REVOLUTIONARY NETWORKS? AN ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN IN

TERRORIST GROUPS

by

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(Under the Direction of Sherry Lowrance)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is simultaneously an exercise in theory testing and theory generation. Firstly, it is an empirical test of the means-oriented netwar theory, which asserts that distributed networks represent superior organizational designs for violent activists than do classic hierarchies. Secondly, this piece uses the ends-oriented theory of revolutionary terror to generate an alternative means-oriented theory of terrorist organization, which emphasizes the need of terrorist groups to centralize their operations. By focusing on the ends of terrorism, this study is able to generate a series of metrics of organizational performance against which the competing theories of organizational design can be measured. The findings show that terrorist groups that decentralize their operations continually lose ground, not only to government counter-terror and counter-insurgent campaigns, but also to rival organizations that are better able to take advantage of their respective operational environments. However, evidence also suggests that groups facing decline due to decentralization can offset their inability to perform complex tasks by emphasizing the material benefits of radical activism.

INDEX WORDS: Terrorism, Organized Crime, Counter-Terrorism, Counter-Insurgency, Networks, Netwar, Revolution, al-Qaeda in Iraq, Mahdi Army, Abu Sayyaf, Iraq, Philippines

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSPHY

ATHENS, GA

2011

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DEDICATION

To my beloved wife, Carrell Weeks McAllister, whose emotional support struck the perfect balance between productive encouragement and thinly veiled impatience, and whose material support made possible this whole process. Above all, you make me want to achieve. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The effects of the information revolution on political actors and systems have been studied by a wide variety of scholars of international relations. In the field of international security, a large body of literature has taken the form of studies into the nature of Revolutions in Military Affairs and how technological advances effect strategic calculus, as well as studies on the ability of advanced communication technologies to influence normative behavior in great powers, among others. As it relates to the field of terrorism studies, scholars have sought to understand the ways in which increased technological capacities have influenced the behavior of violent non-state actors. A large portion of these scholars have focused on the ways in which terrorist organizations have used information age technologies to speak to the challenges of an increasingly complex political marketplace. Collectively known of as the netwar school of thought, these scholars have concluded that the IT revolution has dramatically changed the manner in which political actors engage in conflict, and as a result the organizational paradigms best suited for 21st century warfare.

In particular, netwar theorists contend that the information revolution has drastically empowered the network organizational paradigm, and as a result made terrorist organizations that adapt distributed organizational designs a central threat to the classic hierarchies common to state based systems. While intuitive, these arguments stand in stark contrast to traditional estimations of terrorism as a form of revolutionary political violence, the end of which being the seizure of state power. Whereas netwar theorists suppose that the more successful organizations

will adopt decentralized and informal structures in order to counter state power, the assumption in conventional terrorism studies is that successful organizations will increasingly centralize their organizations and formalize command and control relationships as they move toward supplanting the incumbent regime.

1.1   Research Question

The purpose of this study is to analyze the daylight between the netwar hypothesis and the conventional theories of terrorism this study will collectively refer to as the theory of revolutionary terrorism[1]. *As an empirical analysis, the goal of this study is to determine what independent effect institutional design has on the performance of terrorist organizations.* Thus, while this study is a rigorous test of the netwar hypothesis, it is also an attempt to re-emphasize the revolutionary nature of political violence, an attribute of terrorism which has been obscured by the emphasis on expressive violence endemic to the 'new terrorism" literature to which the netwar school is inextricably linked.

Given the centrality of netwar arguments to contemporary understandings of terrorism in both scholarly and policy circles, a rigorous analysis of the central assumption of the netwar hypothesis—that networks make for more effective violent organizations—is long overdue. This relevance to the community of terrorism scholars is compounded by the need of states to counter non-state violence. A better understanding of network structures as well as the strengths and weaknesses of various organizational designs will greatly benefit form a more systematic understanding of the command and control processes of terrorist groups.

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[1] Martha Crenshaw, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 16(3) September, 1972, pp. 383-396.

1.2   Problems with the Literature

Despite the fact that a large fraction of the current literature on terrorism and political violence has dealt with networks, their operational capacities, organizational designs, and policy implications, networks as a concept have been treated somewhat casually by the terrorism literature, warranting a more in depth analysis. Specifically, the term has been used in a broad fashion to account for any number of different inter-connections amongst organizations, and for numerous of organizational designs across firms. Furthermore, research into network centric warfare (referred to as the netwar doctrine when applied to non-state groups) has been over reliant on theoretical postulation rather than empirical testing, and when tests have occurred, they have overwhelmingly used al-Qaeda as a case study… a habit the author believes has biased the findings of such works in favor of netwar predictions.

1.3   Expected Findings

Much of the terrorism literature derived from network analysis tends to treat distributed networks as a panacea against state reactions to non-state resistance efforts. In doing so, they turn on its head Martha Crenshaw's assertion that terror is a strategy of revolution, geared not simply towards surviving, but towards assuming the qualities of a state. According to Crenshaw's model, terror organizations must move up a ladder of violence, of which terrorism is only the second rung (after violent protest), to be followed by guerilla warfare, then civil conflict, and ultimately conventional warfare as exercised by a state (once the revolution is successful). The netwar literature largely ignores the revolutionary goals central to most of the scholarly work on terrorism, and instead focuses on the violent capabilities and attrition rates of distributed organizations. As a consequence, the assumption that poly-cephalous 'leaderless resistance' represents the future of warfare, is both misreading the full literature on

organizational design, as well as the body of literature produced by terrorism studies prior to the introduction of the discourse on the 'new terrorism'.

The author believes a thorough analysis of the netwar literature, the new terrorism literature, and the 'classic' literature on revolutionary terrorism, will illustrate that particular political outcomes do not follow logically from organizational choices (i.e. decentralized networks are *a priori* more resistant to the myriad pressures illicit organizations face). Rather, organizational choices only affect political circumstances if they are geared towards both market shaping activities *and* market reacting activities. In other words, successful organizations must be able to both shape their structural circumstances (typically by destabilizing a system and developing constituent communities) as well as react to opportunities by directing institutional capacity towards institutional goals (the organization in question must be able to grow as communal support does and it must be prepared to fill a vacuum in governance should they produce one). The netwar literature focuses on an organization's ability to produce violence and survive in the face of government crackdowns. But this only speaks to an organization's ability to destabilize a system through violence. If however, terrorism is political, and therefore revolutionary, the crux of organizational success will be determined by its ability to react to the very crisis in governance terrorism is geared to produce. Poor organizational choices (especially those which disconnect command and control from tactical subordinates) limit the ability of organizations to do just that. The body of literature which suggests decentralized 'swarming[2]' will be an effective tactic against hierarchical state enterprises have derived such hypotheses from assuming that the primary danger to terrorist organizations stems from government counter-terror reactions to their violence. In reality, government counter-terror operations have only rarely resulted in the destruction of the targeted organization. Instead, the real dangers to a

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[2] John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "Swarming and the Future of Conflict" Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000.

revolutionary organization have tended to stem from the loss of its constituent communities as well as competition from rival terrorist outfits. Thus, the anarchists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the leftist revolutionaries of the 60's and 70's, died out not because they were all arrested or killed, but due to the ignominy that resulted from the failure to produce political results from their violent actions.

This chapter begins by outlining the theoretical arguments to be tested in this dissertation. First will be an introduction to conventional theories of revolutionary terrorism, and how contemporary terrorism has prompted some theorists to consider this 'New Terrorism' a distinct phenomenon from terror as it has appeared in the past. This will be followed by an overview of the netwar doctrine and how its assumptions regarding the efficacy of violent networks follow logically from many of the assumptions of the new terrorism school of thought. This section will conclude with an outline of some of the key shortcomings of the netwar literature. Drawing from the theoretical overview, this chapter will then outline the two competing theoretical arguments debated in this study; the netwar hypothesis, which states that decentralized networks represent the future of political violence, and the theory of revolutionary terrorism, which assumes that to be successful terrorists must procure revolutionary goals. Finally, this chapter will close with a chapter plan of the ensuing dissertation.

1.4   Theories of Terrorism and Political Violence

1.4.1   Theories of Terrorism

Terrorism has been studied by a variety of disciplinary angles, among them; psychology, anthropology, religious studies, history, political science and international affairs. However, the roots of the discourse were laid by the practitioners of terror themselves. Vera Figner, Peter Kropotkin, Che Guevara, Carlos Marighella, and their contemporary counter parts such as

Ayman al-Zawahiri all wrote/write at length about the strategy and tactics of terror. Though all of these radicals stem from different revolutionary traditions, they all had a sound conception of what terrorism *is* as well an appreciation of the efficacy of terrorism as a *strategy* of revolution. To put it more succinctly, they all considered terrorism as a mode of political violence. In this sense, al-Zawahiri's global jihadism, Figner's "Propaganda by the Deed", and Marighella's 'urban guerilla warfare' all conceived of what we deem terrorism as a particular point in the revolutionary process. This process in turn represents a movement from relatively mild versions of violent political behavior to ever more sophisticated forms of violence. Such a spectrum of violence can be conceived of as a continual escalation, from radical social protest, to terrorism, to guerilla warfare, etc.. Once an organization has developed the institutional capacity to engage in irregular warfare, it might in time be able to engage its state adversary on more conventional footing in the form of a civil conflict. Should the revolutionary organization emerge victorious from this then it in effect becomes a state power[3].

The role of terror in the revolutionary process is one of organization building. It performs this act by simultaneously serving as a vehicle for communication between the organization and its constituent communities[4] as well as means of destabilizing the status quo to an extent conducive to the emergence of political alternatives to the incumbent regime. Pursuant to this, Figner articulates terrorism as a form of propaganda that at once signals the vulnerability of the state, articulates the political alternatives to the status quo, communicates the commitment of the revolutionary organization to the stated goals of the revolution (both to the state adversary as well as the membership of the organization), and serves as a rallying call to like minded actors who can be persuaded to join the revolution. What terrorism decidedly was not, was a vehicle

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[3] M. Crenshaw, 1972.
[4] Alex Schmid and Janny de Graaf, <u>Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and Western News Media</u> London: Sage Publications, 1982.

for the overthrow of the state. Quite to the contrary, Marighella states bluntly that urban guerilla warfare (his terminology for terrorism) is merely a complement to rural guerilla warfare, and that the latter was the primary means by which revolution was to be achieved[5]. Guevara likewise paid little heed to terrorism and stated that only certain acts, such as assassination, can be deemed helpful to guerilla warfare, which he, like Marighella, believed was the crux of revolutionary action[6]. Terrorism was viewed, in effect, as a mode of persuasion: persuasion to join the cause, persuasion to accept revolutionary demands, and persuasion to view the aims of the organization as legitimate. Once organizational abilities were buoyed by a successful terrorist campaign, the goal would be to escalate violence to guerilla style campaigns.

Terrorism as a subject has traditionally been treated by the literature in a historiographic sense, dividing terrorism into chronological 'waves' of movements differentiated not only by timing, but by motivation as well. Rapaport divides what he believes to be the history of contemporary terrorism into a succession of four such waves. The first were the anarchists of Figner and Kropotkin. The second wave grew out of the ethno-nationalist movements of the middle of the 20th Century. These organizations were committed to fighting colonial domination in the emerging third world. The third wave was populated by left wing radicals who organized into small cellular groups throughout Western Europe and North America. The fourth wave followed the decline of leftist antagonism and took the form of a resurgent and vicious right wing wave of terror, of which international salafism, is the most notorious, though certainly not the only, example. It is the emergence of this third wave, or what Hoffman terms the 'New Terrorism' that has at once sparked a renaissance in terrorism studies, as well as prompted a move away from conventional estimations of terrorism as a form of revolutionary political

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[5] Carlos Marighella, <u>Mini-manual of the Urban Guerilla</u> St Petersburgh, FL: Red and Black Publishers, 2008.
[6] Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, <u>On Guerilla Warfare</u> New York, NY: Classic House Books, 2009.

violence. Drawing distinctions between the secular terrorism of the past and the theologically motivated fourth wave, Hoffman states,

> "These new terrorist organizations embrace far more amorphous religious and millenarian aims and wrap them-selves in less-cohesive organizational entities, with a more-diffuse structure and membership."[7]

This emphasis on an ephemeral motivation for violence, coupled with an allegedly new distributed mode of organizing political violence has sparked a move away from more pragmatic conceptions of terrorism's place in a broader spectrum of political violence. Instead, traditional understandings of this kind have been replaced with notions of Cosmic War[8], wherein terrorist organizations envision themselves as being involved in a Manichean struggle of good against evil. A self-perception that warps 'rational' understandings of both the ends of violence, as well as what it means to win and/or lose political struggles. Since it is assumed that these movements lack broader constituencies or conventional goals, terrorist violence is understood to be analogous to religious ritual, rebutting Crenshaw's critique that terrorism is necessarily an instrumental strategy geared towards revolutionary change[9].

1.4.2   The Netwar Hypothesis

The literature on terrorism studies has made much use of network theory over the past two decades. As it relates to terrorism, networks have been seen either as a *casus belli* for non-state activism, or as a technological enabler of political violence[10]. A number of authors have looked at networks as a cause of terror, in so much that certain networks encroach upon

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[7] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism, Trends, and Prospects" in Ian Lesser, Bruce Hofman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, Michele Zanini, and Brian Micahel Jenkins, <u>Countering the New Terrorism</u> Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999, p. 9.
[8] Mark Juergensmeyer, <u>Terror in the Mind of God</u> Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.
[9] M. Crenshaw, 1972, pp. 383-396.
[10] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism" *International Security* vol. 27(3) Winter 2002/2003, pp. 30-58.

traditional social arrangements. Conceived of broadly, these networks most often take the form of neo-liberal economic enterprises, or cultural networks representing the intrusion of foreign norms and values. This consistently takes the form of globalization in the literature… terrorism is then a reaction to the interpenetration concomitant with globalized modes of interaction, whether cultural, political, or economic.

The literature dealing with globalization as a motivator of terror tends to assume globalization itself is an organic and networked enterprise, resulting from a variety of agents bound by a variety of goals such as multinational and transnational corporations, various organs of foreign states, non-governmental organizations, cultural institutions, and technological advancements such as the internet, telecommunications, and the proliferation of international mass media outlets. The result of this encroachment, in many instances, is a form of rejection, which is not necessarily anti-modern, but rather a reaction to western modernity, which,

> "…results from the expansion of trade, financial, and production investment
>
> networks in the global economy."[11]

In this instance, terrorism ceases to be instrumental in nature, denoting a movement towards some conventional goal, but expressive, meant in turn to establish an identity against forces of homogenization and/or globalization, in which the terrorists themselves are seen (or see themselves) as the precursor for a collective awakening.[12] According to this approach, the social origins of expressive terror are rooted not in underdevelopment, or in specific US policies, but in

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[11] This hypothesis was tested by Li and Schaub who found no relationship between globalization and international terrorism, but serious theoretical flaws undermine their findings. Quan Li, and Drew Schaub, "Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 48(2) April 2004, pp. 230-258.

[12] Christopher Coker, "Globalization and Insecurity in the 21st Century: NATO and the Management of Risk" *Adelphi Papers*, vol. 345, 2002.

the clash of western rational-bureaucratic structures with mixed-clientelist economies in the developing world,

> "…triggering intense anti-market resentment directed primarily against the epitome of market civilization: the United States."[13]

The organizationally empowering aspects of the information revolution are played out in the terrorism literature which focuses on terrorism as having been empowered by the information revolution, and by extension, globalization. This literature treats networks as a motivation for violence only in the instrumentalist sense… in so far as they act as enablers of violence. According to instrumentalists, terrorism is a result of instrumental calculus[14]. Thus, structural changes such as the information revolution affect the strategic calculus of political actors and make terrorism more attractive from an expected utility standpoint. Homer-Dixon states that advancements in weaponry, communication technologies, and information processing technologies[15], have simultaneously empowered non-state actors materially, while enabling them to organize in such a way as to maximize impact despite relatively low numbers of active participants. In addition, Keohane points out that the increased complexity of 'modern society' has multiplied the vulnerabilities of what could be termed the 'critical infrastructure' of hierarchical states, highlighting an over-emphasis on states and an over-aggregation of power in the security discourse[16].

The hyperbolic assertions of netwar theorists are in large part a result of placing these two different takes on networks in dialogue with one another. On the one hand is a theoretical

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[13] Michael Mousseau, "Market Civilization and Its Clash with Terror" *International Security* vol. 27(3) Winter 2002/2003, p. 6.
[14] Walter Enders, and Todd Sandler, "The Effectiveness of Anti-Terrorism Policies: A Vector Auto-Regression Intervention Analysis" *American Political Science Review* vol. 87(4) December 1993, pp. 829-844.
[15] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Rise of Complex Terrorism" *Foreign Affairs* January/February 2002.
[16] Robert Keohane, "The Globalization of Informal Violence" *Dialogue-IO* Spring 2002, pp. 29-43.

tradition which places an emphasis on terrorism, not as an instrumental strategy of insurgency, as has traditionally been the case, but as a mechanism of 'expressive violence' whereby a group of individuals utilize political violence as an avenue of cultural resistance to western political, economic, and cultural encroachments. In the second instance, the information revolution is seen as empowering distributed forms of organizational design, acting as a force multiplier for small groups operating with little or no connections to wider political-minded constituencies. Netwar theorists then assume that security studies will increasingly revolve around continued threats to hierarchical states from ethereal movements with little political organization but high degrees of destructive capabilities. In short, a world of al-Qaedas simultaneous empowered and motivated to commit mass violence against a rhetorically constructed enemy. In summation, the new terrorism literature removes the need for organizations to be market reactive as their goals are immaterial. Instead, the focus is on the amount of violence the organization is able to bring to bear on a state while surviving the state's counter-reaction; capabilities netwar theorists believe are enhanced by networked organizational designs.

1.5   Theoretical Argument

The nature of this study is to test of two theories regarding the effects of organizational design on organizational performance. The first of these, the theory of revolutionary terror, assumes that political violence is a means of procuring political power through violence. Terrorism, therefore cannot be viewed in a vacuum, but must be viewed as one particular tactic in a spectrum of political violence. The role of terrorism in this broader repertoire is to build organizational capacity (by recruiting members) and to create the structural conditions (crisis of governance) necessary to graduate to more effective modes of political violence such as guerilla and civil warfare. The violent group must therefore have the organizational capacity to

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undertake more complex forms of violence as well as the institutional wherewithal to provide goods and services for constituent communities should shifts in the marketplace be achieved through terror. The greatest threats to a revolutionary organization would therefore be a loss of constituent support or a rival organization that was better organized to take advantage of political circumstances to further their own goals. In either case, the ability of the terrorist group to recruit and retain members would be impaired, leading to organizational decline.

