we fighting for, are you going to fix the government there (pointing toward Saigon)?’* I replied, ‘*You mean Hanoi (pointing toward the North)?*’ ‘*No,’ she replied, ‘I mean there (that is, the government in Saigon).*’”

-General Anthony Zinni, Interview with Author, January 2017.

As long as U.S. military and civilian officers were present, the Government of South Vietnam was largely successful at pacification from 1967-1972. However, the U.S. failed to develop a Government of South Vietnam capable of governing effectively after the U.S. withdrew. The U.S. was unable to change the systemic culture of governmental corruption that weakened the South Vietnamese political system. Perhaps the most unambiguous evidence that the U.S. failed to change the culture of the Government of South Vietnam during its almost twenty-year tenure was the South Vietnamese cessation of CORDS immediately upon the
U.S. withdrawal of its last forces in February 1973 (Jones, 2005). U.S. military officers with no expertise in governance had been relied upon to develop district and provincial leadership due largely to the access of the U.S. military. The principal benefits the U.S. military and civilian officers brought were temporary fixes that relied on U.S. military structures that were never meant to be long-term repairs.

The U.S. employed Advise and Assist forms of relationships to develop South Vietnamese governance at the national, provincial, and district levels. The U.S. eschewed direct control over the Government of South Vietnam, and attempted to maintain at least the pretense of South Vietnamese sovereignty. However, this pretense was fallacious. This fallaciousness was evident when the South Vietnamese president had to get American permission to increase his country’s own force structure. It was further evidenced in the decision to structure of the RVNAF according to American designs and against Vietnamese wishes. The fallaciousness of South Vietnamese sovereignty was most obvious when the U.S. president directed the RVNAF, without any U.S. forces present, into battle against a foreign force in an adjacent state. The result of U.S. efforts to develop South Vietnamese governance would result in a South Vietnamese government that was unable to govern and defend itself for more than three years after the withdrawal of U.S. combat formations.

**U.S. Adaptations in Security Force Development**

From 1954-1973, the U.S. military *influenced and advised* the development of the armed forces of South Vietnam. The choice of this strategy was deliberate. President
Johnson specifically recommended the use of *inhabiting* forms of relationship like *encadrement* to develop the RVNAF and to fight the Vietnam War early in the intervention. While President Johnson had asked General Westmoreland to assess the potential option of encadrement on 15 April 1965, it took only three days for Westmoreland and his deputy, Lieutenant General Thockmorton, to summarily rejected the idea. Thockmorton argued that, “there would be both language difficulties and increased support requirements for American personnel under such a plan. He recommended that the experiment not be tried: American soldiers simply did not lead native forces” (Nagl, 2005, p. 153).

Thockmorton’s argument seems spurious at best. Language problems had hardly stopped advising for the past eleven years prior to this discussion. Further, language problems would persist no matter what strategy the U.S. pursued. Moreover, the force increases of 1965-1966 created far more support requirements than encadrement would have. Finally, the American military in 1965 already had over thirty-five years of experience in leading native forces from 1898-1933. Therefore, contrary to Thockmorton’s reservations, the U.S. would not have borne any additional risk than it had already accepted and it may have produced a cheaper, more lasting success. Nevertheless, Westmoreland and Thockmorton explicitly disavowed an *institution inhabiting strategy*.

The U.S. developed a Vietnamese military that was no more capable of defending itself against its northern neighbor in 1975 than it had been when the U.S. began to develop the RVNAF in 1954. This poor showing was in spite of a National Security Council Assessment in 1972 that asserted, “In assessing RVNAF strength, the CIA concludes that both in the present period and in early 1973 ARVN should—from a quantitative point of view – be able to handle the internal security demands as well as the main forces
threat” (National Security Council, 1972, pp. IV-7). At every point in the war, the South Vietnamese possessed a quantitative advantage over the North Vietnamese forces operating in South Vietnam. Therefore, the explanation for the failure of the Government of South Vietnam to survive more than three years after the withdrawal of U.S. combat formations must lie elsewhere.

**Pre-intervention Development**

In 1954, the U.S. military in Vietnam identified the greatest threat to South Vietnam as a conventional invasion from North Vietnam. The U.S. anticipated an invasion along the same lines as North Korea in 1950. Despite South Vietnamese preference for a French styled light infantry model, U.S. planners developed an American styled military designed to defeat a northern attack (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 22; Nagl, 2005, p. 119; Collins, 1974, p. 12). The South Vietnamese military that would evolve over twenty years would two-dimensionally resemble a westernized conventional military in every way except: command and control, logistics, aviation support, and an economic base able to sustain a highly industrialized military.

Despite the U.S.’s pretense of eschewing trusteeship forms of relations, South Vietnamese planners would have little say regarding the strategy and composition of South Vietnamese forces. These deliberations were the province of French planners, the U.S. National Security Council, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff--not the South Vietnamese. The debates of 1954 centered around the type of threat the South Vietnamese should posture their military to confront. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles argued that the RVNAF should orient on defeating internal threats. He also asserted that South Vietnam’s external security could be guaranteed by the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).
This called for a leaner and lighter military force than that proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. While Dulles’ and the National Security Council’s views prevailed, the Joint Chiefs nevertheless modified the strategy of this lighter leaner force to still principally address external vice internal threats. U.S. and French dialogues would produce dual mission combat infantry divisions and a military patterned largely after the U.S. model (Nagl, 2005, p. 120; Collins, 1974, p. 2). Thus from 1950-1956 the RVNAF would be organized in an ARVN, a Vietnamese Air Force, a Vietnamese Navy, a Vietnamese Marine Corps, as well as Civil Defense Guards and Self-Defense Corps.240

**Command and Control and Logistics**

Command and control and logistics were two crucial RVNAF shortfalls that U.S. advisors attempted but failed to influence from start to finish. This resulted in confused combat reporting from the front, confusion in authorities, confusion in responsibilities, a lack of accountability, and glacial decision making during crises. From 1954 until 1975, U.S. advisors were unable to compel or convince South Vietnamese military and civilian leaders to ameliorate these shortfalls. This is crucial in comparison to the learning curve of the North Vietnamese during the same period. Unlike the U.S. military, unity of command and unity of effort were not esteemed in the same way by French colonial rulers in Vietnam, President Diem, nor the RVNAF. The French colonial system was designed to prevent the national consolidation of power by challengers to French rule or later to the Diem regime. This resulted in a byzantine chain of command through regional power nodes. The system the South Vietnamese inherited provided for direct coordination and

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control between the more than forty provincial chiefs, functional commands, combat commanders and the president himself. Within this system, a mid-level commander could receive contradictory orders from several commanders, at the same time, and even directly from the president himself.

In April 1961, President Kennedy sent Vice President Johnson to warn that future U.S. economic and military support would be conditioned upon reform of the Vietnamese national command and control system. Diem agreed, but little changed (Collins, 1974, p. 22). During the entire U.S. involvement in Vietnam, political dysfunction continued to weaken military command and control. Vietnamese military forces were used to intimidate Vietnamese politicians and to bus-in additional voters. General Zinni noted that the Vietnamese marine battalion he advised was responsible for the coup and assassination of the President (Zinni, 2017). He relates that this was a badge of honor within the unit. Further, politics, rather than merit, was a more consequential criterion for promotion and a severe impediment to strengthening the officer corps (Central Intelligence Agency, 1972, p. 8; Krepinevich, 1990, p. 22; Collins, 1974).

“Logistical and transportation support from the South Vietnamese military was terrible and Advisors were able to leverage the U.S. military’s great logistical and specifically transportation infrastructure.”

- General Anthony Zinni (USMC, ret) regarding RVNAF logistics in 1966, (January 2017)

The U.S. failure to develop the Vietnamese military logistics system began in 1955 under the Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (TERM) and culminated the NVA invasion of 1975. Initially, U.S. advisors were assigned to all major South Vietnamese logistics organizations. South Vietnamese officers were also sent to U.S. service
schools for supply and maintenance management training. Brigadier James Lawton Collins Jr. noted that while American advisors observed successes in the Vietnamese medical corps, quartermaster services, ordnance, and military engineers they did not see the same successes in transportation and signals. Collins related that the transformation of the South Vietnamese logistical system was complete by 1957 (Collins, 1974, p. 7). In spite of this sanguine assessment, the South Vietnamese logistical system would remain a critical vulnerability for the RVNAF until the very end. In 1961, General Maxwell B. Taylor would argue that the South Vietnamese logistical system was already failing and needed U.S. support. Again, in 1972 and 1974, South Vietnamese logistics were cited as areas of critical need for U.S. support (Boot, Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power, 2002; Director of Central Intelligence, 1974). Further, the CIA estimated in 1974 that the RVNAF had sufficient ammunition, fuel, and other supplies to fight for an extended period of time but that, “At a minimum, large-scale US logistic support would be required…” (Director of Central Intelligence, 1974, p. 2). Massive systemic corruption seems to have been a critical element in the failure of the South Vietnamese logistical system (Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011; Montague, 1966).

U.S.’s First Attempt to Withdraw and First Request for U.S. Combat Formations

After nearly six years of advising, the U.S. military assumed it would be able to withdraw U.S. forces in 1960 (Collins, 1974, p. 16). However, the weakness of the South Vietnamese military compelled further U.S. investment and prevented withdrawal. The South Vietnamese military in 1960 was not able to compete effectively with either Phase
II or Phase III guerillas. The U.S. military had ignored the burgeoning Viet Cong insurgency from 1954-1960. However, with the overrunning of an entire ARVN regimental headquarters in Tay Ninh on 26 January 1960, U.S. planners were obliged to retrain and reorient the ARVN to address internal threats and pacification. Until 1960, the Civil Guards and Self-Defense Corps were relied upon to implement the Agrovilles or centers of agglomeration and secure the populace. This allowed the national forces of the military to focus their preparation on defeating an external threat. However, the Civil Guards and Self-Defense Corps were poorly trained, equipped, and led (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 25). The deficient performance by the Civil Guards and Self-Defense Corps exacerbated tensions caused by forced relocations of Vietnamese peasants under the Agrovilles. Their performance also caused this program to be suspended and compelled the national military to assume the lead in pacification efforts.

**Changes to Advising 1960-1964**

Given the poor showing of South Vietnamese forces in January 1960 against the VC, the United States made substantial changes in advising and training the RVNAF. First, the advisors began to prioritize training the ARVN in population centric counterinsurgency methods, or pacification. The ARVN, however, abhorred the pacification role. Nagl argues that the ARVN disliked the pacification mission because their role models, the American officers training them, abhorred it as well (Nagl, 2005, p. 172). Second, U.S. advisors were reorganized into a new command that unified all U.S. efforts in Vietnam. Third, the new command, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) took the further step of increasing the number of U.S. advisors in Vietnam and pushed American advisors down to the company levels. Fourth, as part of the new pacification effort,
the Agroville concept was modified into the strategic hamlet program. The strategic hamlet program ended in failure just as the Agroville project that proceeded it had. The Pentagon Papers attributed the failure of the strategic hamlet program to the inability of American advisors to influence Diem regime to: 1- address rampant corruption; 2-to supervise implementation, and to actually follow through on promises of peasant compensation (Osborne, 1965; Knoebl, 1967).

The U.S. leadership attempted to use coercive influence to bring about change when South Vietnamese leaders resisted. By October 1961, President Diem requested that President Kennedy intervene in Vietnam with U.S. combat formations. Kennedy declined to employ U.S. combat forces but promised to provide everything else the Government of South Vietnam required. This support was conditioned upon Government of South Vietnam compliance with U.S. advice (Collins, 1974). Further, when Diem insisted on using the ARVN in repressing the Buddhist dissidents, U.S. advisors were prohibited from advising their counterparts. Withholding U.S. economic support, fire support, and the participation of U.S. advisors would remain a coercive tool of U.S. policy throughout the war. According to advisors surveyed for this examination, when there was a disagreement between U.S. policy makers or advisors and the Government of South Vietnam or RVNAF, continued U.S. support was sometimes relied upon to coerce South Vietnamese performance.

As a result of U.S.’s failures, Krepinevich argues that “As time passed, the Army’s reliance on technological solutions (helicopters, increased airpower, electronic barriers, defoliants) would increase in an attempt to make up for its strategic shortcomings” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 56). From 1960-1964, the U.S. tried to compensate for
ARVN weaknesses by transferring the U.S. military culture of combined arms operations. However, South Vietnamese use of indirect fire, artillery and mortars, was so erratic, un dependable, and inaccurate that this precluded their use in support of airmobile operations. The South Vietnamese failings in the employment of indirect fires is in contradiction to North Vietnamese capacity with indirect fire demonstrated as early as operations against Dien Bien Phu.

In December 1961, the U.S. Army deployed two companies of U.S. assault support helicopters to support ARVN operations. However, the American advisors found themselves constantly retraining the ARVN forces in the most basic elements of airmobile operations. U.S. advisors worked with the Vietnamese Air Force, the second oldest of the Vietnamese Armed Forces to conduct offensive air support missions. However, even with the benefit of a decade of existence in 1961, Vietnamese Air Force offensive air support was described as “inadequate, inaccurate, un-co-ordinated, and useless” (Collins, 1974, p. 37). This deficiency would remain until 1972 as U.S. aviation would be required to compensate for South Vietnamese inadequacy.

Two critical shortfalls would hamstring U.S. efforts to create a three-dimensional replica of itself: lack of senior leadership and an industrial/economic base. With respect to leadership Krepinevich observes, “Most conspicuous, however, was the absence of that prime ingredient of successful armies—capable leadership” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 21). French colonial rule prohibited Vietnamese officers from rising above the rank of junior officers, from the Nineteenth Century until 1951 when the first formal Vietnamese officer commissioning programs were begun. By 1952, the RVNAF had its first command and
general staff course for field grade officers. The Vietnamese military academy was established in 1956 for regular officers, and reserve officers were trained at the Thu Duc Officer Candidate School. Despite all this, selection of officers was disproportionately focused on political connections and civilian education rather than an officer candidate’s ability to lead. While the RVNAF made some strides in commissioning prior enlisted NCOs as well as candidates with less-aristocratic educations, this was not wide-spread. Additionally, officers in the RVNAF tended to remain in the same units and same pay-grade levels with little rotation between combat and support roles (Collins, 1974, p. 78).

Thus, the U.S. had almost a decade and a half of training and combat experience to create an effective South Vietnamese officer corps before U.S. combat formations ever intervened (Collins, 1974, pp. 14-15; Krepinevich, 1990, pp. 21-22). Moreover, their adversaries, the North Vietnamese, only had the slightest of a head start when compared to the development of South Vietnamese officers.

“In retrospect, the Vietnamese Army should have been given a greater combat burden between 1965 and 1968, together with more U.S. backup support” (Collins, 1974, p. 128).

The U.S. stunted the institutional learning and growth of the RVNAF by almost a decade of shielding the ARVN from the North Vietnamese forces they would have to face on their own later. From 1965-1971, U.S. forces insulated the anemic RVNAF from the most dangerous fighting. According to General Andrew Goodpaster, “ARVN and RF/PF secured areas we cleared. Our job was to keep the NVA Main Force away from secured areas we cleared; inside them, ARVN, RF/PF, and CORDS” (Nagl, 2005, p. 170). Goodpaster noted that after Tet, the U.S. forces were protecting the ARVN from the NVA main force units.
Perpetual promises of U.S. support seem to have prevented the Government of South Vietnam from taking a more dramatic stance against its catastrophic manpower shortages. The unanticipated effects of shielding the ARVN and Government of South Vietnam from existential threat their adaptation and learning. The Government of South Vietnam resisted the aggressive enforcement of its already weak conscription laws, despite U.S. entreaties. This resulted in rampant draft dodging and a force hollower than what the North Vietnamese produced through stricter conscription laws. From the start of conscription laws in September 1957 and until 1965, some 232,000 Vietnamese are estimated to have evaded conscription. Additionally, weak desertion laws and flaccid enforcement furthered the already challenging RVNAF manpower problem. In 1965 alone, 113,000 Vietnamese deserted the RVNAF. While the rate of desertions would drop by 30% in 1967 and continue to drop, nearly 80,000 Vietnamese would continue to desert the RVNAF every year throughout the remainder of the war (Collins, 1974, pp. 61-65). If the numbers of South Vietnamese deserters and conscription evaders are combined from 1954-1974, as many as 1,993,000 South Vietnamese men might have avoided service out of a country of less than 18,000,000.

To provide context, in the thirteen years of draft and service in Vietnam (1960-1973) the U.S. had approximately 569,517 draft evaders, 209,517 who were charged and 360,000 who went uncharged, of 213,000,000

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241 Assumes 73,000 per year for desertions from 1959-1964, 113,000 in 1965 and 1966, and 79,100 from 1967-1974 resulting in an estimate of 1,297,000 total estimated deserters from 1959-1974. Conscription evaders is based on 232,000 from 1959-1965 or every six years with no sign of abating. Therefore, I estimate that roughly 696,000 conscription evaders could have possibly refused service in the RVNAF from 1959-1974 (Collins, 1974, pp. 56-63).
U.S. citizens (Glass, 2008). That is, the U.S. had only one third the number of draft
dodger as South Vietnam despite possessing a population almost twelve times larger.

**Vietnamization**

The U.S. Improvement and Modernization (I&M) plan for the RVNAF in 1969
was composed of three phases and was based on two assumptions. The first assumption
was that the North Vietnamese threat that existed in 1969 would persist. The second as-
sumption was that the U.S. would perpetually provide the Government of South Vi-
etnam’s combat support (logistics and offensive air support). Originally, there were two
phases to the I&M plan. Phase I accelerated the quantitative increase in manpower in the
RVNAF maneuver battalions. Phase II transitioned U.S. gear to South Vietnamese
forces. This equipment included aviation, armor, and artillery systems. Phase II also in-
creased the Vietnamese role in aviation, armor, and artillery operations. After it became
clear in 1970-1971 that the U.S. would be withdrawing faster than initially anticipated, a
Phase III was added to enhance the ability of the RVNAF to provide its own combat sup-
port (Collins, 1974, pp. 89-90; Nagl, 2005, p. 174). However, while the RVNAF was ex-
periencing its greatest growth, the number of U.S. advisors was dwindling (Nagl, 2005, p.
174).

**Testing**

From 1970 to 1975, the Government of South Vietnam underwent four major
tests of the U.S.’s twenty-one year Advise and Assist mission. The first test was the U.S.
and Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia in 1970 to interdict North Vietnamese base-
camps in conjunction with massive bombing of North Vietnam. This resulted in an un-
mitigated military success (Boot, 2002, p. 311; Nagl, 2005; Krepinevich, 1990). The second test was the ARVN incursion into Laos in 1971—Operation Lam Son. The difference for this operation was that no U.S. troops were allowed to participate except for U.S. air support. The third test of the U.S Advise and Assist mission in Vietnam would be the defense of South Vietnam during the 1972 Easter Offensive. Only the massive infusion of U.S. air support and logistical support prevented the Government of South Vietnam’s collapse. The Government of South Vietnam and the RVNAF failed their last and final test—the final invasion of South Vietnam in December 1974. The Government of South Vietnam continued to receive economic support until the end of the war. But when U.S. combat support was withheld, the U.S. trained and equipped RVNAF collapsed completely in less than two months.

**Difficulties in Influencing Relationships**

The difficulties faced by U.S. advisors to the Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF centered around dissonance between U.S. and Vietnamese cultures. Montague argued that U.S. advice was “anathema” to some district chiefs for fear of looking like U.S. lackeys (Montague, 1966). This made a difficult job harder. The U.S. advisors had difficulty in transforming the French colonial culture of the Vietnamese officer corps. The advisors were not able to overcome a corrupt political promotion system, the class bias of the officer corps, nor the difficulty in removing incompetent senior officers (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 251; Collins, 1974, pp. 75-76). U.S. advisors were unable to re-

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242 This operation was alternatively known as Operation Dewey Canyon II among U.S. forces operating in South Vietnam.
form the Government of South Vietnam’s superficial commitment to enforcement of desertion and conscription laws (Collins, 1974, p. 93). Lastly, corruption was noted as a significant obstacle to U.S. influencing operations at every level and every institution.

Montague related his understanding of the strong temptation for Vietnamese officers towards corruption: “An ordinary Vietnamese army captain does not have an enviable job in South Vietnam ... If this captain happens to land a job as a district chief, he becomes a little emperor. As the chief tax collector, conscription officer, judge, public prosecutor, police chief, contract officer and everything else rolled into one, he literally has the power of life and death over his subjects... If you were a Vietnamese army captain earning $40.00 a month wouldn't you like to be a district chief?” (Browne, 1965, pp. 208-209).

“It was a big mistake in developing a military in our image. Should have focused on creating a more light infantry, counter-guerrilla force.”

-General Anthony Zinni, January 2017

The United States used influencing relationships through Advise and Assist to create a two-dimensional facsimile of itself. The Vietnamese tables of organization and equipment would be translated into Vietnamese in their entirely and without major modification. The U.S.’s effort to influence the Vietnamese military and government was hamstrung by four components: command and control/leadership development, logistical development, combined arms development, and insufficient economic base to support the U.S. style of war without perpetual U.S. support. The U.S. could not transfer its leadership and command and control culture to the highest levels of the RVNAF. Worse, the U.S. forces actually shielded the RVNAF from the crucial lessons and adaptation re-
quired to learn to compete effectively against the North Vietnamese after the U.S. withdrew. The U.S. could not overcome the systemic corruption in the Vietnamese logistical system through U.S. influencing operations. This corruption denuded the RVNAF of much of its capacity. Despite having had over twenty-four years to do it, the U.S. was unable to develop the Vietnamese aviation support capability which the RVNAF had become accustomed to leveraging. Lastly, the U.S. created a rentier state and an artificial and unsustainable Vietnamese military that required an economic and industrial base like the U.S.’s to replicate. Short of producing a similar economic and industrial base in South Vietnam, the U.S. was compelled to continue to provide combat support at 1972 levels ad infinitum to ensure the survival of the Government of South Vietnam:

“The Vietnamese had artillery fire support but only in small quantities. Therefore, they relied heavily on the Advisors to leverage the immense fire support capacity of U.S. forces. As long as the U.S. was there to fill this gap in South Vietnamese artillery, close air support, transportation, and logistics, the South Vietnamese could compete effectively with the North Vietnamese forces as demonstrated by the 1972 Easter Offensive. However, once this level of support to which they had grown accustomed to was removed, they could not compete effectively against North Vietnamese forces in 1975.”- General Anthony Zinni, (January 2017)

Advisors’ Assessments

From December 2016-May 2017, fifty-five U.S. advisors to the RVNAF were surveyed as part of this research. These advisors served all over South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos and their experiences cover the entire range of the U.S. intervention in South Vietnam, from 1960 until the Easter Offensive of 1972. The advisors were almost entirely commissioned officers, with a small number of senior NCOs and all served in

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243 I used exclusively commissioned officers and senior non-commissioned officers not because the impact of the junior soldiers was less, if anything in many cases the impact of NCOs on the training for the Vietnamese forces troops was greater than the senior non-commissioned and commissioned officers. However,
either the U.S. Army or U.S. Marine Corps. The lowest ranking advisor surveyed was a senior non-commissioned officer and the highest-ranking officer interviewed or surveyed was a four-star general.

Given the poor performance of the RVNAF in 1975, this examination expected universally negative opinions of the RVNAF by their U.S. Advisors. This assumption was proven dramatically erroneous. Specifically, General Anthony Zinni, then a Marine Lieutenant advising the Vietnamese Marine Corps, relates that:

“I was advising the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) and even after over four decades of military service I would consider them one of the best light infantry organizations in the world. The company commander I advised was 55 years old, had been wounded nine times, and had numerous awards for valor. The caliber of VMC officers was ‘off the page.’ VNMC officers were ‘highly selected, tough, and courageous.’”

General Zinni’s opinion was not an isolated one. As regards the more elite branches of the RVNAF, advisors across the board spoke highly of them. Additionally, advisors in general spoke well of the units they advised, whether or not they advised elite units or conventional elements.