Alternately, netwar theorists conflate means and ends (networks are both a motivation for- as well as an enabler of- political violence) and therefore do not need to view terror in relation to other modes of political violence, as the new terrorism assumes that violence is expressive rather than instrumental and need not lead to the procurement of any higher political goals. Accordingly, organizational forms that are most conducive to violent enterprises, and most resilient to state counter-terror efforts, will be the most successful. In such cases, highly decentralized networks of militants who use advanced technologies to coordinate activities and offset their small numbers might in fact represent the future of terrorism.

1.6   Research Design

1.6.1   Methodology

As noted previously, the over reliance on the trans-national al-Qaeda movement as a case study for analyzing violent networks has resulted in what the author feels to be biased findings. Single case studies in the social sciences are always prone to bias if not properly executed, but they result in severe bias when the case in question seems to be such a staunch example of a malignant outlier in the universe of potential cases. Al-Qaeda, it can easily be argued, bares little resemblance to any other violent political movement in history or at present. Its raison d'etre, organizational design, and material resources are all highly anomalous in the history of insurgent

violence. This study attempts to improve upon the suspect rigor of past studies by utilizing a controlled comparative analysis of multiple organizations, and track their political progress across time as various organizational designs play themselves out in the marketplace.

1.6.2 Case Studies

The empirical analysis of this study will include three cases: the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and the Abu Sayyaf Group. In the broadest sense then, this study will take the form of a comparative historical analysis of various violent political groups each of which operate according to various organizational paradigms. In addition, this study will utilize process tracing to extrapolate the mechanisms by which command and control relationships effect political outcomes, an exercise that will be aided by analyzing the within case variation within the Jaiysh al-Mahdi over time. Furthermore, this analysis will take the form of a Most Similar System[17] design or a Methods of Difference[18] approach. This research design will compare and contrast the performance of three revolutionary movements, each of which operate under similar structural circumstances (ongoing insurgencies in Iraq and the Philippines) and with similar aims (all are nominally Islamist). Thus, all independent variables save organizational design are controlled to the greatest extent possible, leaving variation in the main independent variable as the dominant explanation for variation in the dependent variable, political performance according to metrics laid out by both the theory of revolutionary terrorism as well as the netwar hypothesis.

1.6.3 Metrics of Organizational Success

Given that two theories are being tested in this study, metrics of organizational success need to reflect metrics obtained from assumptions stemming from both the netwar hypothesis as

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[17] Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1970.
[18] John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive Toronto: University of Toronto Libraries, 2011.

well as the theory of revolutionary terrorism. These include; the ability to recruit and retain members, the level and quality of violence pursued by the organization, the resilience of the organization itself as well as the organization's capabilities, and the ability of an organization to innovate and adapt to shifting circumstances.

This research design attempts to protect from truncation and endogeneity. Truncation is accounted for by including the control case of Abu Sayyaf as a means of measuring the generalizability of the theory outside the Iraqi context. Further, all organizations studied offer staunchly different political trajectories (in terms of political successes and failures). In addition, it protects from both exogeneity as well as endogeneity given the similarities in operational environments and organizational motivations across all cases.

1.7 Chapter Plan

This dissertation will proceed firstly by offering a three-pronged literature review. This will begin with an overview of the scholarly work on revolutionary terrorism followed by an analysis of the new terrorism discourse and the netwar literature. Following this, the author will develop in greater detail the competing theoretical arguments between the netwar theorists and the author's contention that political violence is inherently strategic, and thus negates organizational capabilities at it's peril. These hypotheses will be used to inform the empirical expectations of the competing hypotheses and metrics for organizational success are developed in greater detail. The next three chapters will be devoted to exploring the historical evolution of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and the Abu Sayyaf Group. The historical analysis of these cases will follow, succeeded by concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

If there were a canon of terrorism literature, it would include historians, psychologists, sociologists, military scientists, computer scientists, and even biological and other physical scientists, in addition to the core of International Relations theorists who founded the discourse in the 60's and 70's. Organizing a literature review of a major school of thought in contemporary terrorism studies can therefore prove a difficult task. As a result, this study will be divided according to schools of thought, rather than academic discipline. This chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical arguments addressed in the dissertation, followed by an analysis of the netwar discourse, and its investigation of the role of organizational design in terrorist groups. Second, this chapter will look at the literature comprising the new terrorism school of thought, of which the netwar hypothesis is a key component. Finally, this chapter will engage the broader work on terrorism as a strategy of political violence with an eye towards detailing the effects of revolutionary motivations on organizational processes.

2.1 Theoretical Arguments

When distilled to its basic assumptions, the netwar hypothesis contends that contemporary terrorism represents an entirely different phenomenon than past incarnations of non-state political violence. As a result, modern terrorist organizations represent a much greater threat to international security than did previous waves of terrorism, as reflected by their centrality in current domestic and foreign policy discourse. According to netwar theorists, terrorists owe their new found pre-eminence in security studies to the fact that many of them

have abandoned the hierarchical structures of previous organizations in favor of highly distributed and decentralized organizational arrangements which tend to blur the lines between the violent organization itself, and the radical movement of which it is a part. The central causal factor in the evolution of terrorist organizations into terrorist networks is the Information Revolution and the radical advancements it has brought about in basically every technological arena. Broadly speaking, networks empower violent organizations in three ways; advanced communication technologies enable poly-cephalous or even acephalous organizational designs, advanced weapon and dual use technologies place in the hands of terrorists increasingly destructive technologies, and as states have also begun to network vital functions, networks have increased states' vulnerabilities to attack at the same time as they've empowered their non-state adversaries.

Netwar theorists contend that poly-cephalous organizations are attractive to radicals primarily because they prove very difficult to destroy through conventional counter-terrorism. Directing organizations via poly-cephalous command and control relationships has become feasible as massive strides in communication technologies make it easier to coordinate disparate cells across theaters of operation. Further, many believe that modern communication networks may make coordination unnecessary altogether since organizational knowledge can be shared freely via virtual mediums, resulting in an acephalous "leaderless resistance" style terrorist organization. The IT revolution increases the efficacy of leaderless resistance strategies since more and more start-ups can be incorporated into the organization/movement without having to maintain formal ties to the organization's hub. In addition, even if radicals chose not to join an actual organization, modern communication technologies allow terrorists to reach more and more potential constituents. This is of major importance since theorists of terrorism have always

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maintained that terrorism is, in effect, a means of communication. Finally, the networked organization results in a knowledge based organization whereby lessons learned can be more readily distributed to the organization/movement at large. This learning curve is important to the netwar theorists as it allows organizations to make good use of the proliferation of destructive technologies as well as provide training on tradecraft issues such as surveillance, document forging, smuggling, etc.. The movement away from centralized and functionally differentiated organizations to dispersed cellular networks is possible, due to the growth in destructive technologies, which acts as a force multiplier for smaller organizations. The obvious implication is that weapon technologies have advanced, as have global smuggling networks[19], making them available to non-state groups. However, the technological revolution has also created a situation where dual use technologies (everything from fertilizer, to beer fermentation tanks, to airplanes) can be found anywhere an organization has the gumption to look. Suffice it to say, without the threat of CBRN[20] technologies in the hands of terrorist cells, scholars of terrorism would have difficulty gaining access to the corridors of power where security policy is made. The empowerment of non-state challengers is only part of the equation however, there are many scholars within the netwar school who point to the networking of state institutions as a vulnerability which could easily be exploited by terrorists. Mirroring many arguments made by neo-liberal scholars, issue linkage and density both promulgate areas of potential grievance as well as targets within reach of international terrorists. So the demand side for terrorism increases as the supply side does[21]. Most interestingly, the organization of state networks differs from that of terrorists. Whereas netwar theorists assume terrorists tend to organize their cells according to

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[19] Quan Li and Drew Schaub "Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism Incidents: A Pooled Time Series Cross Sectional Analysis" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 48(2) 2004, pp. 230-258.
[20] Chemical, Biological, Radiolgical, Nuclear weapons.
[21] Q. Li and D. Schaub, 2004.

a random distribution for security reasons, states have definitely adopted a network structure based on a power law distribution, for the purposes of achieving greater efficiency in critical processes. The result is that strategic attacks on key nodes can have echo effects across a variety of other inter-dependent processes, making terrorist attacks more destructive.

The netwar hypothesis does a good job of theorizing about the increased capabilities of small groups, at least in terms of institutional survivability and the capacity for higher levels of violence. However, it assumes then that the end of terrorism is simply survival, and that the metric for success is the level of violence an organization is capable of maintaining. This runs counter to traditional conceptions of non-state political violence, which have conventionally assumed that terrorism is but one tool in a broader panopoly of revolutionary violence, the end of which is the procurement of revolutionary political goals[22]. So, unless there was a radical shift in our understanding of the goals of terrorism, this different take on terrorist means would seem anachronistic. As it happens, conceptions of netwar have emerged simultaneously with the 'New Terrorism' school of thought which forwarded the idea that the right wing terrorism which emerged in the 1980's, and continues to the present, represents a marked shift away from the traditional left-wing and anti-colonial terror of times past. Rather than looking at terrorism as a form of revolutionary violence, the new terrorism school views the current wave of conservative violence as a form of cultural expression, a violent evocation of an alternative conceptualization of modernity. Its ends are ideational rather than material and as such new terror organizations lack both the strategic direction and restraint that characterized previous groups. In short, as the information revolution has transformed the means employed by terrorists, so has globalization shaped the ends of political activism. The end result is a distorted view, not only of terrorist

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[22] The major exception to this is single-issue terrorism, which is a form of terror not addressed by this paper.

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capabilities (the netwar school), but also of the strategic rationale behind non-state violence in general (the new terrorism school).

2.2 Chapter Outline

It is the contention of this dissertation, that only by radically shifting what we conceive of to be the ends of terrorism, can the netwar theorists' contention that decentralized networks are an effective means of political violence be supported. This chapter will therefore begin with an investigation into how the netwar theorists claim the information revolution has changed the nature of non-state political violence. It will then show how the new terrorism school of thought drastically breaks with the traditional conception of terrorism as a mode of revolutionary change, and instead views it as a cultural phenomenon representing a contemporary version of identity politics. This chapter will conclude with an assessment of the netwar literature given what traditional theories of terrorism say about political violence as well as what theories of organizational design have to say about the decentralization of the firm. The critique will be divided into a critique of the theoretical aspects of Netwar and the New Terrorism and a critique of the empirical assumptions made by terrorism scholars adhering to these two schools of thought.

2.3 Theories of Terrorism and Political Violence

The literature review portion of this dissertation will begin with an overview of the theories of terrorism that deal explicitly with the decentralization of operations within terrorist organizations. These are the netwar school of thought and the new terrorism discourse. The summary of netwar literature will begin with a delineation of the core assumptions of the major works in the field and an outline of the implications of these assumptions on contemporary political violence. This chapter will then take a look at how networks act as enablers of political

violence, according to the assumptions previously described. The section on the new terror literature will begin by listing the core tenets of the work on the new terrorism, and then show, by way of contrast how this literature represents a stark departure from classic discussions on terrorism. The section on terrorism studies will be concluded by an analysis of the new terrorism's contention, that globalization as a cultural phenomenon has been largely responsible for the tremendous shift in the nature of terrorist violence over the past three decades.

2.3.1 The Netwar Hypothesis

The purpose of this chapter is, in many ways, to underscore the centrality of the concept of networks to contemporary work on the study of terrorism. Broadly speaking, this concept has been applied to terrorism studies in two ways: networks as an enabler of violence, and networks as a motivator for violence. Thus, networks, in and of themselves, satisfy Szanfranki's contention that any theory of political violence must speak not only to capabilities, but also to "hostile will"[23]. The author will begin this section with an analysis of the major assumptions of the netwar literature. Firstly, netwar theorists assert that the shift in the global economy, and the concomitant shift in global production has fundamentally altered the ways in which institutions prepare for, and engage in, conflict. Secondly, netwar theorists state that non-state actors have been fundamentally transformed by the information revolution, both in terms of their relative capabilities, as well as the ways in which they organize for resistance. Finally, most netwar proponents forward the notion that these developments have wide ranging implications for international security, *writ large*. The author will conclude by relating these core assumptions to the notion that networks serve as a critical ingredient of political violence in the globalized marketplace.

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[23] Richard Szafranski, "A Theory of Information in Warfare," *Airpower Journal,* Spring, 1995, p. 2.

2.3.1.1 Netwar: Warfare and the Marketplace

Attention began being paid to the relationship between the information revolution and organizational design when it became apparent that the IT revolution was radically shifting the nature of the business firm in the modern marketplace. As the complexity of production increased, so did the organizational arrangements amongst disparate aspects of the production process; in addition, as the means of production changed, so too have the goods being produced. While agricultural and industrial production do remain central pillars of present-day markets, the most profitable sectors of the economy have increasingly been found in the informational, or service, economy. In the 1990's many scholars of security studies began looking to these shifts as a means of explaining how a formerly fringe area of concern, terrorism, was quickly becoming one of the central policy issue areas of the day.

Bogart[24] was the first to suppose that methods of economic production have a direct correlation with means employed in war. This early analysis sought to explain unforeseen military behavior in the First World War, namely the purposive targeting of civilians and industrial infrastructure. What Bogart had observed was the first true example of industrial era warfare, the term itself drawing a direct correlation between the means employed in capital accumulation and that of waging war. According to Bogart, the previous centuries had been witness to the steady erosion of the agrarian economy, as well as the class structures of landed elite that supported it. Likewise, the military formations comprised of the aristocracy and their subjects gave way to increasingly professional institutions beginning at first with the rise of mercenaries in the 18th century and later conscripts directed by a professional officer corps from the Napoleonic wars onward. The brutality of the First World War was, in large part, a result of

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[24] Ernest Bogart, "Economic Organization for War" *American Political Science Review,* vol. 14(4) Nov. 1920, pp. 587-606.

the fact that national power had ceased to be viewed in terms of land held, as it had been during the previous era, and more a function of national production. Thus, a nation's industrial complex, as well as the civilians who ran it, were as much a part of the war effort as were the soldiers on the field. It wasn't a stretch therefore, to consider them fair targets for belligerents. Targeting wasn't the only fundamental change in military practices that followed this economic shift. Militaries adopted the pyramidal hierarchies of corporations and sought to vertically integrate all the various competencies of warfighting, just as industrial barons were monopolizing their own various market niches. It's important to note however, that the relationship between these parallel developments in the military and private spheres respectively was not causative but correlative. Military scientists did not necessarily mimic the behavior of their capitalist cousins. It was simply that emerging technologies had made certain behaviors more rational. If anything, theorists look to the business community first for innovative behavior as the profit motive acts as a far greater incentive for change than increased bureaucratic efficiency.

In much the same vein, contemporary theorists believe the shift from an industrial to an information economy has prompted a change in the organizational paradigms of business firms. The reason for this is the increased complexity of the new market place. In the IT economy the amount of information firms need to take in, digest, and utilize has increased dramatically. As this has occurred, the old Fordist style hierarchies have become anachronistic. The reason for this is the process of 'abstratification'.

"'Abstractification' occurs as a result of a massive increase in information, which increasingly isolates those at the top of the decision-making chain from the implementation of policies".[25]

Pyramidal hierarchies made sense in industrial-era firms as the modes of production were relatively static. This concept is best exemplified by Henry Ford's famous contention that customers could have any color Model T they wanted, 'provided it was black'. In this context, hierarchical bureaucracies achieved the desired efficiencies. As the modes of production became more complex, the number and quality of the necessary technologies became cumbersome for vertically organized corporations to handle. The reason is that pyramids have vertically organized hierarchies with managers located at each echelon who serve as filters for information being passed from the bottom to the top. As a result only a small percentage of relevant information makes it to the upper departments of decision-makers. At some point, the decision maker becomes so isolated from the necessary information that leadership becomes unable to make effective decisions. This is abstractification. In order to remain competitive, business organizations needed to create new means of information sharing in order to transform random information into useable knowledge.[26] Over time, this reorganization resulted in a horizontally integrated production chain populated by relatively small firms who increasingly specialized in one particular niche area of manufacture. These firms are tied together either on a contractural basis, or as part of a broader consortia, such as the Japanese *Kaizan* style corporate families, or the Po River Valley Textile associations[27]. These interconnected, yet autonomous firms are better placed to adapt to rapidly shifting market dynamics as their narrow focus and flat

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[25] Heidi Toffler and Alvin Toffler, "Connections and Constellations: Key Concepts for the New Economy" accessed on 08/15/2003 at www.toffler.com/featured/fd_article_connconst.shtml, p. 2.
[26] Toffler, Alvin and Toffler, Heidi "The War of Pyramids Vs. Pancakes and How it Will Shape the Future" p. 3.
[27] Michael Best, The New Competition: Institutions of Industrial Restructuring Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

organizational design better enable them to make use of available data in real time, and their autonomous nature allows them greater flexibility in an ever changing business environment. They can diversify their product line more quickly, or change partnerships should demand in one area decline or new opportunities arise in another.

The assumption by the netwar theorists is that these horizontal organizational designs are being mimicked by violent actors who have organized themselves into so called "dark networks[28]". As Alvin and Hiedi Toffler have stated, "Mass destruction is the deadly doppleganger of mass production[29]". Often netwar proponents are aloof as to whether they believe these comparisons signal a correlative/causative relationship, or whether they believe it is simply a useful metaphor. Some, however, have drawn specific relationships between violent and for profit organization, drawing on bin Laden's experience as a CEO in informing his decision to manage al-Qaeda as a franchise network[30]. The Tofflers state that there are three parameters for war; range, lethality, and speed[31]. While pyramids might be better in the second category, the first and last cede advantage to the smaller, more dynamic "constellations" [32]. Just as for profit corporations task other firms in order to tap vital expertise in one particular function within the production chain, so can horizontally linked like-minded cells network for particular operations before redeploying to evade retaliatory measures[33]. The exact nature of the advantages and disadvantages of the networked organizational design will be discussed in

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[28] Jorg Raab and H. Brinton Milward "Dark Networks as Problems" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 13(4) 2003, pp. 413-439.

[29] Alvin Toffler and Hiedi Toffler, War and Anti-War: Making Sense of Tadoy's Global Chaos Warner Books: New York, NY, 1993, pp. 46-47.

[30] The most notable example of this is Peter Bergen, Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden London: Phoenix, 2002. However, more likely is that al-Qaeda's decentralized strategy is the result of military strategists such as *al-Masri* who borrowed heavily from previous tacticians of terrorism such as Louis Beam.

[31] A. Toffler and H. Toffler, War and Anti-War p.32.

[32] H. Toffler and A. Toffler "Connections and Constellations", p. 3.

[33] John Arquilla and David Ronfledt, Swarming and the Future of Conflict Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000.

subsequent sections of this chapter. The point here is to show how the netwar theorists don't view the rise of networked terrorism as something *sui generis*, but rather as a phenomenon symptomatic of the times.