Impressively, when asked about Vietnamese military competence upon the end of the advisors’ tours, 84% said the Vietnamese were generally competent-highly competent (see Figure 5.2).\textsuperscript{244} Highest praise for South Vietnamese forces was reserved for Vietnamese Marines, members of the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs) involved in the Phoenix program, and Vietnamese Rangers. The opinions regarding non-elite

\textsuperscript{244} Among these 44% said Vietnamese forces were generally competent and 40% said they were highly competent.
RVNAF forces was more muted and aligned well with General Zinni’s assessment of them:

“However, this level of quality officer was not uniform throughout the South Vietnamese military. The elites: VNMC, Vietnamese Airborne and Rangers were very good along with other non-elite standouts. However, these exceptional units were the exception rather than the rule. The majority of South Vietnamese forces, in my opinion were not this high caliber. However, the majority of the South Vietnamese forces could compete effectively with their North Vietnamese and Viet Cong enemies IF there were properly supported in the U.S. manner they were trained to fight in.” (Bolding added by author).

When advisors were asked if the average Vietnamese soldier they advised compared favorably to U.S. soldiers, only ten advisors, or 37%, answered unequivocally-no. In contrast, 63% said the Vietnamese troops they advised were as good as U.S. forces and several said they were better in some ways. This is heavily influenced, however, by U.S. Marine advisors who served with the Vietnamese Marine Corps. They accounted for twelve of the seventeen positive responses. However, when former advisors like General Zinni addressed the more common forces of the RVNAF, he and the other advisors agreed that, “the majority of South Vietnamese forces could not operate at U.S. levels even with proper support. However, they could effectively compete with North Vietnamese forces if supported in the same manner to which they had grown accustomed.”

Lastly, when asked about the comparative qualities of the Vietnamese leaders compared to the American leaders, only six, or 30%, of twenty advisors who answered unequivocally said Vietnamese leaders were less capable than their U.S. counterparts. In contrast, fourteen, or 70%, said the Vietnamese leaders were unequivocally as good. The advisors
found fault most often not at the tactical, or small unit level, but at the operational or strategic levels of the RVNAF. The most cited concern with the senior Vietnamese leaders was corruption and failure to promote based on merit rather than politics.

When the advisors were asked to compare the quality of their South Vietnamese counterparts to the troops and leaders of the VC and NVA, the majority said their counterparts were better. When asked specifically who had the better soldiers, the insurgents or the South Vietnamese the advisors worked with, of the forty-three who answered unequivocally, 49% rated their counterparts better. Of those, who rated their South Vietnamese counterparts unequivocally better, fourteen of these had worked with the Vietnamese Marine Corps and seven worked with ARVN or RF/PFs. Further, 30% said RVNAF troops were comparable to the VC/NVA and 23%, said the VC/NVA were better. Of those who observed that the VC/NVA leadership as better than the RVNAF, most of these specifically identified the senior leadership of the VC/NVA as the reason for their estimate.
Another revelation was advisor perceptions regarding the ability of Vietnamese officers to internalize U.S. leadership traits, principles, and warfare concepts. When asked about difficulty in getting Vietnamese officers to internalize U.S. leadership traits and principles, 74% said it was either possible with effort, possible with minimal effort, or easy. Only 26% said it was impossible or extremely difficult (see Figure 5.3). In breaking out specific leadership traits and principles, over 80% of advisors said getting Vietnamese officers to internalize courage, dependability, and endurance was easy or possible with minimal effort. Similarly, Vietnamese officer judgment, tactical and technical proficiency, and setting the example were also highly rated at 77%, 77%, and 72% respectively (see Table 5.4).

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245 For discussions on American leadership traits, principles, and warfare concepts, see footnotes in Chapter 3, *Advisor Surveys.*
**Figure 5.3**-**Question:** To what degree was it possible to get HN officers to internalize American leadership traits and principles by the end of your deployment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Extremely difficult</th>
<th>Possible with effort</th>
<th>Possible with minimal effort</th>
<th>Easy it came natural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>35.90%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Judgement</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
<td>7.32%</td>
<td>9.79%</td>
<td>36.50%</td>
<td>43.80%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unselfishness</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>20.51%</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>25.21%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.32%</td>
<td>4.89%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
<td>75.60%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>29.57%</td>
<td>56.82%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Knew yourself and seek self-improvement</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>38.48%</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Be technically and tactically proficient,</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>52.50%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Set the example.</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Knew your people and look out for their welfare.</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>20.51%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.4**-**Question:** To what degree was it possible to get HN officers to internalize American leadership traits and principles by the end of your deployment?

Likewise, when asked how difficult it was to get Vietnamese officers to internalize American *tactical concepts*, another 83% recalled this as being possible with minimal effort, or easy. Another 10% said it was possible with effort (see Figure 5.4). Further, when asked to assess how well their Vietnamese counterparts internalized U.S. *tactical*...

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246 For discussions and explanation of differences between tactical concepts and disciplines see footnotes 149-154 from Chapter 3, Advisor Sureys.
disciplines, 90% said it was possible with minimal effort or easy (see Figure 5.5). Where advisors took issue with Vietnamese ability or willingness to apply U.S. tactical disciplines they said it was extremely difficult or impossible to get the Vietnamese to perform advanced maintenance, inspections, and training.

**Figure 5.4-Question:** To what degree was it possible to get HN soldiers and police to internalize American tactical concepts such as combined arms, fire and maneuver, mission command, and maneuver warfare?²⁴⁷

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²⁴⁷ Maneuver warfare was not really developed as a concept in the U.S. military until the 1980s and 1990s. The inclusion of maneuver warfare and mission command were more relevant to operations training Iraqi and Afghan forces.
Figure 5.5: Question: Was it easy or difficult to get HN officers to do what you would consider basic tactical disciplines (patrolling, training, inspections, guard post and relief)?

If the advisors took issue with the South Vietnamese officers they advised at all, it was in the area of corruption. While 62% of the advisors said those officers they worked with were not corrupt at all, 33% said they were more corrupt than what would be tolerable in the U.S. military. Only 4% indicated their counterparts were criminally corrupt (see Figure 5.6). However, when specifically asked about their dealings with the government and the population, over half (51% and 52% respectively) said their counterparts were either more corrupt than what the U.S. military would tolerate or criminally corrupt even by Vietnamese standards. When asked what types of corruption they witnessed, advisors most often cited the siphoning off of subordinate pay, procuring food from local citizens, receiving pay for dead soldiers, and misappropriation of government material and funds.
FIGURE 1.6-QUESTION: TO WHAT DEGREE, IF ANY, WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THOSE YOU ADVISED TO BE CORRUPT IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE LOCAL POPULACE OR THE GOVERNMENT? WHAT FORM DID THIS GENERALLY TAKE IF IT TOOK PLACE AT ALL?

Lastly, advisors were deliberately asked an open-ended question regarding what one thing could have been done better regarding the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This open-ended narrative question was designed to identify if there was a common-theme amongst the opinion of the advisors--there was. Twenty-one of the thirty-three who answered the question cited the U.S.’s failure to keep its promise of perpetual combat support to the Government of South Vietnam as the single greatest cause of long-term failure.

Ascribing the failure of the Government of South Vietnam in 1975 to the U.S. cessation of perpetual combat seems consistent with Krepinevich’s assertion. He argues that with regard to the RVNAF, the final product was a westernized military, except that “It did not have the heavy firepower associated with the field armies of Western Europe and the United States, but that was more a result of funding limitations than anything else” (Krepinevich, 1990, p. 24). This also seems consistent with the totality of the U.S.
advisor’s responses that the U.S. had created a near facsimile of itself with several key differences.

From these advisor surveys a couple critical assessments become visible. The first assessment was that there was a significant departure between what would be tolerated as an American officer and what was common as a Vietnamese officer. This is critical because, as was argued in Chapter 3, the American style of warfare relies of a great deal of trust between seniors, subordinates, military officers, and civilian overseers. The American style of war does not appear to translate well into other contexts where corruption is rife and trust is limited. The second assessment that becomes visible is that in attempting to artificially transfer U.S. military and political adaptations, the U.S. created a permanent dependent—a strategic rentier state in Vietnam. As long as the Government of South Vietnam continued to receive strategic rents, it could continue to fight as it was trained to by the U.S. However, when these rents were withheld, the Government of South Vietnam ceased to be able to defend itself.

**Conclusion**

“According to the U.S. National Security Council, ‘deep-seated’ corruption was endemic in the Saigon regime during the entire course of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and had been identified as a major factor in the ultimate collapse of South Vietnam.” (Hunt, 2010, p. 40).

From 1965-1973, the U.S. employed institution influencing strategies such as Advise and Assist and embedded-parallel advising to develop South Vietnamese security and governance institutions. These strategies of low embeddedness produced host-nation security forces that were only able to act as the senior partner in an oligopoly of violence for less than three years. The result of the U.S. intervention was to produce a strategic
rentier state. As long as Vietnam continued to receive strategic rents in the form of close air support, advisors, and massive logistical support, it could and did endure. This was most clearly demonstrated in 1972. However, once the U.S. withdrew these strategic rents beginning in 1973, Vietnam became what this examination terms a crumbling state, characterized by no democracy, and no stability. Indeed, South Vietnam ceased to exist altogether by 1975.

This examination makes several observations clear: 1-the U.S. and Government of South Vietnam did defeat the South Vietnamese insurgency in 1968 relying primarily on enemy centric COIN methods; 2-the U.S. and Government of South Vietnam did successfully pacify the great majority of South Vietnam from 1968-1972; 3-the U.S. had minimal impact on improving Government of South Vietnam governance; 4-in the RVNAF, the U.S. created a two-dimensional facsimile of its own military but one that lacked the economic and industrial capacity to operate independently; and, 5-the U.S. shielded the RVNAF both from destruction and learning while American combat formations were involved.

The U.S. military and RVNAF decisively defeated the Viet Cong in 1968 and this had little-to-no impact on the longevity of the South Vietnamese state after U.S. withdrawal. Despite using enemy centric methods which have been largely repudiated by the advocates of population centric COIN theory, the U.S. military and RVNAF confronted and entirely defeated and marginalized the VC after the Tet Offensive. While the U.S. nevertheless lost strategically as a result of the Tet Offensive, the U.S. and South Vietnamese military demonstrated the possible efficaciousness of enemy focused COIN
methods tactically. However, this appears to have had little impact on extending the longevity of the Government of South Vietnam after U.S. forces withdrew.

Secondly, the U.S. and GVN were also successful in their efforts to pacify the vast majority of South Vietnam. But this also had little to no impact on the lack of durability of the South Vietnamese government after U.S. withdrawal. The HES’s ability to effectively determine with precision the pacification of a given village through quantitative measures has been subjected to valid critique. However, what other more effective measure could be employed? The HES helped gauge COIN success or failure and helped make resource allocation decisions based on this. The HES, while not perfect, appears to be the option in a field of bad options. Moreover, even if the HES was inadequate, it is still clear that pacification was successful from 1968-1972 based on the need to replace VC cadres after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. Additionally, the HES’s evaluation was further corroborated by the fact that the VC were never to play a significant role in the war again after 1968 and the North Vietnamese conventional forces were compelled to carry the entire war thereafter. Still, even the relative success of pacification does little to explain the inability of the Government of South Vietnam to persevere for longer than three years after the U.S.’s combat formations withdrew.

Thirdly, the U.S. was not able to materially reform the weak governance of the Government of South Vietnam despite the possession of a significant degree of coercive ability over it. When asked regarding the key contributing factors to the U.S.’s defeat in Vietnam, General Zinni argues that, “There are two reasons why we lost the Vietnam War: 1-The corruption of the Saigon government and national level military; and, 2-The
enduring presence of sanctuaries. If the enemy has enduring sanctuaries such as Pakistan, Syria, or North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia etc, they can never fully be dealt with.”

The U.S. failure to improve South Vietnamese governance through influencing relationships did materially circumscribe the longevity of the South Vietnamese state after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. The U.S. was unable to restrain President Diem’s repressions of the political and religious dissidents. Diem’s heavy-handedness directly led to instability in South Vietnam and materially impacted the government’s ability to govern. It also led to the coup that unseated Diem and compelled U.S. intervention with combat formations. The United States was aware of and gave tacit approval to Diem’s conspirators. Accordingly, it is not too far a stretch to argue that because the U.S. could not sufficiently influence Diem, it chose to replace him instead.