The comparisons between information age firms and contemporary violent networks do not stop with analogies of organizational design. According to the netwar theorists, organizational production has also affected both licit and illicit networks. Information age firms, whether they're in manufacturing or in the service industry, increasingly rely on the proper use of information. Marketing and public relations are as integral to creating new markets as innovative products are. As it relates to a shift in warfare, the assertion has been that the battle of ideas is of equal importance to the diminution of an opponent's material capabilities. In other words, the information age battlespace includes not just geographic space, but ideational space as well. This is what Arquilla and Ronfeldt have termed Noopolitik[34], drawing from the Greek *noos* for 'the mind'. Information warfare has two implications. The first of these relates to the proliferation of democratic systems and their effect on a state's ability to wage war. While propaganda has always played some part in conventional (industrial-era) warfare, many theorists conclude that it has particular relevance to non-state violence given that weaker parties win a sizeable fraction of *asymmetrical* conflicts due to an asymmetry of political will, rather than any disparity of power. The ability of a belligerent to maintain a war effort depends in large part on the power of its message. Should a stronger power nonetheless lose control of the ideational space, they will likely begin to suffer a loss of geographic control as a result. Secondly, issue framing is of huge importance to organizational longevity as it enables an organization to recruit and retain new members. If an organization is sophisticated enough in its marketing, then it will

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[34] John Arquilla and David Ronfledt <u>The Emergence on Noopolitik: Toward an American Information Strategy</u> Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999.

be able to use state counter-terror actions as recruitment mechanism, transforming, jujitsu style, the force a state is able to bring to bear into a weakness rather than a strength[35].

2.3.1.2 Netwar: Empowering Dark Networks

The second core assumption of the netwar discourse is that networks have empowered terrorist organizations in two ways. The first is the result of massive advancements in both communications and weapons and weapons related technologies. The former empowers organizations to decentralize their operations and the latter enables decentralized organizations to stay relevant despite the small size of individual nodes in the network. Secondly, networked organizational structure has (quite ironically it must be added) increased the vulnerabilities of states to terrorist attacks.

Drawing loosely from organizational and network theoretical approaches to the social sciences, Arquilla and Ronfeldt were the first to propose a network centric approach to the study of terrorism, or what they termed, netwar. Netwar presupposes that the information revolution is changing the nature of conflict in two core ways. The first is by favoring networked forms of organization, and the second, and related supposition is that conflict is becoming increasingly reliant upon information and communication flows[36]as a result. The reason for this increased reliance on communicative technologies results from the way in which information is shared in a decentralized network. As stated previously, hierarchical organizations utilize chains of commands with managerial filters to direct and respond to information flows through an organization. The compartmentalization of functions amongst nodes in a hierarchy aides in the organization of information and points of contact have clear lines of communication to relevant

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[35] This is especially problematic when a state is fighting an organization with a readily identifiable constituency, such as when a state is facing ethnic/sectarian strife. Community punishment measures often play into the hands of radical organizations. See for example, Daniel Byman "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism"

[36] Arquilla, John and Ronfeldt, David "The Advent of Netwar: an Analytic Background" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 22, 1999, p. 193.

decision-makers higher in the chain. Such clarity in function and accountability simplify the management of information in an institution. Decentralized networks do not have similarly clear-cut lines of command and control or functionality. As a result, communication is complicated. In order to facilitate the proper functioning of a distributed organization, information flows need to be multiplied. Prior to the explosion of communication and information processing[37] technologies promulgated by the information revolution, highly decentralized organizational designs simply were not plausible, as complex information requirements could not be met. The flattening of institutions began to occur organically as a result of the advent of relevant technologies, coupled with severe market competition that drove corporations to continually seek organizational advantages in firm innovation. The unintended consequence of this shift in organizational paradigms was the facilitation of the growth of 'knowledge organizations', in the parlance of micro-economic theory of the firm. Violent political organizations, which (according to many netwar theorists) borrowed from the business acumen of American corporations, adopted network based organizational innovations using the very same technological advancements[38] exploited by corporations. The result has been a vigorous boost in any number of illicit criminal activities, from narcotics trafficking, to money laundering and black market dealings, to non-state political violence[39].

As a result, the literature on political violence began to speak at length regarding the new terror as a network enterprise. Early work on network centric violence outlined three basic features of a network organization[40]. Firstly, in a decentralized network, communication and

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[37] T. Homer-Dixon, 2002.

[38] P. Bergen, 2002.

[39] Michael Kenney, <u>From Pablo to Osama: Trafficking and Terrorist Networks, Government Bureaucracies, and Competitive Adaptation</u> University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008.

[40] Michele Zannini and Sean J. A. Edwards, "The Networking of Terror in the Information Age" in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (eds.) <u>Networks and Netwar: The Future of Terror Crime and Militancy</u> Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001, pp. 31-32.

tactical coordination are not specified as being either horizontal or vertical. Rather, each organization represents something of a mixed bag with hierarchies operating at the micro-level, or with over all guidance coming from some sort of centralized command and control node. Secondly, violent networks often complement internal connections with external contacts. Thus, they mirror the shift in economic firms from vertically integrated manufacturing processes to horizontally integrated niche production. More often than not, external agents are needed for specific tasks such as recruitment, procurement, money laundering, etc. In extremely decentralized organizations this can even include the outsourcing tactical operations to local firms (a phenomenon which took on monumental proportions in Iraq). Finally, overt command and control is greatly burdened by the decentralized nature of the new terror organizations. When coupled with the highly covert nature of violent endeavors, this complicates the maintenance of discipline in an organization. Whereas hierarchical organizations can make use of institutionalized punitive measures, these options are often not open to distributed institutions. The result is that organizational cohesion is obtained by the promulgation of shared norms and values rather than the bureaucratic checks and balances one might find in more vertically organized institutions.

This speaks to the 'how' of the netwar phenomenon, but not necessarily the why. The supposed advantages of networked organizations are most succinctly stated by netwar skeptics, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones[41]. According to these authors, decentralized networks offer the organization in question adaptability, resilience, increased learning capacity, and wide spread recruitment[42]. Further, there are four reasons why networks are so good at producing these results. They manage information more efficiently. Their networks are scalable. Networks can

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[41] Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones "Assessing the Dangers of Illicit Networks: Why al-Qaeda may be Less Threatening than Many Think" *International Security* vol. 33(2) Fall, 2008, pp. 7-44.
[42] M. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and C. Jones, 2008, p. 8.

adapt more readily to shifting circumstances. And finally, networks show enhanced resilience to state counter-terror measures. The first of these reasons has been adequately covered above. The second of these, scalability, refers to an organization's ability to grow by incorporating new cells into the organization. These cells can be wholly new start-ups, or existing organizations that chose to join a larger network. This enables a group to take advantage of opportunities in new markets where they previously had little or no access. Or, a group could consolidate control over its present geographic setting by assimilating other like-minded activists. The proliferation of these sorts of intra-organizational connections lends a large degree of adaptability to its overall structure. Underperforming cells, or cells that behave in a counter-productive manner can, at least in theory, be removed from the organization. Correspondingly, organizations can use scalable networks to shift the geographic locus of their military strategy. This tactic can be readily seen in al-Qaeda's shift in focus from Saudi Arabia to the United States in the mid-nineties, then to Afghanistan in 2001, then to Iraq in 2003-2005, and then back to Afghanistan from 2007 to present. According to netwar theorists, none of this would have been possible using a static organizational structure. Finally, flexible network structures lend a degree of resilience to organizations for two reasons: loose coupling and redundant design[43]. Loosely coupled networks, in theory, retard a government's ability to roll back an organization cell by cell, as no cell is aware of any other's existence. Redundant design refers to the fact that most cells in a decentralized network are by necessity functionally autonomous. The lack of functional differentiation means that damage to one cell does not critically effect the overall functioning of the organization.

Networking as an organizational tactic, however, only speaks to a group's ability to organize resistance to the state, and to survive in the face of a state's retaliation to that resistance.

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[43] M. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and C. Jones, 2008, p. 8.

Terrorists could hardly have become the foremost security concern to the international system, however, were it not for the increased destructive capacity of such groups. While one might debate the pros and cons of decentralization to terrorist groups, the advancement of weapon and dual use technologies have largely been a plus to illicit networks. It is this side of the netwar equation that allows terrorists to maintain relevance rather than merely survive. Homer-Dixon states this area of netwar theory most succinctly.

> "Over the last century, progress in materials engineering, the chemistry of explosives, and miniaturization of electronics has brought steady improvement in all key weapons characteristics, including accuracy, destructive power, range, portability, ruggedness, ease-of-use, and affordability. Improvements in light weapons are particularly relevant to trends in terrorism and violence by small groups, where the devices of choice include rocket-propelled grenade launchers, machine guns, light mortars, land mines, and cheap assault rifles such as the famed AK-47[44]."

2.3.1.3 Netwar: Networks of Critical Infrastructure and State Vulnerabilities

The vast majority of the network centric warfare discipline extols the virtues of the networked organization, praising the ways in which non-state actors have embraced this innovative paradigm while criticizing states for retaining their antiquated hierarchies. Others, such as Homer-Dixon, however have been a little more astute in their analysis of state systems. The difference, he concludes, isn't that of pyramids vs. constellations, as the Tofflers contend, but that of random vs. power law networks. States, it seems, are not as simple in their organization as they seem. Rather, contemporary societies represent vastly complicated networks of public and private actors, each of which serve some particular function in the overall

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[44] T. Homer-Dixon, 2002.

maintenance of the system as a whole. These nodes are not necessarily vertically integrated into the state. In fact, the vast majority of what could be termed a state's critical infrastructure lies in private hands. What differentiates these legal enterprises from illicit networks is that they are organized for efficiency rather than security. Thus, in order to obtain economies of scale, infrastructure networks concentrate linkages within key nodes in the systems. These hubs represent critical weaknesses in a state's daily functioning as a strategic attack can have a disproportionate effect on systemic stability as they are defined by interdependencies. The interdependencies of key functions, when coupled with the concentration of key functions within systems, makes states highly vulnerable to feedback loops, where an attack on one node has echo effects across the system as interdependent functions are interrupted as secondary effects of the primary attack.

2.3.2 Networks as Enablers of Violence

Those who view networks as an enabler of political violence inevitably base their studies on instrumental theories of terrorism. Given its roots in economic theory, instrumental theories of terrorism often mirror studies of micro-economic theory of the firm. As a result, instrumentalism assumes that terrorists, like firms, are geared towards the production of basic commodities[45], but rather than material production aimed at profit maximization, terrorists base firm efficiency on the production of political goods such as wealth redistribution, de-colonization, the imposition of Sharia/Halachic/Biblical law, etc.. Following from this assumption, there are three basic allocative decisions that must be made to determine what products are to be produced[46]. The first is a choice between violent and non-violent strategies. Thus, the relative utility of each potential strategy to pursue must be analyzed. The second and

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[45] Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector Auto-Regression Intervention Analysis" *American Political Science Review* vol. 87(4) December, 1993, p. 830.
[46] W. Enders and T. Sandler, 1993, p. 830.

third decisions follow from the first and reflect tactical decisions made in pursuit of the preliminary strategic choice. These are choosing amongst the most rational violent strategies to be pursued, and choosing amongst potential non-violent political alternatives. The initial strategic choice is often binding on tactics, but in an innovative firm it doesn't have to be as it is assumed that distributed firms can diversify at will, switching from violent to conciliatory strategies based on market dynamics. Regardless of the particular strategy chosen, each productive act carries with it a per-unit cost. The choice, furthermore is not purely structural, but is constrained by the finite resources available to the firm[47].

The technological diffusion described by netwar theorists enables terrorist organizations by lowering the per-unit cost of violent strategies by empowering non-state actors in several ways; by enabling organizational alternatives to non-state actors which aid violent resistance/reaction, and by providing increased destructive potential to relatively small numbers of actors. In each instance, theorists assume *a priori* that globalization provides opportunity structures[48] for violent networks, which increase the expected utility of violent political strategies.

2.3.3   The New Terrorism and the Changing Rationale for Conflict

The end goal of this paper is to address the empirical and theoretical validity of the netwar hypothesis. The concept of netwar by itself, however merely speaks to the enabling attributes of the information revolution and the networked form of organization that they make possible. Advantages afforded by distributed networks are limited, however, to providing improved survivability, while advances in destructive technologies allow decentralized networks the continued capacity for violence. Traditionally, however, students of terrorism have viewed the phenomenon of terrorism as a revolutionary strategy, geared toward consolidating power in a

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[47] W. Enders and T. Sandler, 1993, p. 830.
[48] Ahmet Kuru, "Globalization and Diversification of Islamic Movements: Three Turkish Cases" *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 120(2) 2005, p. 254.

new revolutionary government[49]. It is obvious then that the trend towards decentralization seems to run counter to the goals of terrorist organizations, that of seizing control of, and then running, a hierarchically organized bureaucratic state. Unless netwar theorists can offer a radically different end of terrorism then, it seems the improved means of resistance they speak of should prove irrelevant. As it happens, the discourse on netwar evolved simultaneously with that of the new terrorism, a new school of thought, which makes the argument that contemporary terrorist organizations represent a stark divergence from historical movements. It is the new terrorism school, which offers netwar theorists a way around the problem of explaining motivations for violence. This section will therefore address the nature of the new terrorism school, with an eye towards describing how these scholars explain networks not merely as enablers of violence, but as motivators for resistance. The author will begin with a brief overview of what could be termed 'traditional terror' and then illustrate how the new terror concept offers a different take on contemporary radicalism. The new terror will be described by delineating the key trends of the new terror; namely, the rise of right wing terror, the amateurization of political violence, the emphasis on ideology/theology, a focus on symbolic violence, and the abandonment of traditional restraints on the use of force. Since the veracity of the netwar hypothesis hinges on the new terrorism school's ability to offer a new motivation for political violence, this section will conclude with an analysis of how advocates of the new terrorism maintain that networks can act as motivations for resistance.

2.3.4 Traditional Terror

Terrorism is a very high cost political activity. As a result, practitioners tend to be quite conservative in their tactical decision-making. It is not a profession where one learns by doing.

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[49] See in particular, Martha Crenshaw, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 16(3) September, 1972, and Edward H. Price, "The Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Terrorism" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 19(1) January, 1977, pp. 52-66.

Rather, terrorists often learn by observation. They observe what has worked in other contexts and then attempt to mimic that success in their own struggle. There is, as a result, a contagion effect of terrorism, and political violence has tended to come in 'waves'. Perhaps the most widely excepted typology of terrorism has been Rappaport's "wave theory" of terrorism[50]. In it, he divides the history of terrorism into four chronological waves, though he admits there is considerable overlap at the edges. The first three waves represent what the author deems 'traditional' terrorism. These preliminary three waves were motivated by revolutionary ideology, either-left wing or ethno-nationalist, and organized in either conspiratorial societies, or guerilla outfits depending upon the size and operational environments of the groups in question. The first of these waves was 19th century Anarchism. These early social revolutionaries were active in Eastern and Western Europe as well as North America, and were responsible for high-level political murders in virtually every country in which Anarchist cells were active. Their success in promulgating a transnational movement was due largely to their exploitation of new printing press technologies, as well as their articulation of a science of terrorism. Using the term 'terrorist' as a badge of honor, the early anarchists created a strategy for terror built off of the assumption of emulation. The term, as well as the tactic of terrorism was based on admiration for Robespierre in the reign of terror. Emulating his treatment of counter-revolutionaries, the Anarchists advocated tyrannicide as a substitute for the 'battles of the barricades' earlier groups used at a great cost in lives[51] during the Paris Communes of 1871. The key component of the anarchist strategy was what Prince Kropotkin coined "Propaganda by the Deed", the idea that a revolutionary act will serve as a wake up call to other would-be revolutionaries who would then

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[50] David Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism", in Audrey Cronin, and J. Ludes, (eds.) Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007, pp. 46-73.
[51] Ze'ev Ivianski, " The Terrorist Revolution: The Roots of Modern Terrorism" in David Rapoport, (ed.) Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science London: Routledge, 2005, p. 82.

imitate the violence of their colleagues-in-arms. The idea was to continually target the regime elite until chronic instability created the preconditions necessary for revolution.

The second wave consisted of the anti-colonial insurgencies of the mid 20th century. These organizations could be said to be among the most successful violent non-state movements in history. Beginning in the early 1920's following the invocation of the concept of self-determination in the treaty of Versailles (meant only to refer to the colonies of the defeated Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires), anti-colonial fervor really grew after the weakening of the western empires during World War II. These organizations were in large part so successful as they operated with a built in constituency, the ethnic, or nationalist, 'in-group'. Further, the insurgent operated in a geographic space that was immediate for themselves, but often quite distant to their adversaries, lessening the political will necessary for successful counter-insurgency. Whereas the anarchists were inherently transnational as a result of their revolutionary ands, the 2nd wavers were able to effectively transnationalize their means. Most notably, the anti-colonialists made use of diaspora communities abroad as a major source of funding, a trend that continues to this day. In addition, they began to use foreign states and supranational organizations such as the UN as leverage against their domestic opponents in order to force political behavior domestically. The insurgents' violence was also scripted to further the strategic ends of the group. They began by targeting police forces and other means of colonial administration. This prompted their replacement by regular military personnel, whose heavy-handed tactics created backlash against the colonial state. Successful organizations were able to capitalize on this discontent by increasing recruitment and material support for the group.

The Vietnam War was the major catalyst for the rise of Left-wing radicalism in the 1960's, marking the rise of the 3rd wave of international terrorism. These groups were spurred

on by the successes of the Viet Cong in their war against French and American military power, and they saw themselves as a fifth column for this and other 3rd world revolutionary groups, operating 'behind enemy lines' in their Western homelands. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, the PLO replaced the Viet Cong as the model for revolutionary resistance, but the modus operandi of such groups changed little.   In only a few circumstances (mostly South American revolutionaries) were these new left wing organizations able to obtain the organizational sophistication of their 2nd wave predecessors. For the most part they maintained a decentralized cell structure akin to the anarchists in the first wave, though markedly more authoritarian at the local level, since Leninism, Maoism, and in some cases Stalinism, had replaced the libertarian leanings of the Anarchists.   Unlike the second wave, left-wing radicals did not have the organizational capabilities to attack military targets and improvements in internal security made targeting heads of state in the latter part of the 20th century quite difficult. The later social revolutionaries therefore opted for symbolic targets, largely as an attempt to shift public opinion regarding American (and Western European) policy during the Cold War. They attacked banks and federal buildings, and as the rise of network news coverage created incentives to garner the most attention possible per terrorist act, hijackings and hostage takings became commonplace.

In each of these early incarnations of terrorism, organizational design remained fairly constant. Where insurgents faced a powerful state and/or had a limited domestic constituency, they organized themselves into conspiratorial societies in the style of Balnqui and Buonarotti[52]. Where structural circumstances permitted, organizations built up their internal capacities accordingly, in some instances taking on quasi-military qualities, often with retired officers at their helm. In each case they maintained a focus on political agitation meant to forward and ideological and/or geopolitical goal.

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[52] Z. Ivianski, 2005, pp. 74-75.