The U.S. was never able to materially address the systemic corruption in the South Vietnamese government and military. Nor was the U.S. able to influence the Government of South Vietnam to act for its own self-preservation and strictly enforce its own conscription and desertion laws. Lastly, the U.S. was unable to sufficiently ameliorate the political promotions process of the Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF. The Government of South Vietnam and RVNAF promotion processes repressed the talented but unconnected, and promoted the incompetent but connected. This would create a system where U.S. material and economic investments, which dwarfed the investments by communist countries in North Vietnam, were squandered through corruption and mismanagement.
Fourthly, the U.S. created a replica of itself that lacked the economic and industrial resources of the U.S. and the expectations of trust and integrity throughout the U.S. officer corps. These two key shortfalls tangibly reduced the South Vietnamese state longevity after U.S. withdrawal. This examination does not take exception with U.S. advisors transferring U.S. lessons and adaptations. U.S. advisors could hardly transfer lessons they themselves were unfamiliar with.

However, since the U.S. advisors operated outside or alongside the Vietnamese institutions, the learning and adaptations they transferred to the RVNAF were entirely American. These adaptations were based on an American military command culture, logistics system, aviation support system, and economic base. The South Vietnamese government and armed forces repudiated the principles of delegation of military authority and unity of command. Systemic Government of South Vietnam corruption denuded the logistics system the United States spent almost twenty years helping to create. Vietnamese aviation support was shielded from both failure and learning, by years of reliance on U.S. aviation support. It was further weakened by being bound to the feeble and corrupt Vietnamese logistics system. And even if the Vietnamese logistics system had not been corrupt, the South Vietnamese still lacked an economic and industrial base able to support a massive air forces without unceasing U.S. support. This resulted in South Vietnam becoming a strategic rentier state that could persist only as long as strategic rents continued to be remitted.

Fifth and finally, the United States successfully shielded the RVNAF from both destruction and learning and adaptation. The NVA was compelled to learn and adapt in its ability to logistically support itself over thousands of miles of trails, roads, rail, and
pipeline while under intense U.S. interdiction efforts. The NVA also had to compete militarily with one of the world’s superpowers. While the NVA rarely, if ever, won any significant battle against U.S. forces, the NVA were nonetheless able to fight the U.S. to a stalemate. After eight years of direct combat against the U.S. military, the NVA benefited from what Michael Lewis of the Marine Corps University terms a *training effect*.

During this same eight-year period, the ARVN was only used in mostly pacified areas. The RVNAF was protected from having to figure out how to defeat VC and NVA main force units, how to overcome logistical shortfalls, how to improve aviation combat support, and how to compensate with artillery in anticipation of a reduction in U.S. air support. Shieling the RVNAF from danger *and* learning resulted in what this examination terms a *retarding effect*. The *training effect* that the NVA benefitted from, and the *retarding effect* the RVNAF was hampered by, directly led to what Lewis describes as a *training gap* and the implosion of the RVNAF in 1975.

The Government of South Vietnam was a *strategic rentier state* from 1954-1973. It was able to defend itself as long as the U.S. continued to supply strategic rents. Further, South Vietnam had become accustomed to receiving greater strategic rents as instability in South Vietnam increased. This created a *moral hazard* where the South Vietnamese government was actually de-incentivized from improving. This resulted in self-destructive behavior such as refusing to aggressively enforce conscription and desertion laws. Ultimately, when the U.S. withheld the strategic rents starting in 1973, the Government of South Vietnam became a *crumbling state* and eventually collapsed with the NVA’s 1975 invasion.
Chapter 6: State Centric Counterinsurgency (COIN)

“Occupation duties are the inevitable result of most offensive operations. We need to recognize that a military unprepared for occupation is likewise unprepared for offensive operations. The decision to conquer comes with the responsibility to govern…” -David A. Mueller (LtCol, USMC), Civil Order and Governance as Military Responsibilities, 2017, p. 49.

This examination finds that the host-nation government itself, not the population and not the insurgents, is the most appropriate focus for U.S. intervention as a third-party to foreign COIN efforts. No amount of success in winning the populace to the United States or defeating the insurgents can compensate for failure to develop the host-nation’s ability to govern and secure itself after U.S. forces have withdrawn. All other concerns are secondary. Much of the contemporary COIN debate has revolved around the most efficacious focal point for counterinsurgency efforts: population or insurgents. For the authors of the Small Wars Manual (1940), this was a decided issue. From their perspective, the core problem U.S. intervention in small wars addressed was a host-nation “government which is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life…” (Small Wars Manual MCRP 12-15, 1940, pp. 1-1). The foundational problem the Small Wars Manual addresses therefore is not principally the defeat of the insurgents nor the control or security of the population. These were important methodological concerns to the authors of the Small Wars Manual. There were not however, the reason the U.S. intervened before 1940. This examination concludes that:

When the United States embeds its officers deeply and inhabits host-nation institutions through institution inhabiting strategies such as trustee-ships, military government, and encadrement, then state longevity improves in the course of COIN interventions.
Under What Conditions Is This Theory Operable

There are two antecedent conditions under which this hypothesis is valid and these relate to the stability of the host-nation government and the level of U.S. intervention. Firstly, this hypothesis is operable when the U.S. anticipates the failure of U.S. supported state apart from U.S. intervention. Secondly, this hypothesis is valid when host-nation government’s situation is so dire and failure so imminent that only the intervention of U.S. combat formations conducting unilateral combat operations is sufficient to arrest it. This *dire situation* may either precede, or be caused by, the intervention of U.S. combat formations.

The United States intervenes with combat formations in foreign COIN because the host-nation government is unable to protect and control its populace and/or defeat its own insurgent threat. The mere presence of an insurgent threat does not necessitate a U.S. intervention with combat formations. The United States may send trainers, economic aid, military aid, equipment, or advisors to assist in defeating the insurgency. The United States also does not intervene to protect another nation’s citizenry from the insurgents. The United States intervenes with combat formations *when the host-nation government is unable to do these things itself*. If inadequate host-nation governance and security are the causes of U.S. intervention, then repairing or replacing host-nation governance and security must be the primary goals of U.S. intervention as a third-party to COIN. De-

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248 Combat formations are deliberately differentiated from special operations units, theater security cooperation, joint training events, trainers, advisors, contractors etc. All of these are *normal* in the course of banal state to state intercourse. Combat formations with the authority to kill rebellious host-nation citizens at the behest of the host-nation government is a dramatic departure from the norm.
feating the insurgents and protecting and controlling the population are therefore secondary efforts to addressing the failure in governance that necessitated the intervention in the first place.

**Sovereignty Fallacy**

The move away from intervention strategies of higher degrees of embeddedness (DoE) has resulted in a *sovereignty fallacy*. Even prior to World War II, the United States attempted to maintain at least the pretense of host-nation sovereignty during small wars interventions. However, as Morgenthau argues, “A nation that gives command of its armed forces to the military of another state is forgoing its sovereignty. To be sovereign is to have the supreme law giving and law-enforcing authority within a certain Territory” (Morgenthau, 1967, p. 305). In all four cases of U.S. intervention with combat formations, the United States refused to allow U.S. combat formations to be commanded by host-nation officers. This makes sense. Why would the United States place its forces under the operational control of host-nation forces whose failure necessitated the intervention of U.S. forces in the first place? Secondly, as Gravatt notes, “Without a doubt, the surrender of the control of one's army, an executive agency, is concomitantly the surrender of one’s sovereignty...Only a government experiencing a situation of extreme emergency will be willing to relinquish the command of its armed forces to a foreign power” (Gravatt, 1973, p. 140). Therefore, the use of U.S. combat formations to kill rebellious citizens of a foreign state during an internal conflict eliminates any pretense of host-nation sovereignty. It is a de facto *appropriation* or *surrender* of host-nation sovereignty. U.S. combat formations operating unilaterally within a foreign internal conflict at the behest of a host-nation government, or relying on its acquiescence, should be seen as titanic
departure from the norm. Further, when the United States assumes control but not command or authority in fighting the internal conflict of a foreign state, it nevertheless becomes responsible for the outcome. Because of this, the United States employs coercive influence to try to compel the host-nation government to do what the United States would do if it were in command/authority. This sovereignty fallacy is fallacious and dilutes the efforts of both states.

**Comparing Possible Explanations of State Longevity After Withdrawal**

This examination identified five compelling potential independent variables to explain variations in state longevity after withdrawal (SLAW) of U.S. forces in the course of U.S. counterinsurgency interventions. The five plausible variables for explaining SLAW variations were COIN methods, troop ratios, enduring presence of insurgent sanctuaries, continued U.S. combat support after withdrawal of U.S. combat formations, and the DoE employed to develop host-nation governance and security. It also scrutinized four case studies to discern potential correlations between these variables and SLAW: the Philippines (1898-1913), Nicaragua (1927-1933), Vietnam (1965-1972), and Iraq (2003-2010) (see Table 6.1).
Based on the assessment of the five variables across the four cases, the strongest correlation was between the degree of embeddedness used to develop host-nation security forces and SLAW (see Table 6.1). Where the highest DoE was only used solely to develop the host-nation security forces and not governance, SLAW was still significant. This indicates that the minimum requirement for increasing SLAW is an effective host-nation security force, even when the host-nation government is authoritarian or dysfunctional. And given the poor showing of strategies of low DoE (i.e. advise and assist), this examination finds that the optimal method for developing host-nation security forces in a revolutionary timeline is a strategy of high DoE (i.e. encadrement). The next strongest correlation was between the SLAW and the DoE employed to develop governance and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>The only case that wasn’t effective had SLAWs of &lt;1yr. The two cases where it was effective had SLAWs of &gt;1yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>The only case that wasn’t effective had SLAWs of &lt;1yr. The two cases where it was effective had SLAWs of &gt;1yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>The only case that wasn’t effective had SLAWs of &lt;1yr. The two cases where it was effective had SLAWs of &gt;1yr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>The only case that wasn’t effective had SLAWs of &lt;1yr. The two cases where it was effective had SLAWs of &gt;1yr.</td>
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**Table 6.1: Possible variables in state longevity after withdrawal**

Based on the assessment of the five variables across the four cases, the strongest correlation was between the degree of embeddedness used to develop host-nation security forces and SLAW (see Table 6.1). Where the highest DoE was only used solely to develop the host-nation security forces and not governance, SLAW was still significant. This indicates that the minimum requirement for increasing SLAW is an effective host-nation security force, even when the host-nation government is authoritarian or dysfunctional. And given the poor showing of strategies of low DoE (i.e. advise and assist), this examination finds that the optimal method for developing host-nation security forces in a revolutionary timeline is a strategy of high DoE (i.e. encadrement). The next strongest correlation was between the SLAW and the DoE employed to develop governance and
security. This combination produced not only a stable security environment for the longest duration, but also a stronger democracy. A conditional correlation was also identified between continued U.S. combat support after withdrawal and SLAW. This correlation only applied in cases of low DoE strategies and resulted in an entirely dependent host-nation government, or *strategic rentier state*. The other variables, COIN methodology, troop ratios, and presence of insurgent sanctuaries did not have a positive correlation between their presence and an increase in SLAW. They are relevant tactical and operational subjects, but not decisive strategies for third-parties to COIN.

**COIN Methodologies**

Recognized COIN methodologies failed to explain variations in SLAW. In one case, Nicaragua, while both methods (enemy and population centric) were present, neither was demonstrably effective. Yet this appears to have had no impact on SLAW as the host-nation government persisted over four decades after U.S. withdrawal. The Nicaragua case study was particularly intriguing because it seems to indicate that the United States as a third-party to COIN may fail in its COIN efforts and still increase SLAW. The Marines succeeded in creating the *Guardia Nacional*, the most tactically and technically capable military force Nicaragua had possessed to that date (Boot, 2002; Crawley, 2007; Library of Congress, 1993; Munro, 1974; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008; Walker & Wade, 2011). In contrast, in Iraq, enemy and population centric methods were present and *weighted*, that is, made the focal effort at different points, yet only the population centric method could be considered effective as a result of *The Surge*. Still, this success in population centric COIN had no discernable effect on SLAW. In contrast, the U.S. Marines and *Guardia Nacional* did not demonstrate clearly effective population or enemy centric
COIN methods in Nicaragua. Yet, the military that the Marines created, was nevertheless able to maintain Nicaraguan stability for forty-six years after they withdrew.

U.S. interventions in Vietnam and the Philippines demonstrated very similar successes in COIN methodologies but very divergent outcomes with respect to SLAW. Both interventions began with very conventional and effective enemy centric COIN efforts. U.S. forces in the Philippines under General Elwell Otis and then Arthur MacArthur ruthlessly and effectively pursued Aguinaldo’s conventional and guerilla forces. However, these efforts were also executed in parallel with Governor William Howard Taft’s efforts to elevate the Philippine government’s provision of justice, security, essential services, and democratic participation (Boot, 2002; Karnow, 1989; Linn, 2000; Silbey, 2007). Harsh philanthropy, the combination of attraction and chastisement, was a potent combination.

The United States pursued an enemy centric COIN effort in Vietnam from 1965-1968. This resulted in the complete defeat of the South Vietnamese insurgency. From 1968 on, the VC ceased to be militarily relevant. (Boot, 2002, p. 308; Nagl, 2005, p. 167; Krepinevich, 1990, p. 239). U.S. pacification efforts in Vietnam were also successful. By the end of 1972, as a result of pacification and the military destruction of the VC, the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) claimed 93% of South Vietnamese villages were pacified (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006, p. 17; Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) Annual Statistical Analysis, 1968-71, 1968-1971; White, Civil Affairs in Vietnam, 2009; Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011). Therefore, with regard to effective COIN efforts, the Philippines and Vietnam case studies provide dramatic successes. However, despite similar successes in enemy and population centric COIN, the SLAW for the Philippine
Case study is a minimum of twenty-four times longer than Vietnam. Therefore, COIN methods do not adequately explain the two SLAW outcomes.

**Troop Ratios**

Counterintuitively, this examination found that the cases with the highest troop to population ratios had the worst outcomes with respect to SLAW. The outcomes appear to be the inverse of what would be predicted by doctrine and theory. The 2006 Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, and Quinlivan advocate for a 1:50 minimum counterinsurgent to population ratio (Quinlivan, 1995-96; FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) Counterinsurgency, 2006). McGrath is more liberal estimating that the optimal number might be possibly as high as 1:91 (McGrath, 2006, p. 109). The only cases to get within this range were Iraq and Vietnam. Iraq, at its peak U.S. deployment, was equidistant between the two estimates (1:70) (DOD, Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq-Report to Congress, 2006; McGrath, 2006, p. 193; Petraeus, 2007; Belasco, 2009). Surprisingly, in Vietnam’s case, there were already theoretically more than enough U.S. and South Vietnamese forces on the ground in Vietnam *before* the intervention of the first U.S. combat formation in 1965 (1:32 counterinsurgents to population, see Table 6.1). Furthermore, Vietnam had the best troop to population ratio of all the four case studies getting as low as 1:15, or one counterinsurgent (U.S. or Vietnamese) for every fifteen South Vietnamese citizens (Central Inteligence Agency, 1967; Director of Central Intelligence, 1966, p. 6; Director of Inteligence, 1968; Director of Cnetral Intelligence, 1969; National Security Council, 1972, pp. IV-7; Central Inteligence Agency, 1972, p. 4; Director of Central Inteligence, 1974, p. iii). Therefore, if it were possible for troop ratios to directly im-
prove SLAW, Vietnam and Iraq should have been the cases to observe the most optimized performance. Instead what the examination observed was that where the Philippine and Nicaraguan cases had the lowest troop to population ratios, they ironically fared the best with respect to SLAW. The Philippine and Nicaraguan cases had peak troop ratios of only 1:100 ratio (one counterinsurgent for every 100 citizens). They also had lows of 1:494 and 1:264 respectively (Linn, 2000, p. 325; Deady, 2005, p. 66; McGrath, 2006, p. 8). They nevertheless fared far better than the two former cases with respect to SLAW.

Presence of Insurgent Sanctuaries

This examination found no correlation between the enduring presence of insurgent sanctuaries and SLAW. In fact, without exception, insurgent sanctuaries were present and active before, during, and after U.S. interventions in each case. Counterintuitively, the presence of insurgent sanctuaries in the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Iraq benefitted the United States and host-nation governments more than the insurgents. In all three cases, the insurgents voluntarily cut themselves off from the bulk of the population they meant to influence and control. While the sanctuaries, especially in the case of Nicaragua, allowed the insurgents survive, they also kept them from succeeding (Millett R., 1978). U.S. and host-nation forces had some successes in conducting raids or spoiling attacks into these sanctuaries in all three cases, but they never foreclosed on any of them entirely. In the long-term, this simply did not matter in the Philippines, Nicaragua.

The singular point in mitigation of this observation was in Vietnam. From 1965-1968, insurgent sanctuaries in neighboring states were less harmful to the Government of Vietnam and U.S. forces than the popular support for the insurgents. Support structures
the insurgents had established *among* the populace, however, were more concerning. Krepinevich and the CIA both estimated that more than 50% of the VC’s support came *not* from neighboring states or North Vietnam, but directly from the South Vietnamese populace (Central Inteligence Agency, 1966; Krepinevich, 1990). Further, from 1968-1972, VC and NVA displacement to sanctuaries in neighboring states worked to help, not hurt pacification efforts. However, where the NVA used neighboring states as staging areas for conventional invasions, these *were* instrumental in threatening the Government of South Vietnam’s existence. These staging bases are not relative to a discussion of insurgent sanctuaries but rather a conventional invasion from a neighboring state. If the insurgent threat metastasizes to the level of a Phase III guerilla force, or the host-nation government is threatened by a neighboring invading army, the host-nation government has the same military options as when it faces a conventional invasion. The host-nation government can conduct spoiling attacks to disrupt invasion preparations, pull back into a mobile defense, conduct an area or positional defense, or invade the adjacent state first. The South Vietnamese government did none of these and lost.

**Combat Support After Withdrawal of U.S. Forces**

The impacts of continued combat support after withdrawal were conditionally conclusive. Where the U.S. used *institution influencing* strategies, it created *strategic rentier states* in Vietnam and Iraq. That is, Vietnam and Iraq were able to successfully defend themselves only when they perpetually received strategic rents from the U.S. in the form of combat support (offensive sir support, assault support, and intelligence) and combat service support (logistics). Economic aid was not an issue in either case as South Vietnam continued to receive economic aid in the amount of $1.25 billion through the
fiscal year they were overrun in (or $5.875 billion in 2017 dollars) (Ellerman, The South Vietnamese Economy and U.S. Aid (January 14, 1975), 1975, p. 5). Similarly, Iraq received over $860 million in economic and military aid in the year before and year of ISIS’s 2014 invasion (U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), 2015). Nevertheless, the provision of these titanic amounts of aid did nothing to prevent both countries from being easily defeated after U.S. withdrawal.

**Figure 6.1 - State Outcomes Depending on Degree of Embeddedness in Governance and Security**

Degrees of Embeddedness in the development of host-nation governments and host-nation security forces provide the strongest correlations to SLAW. Where the United States employed *institution inhabiting strategies* like trusteeships, military governance, and encadrement to develop both host-nation government and host-nation security forces, this resulted in a *stumbling state*. The Philippines exemplifies a *stumbling state* as it demonstrated high-stability and low democracy for a minimum of seventy-one
years after independence (see Figure 6.1). Where the U.S. military and Department of State pursued a combination of inhabiting and influencing strategies, this resulted in a tumbling state, or a state in which stability endured only as long as the host-nation security force remained effective. Nicaragua is the example for this state demonstrating a high level of stability but a faux democracy.\(^{249}\) Once the tumbling state’s security force became less effective, the state devolved into a crumbling state. This was the case with the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua after the 1972 Managua earthquake. Finally, where the United States engaged institution influencing strategies exclusively, it produced strategic rentier states that could persist only as long as strategic rents continued to be paid. Once the strategic rents were withheld, these states became crumbling states, devoid of state provided governance and security unless and until the U.S. re-intervened. Iraq and Vietnam exemplify crumbling states. Massive swathes of Iraq fell to ISIS from 2014-2017, and South Vietnam ceased to exist altogether in 1975.

**General Findings**

The general findings of this examination are that once a state’s governance and security situations have devolved to the level that only intervention by U.S. combat formations can arrest it:

1. The minimum requirement for increased SLAW is a capable and effective host-nation security force.

2. Evolutionary change by third-parties can only be accomplished in a revolutionary timeframe from within the host-nation institutions themselves.

\(^{249}\) Faux democracy is the author’s term used to describe the pretense of democracy maintained by constantly abrogating old laws or fabricating new ones to justify the currently illegal and democratically corrupt.
3. Where U.S. officers deeply embed exclusively in the host-nation’s security forces, stability increases SLAW but not necessarily democracy or good governance.

4. Where U.S. officers deeply embed in both the host-nation’s government and security forces, SLAW and democracy is improved.

5. When U.S. officers are deeply embedded in host-nation institutions, transitioning governance and security leadership responsibilities from the grassroots up creates more organic and sustainable governance and security structures.

6. The U.S. produces strategic rentier states when its officers remediate or replace failing or failed host-nation institutions from outside host-nation institutions using low DoE strategies.

7. Where the U.S. produces strategic rentier states as a result of low DoE strategies, this results in a collapsed state once the strategic rents were withheld.

8. Shielding the host-nation security forces from the most dangerous combat retards host-nation security force adaptation (retarding effect) and trains the insurgents who are compelled to continuously adapt (training effect); this results in a training gap between host-nation security forces and insurgents upon U.S. withdrawal that makes the host-nation less competitive.

9. The variances in SLAW is best explained by differing degrees of embeddedness employed to develop host-nation institutions.

10. The greater SLAW of high embedded strategies results from U.S. officers symbiotically adapting within host-nation institutions; these adaptations are unique to the host-nation’s discrete context and are the property of the host-nation institution.

11. Increased sustainability after U.S. withdrawal results when U.S. officers operating within host-nation institutions are constrained by the limits of the host-nation government’s ability to pay for these adaptations ad infinitum.

12. The meager SLAW of low embedded strategies results from U.S. officers imposing uniquely American adaptations artificially on host-nation institutions; these adaptations have little association with the host-nation’s discrete economic and cultural context and are the exclusive property of the U.S. institutions that produced them.

13. U.S. officers are able to act as neutral leaders and unify and command host-nation security forces that are riven by sectarian, religious, ethnic, or ideological strife in ways that non-neutral host-nation officers are not.
What New Knowledge Do These Findings Represent

This study creates new knowledge by identifying how third-parties involved in foreign COIN interventions develop sustainable states after they withdraw. Third-parties do this through either artificial or symbiotic adaptation. That the U.S. produced states with longer SLAWs before 1950 compared to states produced after 1950 is beyond dispute. However, what was previously unclear is how the U.S. did this. The degree of embeddedness used to develop the host-nation security forces and/or government helps explain the divergent outcomes of U.S. interventions before and 1950 with respect to SLAW.

Where this examination goes further is to ask, why do high DoE strategies increase SLAW? The answer this examination finds regards the form of adaptation both intervention strategies demonstrate. In high DoE strategies adaptation is symbiotic and dynamic to the host nation’s unique enemy, domestic political context, domestic economic context, and culture. While understanding of the enemy is important, how the enemy adapts, how the host nation adapts, and how the U.S. adapts and learns is of greater import than understanding the enemy in a vacuum. Symbiotic adaptation, evident in high DoE strategies, is interdependent on host nation adaptation and enemy adaptation. Likewise, host nation adaptation is interdependent on American adaptation and enemy adaptation. U.S. and host nation adaptation is symbiotic, constrained by the interdependence of both cultures, and dynamic in the sense that it is constantly reacting to changes in the environment.

In contrast, low DoE Strategies rely on artificial adaptation. Artificial adaptation is static in that the lessons the U.S. transfers to the host nation are bound to the unique, static conditions under which they were learned. They are also static as they are also bound to the U.S.’s unique economic, political, and cultural context under which they were learned. Nevertheless, under low
DoE strategies, the U.S. transfers their lessons even though they are static, that is, suitable only to the U.S.’s own discreet conditions.

**Degrees of Embeddedness in Paired Historical Case Studies**

This examination relied on paired contextually constrained historical comparisons to develop a theory of *State Centric Counterinsurgency* and to test it. The examination paired cases where the United States was presented with *tabula rasa* host-nation governance and had to start from scratch, with cases where host-nation government existed but was ineffectual. In both sets of contextually constrained historical comparisons, a case of higher DoE was compared to a case of lower DoE. Then, through process tracing the examination was able to discern the antecedent conditions involved in each case and evaluate each independent variable.