2.3.4.1 Trends of the New Terrorism: Right Wing Violence

The concept of a new form of terrorism arose with the 4th Wave, or the right-wing radicals of the 80's onwards. In some ways, the rise of the fourth wave represented the history of terrorism coming around full circle, as Hofmann noted that religious extremism was the first motivator for terrorism, driving such groups as the Zealots, Assassins, and Thugs[53]. However, the late 70's was the first instance in the history of modern terrorism that conservative ideologies had played the part of insurgent terrorist rather than incumbent counter-revolutionary. A number of factors have been noted to have contributed to the rise of right wing extremism, some of which were major historical incidences such as the 1979 Iranian Revolution which established a template for an Islamic government and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the resistance to which forged the networks of the nascent Salafist radicals[54]. Other catalysts for the 4th wave were more low profile political events such as the nullification of the Algerian elections in 1991 and the signing of the Palestinian/Israeli General Agreement on Principles (Oslo Accords) in 1993[55]. The first of these threw out the election victory by the Islamic Salvation Front, undermining the notion among Islamists that change could be brought through democratic participation. The second undermined the Islamist goal of liberating Jerusalem and triggered a massive wave of spoiler terrorism. While these founding events mark the fact that Islamist groups make up the majority of the extremist organizations in the 4th wave, it's important to note that contemporary radical organizations exist under the umbrella of nearly every major religious tradition, from Christian Identity Theorists *a la* Timothy McVeigh to Hindu nationalists and their Sikh secessionist counterparts, to new age organizations such as Aum Shinrikyo, which was

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[53] Bruce Hoffman, <u>Inside Terrorism</u> New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998.
[54] D. Rapoport, 2007.
[55] Magnus Ranstorp, "Terrorism in the Name of Religion" *Journal of International Affairs* vol. 50(1), 1996,pp. 41-62.

responsible for the sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway in 1995. Despite this diversity of theological tradition, groups of the 4th wave do tend to have a few characteristics in common. Firstly, while the number of active terrorist organizations has dropped precipitously (at least prior to the Iraq war), the average size of these groups has grown. The longevity of right wing organizations has also seemed to improve in contemporary times, lending credence to the netwar supposition that decentralized organizations fare better in highly competitive markets. Many scholars believe this is due to the spread of virtual extremism, which has blurred the lines between hard and fast institutions, and the radical movements of which they are a part. Thus, the new terrorism states that modern terrorist organizations are more an amalgam of amateurs than a hardened core of experienced veterans. Secondly, since such organizations/movements lack any form of centralized hierarchy, ideology/theological conformity seems to have taken the place of direct command and control as the source of institutional glue. Thirdly, and following on from the assumption that contemporary terrorism is viewed by the radicals themselves as a religious act, scholars of the new terrorism believe that terror has taken on the qualities of religious ritual, representing less a tactical act geared towards strategic ends, and more of a symbolic gesture signifying commitment to the faith and a (re)affirmation of alternative concepts of modernity. Finally, and for reasons that are largely debated amongst new terrorism scholars, has been a seeming abandonment of what restraint terrorists of the previous three waves have exercised.

2.3.4.2 Trends of the New Terrorism: The Violence of Amateurs

A distinct trend amongst new terror scholars has been a blurring of the lines between organizations and movements. While terrorist organizations have always existed within a broader radical mileu, new terrorism scholars believe recent advancements in communication technologies allow extremists to move in and out of radical organizations more freely,

undermining the previous distinctions between the groups themselves and those populations who may be sympathetic to their goals. In order to explain this phenomenon new terrorism scholars point to the cultural encroachment of globalization as spawning widespread discontent in conservative societies, whether it be in the Middle East, East Asia, or the American Midwest. This widespread discontent with both the secularism and transnational (ergo foreign) character of globalization creates the mass movement from whence the radical conservatives spring. The radicalization process is spurred on by global information networks, which serve as recruitment tools, and do-it-yourself guides to would-be radicals. The universality of most religious traditions lends right wing radicalism the universal appeal it needs to recruit and inspire on a global scale. Some groups, however, have fused the theological elements of their movements with racial overtones, such as in the cases of Hindu nationalism and American Christian Identity radicals, which creates a particularist mindset that does not transcend borders. Regardless, much of the fear generated by the new terrorist groups comes from the idea that the hardened core of experienced radicals does not need to physically penetrate Western borders, but rather can inspire homegrown radicals to attack from within.

2.3.4.3 Trends of the New Terrorism: Ideology vs. Command and Control

A decentralized organization of homegrown terror cells, or amateur walk-ins, does not lend itself well to being controlled by traditional concepts of command and control, where internal discipline is wrought by rigid indoctrination maintained through punitive enforcement. As a result, new terrorists are alleged to emphasize ideological conformity on a level beyond even the severe environments of 3rd wave cells. This part of the new terrorism discourse draws heavily from the Leaderless Resistance strategies espoused by Louis Beam[56] and al-Suri[57],

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[56] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless Resistance" *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 9(3) Autumn, 1997, pp. 80-95.
[57] Brynjar Lia, Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Musab al Suri London: Hurst, 2007.

respectively and does reflect a purposive strategy by Christian and Salafist radicals to create cohesive organizations out of virtual interactions. The centrality of ideological diffusion to the new terrorism discourse can be observed from the following passage by Turner.

> "…Al Qaeda is 1) more than an organisation. It is in itself an ideology that is a greater threat to global security than it was prior to the invasion of Afghanistan. 2) This ideology is not simply a carelessly composed piece of propaganda created entirely by the contemporary leadership, but a well thought out doctrine which draws upon a respected lineage of Islamic thinking[58]."

The striking part of this comment, isn't that the author believes that leaderless resistance is a central tenet of al-Qaeda's global strategy, but that he believes the localized startup represent a superior threat to Western interests than al-Qaeda's core does. He continues by stating that,

> "Although Al Qaeda may no longer be an organisation with direct command and control of its operatives in the sense that it was prior to the allied invasion of Afghanistan, it is likely an even more powerful force as an ideology. As an ideology Al Qaeda can achieve a kind of immortality. It becomes a myth and a legend. Future generations of jihadists can take up positions as ideologues further evolving its concepts as previous Salafist thinkers have, continuing to inspire future foot soldiers for the cause. This can be done in the absence of any real command and control because of the technological inter-connectivity of the modern world. As it becomes less and less of a tangible entity it becomes increasingly more dangerous[59]."

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[58] John Turner "From Cottage Industry to International Organization: the Evolution of Salafi Jihadism and the Emergence of the al-Qaeda Ideology" *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 22(4) 2010, p. 542.
[59] J. Turner, 2010, p. 543.

This contention is quite radical in its assumptions in that the presence of the radical organization has long been held by terrorism scholars to be the catalyst for terrorist violence.

2.3.4.4 Trends of the New Terrorism: Symbolic vs. Strategic Violence

Whereas the first three waves of terror operated according to a revolutionary agenda with complete, though perhaps ill-conceived, political motivations, Hoffman states that religious terrorists see violence as a sacramental act, and undertake it not out of a hope for revolutionary change, but as the result of a theological imperative[60]. The focus on right wing motivations grew from scholars' focus on two trends in 4th wave violence; a predilection for mass casualty violence and a seeming lack of grand strategy in the employment of violence[61]. Traditional terrorists of the first three waves operated according to Bryan Jenkins' assertion that "…terrorists want a lot of people watching and not a lot of people dead[62]." This was due to the assumption that terrorism was viewed by its practitioners as a strategy of revolutionary change. It was meant to gain attention for a cause, but not attention that would rob it of potential support. Religious terrorists, on the other hand, seem to commit such abhorrent violence, that it seems geared to shock rather than to impress. New terror scholars, such as Juergensmeyer, believe they can address this by looking at the effects religious motivations for terrorism have on the level of violence the organization might chose to engage in. Secular philosophies address particular social issues, such as the distribution of wealth or national self-determination. Religion, on the other hand, deals with the conflict between order and disorder, with the latter being inherently violent[63]. Religious violence, according to Juergensmeyer is justified not because it forwards a

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[60] B. Hoffman, 1998, pp. 94-95.
[61] M. Juergensmeyer, 2001.
[62] Bryan Jenkins "International Terrorism, A New Mode of Conflict", in David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf (eds.) International Terrorism and World Security London: Croom Helm, 1975, p. 15.
[63] Mark Juergensmeyer, "The Logic of Religious Violence", in David Rapaport, (ed.) Inside Terrorist Organizations London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1988, p. 180.

particular political agenda, but because it places terror in the context of the 'cosmic struggle'

between order and disorder. This cosmic struggle can escalate to 'cosmic war' (the way

Juergensmeyer believes religious radicals contextualize their violence) in one of five ways[64].

The religious struggle between good and evil is perceived to be playing out in real time, rather

than at some mythologized point in antiquity or at some critical point in the distant future.

Believers are able to identify personally with the conflict, perhaps because they were victimized

due to their faith, or more likely, because they were previously part of the secular problem and

were spiritually lost as a result. New terror scholars skirt the problem of requiring political

institutions to produce political goods by stating that radicals must hold a belief in the continuity

of the religious struggle, meaning that the conflict began at some point in the distant past and it

will continue indefinitely until rectified by some apocalyptical event in the future. The radical

must simply play his or her part in upholding the faith in the meantime. Juergensmeyer believes

that by ritualizing the violence, adherents do not require political gains for their actions, but

rather are reaffirmed by the act of violence itself. For extremists to commit to the cosmic war,

however, they need to believe that the struggle has reached a point of crisis. When violence is

called for by the organization, it needs to be imputed with cosmic meaning. It is for this reason

that most 4th wave organizations have a theological advisor in addition to its political leadership,

such as Yassin for Hamas, or the myriad Islamic scholars called upon by Zawahiri and bin Laden

to justify al-Qaeda operations. If a cosmic struggle reaches the point of cosmic war, then

according to Juergensmeyer, violence is not strategic, but dramatic, a piece of theater playing to

three audiences; victims, ingroup, and wider audiences. The likelihood of a given movement

spawning a terrorist organization in large part depends upon the type of theology being espoused.

By this the author is not referring to religious tradition, as any and all have proven themselves

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[64] M. Juergensmeyer, 1988, pp. 185-190.

capable of being hijacked by terrorists, but rather, whether or not that organization is millenarian in its beliefs, and more specifically whether their theology is pre, as opposed to post millenarian in interpretation. Most religious radicals, according to the new terrorism school, contextualize their violence by placing it in dialogue with a religious struggle that shall, at some point, be rectified by an eschatological event. Pre millenarians however, believe that the utopian order can only be brought about by that divine event, such as the second coming or the return of the 12th Imam. They, on the whole, focus their attention on correct living in the meantime, and while they may be highly ascetic, they are rarely violent. Post-millenarians, on the other hand believe that certain preconditions must be met before the eschatological event takes place, such as the Kahanist belief that the messiah will not be revealed until the Temple of Solomon is rebuilt. Terrorist acts, such as dynamiting the Dome of the Rock to make way for the rebuilding of the temple, are therefore seen as a means of creating those necessary preconditions… a religious act meant to create miracles, not a political act meant to shift secular policy[65].

2.3.4.5 Trends of the New Terrorism: The Rise of Mass Casualty Terrorism

A series of trends in contemporary terrorism have given rise to the belief amongst new terrorism scholars that terrorists have lost their historical reluctance to engage in wanton violence. These trends are the rise in the average number of casualties related to each individual attack, the widespread adoption of suicide terror, perhaps the signature tactic of the 4th wave, and the growing threat of CBRN terrorism.

While the so-called terrorist spectaculars such as 9/11, the USS Cole Bombing, and the Oklahoma City Bombing garner the most headlines in terrorism, they are merely indicative of an overall trend in terrorism, that of an escalation in the severity of violence modern terrorists are

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[65] Ehud Sprinzak, "From Messianic Pioneering to Vigilante Terrorism: The Case of Gush Emunim Underground", in David Rapaport, (ed.) <u>Inside Terrorist Organizations</u> London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1988, pp. 194-216.

willing to bring to bear against their state adversaries. As terrorism rates fell precipitously in the

1990's, Hoffman noted that the casualty figures for terrorism were remaining static, or even

climbing slightly[66]. There were two possible explanations for this trend, firstly that terrorist

capabilities are growing, and secondly that there is a growing willingness on the part of terrorists

to commit mass casualty violence. The problem with the first contention, according to new

terror scholars, is that terrorists have rarely used the full power at their disposal. Instead they

have historically focused their violence on individuals of great importance to elites, symbols of

government oppression such as colonial police, or symbols of capitalist oppression such as high

profile businessmen or banks. Hoffman roots the emergence of mass casualty terror in the rise of

religious radicalism.

> "Although religious terrorists committed only 25% of the recorded international
>
> terrorist incidents in 1995, …their acts were responsible for 58% of the total
>
> number of fatalities recorded that year; and those attacks that caused the greatest
>
> numbers of deaths in 1995—those that killed 8 or more persons—were all
>
> perpetrated by religious terrorists[67]."

Hoffman believes this radical increase in lethality is inherently tied to the right wing backlash to

secular modernity[68]. Accordingly, he gives a number of reasons for this suspicion. Firstly, the

transcendent aspects of religious violence free radicals from the social and moral constraints

faced by secular groups. Second, unlike secular terrorists who simply seek to supplant the

incumbent regime, religious groups seek the elimination of a broadly defined enemy or group.

Third, grievances that foster religious violence are usually justified through sacred texts and

receive the approval of religious authorities, this scriptural and clerical sanction for violence

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[66] B. Hoffman, 1998, pp. 93-94.
[67] B. Hoffman, 1998, pp. 94.
[68] B. Hoffman, 1998, pp. 94-95.

alleviates much of the psychological reticence to engage in violence. Fourth, whereas secular terrorists are restrained in their violence in hopes of appealing to a broader constituency, religious terrorists see themselves as being locked in a holy war, where belligerents are defined in Manichean terms. These radicals reject society wholesale, as opposed to their leftist forbears who merely wished to reform it. As a result, they attempt to appeal to no broader constituency other than themselves.

Perhaps the greatest single tactical cause of the increase in the lethality of terrorism has been the widespread adoption of suicide terrorism. Pedahzur and Perlinger state that suicide terrorism began in earnest in the 1980's but that it is now used by 32 groups spread out across 28 countries[69]. As stated previously, terrorists learn by observation, and they, like scholars of terrorism, have observed that suicide terrorism achieves remarkable results. Pedahzur and Perlinger point out that the average number of victims in a terrorist attack that employed small arms fire was 3.32. Among terrorist attacks where the insurgents utilized a remote controlled bomb, the average number of victims rises to 6.92 casualties per attack. However, when an organization uses a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt, this number increases to an average of 81.48 victims per incident and if the suicide bomber is using an explosive laden car (VBIED[70]) this number goes up slightly higher to 97.81 victims per attack[71]. It's easy to see why suicide terror was responsible for 50% of all fatalities associated with terrorism from 1980-2001, even though they accounted for only 3% of all terrorist incidents[72]. Further, from 2000-2003 there were over 300 suicide attacks resulting in 5300 dead, and of these attacks 70% were

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[69] Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perlinger, "Introduction: Characteristics of Suicide Attacks", in Ami Pedahzur, (ed.) Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 1.
[70] Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device
[71] A. Pedahzur and A. Perlinger, 2006, p. 2.
[72] Scott Atran, "Mishandling Suicide Terrorism" The Washington Quarterly vol. 27(3) Summer, 2004, p.68.

religiously motivated[73], and fully a third of those religiously inspired attacks were perpetrated either by al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda affiliates. As Dale points out, religion has a long history with relation to suicide terror, and the culture of the Shahid can be traced all the way back to 18th century resistance to British colonialism, where spiritual texts such as the Hikayat Prang Sabi were used as recruitment propaganda by detailing the visions of paradise that shahids could expect should they perish fighting Europeans[74].

Still, were it not for the threat of WMD terrorism, the new terrorism would never have gained the prominence it now enjoys in academic and policy circles. On the surface, the concern that CBRN technologies could work their way into the hands of terrorists is certainly warranted. New terror proponents point to attacks such as 9/11, 7/7, and 3/11 to show that certain organizations definitely have given evidence of the will to employ mass casualty terrorism. In addition, the actions of two organizations in particular show that terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons is more than a theoretical possibility. While a few questionable cases have been bandied about, such as the Rajneeshi sect's use of salmonella against a local Oregonian population in the 1980's, and the post-9/11 anthrax attacks in the US, there is ample evidence that at least two organizations have engaged in large scale WMD production and acquisition efforts: the Japanese sect, Aum Shinrikyo, and al-Qaeda. The first case, Aum is the more sobering of the two. Following the conclusion of the Japanese authorities' investigation into the apocalyptical cult, it was shown that the organization had been able to produce and/or procure a perplexing litany of weapons of mass destruction. Investigators found that Aum had manufactured enough sarin to kill 4.2 million people. Also, they had either produced, or had plans to produce VX, tabun, soman, mustard gas, sodium cyanide, anthrax, Q-

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[73] S. Atran, 2004, p. 69.
[74] Stephen Frederick Dale, "Religious Suicide in Islamic Asia: Anticolonial Terrorism in India, Indonesia and the Philippines" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 32(1) March, 1988, p. 52.

fever, and Ebola. Aum had acquired a small arsenal from Russian sources including a mass of small arms and a Mi-117 attack helicopter equipped with chemical dispersion equipment. Sources also suggest that Aum had attempted in earnest to procure Atomic Demolition Munitions (ADMs), the suitcase bombs, from Russian stockpiles but to no avail. Aum had also purchased two drone helicopters but thankfully were incompetent enough to crash them both while attempting to learn how to use them.

Al-Qaeda has, for good reason, remained the foremost priority for western counter-terror practitioners. Thankfully, however their procurement efforts have remained more rhetorical than fruitful. Al-Qaeda communications have repeatedly called for the acquisition of WMD as a means of squaring the odds between the organization and its western adversaries. It has pursued both fissile material as well as functioning weapons through intermediaries in Eastern Europe and Russia. Al-Qaeda has also sought chemical weapons, but reports about potential programs al-Qaeda engaged in, are dubious. Further, there is evidence that much of al-Qaeda's nuclear related endeavors were actually the organization falling victim to confidence scams by arms dealers who proved, surprisingly, unethical. Nevertheless, new terrorism scholars continue to sound the alarm that when dealing with religious extremists, acquisition of CBRN technologies can be equated with use.