**Case Studies of DoE in *Tabula Rasa Governance***

The Philippines (1898-1913) and Iraq (2003-2010) provide the first pair of contextually constrained historical comparisons. These represent cases where U.S. intervention created or helped create a context of *tabula rasa* host-nation governance. The Philippines represents the case of high embedded strategies and Iraq represents strategies of low embeddedness. The results with respect to SLAW are definitive. Iraq was only able to maintain empirical sovereignty over the majority of its juridical territory for a little over three years after the last U.S. combat formations withdrew in late 2010. It is unclear how much more territory Iraq might have lost if the U.S. had not re-intervened in 2014.
In contrast, the Philippine government was able to defeat internal insurgents for a minimum of seventy-one years, and possibly as long as 104 years, after the last U.S. combat formations ceased operations between in 1913.\textsuperscript{250}

The divergent methods the United States used to develop governance in a \textit{tabula rasa} context also produced divergent results. In the Philippines, the United States developed governance symbiotically and transitioned it organically, from the bottom-up. This government lasted seventy-one years after independence and eighty-four years after becoming a commonwealth. In Iraq, the U.S. developed and transitioned governance artificially from outside the institutions and top-down. The Iraqi government lost a considerable swath of its territory to a rag-tag terrorist group in little over three years. In the Philippines, the United States made no pretense of host-nation sovereignty initially but promised long-term independence from the start. The United States governed initially at the national level as a military government, then as a civilian trusteeship and finally through a shared sovereignty arrangement at the provincial and local levels. At the local levels, Filipino leaders made policy while U.S. agents had veto authority. The United States transitioned Filipino governance from the bottom-up through local councils, then magistrates, then a working judiciary, next a permanent national judiciary, a legislature, and finally a commonwealth and independence.

\textsuperscript{250} The loss of the Philippines to Japan should be seen as a strategic retreat by the U.S. The U.S. made deliberate decisions to focus its early efforts on Europe at the expense of U.S. operations in the Far East. Therefore, the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese had more to do with U.S. planning and operations than it did with Philippine institutional competence. This case study will deliberately exclude a detailed analysis of World War II as even the full capacity of the U.S. military was unable to resist the initial Japanese offensive and thus that the case would have little to do with Filipino capacity and everything to do with U.S. capacity to defeat the Japanese.
In Iraq, the United States rushed to present a pretense of Iraqi sovereignty, even as the Baghdad government had no budget, no constituency, no access to their citizens, no military, and no extractive means to collect taxes. The United States governed nationally through the figurehead client or kafil251 who was compelled to rubber stamp U.S. decisions as U.S. forces operated unilaterally killing rebellious Iraqi citizens on behalf of the Government of Iraq. The United States created a hollow Iraqi Governing Council almost entirely of expats, then an Interim Iraqi Government consisting of the same people. The United States repudiated local governance and, rushing to present the façade of Iraqi sovereignty, the U.S. held elections with twenty-five percent of the population boycotting. The United States created a head of government that lacked any body. Any pretense of sovereignty of the Iraqi government was forfeit with the reality that U.S forces, operating unilaterally on Iraqi soil, were responsible to battle and detain rebellious Iraqi citizens in the name of the Iraqi government.

The divergent methods the United States used to develop security forces in a tabula rasa context also produced divergent results. In the Philippines, the United States developed security forces symbiotically and transitioned them organically, from the bottom-up. These security forces provided security through several major insurgencies and have endured for over a century. In Iraq, the U.S. developed and transitioned security forces artificially from the top-down and yet these Iraqi forces could not defend themselves despite 30:1 odds in their favor, operating in a defensive posture, holding complex urban

251 This Iraqi figurehead regime approximates what Luciani and Beblawi term a kafil in Arabic societies and in the study of rentier states. According to Luciani and Beblawi, a kafil is a local sponsor who is employed by a foreign entity to legitimate its independent operations in another state (1990, p. 92).
terrain, and with a massive fire power advantage. ISIS beat the Iraqi Army with around 1,500 soldiers in Mosul arriving in pickup trucks, and only 21,000-200,000 troops fighting on multiple fronts (theguardian.com, 2014; Gartenstein-Ross, 2015). ISIS routed two infantry divisions, or 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, and seized the city of Mosul with over 650,000 residents. At the time, Iraqi forces altogether numbered nearly 300,000 active duty soldiers and over 500,000 reservists with modern tanks, aircraft, and artillery (Current Military Capabilities and Available Firepower for 2016 Detailed, 2016). Moreover, it took the United States and the Government of Iraq years to take back the terrain that ISIS seized in days with a relative handful of fighters and no armor, artillery, or close air support.

In the Philippines, lessons accrued to the Philippine security forces from within their own institutions. In contrast, Iraqi security forces inherited American lessons and adaptations which were based on the American technological and economic capacity and American military culture. When the Philippine forces were tested, they defeated Communist and Islamic insurgencies without U.S. combat support. They relied on shared lessons and adaptations earned over fourteen years led by U.S. officers. When the Iraqi forces were tested, they collapsed until U.S. combat support was re-introduced.

Iraqi and Filipino security forces were both initially riven by sectarian strife. In Iraq, the sectarian strife was based on the centuries long rivalries between Sunni and Shiite sects. This distrust was exacerbated between the Sunni officers and Shiite politicians after the U.S. withdrawal. In contrast, the Philippine military was also initially constrained by ethnic hatreds between the Tagalogs, Macabebes, and Muslims as visceral as any in Iraq. Yet, these diverse Filipino troops and officers were able to be amalgamated
into a coherent fighting force led by U.S. commanders initially. The United States was not able to coalesce the Iraqi security forces and government into a unified force. Instead, through its uniquely American microsectarian political initiatives, the United States not only maintained the sectarian divisions, but enshrined them in the Iraqi Constitution (Jawad, 2013).

**Types of Adaptation Observed Tabula Rasa Cases.**

The U.S. officers and the Philippine government and security forces learned and adapted to their unique historical context differently than U.S. officers and Iraqi government and security forces as a result of the level of embeddedness employed. The United States used *institution inhabiting strategies*, such as military governance, trusteeships, and encadrement in the Philippines. U.S. officers inside Philippine institutions had to adapt *symbiotically* from inside these institutions. Alternatively, where the United States used *institution influencing strategies* such as Advise and Assist, U.S. forces transferred uniquely American lessons to the Iraqi government and security forces *artificially*.

In the Philippines, U.S. leaders transferred martial and political culture by command from within host-nation institutions. U.S. forces and government personnel were constrained by the extractive capacity of the Philippine government and tax base. They could not adapt beyond the Philippine ability to pay for these adaptations. Furthermore, U.S. agents had to learn to negotiate the *compradrazgo system* to be able to influence and command Filipinos in combat. These same American officers would choose their ultimate replacements. They would choose younger Filipino leaders who best exemplified the martial and political culture the United States sought to transfer.
In Iraq, U.S. advisors operated outside or alongside the Iraqi institutions. When disagreements ensued, the advisors were constrained to advise, not command. They attempted to artificially transfer the lessons the U.S. had unilaterally learned in Iraq and Afghanistan. The only lessons the United States could transfer were the lessons it had learned and which the Iraqi forces had been shielded from having to learn. The liberal political lessons the United States transferred artificially to the Iraqi government were based on centuries of domestic political negotiations, and less than one year of Iraqi political negotiations. The military adaptations the U.S. advisors transferred were the myriad technological and tactical adaptations the United States created based on a massive technological, industrial, and economic base. Thus, these capabilities were not sustainable in Iraq without perpetual U.S. combat support.

**Case Studies of DoE in Existing Governance**

Nicaragua (1927-1933) and Vietnam (1965-1973) provide the second pair of contextually constrained historical comparisons. These represent cases where the United States intervened as a result of state frailty but not complete failure. Nicaragua represents the case of high embeddedness to develop the host-nation security forces but low embeddedness to develop the host-nation government. Vietnam represents strategies of low embeddedness to develop both. The results with respect to SLAW are definitive. South Vietnam was completely overrun and ceased to be a country little over three years after U.S. combat formations withdrew. In contrast, Nicaragua was able to maintain internal stability for forty-six years.
Transitioning Governance

The U.S. developed both Nicaraguan and Vietnamese governance from the outside-in using coercive influence. In both Nicaragua and Vietnam, the United States feigned the perception of host-nation sovereignty. This led to examples of sovereignty fallacy in both cases. Firstly, in both cases, the use of U.S. combat formations to liquidate rebellious citizens at the behest of the Nicaraguan and South Vietnamese governments demonstrated an elemental abdication of host-nation sovereignty. Secondly, in Nicaragua, the United States chose the U.S. Marines as the military branch to train the Guardia Nacional despite Nicaraguan preference for U.S. Army trainers. Thirdly, U.S. Marines were compelled to operate in combat and lead Guardia Nacional personnel before receiving official legal proviso from the government to do so (Headquarters Guardia Nationale, 1927-1933). Fourthly, where U.S. and Nicaraguan forces operated in the same battlespace, U.S. forces would command both (Gravatt, 1973; Millett R., 1978; Neimeyer, 2008). And fifthly, with the exception of paying the Guardia Nacional’s budget, due to concerns with graft, the Nicaraguan government would have little say in how its military’s budget was spent (Boot, 2002; Gravatt, 1973; Millett, 1978; Nalty, 1968; Neimeyer, 2008).

Similarly, in Vietnam, the United States imposed a U.S.-style model on South Vietnam’s military even though the Saigon government preferred a French-style, territorially based command structure. When President Diem wanted to increase the size of his own armed forces, he had to get President Kennedy’s permission. Kennedy refused to
give Diem permission to increase the size of Diem’s own military. Further, when President Nixon was restricted from using U.S. forces in Laos in 1971, he was nonetheless able to direct the raid using exclusively South Vietnamese forces.

The United States made no concerted effort to develop host-nation government in Nicaragua. In Vietnam however, the United States relied on CORDS and the District Advisory Program to develop Vietnamese governance through *influencing* relationships. In Nicaragua, the United States sought to create an *apolitical* military as a check to a partisan and kleptocratic government. However, U.S. diplomats did not realize that an *apolitical* military is an *effect* of good governance, not a *cause* of it. The successes of the District Advisory Program in South Vietnam provided temporary connections between the provincial level and district-level governments. U.S. military advisors provided U.S. military radio connections, transportation, and logistical support that had a valuable impact on governance—but only while the advisors were present. Thus, permanent improvements to dysfunctional South Vietnamese governance at the district level did not occur. At the provincial and national level, CORDS did much to address pacification from 1967-1973. However, as many authors and analysts noted, CORDS did little to address the systemic corruption that enfeebled the South Vietnamese government (Andrade & Willbanks, 2006; Moyar, 2007; Honn, Maisel, Mowery, Smolin, & Ha, 2011; Montague, 1966; Schoux, 2005). Moreover, the South Vietnamese abandoned the CORDS program immediately following U.S. withdrawal in 1973—a clear rejection of U.S. methods and culture.

The principle difference in the SLAWs of these two cases results from the divergent methods used to develop the host-nation security forces of the two countries. The
U.S. employed an *institution inhabiting* strategy—encadrement—to develop the Guardia Nacional. In contrast, the U.S. employed an *influencing strategy*, Advise and Assist, in Vietnam. The Nicaraguan military adapted like a hybrid U.S.--Nicaraguan force, but was built within the economic, technological, and industrial tolerances of Nicaragua. In contrast, the South Vietnamese military was a near facsimile of the modern (for that day) U.S. military, except for four key areas. The South Vietnamese military reflected the same structure as the U.S. military, but it: 1-rejected U.S. command and control philosophy and culture; 2-suffered from corruption that denuded the capacity of the logistical system; 3-lacked the substantial and effective offensive air support it had come to rely on from the United States; and, 4-lacked a national economic and industrial base to support American style operations.

**Types of Adaptation Observed in Existing Governance Cases**

The U.S. and Nicaraguan security forces learned and adapted to their unique historical context differently than the U.S. and Vietnamese government and forces. This differences in adaptation were due to the level of embeddedness used to develop each. The United States used an *inhabiting strategy*—encadrement—in Nicaragua which required the U.S. and the Guardia Nacional to adapt *symbiotically*. Alternatively, where the United States used an *influencing strategy*--Advise and Assist—in Vietnam the U.S. forces transferred uniquely American lessons to the Vietnamese security forces *artificially*. In the Nicaragua, U.S. leaders transferred martial culture by command from within host-nation institutions, and U.S. forces were constrained by the limitations of the Nicaraguan tax base. They could not adapt beyond the Nicaraguan ability to pay for these adaptations. Furthermore, U.S. officers had to learn to negotiate the *personalismo*
system to be able to influence and command. These U.S. officers would choose the junior officers who would replace them. They would select Nicaraguan leaders who best exemplified the martial culture of the U.S. Marines. Unfortunately, the Marines began too late and left too soon to create enough senior officers. They did, however, create the institutions the Nicaraguan government needed.

In Vietnam, the way the United States employed Vietnamese military forces significantly retarded the adaptation of the South Vietnamese. From 1965-1972, U.S. combat formations intervened to provide the South Vietnamese forces time and space to grow and strengthen. U.S. unilateral operations shielded South Vietnamese forces from destruction and learning. Further, wherever the South Vietnamese forces were deficient in logistics or fire support, the United States compensated for these shortfalls. In contrast, the North Vietnamese were forced to compete directly with the U.S. for eight years. They were compelled to improvise logistical systems over thousands of miles and under constant U.S. interdiction efforts. The NVA/VC lost the vast majority of battles they fought with the United States, but adapted and learned from each battle they survived. Thus, the surviving North Vietnamese leaders and units benefitted from a training effect. In contrast, the South Vietnamese forces who were shielded from contact suffered from a retarding effect. Thus, the United States had trained a North Vietnamese enemy and retarded the development of their South Vietnamese counterparts. South Vietnam became a strategic rentier state who was able to survive only as long as the United States continued to pay strategic rents indefinitely.
Implications

Internal and External Validity of This Study

The results of this examination have both high internal and external validity. This examination employed historically constrained controlled comparisons to craft its argument. It relied upon general variables, sought out representative variation, and selected cases that facilitated command of alternative explanations (Slater & Ziblatt, 2013, p. 1301). This provides substantial explanatory range and internal and external validity. This study also looks comprehensively across all instances of U.S. conventional COIN intervention. Thus, this study has high internal validity in the development and implementation of future U.S. foreign policy. Lastly, it also demonstrates a high degree of external validity through proximal similarity, as advanced by Donald Campbell (Campbell, 1986). This external validity stems from the nature of the U.S. government and the U.S. military as representative of the policies and military doctrine of western liberal democracies. Therefore, the external validity due to proximal similarity with states such as those participating in the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) makes the results of this study generalizable to their interventions as well.

Questions This Study Raises

While this examination addresses the third-party interventions of the United States, and by extension other western liberal democracies, is the theory genuinely generalizable across all western liberal democratic third-party interventions? Further, is it generalizable to non-western liberal democratic states: do high embedded strategies, as a rule, increase SLAW in context where a foreign state or organization intervenes in state fragility or failure? Other questions this study raises transcend COIN interventions. The
key issue this examination addresses is what Paul Miller (2013) terms * Armed State Building. Are high embedded strategies also optimal when the situation has *not* required the intervention of foreign combat formations to arrest it? Are high embedded strategies also effective in international development projects? Are high embedded strategies useful in other areas such as remediating failing organizations? Lastly, this study has provided little area for shades of embeddedness. What about strategies that straddle high and low embeddedness, such as parallel advising where the advisors still lack *command*, but their influence is more intimate due to their *inhabitation* of host-nation organizations?

**Policy Implications**

**Are High Embedded Strategies Anachronisms?**

“There was recognition and acceptance of a reality that seems to have been forgotten since, as documented in the Army’s history of the occupation of Germany: ‘Military government, the administration by military officers of civil government in occupied enemy territory, is a virtually inevitable concomitant of modern warfare.’ Indeed, one author noted that, since the occupations following World War II, ‘The capabilities required to carry out military government were shunned and neglected by DoD and the Army at large until the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq made it terribly clear that history was repeating itself: the United States was quite unprepared for the responsibilities of administering Iraq and supporting the government of Afghanistan, and the ad hoc means we devised once again ‘ranged from inadequate to near disastrous.’”


While *institution inhabiting* strategies were effective from 1899 until just after World War II, are they viable options today? The answer is yes. To understand why they are viable today requires addressing *political will, probability of success, and political tenability*. Both Mao and Clausewitz agreed that war was essentially an extension of politics, or politics by other means. They also agreed that political demands constrained
military means (Clausewitz, 1976; Tung, 1961). Therefore, determining if the political will exists to apply highly embedded strategies is crucial before nominating it as a potential policy.

Key aspects in determining sufficient political will are duration, cost, and the probability of success of an intervention. The use of strategies of high embeddedness have resulted in conflicts of shorter duration and exponentially longer SLAWs. The average duration of combat operations by U.S. forces in all of its conventional counterinsurgency interventions has been approximately a decade (8.85 years before World War II and 10.6 years after—see Table 1.1). However, the duration of U.S. support to counterinsurgencies since World War II has dramatically increased. The United States led the training and support for South Vietnamese COIN operations for nineteen years (1954-1973). The U.S. has been leading the support for the Afghan state for the last sixteen years (2001-present), and the Iraqi state for 14 years (2003-present). The average of these COIN support missions after World War II, if they were to end today, would be around sixteen years. However, U.S. interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have no end in sight. In contrast, the Philippines took fifteen years to conclude decisively and Nicaragua took only five. The U.S. remained in the Philippines to provide American access to Far East markets, not to keep the Philippine state alive.

All these wars, before and after World War II, were costly in terms of blood and treasure. All of these wars were incredibly complex. Therefore, the principle differences that set them apart are their durations and probabilities of success. The results are conclusive: the use of highly embedded strategies result in interventions of shorter duration
and produce states that last far longer after cessation of U.S. combat operations. What about domestic political tenability?

Are Highly Embedded Strategies Politically Tenable Today?

“While the army’s embrace of military governance may appear strange in 2016, the U.S. Army of 1940 could refer to a long list of precedents in which U.S. occupation required military governments: the Reconstruction following the end of the Civil War in 1865, the Philippines 1898 – 1946, Cuba 1898–1902, Puerto Rico 1898, Veracruz, Mexico 1914, the Rhineland 1918–1923, and numerous Marine Corps interventions in the Caribbean. Together, these occupations represent more than a hundred twenty years of consistent, the periodic, need for military governments”


While institution inhabiting strategies were politically tenable from 1899 until the aftermath of World War II, are they tenable today? The answer is yes. The key arguments against the untenability of highly embedded strategies today are: 1-they appear neo-imperial/neo-colonial (Neller, 2015; Petraeus, 2015, Zinni 2017); 2-host-nation populations will reject control by a foreign power (Mueller, 2017); and practical concerns over language issues and force protection make them infeasible (Nagl, 2005).

How Contemporary High DoE Strategies Resist Neo-Imperial/Colonial Arguments

Regarding the appearances of neo-imperialism/neo-colonialism, there are several reasons to reject these critiques with respect to modern neo-trusteeships and shared sovereignty arrangements. Claims of neo-imperialism are invalidated by the inherent differences between classical imperialism and neo-trusteeships, the dilution of claims of neo-imperialism, and the charge of neo-imperialism associated even with the current methods.
Fearon and Laitin (2004) point out the significant differences between classical imperialism and modern neo-trusteeships. Although they concede that both share a prolific degree of control by foreign powers over internal host-nation affairs, they argue that classical imperialism and modern neo-trusteeships differ fundamentally. This difference exists because a host-nation under neo-trusteeships is: “governed by a complex hodgepodge of foreign powers, international and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and domestic institutions, rather than by a single imperial or trust power asserting monopoly rights within its domain…the parties to these complex interventions typically seek an international legal mandate for their rule…whereas classical imperialists conceived of their empires as indefinite in time, the agents of neo-trusteeship want to exit as quickly as possible…” (Fearon & Laitin, 2004, p. 7).

**Less Invasive Strategies Failed to Shield The U.S. From Claims of Neo-Imperialism**

Claims against the less invasive means of current intervention and over-profusion of charges of neo-imperialism, have diluted the gravity of such claims. The move away from highly embedded strategies toward less invasive strategies was a direct reaction to charges of imperialism (Killcullen, 2009; Montague, 1966; Nagl, 2005). However, this shift has not averted continued charges of neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism even against the current use of less invasive, low embeddedness COIN strategies such as Advise and Assist (Montague, 1966; Shilliam, 2008; Khalili, 2012; Amar, 2013). Furthermore, what exactly constitutes imperialistic behavior has become diffused by claims of economic imperialism (Lazear, 2000), democratic imperialism (Ravlo, Gleditsch, & Dorussen, 2003), humanitarian imperialism (Bush, Martiniello, & Mercer, 2011), developmental imperialism (Zack-Williams, 2013), linguistic imperialism (Burns, 2013),
and cultural imperialism (Auxter, 1986). Claims of neo-imperialism will exist as long as the United States maintains a power imbalance with other states and continues to intervene in internal conflicts of other states. Therefore, if any form of U.S. intervention is likely to be labeled as neo-imperialistic by detractors of any form of U.S. intervention, it makes more sense to choose a strategy with a higher probability of success. It also makes sense therefore to choose a strategy that is politically viable, tenable, and which possesses a higher probability of success rather than one that is simply less likely to be impugned by the unappeasable.

Sovereignty Fallacy-An Unintended Consequence of Low DoE Strategies

Sovereignty fallacy is an unintended consequence of U.S. reliance on strategies of low embeddedness to avoid accusations of imperialism. However, the pretense of host-nation sovereignty is fallacious, dangerous, and should be avoided. First, as this examination has argued, there can be little pretense for host-nation sovereignty when it has to hire-out the killing of its rebellious citizens to a foreign state. Second, where U.S. combat formations operate, they generally operate under U.S. commanders, and not host-nation commanders. Third, where the U.S. government is financing the conflict and its prestige is at stake, it acts coercively to compel the host-nation government to take decisions the United States would take if it were in charge. Nevertheless, the host-nation government often resists this coercion. Thus, the divergent efforts and strategy of the two entities dilute unity of command, unity of effort, and strategy. This is dangerous and makes fractures in their partnership lucrative targets for insurgent exploitation. As David Johnson of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments notes, “as was the case in Vietnam, the United States rarely had enough leverage on the government upon which it
is relying for legitimacy to force change...American leverage was ineffective in reforming programs, owing to the combination of reluctance to assume control of the South Vietnamese government and Saigon’s resistance to proposals...U.S. efforts in Afghanistan...are similar” (2017, p. 86) Lastly, what host-nation sovereignty is the United States appropriating where the host-nation government that has no military, no budget, no means of extracting taxes from its own people, and not even sufficient security to interact safely with its own populace?

**Host Nation Citizens Resist High DoE Strategies More Than Low DoE Strategies?**

The argument that host-nation populations will automatically reject foreign forces leading their security institutions or administering their governance institutions is not new nor is it well supported by history. General Allenby in Syria cautioned General Harry Chevelle not to allow British troops to enter Damascus in 1918 for fear of a Muslim uprising would be caused by Muslim peoples being opposed to Western occupation. Similar concerns led the Bush Administration and General Tommy Franks to keep U.S. forces outside major Iraqi cities in 2003 (Mueller, 2017; Bensahel, et al., 2008). However, the Ottoman government abandoned Damascus in 1918 and Iraqi security forces abandoned their posts throughout Iraq in 2003. Chevelle was compelled to enter and secure Damascus in much the same way the United States was compelled to provide security and governance in the absence of Iraqi security and governance. The principle complaint from this early period in the Iraq War was not that the United States had too many *Christian occupiers*, but too few (Bensahel, et al., 2008; Mueller, 2017; Gordon, The Conflict in Iraq: The Road to War; The Strategy to Secure Iraq Did Not Foresee a 2nd War, 2004).
Language, Support, Historicity

Arguments that high embedded strategies are not relevant because of concerns of language difficulties, support requirements, and force protection are spurious. President Johnson directed General Westmoreland to research the possibility of using U.S. officers to encadre Vietnamese forces as an alternative to the intervention of massive combat formations. This method was summarily rejected on the basis that “there would be both language difficulties and increased support requirements for American personnel under such a plan.” Accordingly, the recommendation to Johnson was that “the experiment not be tried: American soldiers simply did not lead native forces” (Nagl, 2005, p. 153).