2.3.5   Networks as a Motivation for Violence

Whereas neo-liberals base their hopes on institutional formation resulting from a massive growth in issue linkage and issue density stemming from global interconnections, many students of international security see an inherent danger in the 'devil I know' phenomenon whereby familiarity breeds contempt. At the state level of analysis realists caution that such increases in interactions will only result in more numerous occasions for conflict. Those who focus on non-

state actors likewise see globalization as being inherently tied to the rise in identity politics, which seemingly has exploded in the Post Cold War Era. The rationalizations for these arguments are rooted in the various forms taken by globalization. These include, but are not limited to westernization, secularization, democratization, consumerism, and the growth of market capitalism[75]. All of these concepts are inherently western in orientation. The inability to posit a culturally neutral form of globalization results in a series of reactionary movements in much of the non-western world. Globalization then directly or indirectly, results in the rise of identity politics, seen to be at the heart of the new wars. Terrorists, when viewed as an organizational phenomenon in the form of a social movement[76] use globalization as a reference point for framing in-group identity, articulating themselves as an alternative to western modernity. This reactionary push in identity politics as a new mode of warfare is often explained as a micro-level example of Civilizational conflict along the lines of Samuel Huntington[77]. Given the preponderance of power in western states, non-state identity-based conflict serves as a viable alternative to state centric conflict. Different theorists place causality in different mechanisms of international politics and economics, but most view the rise of identity politics as either the result of state failure[78], of chronic underdevelopment[79] leading to a feeling of relative depredation[80], or as a reaction to the encroachment of neo-liberal economic models[81]. In this final instance, reactions to these encroachments are elicited due to either the impact of such

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[75] A. K. Cronin, Winter 2002/2003, p. 45.

[76] See Albert Berges and Omar Lizardo, "International Terrorism and the World System" *Sociological Theory* vol. 22(1) March, 2004, pp. 38-52, and Robert Snyder, "Hating America: Bin Laden as a Civilizational Revolutionary" *The Review of Politics* vol. 65(4) Autumn, 2003, pp. 325-349.

[77] Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilzations and the Remaking of World Order New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996.

[78] Mary Kaldor, New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

[79] Mark Duffield, Global Governance and the New Wars New York, NY: Zed Books, 2001.

[80] Ted Gurr, Why Men Rebel Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.

[81] Michael Mouseau, "Market Civilization and Its Clash with Terror" *International Security* Winter 2002-2003, pp. 5-29.

impositions unto conservative cultures, or the inequitable distributions of the gains of globalization[82].

The fact that the US represents the archetype of not only western culture, but also of secular governance, democratic best practices, mass-consumerism, as well as neo-liberal market economics, makes anti-American violence symbolic of anti-globalization violence. Thus, reaction to alleged US encroachment, and the observed massive rise in Anti-American terrorism in the late 20th Century, is not indicative of a reaction to specific American foreign policies, but rather to the destruction of mixed clientelist economies subject to the rational bureaucratization of western style capitalism[83]. Anti-Americanism is explained as a reaction against the archetype of the neo-liberal market order[84].

The rise in anti-American violence is of central important not insomuch as it affects particular US policies, but in how it illustrates a new facet of political violence in the 21st century. As shown above, the new terrorism theorists do not think political violence is necessarily always strategic in the sense that it is geared toward well-articulated political goals. Rather, violence sometimes serves the purpose of representing a form of political and cultural expression[85], and it is driven by a need to assert a culture-specific identity in the face of homogenization.

Regardless of the specific cause of a given identity crises, violent organizations can help mobilize resources for resistance, frame issues, provide opportunities for political action, and perpetuate identity formation through cycles of violence[86]. Furthermore, identity politics supply

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[82] A. K. Cronin, Winter 2002/2003, p. 45, and Stanley Hoffman, "Clash of Globalizations" *Foreign Affairs* vol. 81(4) July/August, 2002, pp. 104-115.
[83] M. Mouseau, Winter 2002/2003, p. 6.
[84] M. Mouseau, Winter 2002/2003, p. 6.
[85] C. Coker, 2005.
[86] A. Berges and O. Lizardo, 2004, pp. 39-44.

political organization, violent or otherwise, with powerful motivational rhetoric. This rhetoric in turn can be parlayed into an institutional *raison d'etre*. This sort of ideational—or discursive— glue is said by new terrorism theorists to be capable of replacing political progress as a source of group cohesion, should instrumental institutional goals not be met. Thus, expressive violence can take the place of instrumental violence and perpetuate organizational salience even if political ends are not being realistically pursued. In the end, organizational goals can supplant strategic ones. As a result, organizational dynamics will reflect these ends, and organizational design will evolve in an effort to promulgate organizational longevity at the expense of political effectiveness.

2.4 Core Assumptions of Netwar

2.4.1 The Shift in Global Modes of Production

Emphasis on the role of networks in modern firms was derived from observations of the changing nature of industrial era corporations. As production shifted from the vertically integrated monopolies of the 19th centuries to the somewhat horizontally distributed information era marketplace, some theorists began to suspect that the nature of production during the information revolution had begun to favor decentralized niche production over vertically integrated hierarchical firms. Further, it is believed by some network theorists that the premium placed upon information in contemporary firms, changed the way firms value outputs, from material production to informational/technological production. A key tenet of the netwar hypothesis is that this evolution has its echo in the emergence of non-state activists as key players in the international system following the decline of the Cold War. Not only are they organized similarly to the networked firms, netwar theorists purport litter the corporate world,

but they are uniquely poised to take advantage of information era technologies in order to wage asymmetrical information warfare.

2.4.2 The Information Revolution has Empowered the Networked form of Organization

According to the netwar literature, the trend in decentralized organizations is only partly to be blamed on the complex nature of information era production, i.e. one that favors niche production and horizontally interconnected production chains. In addition, proponents claim that information processing technologies are making it easier for command and control relationships to be relaxed enough to foster the growth of distributed organizations. In addition, not only have communication technologies allowed firms to share information across distributed networks, but distributed networks, it seems, are uniquely poised to *more efficiently* share information and thus represent a more flexible and innovative firm. As it relates to violent networks, this is complimented by the increased sophistication of modern weaponry, which allows smaller and smaller cells to maintain the same level of destructive capabilities of larger organizations.

2.4.2.1 The Shift in International Security

All of the claims of netwar scholars would have likely been ignored had several incidents, such as the 1995 Sarin Gas Attacks in Tokyo, the Oklahoma City Bombing, and, of course, 9/11, not seemingly given substance to netwar claims that the rise of netwar represents a *revolution in military affairs*, with the capability of radically altering the security calculus of states. As Adamson states, economic and cultural globalization simultaneously provides motivation, as well as opportunity structures for mobilizing political communities[87]. This would be a mere variable in larger policy equations, if globalization did not radically alter the resources, infrastructure, and capacity of small groups. Since each radical ideology therefore has the

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[87] Fiona Adamson, "Globalization, Transational Political Mobilization, and Networks of Violence" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* vol. 18(1) 2005, p. 32.

capacity to spawn unacceptable violence, states must now concern themselves with ideational, as well as material conflict. This new emphasis on normative political behavior effectively alters the security environment for states. It is these overarching claims regarding the ability of violent networks to upend the conventional notion of balance of power politics that requires students of terrorism to closely test these core assumptions empirically.

2.5   Core Assumptions of the New Terrorism

2.5.1   Right Wing Extremism

Scholars within the new terrorism camp rest many of their assumptions regarding the ascendancy of terrorism to the top of international policy concerns on the notion that the rise of right wing ideologies, indicative of Rapoport's 4th wave, has had a qualitative effect on the nature of the violence espoused by radical organizations. Historically, scholars of terrorism have always noted that motivation for violence has an effect on the nature of the violence employed by an organization. In short, the violent ideology determines the universe of acceptable targets. However, until recently, studies have not found that ideology has an effect on the *levels* of violence radicals are willing to engage in.

2.5.2   The Amatuerization of Terrorism

Terrorist organizations have almost always represented the fanatical fringe of larger and more acceptable social movements. Following on the heels of the netwar literature, the new terrorism school argues that decentralized social and virtual networks have enabled organizations to tap into these broader activist communities in a manner that blurs the line between violent extremists and the radical mileu. This is largely due to the assumption that virtual information mediums allow organizations to recruit and train new members without the need to physically interact with the new members. New cells can simply be developed just by sharing the necessary

information with respect to ideology, tactics, tradecraft, etc..   Whereas the phrase, 'the amateurization of violence' makes terrorism sound less professional and therefore less successful, proponents of the new terrorism view leaderless resistance strategies, such as those practiced by the American Patriot Movement, with great trepidation, as it creates a greater recruitment pool, acts as a force multiplier by inspiring imitation, spreads law enforcement thin since state agencies must now engage in counter-radicalization as well as counter-terrorism, makes counter-terrorism potentially counter-productive as the creation of martyrs in turn fuels the movement, which in turn spawns more radical cells, and it increases the longevity of the organization as it enables the firm to replace disrupted cells with the new start-ups.

2.5.3   The Centrality of Ideology

Every wave of terror has been defined by a dominant ideological trend, however the new terrorism/netwar literature believes that ideology represents a viable substitute for direct command and control relationships. It is this innovation that makes true leaderless resistance strategies plausible as the blending of organizations and movements makes top down direction impossible.

2.5.4   Symbolic Violence

Previous waves of terrorism were defined by symbolic violence. The early anarchists attacked heads of state as they symbolized the *ancien regimes* of the states they opposed. The ethno-nationalists targeted symbols of colonial domination, such as the police, colonial administration buildings, as well as white owned farms (since most colonial exploitation was agrarian in nature). However, the new terrorism school views the violence itself as symbolic, rather than merely the targets. Earlier terrorists might have utilized symbols in order to effectively communicate with a variety of audiences, and therefore further the cause, but

elements of the new terrorism school contend that the violence itself is symbolic ritual, meant not as a strategic act, but as an act of religious observance… and end in and of itself[88]!

2.5.5 The Abandonment of Conventional Constraints on Terrorism

The term terrorism did not always have the pejorative connotations that it does today. Early social revolutionaries proudly declared themselves to be terrorists in much the same way that contemporary guerillas use the term 'revolutionaries'. The terminology is a reflection of how enamored early anarchists were with Robespierre's counter-revolutionary campaign prior to the 9th of Thermidor. Since the nomer was considered a respectable occupation by its adherents, and a badge of honor of sorts, the strategies and tactics of terrorism were, at least in theory, supposed to conform to certain guidelines. Far from being a vehicle for mass slaughter, terrorism was originally conceived of as a means of procuring revolutionary change without the need for mass bloodshed. It was, if you will, a humanitarian's means of revolt! The rise of terrorist spectaculars in the mid 1990's has caused some scholars to believe that terrorists have abandoned their previous restraints on violence. While this could be explained through the increased capabilities afforded by modern weapons systems, new terrorism scholars have often used the theologically inspired nature of 4th Wave organizations as a means of speaking to the phenomenon of mass casualty terror, in particular the trend of suicide terrorism.

2.6 Arguments to be Tested

2.6.1 Core Argument

The core argument to be tested in this paper, and the one upon which all other assumptions rest, is whether or not decentralized networks are actually more effective than hierarchies when it comes to mobilizing and executing violent resistance to the state? The netwar hypothesis obviously contends that this is the case, however, most caveat that assumption

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[88] M. Juergensmeyer, 2000.

with the observation that most organizations will not be fully distributed, but rather represent something of a hybrid. Empirical observations support this, as many violent organizations do adapt somewhat complex structures over time. The author believes, however, that this is only beneficial to illicit organizations in so far as it allows terrorist groups to minimize the impact of counter-terror initiatives on the broader organization. The larger questions remain; does the network structure make terrorists more effective warfighters in an offensive capacity, and are state reactions to terror the greatest danger to terrorist organizations?

2.6.2 Ancillary Arguments

The true weight of the netwar hypothesis, actually comes from the ancillary assumptions. The first of these stems from the notion that modes of warfighting follow from modes of capital accumulation. The underlying argument is that it is rational for violent organizations to model themselves after private firms. The final argument combines the notion that economic globalization is shifting modes of warfighting with the concept that networks represent more effective vehicles for radicalism. Basing their works on obsolete state model conceptualizations of globalizations, these theorists assume, that the international security environment is shifting with the rise of distributed violent groups. They infer, *a la* Van Crevald that in order to compete with terrorists, modern militaries will need to adopt forms of network centric warfare akin to those used by insurgents. The emphasis for western militaries will therefore be on special forces, stand off munitions, intelligence and information warfare, and above all… a light footprint on the battlespace.

2.7 Literature Critique

This chapter has so far attempted to outline the key arguments of the netwar literature, paying attention to the broader new terrorism school of thought, of which it is a core component,

as well as the organizational studies literature, from which it is derived. As this literature has been applied to the study of terrorist organizations, however, it has suffered from both empirical and theoretical flaws, which need to be illuminated.

2.7.1   Empirical Arguments

Empirically, netwar theorists seem to be addressing contemporary trends in political violence. The assumption then is that they are developing theoretical explanations for empirical observations.   These empirical observations, unfortunately, are fraught with bias for three reasons.   Firstly, netwar theorists consistently conflate levels of analysis, resulting in methodologically questionable approaches to the study of social and behavioral phenomenon. Secondly, netwar proponents consistently use anecdotal evidence from biased case studies to support their conclusions.   And finally, the entire rationalization for the netwar discourse is suspect, as they are more often than not failing to explain anything new to terrorism studies.

2.7.1.1 Empirical Arguments: Blurring Levels of Analysis

The blurring of the lines between organizations and broader social movements has been mentioned multiple times throughout this piece. It is in fact the cornerstone of the argument that the new terrorism is as much about amateur walk-ins as it is about hardcore terrorist professionals. The concomitant refusal to draw firm boundaries follows logically from this notion, however it has severe methodological implications as well.   From an academic perspective, it allows theorists to conflate the structural attributes which drive movements, in this case, economic, political and cultural globalization with the institutional attributes which make terrorism more rational… information technologies as enablers of non-state violence. In reality, these are two separate arguments. Further, as Stohl and Stohl state, network boundaries are often

defined for political rather than analytical purposes[89]. This allows political analysts to classify problems according to funding priorities rather than sound academic criteria. Further, this lack of rigor allows terrorism scholars to conflate a variety of different organizations and phenomenon under the same banner, for example *salafism* and al-Qaeda, or Christian Identity theology and a specific chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, in order to make hyperbolic claims regarding the reach of the organizations in question. Since the crux of the netwar argument is that organizational design is a value added component of non-state activism, what matters are those organizational mechanisms which best enable institutions to take advantage of structural circumstances. As Stohl and Stohl contend, it's necessary for analytical purposes to differentiate between mere 'networking' and formal command and control relationships[90].

2.7.1.2 Empirical Arguments: Case Study Selection

Social science evaluations should choose as case studies subjects that, to the greatest degree possible, avoid selection bias. This helps maintain the validity of results within cases, as well as allows for external applicability. When it comes to empirically testing their claims, however, netwar theorists either make fleeting allusions to al-Qaeda, as though it were a poster child for typical terrorist organizations, or even worse, create straw man arguments by using anecdotal evaluations of institutions. In the first instance, findings are problematized as al-Qaeda is not a typical terrorist organization. While al-Qaeda is, for obvious reasons, the organization of most concern to western policy makers, it is but one out of thousands of radical organizations, nor is it even among the more successful terrorist institutions. Secondly, and perhaps more damagingly, has been the casual treatment given to case studies by netwar thinkers. In one of the founding texts of the netwar literature, Zanini states that throughout the

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[89] Cynthia Stohl and Michael Stohl "Networks of Terror: Theoretical Assumptions and Pragmatic Consequences" *Communication Theory* vol. 17, 2007, p. 107.
[90] C. Stohl and M. Stohl, 2007, p. 110.

1990's Middle Eastern terror in general shifted away from the hierarchically organized groups like the PLO to the decentralized netwar actors like Hamas and al-Qaeda[91]. In this piece she refers to Hamas as the archetype of the new netwar actor and uses this case as a point of departure to reflect on the gradual decline of historic Palestinian organizations such as the PLO, Abu Nidal, and the PFLP, whom she asserts represent the tightly structured quasi-military organizations of the past. In doing so, she not only ignores the fact that the PLO itself is an umbrella network of like minded but autonomous organizations, but she also overlooked the hierarchical nature of Hamas' command structure. Claiming the days of the PLO were waning, Zanini then asserted that the new generation of Middle Eastern terrorists represented the netwar ideal. In addition to Hamas, she also draws upon al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya (EIG), the Algerian Islamic Group (GIA), and al-Qaeda[92]. Without forwarding metrics for analyzing organizational effectiveness, however, we are left to assume that an innovative structure will *a priori* produce novel results. In point of fact, EIG is almost completely decimated, the GIA splintered until the very last cells were forced to fuse with al-Qaeda to maintain relevance (not to mention funding), and al-Qaeda has only ever been effective when operations were planned and funded by its hierarchical core.

2.7.1.3 Empirical Arguments: Old Wine in New Flasks

Much of the impetus for the netwar literature is draw from empirical observations of seemingly new traits of 4th Wave Organizations. However, many of the innovations of the 4th wave, namely decentralized cell structure, the use of symbolic violence, mass casualty terror, and transnational terrorism, actually have precedence in previous waves of terror.

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[91] Michele Zanini, "Middle Eastern Terrorism and Netwar" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 22, 1999, p. 247.
[92] M. Zanini, 1999, pp. 247-256.

Zanini underscores this myopia by her division of Middle Eastern terrorists into traditional and new generation groups. The former, mostly dated back to the 1960's and 70's, were Marxist in orientation, organized in a rational bureaucratic manner, and operated within the PLO's sphere[93]. In contrast, the Islamist groups that evolved in the 1980's and 90's were fluid in structure and represented a phenomenon which was *sui generis*. This argument, as well as similar ones made by other theorists, is symptomatic of the netwar theorists' contention that they are exposing something inherently new on the political stage. In reality, the decentralized terror network has its roots in the early anarchist groups, who based their organizational design on the early 18th century conspiratorial societies, most notable, Grachus Babeuf's "Conspiracy of Equals", an organization formed to intimidate the Directory which ruled revolutionary France following the 9th of Thermidor[94]. The Russian organization, Land and Freedom was the first organization to adopt a decentralized cell network, as early as the 1870's[95]. Land and Freedom cells had no tactical knowledge of each other, and even, like al-Qaeda, offered franchise opportunities to like-minded radicals. In a manner common to the highly disorganized anarchist groups, Land and Freedom was eventually dissolved and replaced with a more lean and hierarchical organization, *Narodnoya Volya,* or the People's Will. Nor was the model of the conspiratorial society simply an anarchist phenomenon. The influence of Masonic style conspiratorial societies was so large on the early Irish nationalists that some scholars contend that this is what cost Republicanism the support of the Church, which was largely suspect of the majority Protestant phenomenon of secret societies[96].

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[93] M. Zanini, 1999, pp. 247-248
[94] Michael Burleigh, Blood and Rage: a Cultural History of Terrorism London: Harper Press, 2008, p. 67.
[95] M. Burleigh, 2008, p. 45.
[96] M. Burleigh, 2008, p. 3.