High DoE Strategies Were Rejected Before, What Makes Them Viable Today?

A valid critique of the contemporary tenability of high DoE strategies is, if they were expressly rejected in Vietnam and Iraq, what makes them more viable after these conflicts? It is expressly due to the contemporary military/political contexts created by the failures in Vietnam, Iraq, and potentially in Afghanistan that make high DoE strategies more tenable today than they were only fourteen years ago. If it were possible to win a foreign counterinsurgency and create a state that would endure after U.S. withdrawal through massive economic investment and large numbers of U.S. troops alone, then U.S. efforts in Vietnam and Iraq should have produced states lasting far longer. However, large scale COIN interventions in Vietnam and Iraq have failed when influencing strategies were used to develop host nation governments and security forces in the context of large scale COIN intervention. In contrast, large scale COIN interventions have increased SLAW dramatically when inhabiting strategies were used to develop host nation institutions.
Every one of these concerns regarding language, support requirements, and force protection are the exact same concerns faced by military advisors. Most obviously, the concerns with language transcend the degree of embeddedness used to develop host-nation institutions. Advisors and indeed any U.S. force in a foreign state will have the same language problems. Second, support for encadred officers is actually less of a burden on the U.S. logistics system. The encadred officers are forced to rely on the host-nation logistics system. Indeed, U.S. encadred officers within the host-nation’s logistics system help it learn to function. In addition, the argument that U.S. officers do not lead foreign armies is fallacious as Lieutenant Colonel Mueller points out, “the U.S. Army of 1940 could refer to a long list of precedents in which U.S. occupation required military governments…Together, these occupations represent more than a hundred twenty years of consistent, the periodic, need for military governments” (Mueller, 2017, p. 48). Finally, Max Boot (2002) points out a concern with the safety of U.S. officers operating alone within host-nation units. However, he also notes that the risk of U.S. officers encadred within host-nation security forces is no greater than U.S. Advisors who operate alone and unafraid with these same forces.

Strategies of high embeddedness are relevant and politically tenable today provided their elements and alternatives are understood. Highly embedded strategies represent a significant departure from classical imperialism and they take less time to decisively conclude. Do they provide higher probabilities of success? Indeed. Even relying on the most conservative estimate of this study, the SLAW of highly embedded strategies is at least ten times greater than low embedded strategies. In contrast, strategies of low embeddedness are more costly, take longer, and come with extremely low probabilities of
success. Lastly, are high DoE strategies politically tenable today? They can be. This is demonstrated most clearly by the fact that they are already being used today. Cindy Daase (2011), Fearon and Laitin (2004), Mueller (2017) and General Anthony Zinni (2017) provide some guidelines upon which high DoE strategies are being employed today and could be employed in the future.

**Are Highly Embedded Strategies Already in Use?**

Cindy Daase (2011), Robert Caplan (2007), David Johnson (2017) and others have argued for not only the value of strategies of high embeddedness but they have identified where they are already being employed or are in preparation. Robert Caplan notes that, “Impracticable though the idea of international trusteeship may have seemed to many at that time, it soon became a reality in all but name with the establishment of international territorial administrations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Eastern Slavonia (1995), Kosovo (1999) and East Timor (1999)” (Caplan, 2007, p. 231). Daase (2011) does extensive research on the efficacy of shared sovereignty arrangements employed in developing Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2005-2006. Finally, Johnson notes presciently that, “The Army recognizes the requirement to consolidate gains post-conflict, noting in *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, ‘The Army also prepares for security operations abroad including initial establishment of military government pending transfer of this responsibility to other authorities.’ Furthermore, the establishment of the Institute for Military Support to Governance (IMSG) at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in 2013 was an important step in turning concepts into doctrine and organizational capability” (Johnson, 2017, p. 81). If highly embedded strategies are politically viable, politically tenable, already being used, and
come with higher probabilities of success, under what guidelines would they need to operate in order to maintain these criteria?

**Guidelines for Implementation of Strategies of High Embeddedness**

Fearon & Laitin (2004), Daase (2011), Mueller (2017), and Zinni (2017) nominate several guidelines under which high embedded strategies should be employed. Fearon, Laitin, and Daase agree that one of the key criteria for implementation is clear indications that the appropriation of the host-nation sovereignty is temporary in nature (Fearon & Laitin, 2004, p. 7; Daase, 2011, p. 7). They and Zinni (2017) also argue for the oversight of the foreign intervention force by international organizations, as well as multilateral participation in order to avoid imperialist and neo-colonial critiques. In contrast, Mueller, (2017) argues that based on the lessons from the U.S. occupation of the Rhineland in 1918, the U.S. Army determined that highly embedded strategies require strict adherence to unity of command. This does not obviate the former arguments of Fearon, Laitin, Daase, and Zinni. It is possible that there could be a single foreign commander, civilian or military, who is in charge but who is also responsible to an international governing body. Also, Daase, reflecting on her comparisons between different instances of shared sovereignty arrangements in Sierra Leone and Liberia, advances a couple additional key requirements. She argues that for success, highly embedded strategies need to be “self-enforcing and self-executing” and “have built in sanctions and for defection and incentives for cooperation” (Daase, 2011).

**Are Institution Inhabiting Strategies Possible With Today’s U.S. Military?**

Transitioning to *institution inhabiting* strategies today would require minimal change in the structure and doctrine of the current U.S. force. The most elemental change
would need to take place at the doctrinal level. The U.S. has documents of historical precedence to rely on such as *The Small Wars Manual* (1940) and *Field Manual 27-5, Military Government and Civil Affairs* (1940). These historical publications would need to be updated and made relevant to some of the guidelines mentioned by Fearon, Laitin, Daase, and Zinni.

Further, the U.S. military would need to integrate *institution inhabiting* training in military government and encadrement into its professional military education (PME) system. This could occur in several areas. Rebecca Patterson provides a valuable work on how the School of Military Governance trained officers for post-conflict World War II occupation and rebuilding (*Revisiting a School of Military Government: How Reanimating a World War II-Era Institution Could Professionalize Military Nation Building*, 2011). Some of this structure already exists in the U.S. military. Both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps have standing theater-security cooperation institutions. These could be adapted to prepare officers and NCOs for the challenging responsibilities of encadrement and military government. Additionally, the military PME system could easily add courses at its formal courses to educate officers and senior NCOs on strategies of high embeddedness. Lastly, the U.S. would also require a substantial deployable civilian force capable and able to assume the role of trusteeship after a state transitioned from U.S. military government. This has been tried before with the U.S. Department of State’s Civil Response Corps (CRC). This provides a start. The State Department does not have the capacity to maintain a standing deployable force. It could however, train a significant number of potential foreign service officers in the military PME schools system. Then,
these foreign service officers would return to their normal duties until a crisis arose. Their skills, once learned, could then be mobilized in a crisis.

**Are High DoE Strategies Panaceas For COIN Interventions?**

High DoE strategies are not panaceas in and of themselves. This research borrows the term encadrement from Bernard B. Fall’s study of the French War in Indochina. The French employed encadrement in this conflict and still failed. In contrast, the U.S. used these strategies and succeeded in increasing SLAW after they withdrew. So, what explains the divergent outcomes as a result of high DoE strategies? The answer to this is related to the contrasting purposes of the French and Americans. The purpose of U.S. high DoE strategies has been to allow U.S. troops to leave…not stay. Indeed, this key difference is the same difference between classical imperialism and colonialism and contemporary high DoE strategies like neo-trusteeships. That difference lies in the fact that, the goal of modern neo-trusteeship relations is to allow the intervening forces to leave quicker, not to stay longer. The French in Indochina were not trying to develop a host nation security force capable of standing on its own. The French desired a capable but dependent local ally. In contrast, American high DoE strategies before 1950 sought to allow the U.S. to withdraw U.S. troops. The U.S. needed to create a viable independent host nation so that it could leave.

**Potential Value of Highly Embedded Strategies-Best Worst Options?**

“*Their limitations notwithstanding, what may most recommend arrangements of this kind in future is simply that they can represent the least worst option, if not sometimes the best hope, for easing a territory's transition from war, injustice and dependence to peace, basic human rights and relative independence in the context of the changing international order of the post-cold war era*” -Rober Caplan, *From Collasping States to Neo-Trusteeship*:
High DoE strategies may assist intervention planners and policy makers in articulating a measurable purpose for intervention. This research suggests that the historical purpose of American high DoE strategies has been: *To produce viable states in the context of COIN interventions who are able to govern and secure themselves after the withdraw of U.S. forces from combat operations on its behalf.*

Winston Churchill once appraised democracy as the worst option except for all the other—so it is with strategies of high embeddedness. Given the poor track record of low embedded strategies, there appear to be few alternatives. One obvious alternative is to stop intervening. As Jeffery Herbst offers, the international system could let weak states die, split, or shrink to the point where their juridical borders match their empirical capacity to govern and secure themselves (Herbst J., 2003). The second option is to simply contain the fallout of state failure. This strategy would seek to limit the impacts of state failure on the rest of the international system, but still allow the state to collapse and then rebuild itself on its own. This seems difficult, if not impossible to accomplish. If a foreign party is going to intervene, it has high and low embedded strategies to choose from. However, given the poor history of using low embedded strategies, these should be considered politically untenable.

**Does Mean There Are Only Options Limited to Isolationism or Imperialism?**

This research does not advocate for the existence of a false dichotomy between isolationism and imperialism in choosing high and low DoE strategies. Rather, the theory this examination produces is operable in the presence of the antecedent conditions
identified by this research. The two antecedent conditions under which this theory operates are:

1. The perception or reality of state failure;
2. The perception that only U.S. combat formations are able to arrest this failure.

Where these two antecedent conditions are present, there appear to be only three historical American options:

1. Large scale COIN intervention and low DoE strategies resulting in strategic rentier states;
2. Large scale COIN intervention and high DoE strategies resulting in stumbling or crumbling states;
3. Don’t intervene and let them fail.

Where the state is not in imminent threat of failure and/or the situation is not dire enough to require the intervention of U.S. combat formations, then myriad options are available and may be more valuable. Therefore, the relevant argument is not between isolationism and imperialism, but between the most efficacious strategy to remediate state failure in COIN interventions when only foreign combat formations can arrest it.

**Where Does This Research Apply to the Current Environment?**

National security guidance contained in *Sustaining the U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* issued in 2012 signaled an official departure from large scale U.S. COIN operations. Specifically, Presidential strategic guidance directed that the U.S. military “will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations” (p. 6). The Trump administration appears to be equally reticent to become
involved in a foreign large-scale counterinsurgency. However, General James Mattis, the current Secretary of Defense has noted that “the enemy also gets a vote.” Thus, the decision to intervene may be forced upon the U.S. and not of its own volition. This examination finds several alternative possible outcomes. The first result might be a *stumbling state* with high stability but imperfect democracy like the Philippines. Another possible outcome is the *tumbling state* which is stable but *faux democratic* at best, such as Nicaragua. The final alternative is to produce *strategic rentier states* that are able to endure only as long as the United States perpetually provides economic and military combat support in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the United States seeks to conclude the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it seems clear that as things stand now, two *strategic rentier states* have been created. As long as the United States is willing to provide the strategic rents the Iraqi and Afghan governments have gotten used to, they have a decent chance of persisting. However, within three or four years of withholding combat support, these states will likely implode and/or be overrun again. Further, as the United States seeks to preempt instability through U.S. military security cooperation deployments all over Africa, the United States will need to be prepared to intervene there with a proven method. The addition of more advisors will not repair a failed state, or even one on the verge of failing. If the situation has gotten so bad as to require U.S. combat formations to arrest it, dysfunctional or non-existent host-nation institutions cannot be reformed, rehabilitated, or created from scratch strictly through *influence*. Caplan calls neo-trusteeships the *best-worst option* available. The United States should prepare itself for this contingency or relegate itself to pursuing strategies of low embeddedness. Unfortunately, low embedded strategies are expensive in
lives and treasure and provide low historical probabilities of success once a host-nation’s situation has deteriorated to the point where only U.S. combat formations can arrest it.
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