In addition, netwar and new terrorism theorists infer from the symbolic targeting of the 4th wave that right wing terrorism views violence itself as a symbolic act. Even a cursory analysis of former organizations, however shows this to be a shallow reading of terrorist tactics. Terrorists have consistently considered the means of violence as symbolic as well as the targets, themselves. The above-mentioned *Naradnoya Volya,* managed on one occasion to infiltrate a carpenter into employment in the Winter Palace. For years the stated aim of the *NV* had been the elimination of the Czar. The *NV* plant, Khalturin, had numerous opportunities to kill the Czar while doing repairs in his office as hammers and other tools were handy and the Czar was unprotected. However, he felt the head of the oppressive regime must be killed in a spectacular manner, i.e. with dynamite. A common murder would not do[97]. In fact, many of the early terrorists refused to use ordinary weapons that a criminal might. Since dynamite was largely associated with acts of terrorism, it became a favorite of the anarchists as it set them apart from ordinary criminals, as did their (seeming irrational) refusal to run away after the commission of acts of terror… as only criminals would run from authorities. Nor did earlier incarnations of terrorism spare symbols of modern society such as public transportation systems. The first bombing campaign by a terrorist group against state infrastructure was conducted by William Mackey Lomasney, who organized a concerted campaign against the London Underground in November, 1883[98]. The 1st attack occurred as the Metropolitan Line pulled out of Praed St Station, followed 20 minutes later by the District Line as it pulled out of Sharing Cross. Foreshadowing al-Qaeda's patented coordinated spectaculars, the Republicans followed on Lomasney's campaigns with simultaneous bombings at railway terminals in 1884 when Charing Cross, Ludgate Hill, Paddington and Victoria Stations were concurrently hit.

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[97] M. Burleigh, 2008, p. 49.
[98] M. Burleigh, 2008, pp. 16-17.

In addition, we are perhaps being too kind to earlier terrorist organizations in our assumption that they took earnest steps to ensure minimal casualties in their acts. While this was certainly the case with some extremists, as it is today, elements of the 4th wave would certainly not be out of place in the 1st and 2nd waves of terror. One of the eminent anarchist ideologues, Karl Heinzen, actually made a plea for what today would be termed mass casualty attacks, in his pamphlet titled, *Murder and Freedom*. Murder and Freedom*, laid the groundwork for not only the use of terror on a transnational scale, but also the deliberate use of violence against civilians[99], aspects of terrorism thought to correspond to the ritualized attacks of theological violence in the 4th wave.

> "The triumvirs Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus had, among others, 300 Senators and 2,000 knights on their death lists. Where have revolutionaries ever agreed on such a massacre? It has after all been the failing, the major defect of revolutionaries, that they in weakness spare the lives of irredeemable reactionaries out of poorly understood humanity, or, blinded by incomprehensible joy at the apparent victory of their cause, fail to gain or secure that victory through the complete annihilation of their enemies. Called to exercise the office of Themis against all enemies of the people, they let the sword of the goddess fall from their hands after the first stroke, and accommodate themselves only to her blindness. A revolutionary, in whose power it were to destroy the collected bearers of the system of violence and murder that rules and ravages the earth, earns a thousand-fold the death of a traitor if he hesitates only for a blink of an eye[100]."

The rationale for targeting civilians wasn't the result of mental deficiencies on the part of the perpetrators, or of a belief in the redemptive power of violent resistance. Rather, it sprung from

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[99] Daniel Bessner and Michael Staunch, "Karl Heinzen and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Terror" *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 22(2), 2010, p. 159.
[100] D. Bessner and M. Staunch, 2010, p. 159.

a sincere belief on the part of the radicals that the root of government control was in its monopoly on the use of force. By creating fear in the population, Heinzen and others believed they would create the preconditions necessary for revolution as anger grew at the government for its failure to protect the citizenry. Subsequent anarchist activity would show that this was not idle talk. The famous terrorist Emile Henry bombed the café terminus in Gare St-Lazare[101], after having failed to get a ticket to a sold out theater performance, which was his initial target. When pressed at his trail how he countenanced the murder of innocent civilians, he merely replied that there were no innocent bourgeoisie. This was followed by a bombing at the Liceo Opera House, that killed 30, and the destruction of a Portuguese Asylum, whose resident psychiatrist had testified that an anarchist bomber, who had attempted to kill the King, was insane[102]. And these examples were merely the work of the relatively small conspiratorial societies of the early social revolutionaries. They were far exceeded in their carnage by the violence of the anti-colonial groups of the 30's, 40's, and 50's, for whom the systematic terrorization of the colonial population was a central tactic of resistance. In some instances, such as the Mau Mau's campaign in Kenya, this even escalated to the deliberate murder of children in an effort to convince European families to leave.

Adamson draws attention to a phenomenon that many scholars believe is a central tenet of the new terrorism, transnational violence. She states that globalization creates pull factors (new opportunity structures) and push factors (lack of political voice at home) which make non state groups use Keck and Sikkink's 'Boomerang Pattern' of political activism, whereby political actors bypass domestic institutions of the state to engage with international actors who might in

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[101] M. Burleigh, 2008, p. 82.
[102] M. Burleigh, 2008, p. 83

turn place pressure on the home state[103]. This is accomplished, according to Adamson, by using framing activities that link local political aspirations with pre-existing discourses abroad, such as the tying of *Salafist* ideology with local political grievances throughout the Arab world, as well as sections of Western Europe. However, all previous waves of terror have done this to some degree. The Anarchists spread their ideology via émigré communities and tied themselves to local labor movements wherever they went. They also took advantage of certain tolerant areas such as Switzerland, to forge illicit networks and exchange ideas on revolutionary government, in much the same way Islamists use international cities such as London today. Further, the ethno-nationalists were the first to pioneer the tactic of using foreign governments and international institutions as a means of placing pressure on their occupiers. Many FLN strikes were timed to coincide with meetings of the UN General Assembly, and many insurgent organizations, such as the Irgun in Palestine, continually played off the anti-colonialism inherent in US foreign policy.

2.8   Theoretical Arguments

Despite the fact that the netwar hypothesis has earned itself a central role in the contemporary terrorism discourse, it remains wrought with theoretical holes, which require more rigorous testing than their assumptions have yet been subject to. It is the author's contention that netwar theory only makes sense if one disregards the broader literature on terrorism and concentrates only on the new terrorism school. This means disavowing the following assumptions that have served as a mainstay of the traditional terrorism discourse; terrorism is a tool of revolutionary change and terrorism typically ends not as a result of state action, but from corrosion from within.

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[103] F. Adamson, 2005, p. 37.

2.8.1 Theoretical Arguments: Terrorism as a Revolutionary Endeavor

Apart from the relatively mild phenomenon of single-issue terrorism, the majority of the traditional terrorism discourse has centered on Crenshaw's concept of revolutionary terrorism. Crenshaw defines revolutionary terror as non-state insurgency wherein the goal of the organization is to seize control of the state, and in so doing, to promulgate comprehensive social and political change[104]. Given the enormity of their aims, revolutionary terrorism must have the following properties; acts of terrorism represent part of a revolutionary strategy wherein the ends of violence is the seizure of state power, the violence itself is socially unacceptable, the victims of violence are chosen as representatives of a larger audience, and the violence is geared towards effecting behavior, not towards destroying a state's material capacity to wage war[105]. The major factor setting the concept of revolutionary terror apart from the new terrorism, is that traditional scholars did not look at terrorism as a phenomenon unto itself. Rather, the theory of revolutionary terrorism conceives of political violence along Thorton's lines; as a process leading from terrorism, to guerilla war, to civil war, with the end goal being to become a state power[106]. Terrorism merely plays a role in this process, which relies on the ability of the organization to continue to grow institutional capacity in order to take on the expanding roles of the violent organization laid out by Thornton. Terrorism is a mode of communication which speaks at once to a number of audiences; the victim, the groups who identify with the victim, and the resonate mass, who could be swayed to side with either the state or the insurgents[107]. Terrorists must be careful, however, as terrorism does not necessarily result in terror. Terrorism,

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[104] M. Crenshaw, 1972, p. 384.
[105] M. Crenshaw, 1972, p. 385.
[106] M. Crenshaw, 1972, p. 387
[107] E. H. Price, 1977, pp. 52-66.

is in essence, a means of communication[108]the end of which is to grow the organization to the point where it can viably undertake more sophisticated means of insurgency. This means that the management of violence in a terrorist group is of central concern as it could provoke hostility rather than fear/sympathy if pursued unwisely[109]. Since the netwar hypothesis focuses on a terrorist organization's ability to commit violence rather than undertake governance, they have to replace this goal with the new terrorism's emphasis on theatrical and ritualized violence, and their contention that religiously motivated terrorists seek no broader constituency other than themselves allows them to circumvent Crenshaw's caution that poorly orchestrated violence might actually be counter-productive for the organization[110].

2.8.2 Theoretical Arguments: How Terrorism Ends

Following logically from the arguments made by netwar and new terrorism scholars, what ultimately defeats terrorists, isn't their inability to further their organizational and political objectives, but state counter-terror efforts. This is reflected in the netwar assumption that their longevity is tied to their decentralized cell structure, which makes the systematic destruction of the entire organization difficult. Thus, netwar theorists posit a structural explanation for institutional decline (counter-terror environment) while forwarding an institutional explanation for organizational performance (internal structure). Crenshaw avoids this fallacy by coming down firmly in favor of Organizational Process Theory as a primary theoretical explanation for the rise and fall of terrorism. Accordingly, it is the presence of a radical organization, not certain structural circumstances, which give rise to terrorism, and it is largely internal machinations that prompt a decline in the organization, not government pressure. According to Organizational

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[108] A. Schmid and J. De Graaf, 1982.
[109] M. Crenshaw, 1972, p. 389.
[110] M. Crenshaw, 1972, p. 389.

Process Theory (OPT), there are two reasons for organizational decline: exit and voice[111]. Exit occurs when elements of the organization either give up on the violent struggle or, as is more often the case, splinter into new organizations and/or join rival factions[112]. Voice, refers to the internal process of vocalizing dissent[113]. In either case, the key vulnerability of violent organizations is not the power of the state, but the necessity of attracting and retaining members[114]. Crenshaw outlines a fact of terrorism that is all but overlooked by netwar theorists, that quite often the prime threat to a radical group is other radical groups competing for the same market-share of communal support.

2.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, the author finds reason to suspect that the dangers posed by violent networks has been overblown. After summarizing the traditional terrorism literature, which points out that terror is a form of political protest geared toward revolutionary change, the author continues to maintain that violent organizations distribute their operations at their peril. The reason for this is that the process of decentralization retards several functions which are key to successful revolutionary violence.

Firstly, decentralized organizational designs impair an organization's ability to recruit and retain members. This is of central concern to violent organizations as organizational process theory supposes that this is the primary concern of all institutions. As firms decentralize, however, they invite those market forces which breed competition back into the firm, facilitating exit and voice. Further, decentralized firms are less able to mobilize resources in order to procure public goods for constituent populations. In areas where organizations face stiff

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[111] M. Crenshaw, 1988, p. 22.
[112] M. Crenshaw, 1988, p. 22.
[113] M. Crenshaw, 1988, p. 23.
[114] M. Crenshaw, 1985, p.482.

competition from rival factions, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, etc., distributed organizations will no doubt lose ground to more sophisticated groups. Finally, the improper management of violence can have severe costs for an organization. This is due to the fact that violent strategies incur costs on constituent communities as well as the radicals engaged in violence themselves. This can be parlayed into organizational support if blame can be projected unto the state. But, this requires a concerted communication strategy, which forwards concrete objectives that are obtainable and that a majority of the radical mileu can agree to. If the organization does not, then it risks being held responsible for the violence done by the state to the community. If this occurs, then the group will quickly lose its human and financial support. Distributed firms have a hard time forwarding coherent and consistent agendas, as the number of interests is limited only to the number of operational nodes. Properly managing violence without strict command and control relationships to harness individual ambition can become difficult. Additionally, the violence must be culturally acceptable to the radical mileu. While the threshold for acceptable violence against outgroups can be quite high, it can nevertheless be surpassed by wanton carnage. The case of al-Qaeda in Iraq can attest to this.

Secondly, acephalous and polycephalous organizations will be ill-disposed to escalate their violence into more sophisticated forms of resistance should structural circumstances allow for an organization to move from being a primarily terroristic organization to a guerilla organization. As traditional terrorism studies suggests that terror is but one step in a ladder of political violence, a group that is not poised to take on a more sophisticated role in the political process will quickly find itself anachronistic.

Thirdly, without the functional differentiation of nodes indicative of some degree of organizational hierarchy, violent groups will not be able to make effective use of the information

and technology at their disposal, and firm innovation will suffer accordingly. The emphasis in the new terrorism on amateur violence largely ignores the fact that violence requires a considerable amount of technical expertise that cannot be usefully shared via the internet. While the information revolution has created incentives for decentralization, the massive increase in technical knowledge requires hierarchies to make use of it.

The next chapter will extrapolate core arguments from both the traditional literature on revolutionary terrorism as well as the netwar literature in the form of a series of hypotheses reflecting the assumptions of each school of thought regarding the ends and means of terrorism. Following from this, testable metrics of organizational performance will be forwarded as well as a delineation of the institutional mechanisms necessary to perform each task listed. The methodology for testing these hypotheses will then be explained and the case studies chosen for this analysis will be introduced to the reader.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The core addition of this dissertation to the terrorism studies literature is an empirical testing of the role of organizational design in terrorist organizations. The netwar hypothesis, and its emphasis on the expressive goals of the 'new terrorism', argues that advantage in contemporary conflicts will increasingly accrue to organizations that adopt decentralized networked paradigms. The theory of revolutionary terrorism, on the other hand, contends that terrorism is a form of political violence geared towards usurping state power. As a result of the strategic goals of terrorism, violent organizations will need to adopt centralized organizational designs in order to demonstrate their ability to take over the complex tasks of governance.

This chapter will begin the empirical testing of these theoretical schools by using the arguments detailed in the literature review to generate a series of testable hypotheses. Following an explanation of these hypotheses, the author will detail the mechanisms of organizational design that have a direct impact on organizational behavior. Finally, metrics of organizational performance will be developed in order to create dependent variables, variations in which can be measured over time.

3.1 Hypotheses

Since this study tests congruence to two theories, it is by default intended to be theory infirming as well as theory confirming, as the possible outcomes are mutually exclusive. There are therefore three possible hypotheses that this study must address.

3.1.1 H1: The Netwar Hypothesis

The crux of the netwar hypothesis is that decentralized organizations will prove more successful in conflict with a state, and as a result will be more successful in obtaining organizational goals. This argument, in turn relies upon three core assumptions regarding political violence.

H1(a):

An organization does not need complex infrastructure or the ability to escalate the quality of its violence. Rather, the ability to reproduce terrorist violence is sufficient to sustain organizational membership.

The end of terrorism is not necessarily the procurement of political change. Rather, it is an expressive act meant to signal resistance to modernizing forces encroaching on conservative cultural values. The new terrorism presumes violence is expressive and ritualized, and meant not so much to achieve radical change in a political system as it is an attempt to achieve theological, often apocalyptic, goals. As a result, an organization need not be prepared to provide political goods to constituencies, or to escalate violence to more sophisticated means of attacking state power. The metrics of organizational success would therefore be longevity and the retention of a minimum of violent capabilities.

H1(b):

Decentralized organizational paradigms are more resilient as poly-cephalus and acephalus organizations are more difficult to destroy than their hierarchical counterparts.

This resilience is made possible by the lack of centralized command and control relationships, which distributes decision making throughout the entire organization. In addition, a full-matrix organization will operate according to a random distribution of cells, where all

nodes in the network are functionally similar and the destruction of one group will not disrupt system-wide operations.

H1(c):

By using advanced communication technologies to distribute information throughout the entire network, decentralized organizations make use of real-time data more efficiently and as a result, are more adaptive and flexible.

Accordingly, networks will react to local stimuli more quickly and distribute lessons learned more effectively. This means networks should prove more capable than their bureaucratic peers at responding to structural shifts and taking advantage of opportunities, as well as learning from their mistakes and improving operational expertise as time goes on.

H1(d):

Cells which are functionally autonomous, both in terms of tactical operations as well as financial requirements cells are more resilient as they make disrupting organizational operations very difficult from a counter-terror perspective.

Where state sponsorship of violence has become rare, the ability of local cells to raise their own funds means the network can become 'self-sustaining' requiring neither support from within or without the organization.

3.1.2   H2: Theory of Revolutionary Terrorism

The main hypothesis of this study assumes that the goal of political violence is to affect revolutionary change. Therefore an organization must centralize its operations in order to more effectively pursue "revolutionary" (note: not symbolic) violence.

H2(a):

Terrorist organizations must be organized in a manner that enables them to accomplish complex tasks of governance as well as more sophisticated forms of violence. The tasks of governance are; law enforcement, economic regulation, the provision of civil services, and protection.

A central tenet of this theory is that terrorism cannot be viewed in a vacuum, as terrorism itself is unable to procure the revolutionary change that is the end of political violence. Instead terrorism must be viewed as part of a spectrum of political violence, which necessarily involves both non-state and state capabilities. The first of these is violent protest, followed by terrorism. Above terrorism is guerilla warfare followed by civil war. If the organization is successful at engaging the state in a civil conflict, then it becomes a state itself. In order to move from one form of violence to another an organization must prove itself capable of accomplishing more complex tasks. This in turn requires a more complex infrastructure. For example, terrorism might create a void of political power by forcing government services out of an area (market shaping behavior). However, in order to fill the void and take advantage of the political opportunity for growth (market reacting behavior) an organization must be capable of handling complex functions previously carried out by the state. Otherwise the incumbent regime begins to be viewed as favorable to the revolutionary organization. In addition, a terrorist group must be willing and able to graduate to successively higher levels of political violence such as guerilla and civil war. Thus, the group must be able to field quasi-military formations capable of engaging in pitched battles with government forces, and gradually taking and holding territory.

H2(b):

Terrorists must be able to escalate the quality of their violence while refraining from escalating the quantity of violence inflicted on both in-groups and out-groups.

The specific role of terrorism in a violent organization is one of communication. According to the principle of revolutionary terrorism, terrorism itself does not materially denigrate the power of the state. Only more sophisticated forms of violence can accomplish that goal. Terrorism instead erodes state support while simultaneously growing the support of the radical organization. It does this by illustrating a number of things to various audiences. It shows regime adherents that the state can't protect their communities. It shows potential sympathizers that the incumbent regime can be defeated. And, it serves as an advertisement for the radical organization, which hopes to project itself as the political alternative to the incumbent regime.

Since terrorism is not a material threat to the state, level of violence is not necessarily a sign of organizational success. Even large-scale terrorist attacks cannot overthrow the government, as regime assets are never concentrated in one location, no matter how large the attack against a single target might be. For a violent organization then, the expansion of political power requires clear-and-hold operations, and terrorists by definition have a limited ability to hold geographic territory. Further impeding the utility of terror in achieving political change through violence alone is the fact that mass-casualty violence can be counter-productive for the radical organization because quite often it repulses those whom the organization wishes to court, including domestic and international constituencies. Since violence as communication is open to interpretation, violence must be carefully managed to ensure the proper communication is received by all audiences. Decentralized decision-making makes message control exceptionally difficult.

H2(c):

The effective management of violence is dependent upon the ability of an organization's leadership to enforce decisions.

This is possible in three ways; by a legitimate claim to authority, by the ability to enforce punitive sanctions, and by the ability to control the material support agents within the organization receive. The decentralization of an organization effectively multiplies the nested interests within an organization, which in turn creates incentives for ideological schisms, which erode the claim to legitimate leadership at the center. Geographic distance between nodes in distributed organizations makes punitive measures all but impossible in most networked organizations. The financial autonomy of distributed nodes in an organization makes control of material assets within the network difficult if not impossible for the organization's center. Further, it creates institutional incentives to engage in organized criminal behavior, which in turn *sends the wrong message.*

3.1.3 H0: The Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis assumes that variations in organizational performance have little or nothing to do with organizational design. Instead variations in organizational performance are a function of variations in other factors relevant to political violence, whether endogenous or exogenous to the terrorist group itself.

Firstly, variations in recruitment and retention could stem from the relative salience of the organization's avowed ideology. Since the (alleged) goal of revolutionaries is not necessarily power for its own sake but the imposition of a revolutionary political system (i.e. a Marxist-Leninist government, an Islamist regime based on Sharia, etc.) then the attractiveness of the radical group's political platform to relevant audiences could account for the traction gained by a terrorist group within potential constituencies.

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On the other hand, success or failure in meeting organizational goals could result from the structural conditions of the organization, be it a function of the political system in which a violent organization is operating, the economic condition's of the organization's constituent community(ies), or the nature of the competitive process in which the institution is operating. There are two ways in which the nature of the incumbent regime could affect the efficacy of political violence directed against it. The first of these is regime type. Substantial literature exists on the influence of regime type on political terrorism, though their findings are not necessarily conclusive. For example, democracies make terrorism less appealing in terms of ends, but simpler in execution by rendering the means (covert organization, freedom of speech, protection from unlawful search and seizure, etc.) more accessible. Autocratic regimes, on the other hand, may make revolutionary change more appealing (due to a lack of alternative mechanisms by which to air grievances), but much more difficult to execute given the difficulties of organizing a clandestine group in a police state. Further, foreign occupation may make organizing resistance along ethno-linguistic or nationalist lines easier than it would be if facing a domestic threat. In addition to the type of regime an organization may face, the relative power of that regime will also be a factor in the ability of the opposition to mount a successful challenge to the status quo. Rotberg[115], established that the degree of internal turmoil in a state will effect the nature of opposition to the incumbent regime, with strong states experiencing the sporadic terror reminiscent of leftist groups of the third wave, and weak and failing states experiencing the more substantial threats of guerilla and warlord outfits found in the developing world. In addition, the economic situation of the (potential) radical mileu might affect the willingness of important constituencies to support political violence, by either raising or lowering the costs of terrorism.

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[115] R. I. Rotberg "Failed States, Weak States, Collapsed States: Causes and Indicators", in R.I Rotberg (ed.) When States Fail: Causes and Consequences Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 1-25.

Finally, organizational success or failure could be a function of the nature of the competitive process in the market for political change. In other words, does the violent organization face significant competition from other terrorist organizations, and if so, to what extent?

3.2 Methodology

This research will utilize three distinct methodological tools to evaluate organizational performance according to H1 and H2, while controlling to the greatest extent possible alternate explanations detailed under H0. The first of these is process tracing. Using detailed historical accounts of case study behavior, this method will attempt to establish the causal relationship between organizational design and organizational performance. Since the end of this piece is to test the theories of netwar and revolutionary terror, respectively, the research design will test for congruence between the case studies chosen for this analysis and the expectations of the two theoretical schools explored. Finally, this analysis will utilize both within case variation of organizational design as well as cross case comparisons of three groups with distinct command and control arrangements.

3.3 Case Study Choices

The case studies chosen for this research are intended to provide a most similar systems design[116] research paradigm. While there are numerous other endogenous and exogenous factors that might influence the efficacy of political violence, the purpose of this study is to determine the independent effects of organizational design on organizational performance. Pursuant to that end, this research design is meant to control for alternative hypotheses detailed under H0, as well as provide a control case in order to test for generalizability outside the structural circumstances of the Iraq Insurgency. All of the cases involved have similar stated Islamist political goals. While the Jaiysh al-Mahdi is a Khomeinist/Sadrist organization, reflecting its militant Shia

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[116] A. Przeworski and H. Teune, 1970.

constituency, al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Abu Sayyaf Group are both Sunni salafist in orientation. Further, all three organizations face similar operational environments. Both the JAM and AQI operate in post-invasion Iraq and operate in areas of limited governance. The regime they face is a relatively weak democracy propped up by a US occupation. For its part, the ASG operates in a similar no-go area in the southern Philippines. Underdeveloped political institutions and rampant official corruption mean that what democratic power Manila wields in Luzon is questionable in Sulu and Mindanao. Further, the ASG must also contend with US forces stationed in the area and who coordinate with Philippine forces in counter-terror operations. Finally, all organizations studied here operate in the context of an ongoing insurgency and face competition for support from other insurgent organizations, some of whom have similar political goals, and some of whom have alternative agendas.

According to the requirements of methods of difference, all three organizations vary according to the main independent variable of organizational design. The Jaiysh al-Mahdi, shows large degrees of within case variation in organizational design as well as variation in political outputs. Al-Qaeda in Iraq, on the other hand, represents a "most-likely case scenario" for the netwar hypothesis, as it a highly complex network with a highly trained leadership cadre and some functional differentiation of nodes. Further, it is networked internally, as well as internationally. Internally, AQI is a geographically distributed network with localized hierarchies. As such it represents the hybrid organizational structure netwar proponents believe represents the ideal paradigm[117] for terrorist organizations. Internationally, AQI is linked to the transnational salafi-jihadi community due to the fact that it serves as a regional affiliate of al-Qaeda. Thus, it is a prime example of netwar's conflation of movements and organizations.

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[117] John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, Networks and Netwar: the Future of Terror Crime and Militancy Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001.

Furthermore, AQI maintained the highest levels of violence in Iraq until their decline in 2007. It therefore reflects the pre-occupation with violence in the netwar literature. The Abu Sayyaf Group represents a completely decentralized network of functionally autonomous cells networked together through the social and kinship ties of cell leaders ('commanders'). While the ASG operates in political circumstances similar to the Iraqi context, it is very different in terms of its geographic and social environment. As a result it should serve as a useful control case to determine the generalizability of this study's findings in areas outside of the context of the Iraqi Insurgency.

3.4 Institutional Mechanisms for Managing Successful Revolutionary Organizations

The core assumption of the theory of revolutionary terrorism is that terrorism remains a political activity, carried out by an organization intent on procuring political change. That some organizations have either purposely opted, or been forced, to decentralize their operations in pursuit of their given political objective is an empirical fact, readily observed in the nature of the transnational salafi-jihadist network of al-Qaeda, the American Christian Identity movement, and the cellular network of western-European left-wing radicals in the 1960's and 70's, among others. The author contends, however, that those organizations which adopt distributed organizational paradigms will suffer due to an inability to perform certain roles, central to an organization's ability to achieve revolutionary goals. These goals are to grow the base of support for the organization, to force government institutions and government services out of areas dominated by the group's constituent community, and establish the organization as the legitimate governing institution of that geographic territory. From this base of operations, the revolutionary organization can then pursue a protracted war strategy of slowly whittling away at the power of the central state, or, if the organization in question is secessionist, consolidating its political

control within the given organization's area of operations. In order to do this, a revolutionary organization must be able to perform four central tasks, which decentralized organizations will find difficult, if not impossible to accomplish. Firstly a revolutionary organization must be able to aggregate the interests of its constituent population by forwarding a consistent but flexible ideology. The ideology must be able to succinctly detail the unacceptability of the status quo, convincingly ascribe blame for the status quo on the incumbent regime and/or belligerent populations/organizations, and promulgate a political solution to the current crisis. Decentralized organizations may find this difficult to achieve for two reasons. Decentralized authority can create multiple centers of power within an organization, effectively multiplying the number of vested interests and creating incentives for ideological schisms. Further, distributed networks often attempt to compensate for an inability to enforce punitive sanctions by developing a rigid and immutable ideology that will prove difficult to adapt to local interests and needs. Recruitment will suffer if the ideology of the organization proves unable to reflect local grievances and cultural institutions. Secondly, an organization must be able to effectively manage the violence committed by its tactical cells. This includes a careful selection of the means employed for terrorist activities as well as the choice of acceptable targets for political violence. Poorly managed violence can backfire in one of two ways. It can invite government retaliation at a time and on a scale that the organization cannot withstand, and it can turn off potential constituents. Nevertheless, counter-productive violence is likely in decentralized organizations for a variety of reasons. To begin with, scholars have noted a selection bias in membership within the tactical cells of terrorist networks, meaning, those militants with an interest in violent activity tend to self-select into the operational nodes of militant network, whereas politically minded persons often select into the political/administrative cells of insurgent

groups. By segregating its membership and giving those with an interest in political strategy little control over those with an interest in violent activism, networks create institutional incentives for escalation. In addition, the decentralization of authority gives command and control nodes little ability to respond to local cells responding to incentives to engage in organized criminal activities. Thirdly, should an organization be successful in provoking the withdrawal of government services from an area, it must be prepared to fill the vacuum of authority, or the ensuing chaos will make the *ancien regime* seem preferable to the revolutionary process. This requires an organization to maintain a bureaucratic differentiation of cellular function. Far from being an antiquated organizational paradigm, bureaucratic specialization is necessary for any organization wishing to perform more complicated tasks than planting explosive devices in roadside ditches. Fourthly, the extremely high attrition rate of insurgent leadership necessitates that a violent organization have in place an effective plan of succession in the event that the current leadership is either arrested or killed. While netwar theorists contend that the lack of a centralized decision-making body make decapitation strategies ineffective, it stands to reason that organizations with multiple centers of gravity are likely to suffer from intra-organizational conflict, and/or schisms in the event of a loss of key leaders.

3.5   Dependent Variables: Metrics of Organizational Success

Since there are numerous theoretically defensible ways in which to assess the effectiveness of a violent organization, narrowing down a single dependent variable for measurement is difficult. The task is further complicated by the fact that simple measures such as longevity and casualty figures cannot be used. The first of these is impossible since all of the case studies are ongoing. In addition, simple measures of violence such as casualty figures are inappropriate since the theory of revolutionary violence suggests high levels of carnage are to be

avoided. Both theories, however assume that organizations using their respective organizational paradigms will be better suited to perform according to the following metrics: the ability to recruit and retain members, the ability to maintain an operational tempo and escalate institutional violence to more effective means of resistance, resilience in the face of government COIN operations and inter-organizational competition, and the institutional flexibility to adapt to shifts in the structural circumstances of the organization.

3.5.1 Ability to Recruit and Retain Members

Both theories of terrorism assume that the primary goal of an organization is to reproduce itself. For this reason netwar theorists focus on the ability of distributed social and political networks to tap into broader movements and sustain themselves by blending in with the radical mileu. In order to pursue revolutionary agendas, terrorist organizations need to compete with other organizations for community support, which in turn provide the group with material and human support. Further, the ability to increase membership overtime will be a key ingredient in successful revolutionary violence.

3.5.2 Violence

A terrorist organization is by definition a violent political organization. Therefore it is acceptable to measure an organization's production of violence as a metric of a successful organization. To give equal weight to different ways in which each theory views violence, the researcher must differentiate between two distinct measures of violence, quantity and quality. Quantity refers to the sheer level of violence an organization is able to unleash both in terms of casualty figures as well as operational tempo. This is the primary metric for organizational success used by netwar theorists. The quality of violence refers to the ability of the violent organization to take advantage of conditions (whether pre-existing or created by terrorist

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violence) in order to escalate to more sophisticated forms of violence, implying a move from purely terroristic means of resistance to guerilla and conventional capabilities. The quality of violence, rather than the quantity of carnage is the seminal metric of the theory of revolutionary terror, and ultimately entails the ability to take and hold territory.

3.5.3 Resilience

Like the ability to recruit and retain members, an organization's resilience is directly tied to an organization's longevity. The difference is that recruitment and retention protect the organization from internal decline whereas resilience protects the group from external threats. Resilience can be measured in two ways. There is the resilience of the organization itself, reflected in the longevity of the network, and there is the resilience of organizational capabilities, which allow the organization to maintain relevance as an oppositional group.

3.5.4 Adaptability

Given the highly competitive nature of political violence, the ability of an organization to adapt to its operational environment is paramount. This requires an organization be able to make use of the technologies at its disposal in order to maximize their human and material resources, as well as to implement lessons learned in a manner that allows the organization to adapt its tactics and strategies to evolving realities.

Netwar theorists contend that information era firms are able to use information technologies in order to both coordinate network action as well as make their violence more effective. However, the author questions the assertion that centralized and functionally differentiated organizations will be better positioned to utilize IT, in terms of its communication potential and destructive capabilities, than distributed networks who lack the specialized expertise of functionally differentiated hierarchies. In addition, an organization needs to display

an ability to innovate organizational strategies in order to meet organizational goals in shifting circumstances. Netwar theorists contend that the interconnectedness of full matrix and hybrid networks allows them to distribute information more effectively and therefore to learn from their operational successes and failures. The author believes, however that organizational learning is a function of an institutionalized process of evaluating organizational outputs and making decisions regarding the necessary changes to tactics and strategies. This requires a hierarchy with the ability to determine grand strategy and manage violent activity.

3.6   Case Study Organization

Each case study will begin with a historical background showing the relationship of the organization to the history of political activism within each group's respective community. This is followed by an analysis of the given organization's ideological orientation. Since there is considerable overlap in ideology, each case study will build upon information provided in previous cases when appropriate (e.g. the author will not describe Salafism multiple times). A detailed description of the organizational design of each will be given, with appropriate attention paid to organizational shifts over time where appropriate. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the operational environments of each group including descriptions of the organization's constituency(ies), the nature of the incumbent regime, the nature of the counter-terror operations faced by the organization, and the nature of the market for militancy (i.e. the presence of rival organizations). A detailed description of the operational history will follow in order to illustrate organizational behavior over time, followed by an analysis section which will detail the ways in which each group performed according to the metrics detailed above; ability to recruit and retain members, quantity and quality of violence, resilience and adaptability.

This study will conclude with an analysis of the variations in organizational design, both within and across cases, according to the expectations outlined by the netwar hypothesis and the theory of revolutionary terrorism, respectively.

CHAPTER 4

JAIYSH AL-MAHDI

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate the nature of the command and control relationship within the Jaiysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia, and the effects of the variable level of centralized decision-making on the organization's ability to perform according to the metrics detailed in the methodology chapter. Firstly, this piece will pay special attention to the ability of the organization not only to recruit from radicalized Shia populations, but also to retain those militants under the JAM's leadership structure. Secondly, this piece will look at the level and type of violence the JAM is capable of at any given time. Thirdly, this piece will look at the extent to which the JAM has been able to cope with counter-insurgency operations (COIN) from both the oppositional regime (The Iraqi Governing Council and later the Iraqi National Government) and the occupational authorities (Coalition Authorities and US armed forces). Further, the JAM's ability to withstand competition from rival organizations (other insurgents) will be detailed. Finally, this piece will look at the ways in which the JAM is, to varying degrees, able to innovate and adapt to changes in its operating environment.

The Jaiysh al-Mahdi represents an excellent case study for the analysis of organizational design as the group exhibits quite a bit of within case variation. AS this chapter will illustrate, the JAM has undergone two radical shifts in organizational design resulting in three distinct command and control frameworks. As this study will show, these shifts in organizational design resulted in tremendous changes in organizational behavior.

4.1 Organizational Background

4.1.1 History

The Jaiysh al-Mahdi, as well as the assorted groups which comprise the "special groups"—discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter—is a military wing of a broader movement loosely referred to as the Sadrist Trend. Sadrism is a politically active strain of Shia Islam, with roots in 1950's Iraq. While originally universalist in scope, Sadrism in its present form fuses fundamentalist Shi'ism with a rabid strain of Arab and, in particular, Iraqi, nationalism. It was founded by Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, who is know of as the 1st Martyr, due to the fact that his 1980 assassination by Saddam's Mukhabarat marked the first time a Grand Ayatollah had been executed[118]. Contrary to popular belief, the movement is named for him, not Muqtada al-Sadr (a nephew and son-in-law of Baqir), though the latter garners the majority of current media attention.

Baqir and other senior Shia clergy began the politicization of the Iraqi Shia with the formation of the *al-Da'wa* Party in Najaf in 1957. Slavin neatly summarizes the centrality of *al-Da'wa* to modern Shia political activism.

> "Sadr helped found the first Shiite political party in the Middle East, Da'wa (the Call), in Najaf in the late 1950s. (The party has lost influence in recent years because it lacks a militia, but it remains useful as a bridge among Iraqi Shiite factions; post-Saddam Iraq's current and previous prime ministers are party members.) In 1959, Baqr al-Sadr published the treatise Falsafatuna (Our Philosophy), which criticized communism from a religious perspective. Another work, Iqtisaduna (Our Economics), combined aspects of socialism and

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[118] Patrick Cockburn, <u>Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq</u> New York, NY: Scribner, 2008, p. 27.

capitalism in a synthesis that Sadr hoped would be more attractive to Shiites than the systems of East or West. Sadr supported a greater political role for clerics and modernization of the clergy[119]."

The end was to promote policies that aided the *Hawza* after the fall of the Hashemites; the *Hawza* being a loosely organized group of seminaries operating under the senior Shi'ite Ayatollahs in Najaf, which serves as the de facto center of Shia philosophy and Jurisprudence. Shia revivalists were not alone in their political activism, however, as *al-Da'wa* had to compete with secular organizations such as the Iraqi Communist Party, which was wining over large sections of the Shia middle class at the time[120]. In order to do so, *al-Da'wa* adopted a cellular structure that answered to a rigid hierarchy, reminiscent of the hierarchical organization of the Shia clergy in general. The centrality of Sadrism to Islamic fundamentalism, broadly speaking, can be illustrating by the fact that the founding members of *al-Da'wa* went on to define Shia politics for the next 50 years. Firstly, Baqir's cousin, and brother-in-law, Musa al-Sadr moved to Lebanon in 1959 where he formed the first Shi'ite mass movement, the Movement of the Dispossessed, as well as that organization's military wing *Afwaj al-Muqa-wama al-Lubynaniya* (AMAL), a group which would later spawn Hezbollah[121]. Further…

"… students of Sadr and Fadlullah in Najaf in the 1960s and 1970s included three future leaders of Hezbollah: Shubhi al-Tufayli, Abbas Mussawi, and the party's current head, Hassan Nasrallah[122]."

Perhaps the legacy that has had the most lasting impact on political Shi'ism is the fact that the Khomeinist concept of *velayet-e faqih* was heavily influenced by Baqir al-Sadr as the former

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[119] Barbara Slavin, "Mullahs, Money, and Militias: How Iran Spreads its Influence in the Middle East" USIP Special Report No. 206, June, 2008, p. 3.
[120] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 31.
[121] B. Slavin, 2008, p. 3.
[122] B. Slavin, 2008, p. 3.

studied with Khomeini in Najaf in the 1960's and 70's[123]. In turn, Baqir was an open supporter of the Iranian Revolution and his supporters hoped to emulate the Khomeini's success in Iraq. Another member of the early *Da'wa* party was Muhammed Baqir al-Hakim, the founder of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and it's military wing, the Badr Corps. The present day Sadrist Trend comprises not only the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, but also the so-called "Special Groups", who together accounted for 70% of the insurgent activity in Iraq after 2007.

Baqir's *Marja al-Taqlid* (a concept expounded upon in the ideology section) was Muhsin al-Hakim. Hakim achieved the title of Grand Ayatollah due largely to his support from the Shah of Iran. The Shah's reasoning was that since Hakim was Arab, he would attract a smaller following in Iran[124]. This was necessary since at the time of *al-Da'wa's* founding, Shia clergy who were critical of Tehran were based out of Najaf, and clergy who were critical of Baghdad typically based themselves out of Qom, in Iran. After Muhsin al-Hakim died in 1970, Abu al-Qassim al-Khoei superceded him as the leading Grand Ayatollah and the preeminent *Marji'iyya*. Al-Khoei, however took an apolitical stance, so the politicized Shia rallied around Baqir. Harkening back to the nationalist roots of Sadrism, this was aided by the fact that Baqir was Iraqi (Arab) and al-Khoei was Iranian (Persian).

Baqir's protégé and cousin was Muhammed Sadiq al-Sadr. After Baqir was arrested, along with his sister, in April of 1980, Sadiq took over the management of *al-Da'wa*. Baqir was executed shortly thereafter by Saddam. Sadiq became quite prominent throughout the 1980's as a thinker and writer on matters of Shi'ite jurisprudence. Sadiq's true ascendence to political Shi'ism, however occurred following the Shia rebellion in 1991 is known of as the Sha'aban Rebellion. Following the Sha'aban rebellion, Saddam attempted to reconcile with the Shia and

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[123] B. Slavin, 2008, p. 3.
[124] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 30.

tap into their growing religiosity. He began by appointing Sadiq al-Badr as the Grand Ayatollah in Najaf. Sadiq, for his part, convinced the Mukhabarat that he could be controlled. In reality he began a Shia cultural revival, the end of which was to create an Islamic State based on Baqir al-Sadr's model. Sadiq then set about setting up charity networks that quickly became of central importance to the Shia poor as the sanctions regime following the 1991 Gulf War began to take their toll on the urban under-classes. As a means of bypassing the *Hawza*, Sadiq established networks of low ranking clerics across the Iraqi south, catering to what would become the wellspring of Sadrist support, the Shia poor[125]. The emerging Sadrist network emphasized a return to traditional values and charity. In pursuit of greater influence amongst the Shia, Baqir established schools, mosques, and other community outreach initiatives during the sanctions regime. This granted the Sadrist Trend considerable support amongst their intended constituency.

Sadiq's major legal breakthrough was in reconciling Sharia with tribal law, so that local tribes could administer religious verdicts[126]. This enabled the Sadrists to expand their networks beyond clerical circles and tap into the tribal power base. This, in turn enabled them to more effectively shape the political realities of Iraqis at the local level. However, it also greatly influenced the distributed nature of the radical organizations that would spring from the Sadrist trend following the US invasion in 2003.

Sadiq rejected the Quietist Tradition of Shi'ism practiced by al-Sistani and the majority of the Iraqi Shia *Marja*[127]. Instead, Sadr thought it was the duty of clerics to advocate for justice and equality. While his version of *velayet e-faqih*, was in line with the Khomeinist tradition in

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[125] Marisa Cochrane, "Iraq Report 12: The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement" The Institute for the Study of War January, 2009.
[126] M. Cochrane, January, 2009.
[127] M. Cochrane, January, 2009.

Tehran, Sadiq rejected Khameini's claim to be the ruler of the Shia and sought to install an Iraqi cleric over the Iraqi Ulemma. Sadiq's nationalist credentials were burnished by the fact that he stayed in Iraq during the 80's and 90's while most of the other opposition leaders were living comfortable lives in London, Iran, and Damscus[128].

Sadiq openly threatened the Ba'athist regime when he began issuing Friday Prayers following a Fatwa authorizing such activity in 1997[129]. Friday Prayers had been outlawed by Saddam, and they immediately drew large crowds upon their renewal. While not overtly anti-Ba'athist, the prayers signaled to Saddam the large following the Sadrists were obtaining, and this alone was enough to threaten the regime. Sadiq bid his time until his following had enlarged to the point that he felt he could take a more confrontational stance with the regime. On February 12th, 1999, in Kufa, Sadiq called for the release of more than 100 clergy and students who had been arrested and detained since the 1991 uprising[130]. Friday Prayers were banned and gunmen assassinated Sadiq one week later, on February 19th, 1999. The attack also killed his two older sons and top aides. Muqtada al-Sadr, his youngest son who was then 25, was not present and was put under house arrest.

During the intermittent years, the Sadrist Trend moved underground and, until Muqtada's ascendance in 2003, was run by a number of senior Sadrist clerics, notably, al-Nouri, Tabatabai, and Yacoubi, with help from Qais Khazali and al-Khafaji[131]. Without a clear successor to Sadiq, however, the movement was torn as to whom to adopt as the *Marjah al-Taqlid*. Many chose al-

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[128] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 10.
[129] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 10.
[130] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 10.
[131] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 11.

Sistani the quietest senior Ayatollah of the *Hawza*. Some, however, chose al-Haeri, who had

been Sadiq's *Marjah al-Taqlid*[132], and who also advocated the politicization of the clergy.

As a political activist, Muqtada was something of a novice. This was partly a function of

the fact that his two older brothers had been viewed as the likely heirs to the Sadrist mantle.

Muqtada's only previous forays into political organization had been in providing security for his

father, and in managing a Sadrist publication, *al-Huda*[133]. Muqtada was however, able to

survive the Ba'athists by feigning feeble mindedness[134], a fact that had the added payoff of

causing the Coalition and Iraqi authorities to continually underestimate him as a political force in

the early days of the occupation. Under Muqtada's leadership Sadiq's underground, re-

established its operations within weeks of the invasion. Under Saddam, 60% of Iraqis relied on

the government for the provision of basic foodstuffs. The power vacuum left in the wake of the

invasion therefore was especially devastating[135], and the Sadrists wasted no time taking

advantage of the chaos in order to extend their areas of political control.

On April 7th, 2003, al-Ha'eri had appointed Muqtada as his deputy and representative in

Iraq[136]. Muqtada's allegiance to al-Ha'eri was necessary to ward off criticism from al-Sistani[137].

Since Sistani was opposed to the vilayet e-faqih doctrine espoused by the Sadrists, he issued a

fatwa in the days after the invasion stating that the Shia should only obey religious rulings

written from living clergy. This was meant as a clear attack on Muqtada, who had only achieved

the status of a mid-ranking cleric, a *Hojjet al-Islam*. Since Muqtada was not of sufficient rank to

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[132] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 11.
[133] Anthony Cordesman and Jose Ramos, "Sadr and the Mahdi Army: Evolution, Capabilities and a New Direction" *Center for Strategic and International Studies* Special Report, August, 2008, p. 7.
[134] P. Cockburn, 2008.
[135] "Iraq's Shiites Under Occupation" International Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No. 8, September 9th, 2003.
[136] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pg. 11.
[137] Craig Smith, "Aftereffects: Karbala; In Hotbed of Shiite Emotion, Clerics Jockey for Leadership" *The New York Times*, April 23rd, 2003.

issue such fatwas, he was relying upon the teachings of his father to legitimize his authority. This nonetheless opened him up to criticism from the established Shia hierarchy, who were disdainful of Muqtada from the start. Al-Ha'eri, at least for the time being, allowed him to circumvent this criticism. On April 8th, 2003, al-Ha'eri issued a fatwa urging the Shia to seize political power…

> "… seize the first possible opportunity to fill the power vacuum in the administration of Iraqi cities… People have to be taught not to collapse morally before the means used by the Great Satan… if it stays in Iraq. It will try to spread moral decay, incite lust by allowing easy access to stimulating satellite channels and spread debauchery to weaken people's faith[138]."

Given that many of Sadiq's former deputies recognized al-Haeri as their *Marjah al-Taqlid*, they were beholden to grant Muqtada a leadership position when al-Sadr was appointed as his deputy[139]. In addition, al-Sadr's deputy status gave him the right to collect *khoms*, an Islamic tax Shia give to their *Marjah*[140], on behalf of al-Ha'eri. At least at the beginning, al-Sadr was able to collect about $65,000 USD a month in *khoms*, of which, about ½ went to support the poor and religious students and ½ went to funding the Sadrist offices, including outfitting their bodyguard contingents, the nascent JAM. This source of funding would prove crucial in the early days of the JAM as a means of establishing control over the tactical cells of the organization, and the loss of it would prove equally devastating to organizational leadership when al-Ha'eri revoked Sadr's deputy status in 2004.

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[138] Peter Maas, "Backroom Theocrat" *The New York Times*, May 11th, 2003.
[139] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 12.
[140] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 12.

The first order of business for the Sadrists was to reopen the regional Sadrist Offices, which had been closed by Saddam in 1999[141]. These were promptly renamed the Offices of the Martyr al-Sadr (OMS), and they served as the regional headquarters for Sadrist activities in various cities. The Headquarters for the movement at large would be located in the Najaf OMS, which was placed under the command of Riyad al-Nouri, Muqtada's brother in law, and first deputy. Muqtada's largest geographic base of support would be managed by Sheikh Ahmed al-Fartousi who came to head the OMS in Sadr City. In areas where they established control, the Sadrist leadership in Najaf, also set up Islamic courts[142], which administered the Sadrist version of Sha'ria and even went so far as to carry out summary executions on occasion. Further, alcohol sales were banned and strict controls were placed on women. Enforcement was carried out through the establishment of "Punishment Committees" which operated on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis and reported to their respective OMS's.

Muqtada's first instance of mass mobilization was the calling for a pilgrimage to Karbala to commemorate the defeat of Imam Hussein and his half brother Abbas, who were killed by Yazid in 680 AD[143]. This pilgrimage, called the Arba'in, had been outlawed by Saddam. In much the same way that the call to Friday Prayers by Sadiq had signaled to the Ba'athists the popular support of Sadrism, so too did the massive showing of the Arba'in signal to Muqtada's Shia opponents the formidable appeal of the Sadrist Trend. Indeed, the Sadrist constituency was far superior in numbers to those of other Shia political groups such as SCIRI/ISCI and *al-Da'wa*, as these groups largely appealed to the educated middle classes while the Sadrists drew their support from the more numerous Shia poor[144]. Further, amongst the average Shia, there was

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[141] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pg. 12.
[142] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pg. 12.
[143] P. Cockburn, 2008.
[144] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pg. 13.

deep mistrust of those institutions (such as *al-Da'wa* and SCIRI/ISCI) that had weathered the 90's in exile, and they were widely, and perhaps rightly, believed to be pawns of the Iranians and/or Americans.

Muqtada's challenge to the *Hawza* was immediate and violent[145]. The first widely publicized act of violence by Muqtada's followers was the murder of Sheikh Abdel Majid al-Khoei, son of the murdered Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei. Al-Khoei had been returned to Iraq by US Special Forces, who had hopes of creating a Shia political bloc that would be independent of Tehran. He was murdered while accompanying Haider al-Refaei to the Imam Ali Mosque, to which the latter was the hereditary key-holder[146]. It's possible the actual target was al-Refaei as he was hated in the community, but it is noted that a wounded al-Khoei made it to Muqtada's house, where he was refused aid. While Muqtada denies any involvement in al-Khoei's murder, the latter's status as a high ranking cleric, and his experience in political activism made him a formidable challenge to Muqtada's authority. There apparently was sufficient evidence of al-Sadr's complicity that Iraqi authorities issued an arrest warrant for Muqtada, though this remained sealed until 2004, in order to avoid fomenting widespread unrest amongst the Sadrists. Al-Khoei's murder was followed by another violent protest of Sadrists. This one, however, made its way to the house al-Sistani. The crowd demanded that al-Sistani leave within 24 hours. The Sadrist melee was only dispersed by the intervention of local tribes, who remained loyal to the Grand Ayatollah.

4.1.2 Ideology

While the broad movement that comprises *Sadrism* has a varied history, the ideology of the Sadrist faction that constitutes the JAM is distinct in its composition. The appeal of Muqtada

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[145] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 13.
[146] Craig Smith "A Nation at War: Najaf; A Long-Simmering Power Struggle Preceded Killings at an Iraqi Holy Shrine" *The New York Times*, April 13th, 2003.

al-Sadr's *Jaiysh al-Mahdi*, stems from its three core ideological components. It is at once a class based social movement, a millenarian religious organization, and a nationalist movement, which rejects both Western neo-colonialism as well as Iranian meddling… though admittedly to varying degrees.

In so far as the JAM represents a social movement, it is merely filling a particular role in Shi'ite politics, as all Shi'ite militias are class based. Whereas the SCIRI/ISCI tends to attract followers from the Shia middle- and upper-classes, the JAM finds its base of support from within the lower strata of Shia society. This is perhaps a result of the fact that the precursor organization to the Sadrist Trend, *al-Da'wa* was formed in the 1950's with the specific aim of offering a theological counterpoint to the rise of communism[147]. Thus, Baqir promulgated a distinct brand of social activism. While redistributive in nature, Baqir's working and under-class focus sprung not from socialist political doctrine but through the administration of charitable networks made possible by the *khoms*. The legacy of this network of hospitals, schools, and social service wings serves not only as the basis of legitimacy for the JAM and it's related organizations, but also underwrites the widespread base of support the Sadrists enjoy in the lower classes of Shia society in Iraq.

Under Sadiq al-Sadr, the Sadrist's tempered their social work with a millenarian ideology that rejected the traditional *Taqqiyya*, the quietist doctrine of non-intervention in politics by clergy[148]. The millenarian aspects of Sadrism arise from its origins as an outgrowth of Twelver Shi'ism, a branch of Islam that believes in the rightful rule of the 12 Imams in succession. The 12th Imam, al-Mahdi, disappeared in Samarrah in the 9th Century, and is believed by Twelvers to be in occultation. Twelvers believe that the return of the Mahdi will prompt a return to the rule

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[147] Robert Gleave, "Conceptions of Authority in Iraqi Shi'ism: Baqir al-Hakim, Ha'iri and Sistani on *Ijtihad, Taqlid and Marja'iyya*" *Theory, Culture, and Society* vol. 24(2) 2007, p. 65.
[148] P. Cockburn, 2008.

of Islam envisioned by the Prophet. While Twelver Shi'ism is the dominant strain of Shia Islam, The Sadrists adopt a post-millenarian take on the Mahdi's return, specifically, that certain social and political conditions must be met prior to the Imam's return. To the Sadrists, this means adopting an Islamic rule of law over Muslim lands. Pursuantly, rather than adopt the *taqiyyah* concept generally held by al-Sistani and other senior Iraqi clerics, the Sadrists instead support the Khomeinist philosophy of *vilayat e-faqih*, or the notion that the proper rule for a Muslim state is an Islamic rule by an Islamic Jurist until the return of the Imam.

While the doctrine of *vilayat e-faqih* is Khomeinist in origin, the Sadrists reject the claim of Khomeini, and subsequently Khameini, to be the rightful rulers of all the Shia. In fact, differences between Sadiq and Tehran over this point led Iranian authorities to shut down the Sadrist offices in Iran as Sadiq's teachings undermined the authority of the Iranian regime, since Sadrists harken back to when Najaf, and not Qom, was the center of Shia learning, philosophy, and jurisprudence. Now that the Ba'athists have been forced from power, they see an opportunity to return Iraqi Shi'ism to what they believe is their rightful place at the center of Shi'ite politics. This nationalistic bent was hardened by two experiences, the horror of the Iran-Iraq war, and the miserable experience of the Shia under Saddam. While the former led them to distrust and even despise the Iranian regime, the latter created an immense disrespect for those organizations, such as the SCIRI that spent the Saddam years living 'comfortably' in exile. The shared persecution the Sadrists hold in common with the average Shia in Iraq, in turn gave them ideological inroads with under-privileged communities in the Baghdad and Southern Iraqi slums.

The authority of the Sadrists is derived from the hierarchical nature of Shia Islam. To begin with, the al-Sadrs are *Sayyids*, clerical aristocracy who can trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muhammed. In the case of the al-Sadrs, this is done through the 7th Imam, Musa al-

Khazim. More importantly, however, the Sadrists are both empowered, as well as constrained, by the Shi'ite notion of *Taqlid*. *Taqlid* is a Shia doctrine of imitation made necessary by the process of *Ijtihad*, or Shia Jurisprudence. While initially frowned upon as opinion (Shia relied upon the Imams for religious rulings) the occultation of the 12th Imam, made learned interpretation of Islamic scripture necessary, provided the cleric in question is of sufficient rank. A *Mujtahid* is such a cleric, who has received an *ijazat al-ijtihad*, or a license to engage in debate, *ikhtilaf*, with other *Mujtahids*. Since the average Shia is not allowed to engage in Qu'ranic interpretation, their actions must be guided by imitation of a prominent *Mujtahid*. This imitation is *Taqlid*, and it is based on devotion to a *Marja*, or a *Marja al-Taqlid*, the cleric one attempts to imitate. The *Marja* is then a source of spiritual authority, and the one to whom a devout person would pay their *khoms*, or religious tax. As stated previously, however, Muqtada, at the time of writing, has achieved the rank only of *Hojjet al-Islam*, a rank too low to warrant *Taqlid*. In Iraq, only three (prior to the death of al-Hakim) are of sufficient rank and as a result, they represent between them the three major religious traditions in Iraqi Shi'ism. These are Baqir al-Hakim, al-Ha'eri, and al-Sistani[149]. One's choice of *Marja*, says as much about one's political inclinations as it does about one's spiritual disposition, and for this reason, organizations have shifted devotion from one to another based largely on current political circumstances, illustrating the necessity of maintaining flexibility in ideological (even theological) orientation. Of the three, only al-Sistani lacks a political party and militia, due to his quietist stance. Though Al-Hakim, and al-Ha'eri have common roots in the Sadrist Trend the SCIRI/ISCI would become the main competitor with the JAM. The divergence occurred in 1980[150], a year that simultaneously marked the death of Baqir as well as the outbreak of the Iran-

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[149] R. Gleave, 2007, p. 65
[150] R. Gleave, 2007, p. 64.

Iraq war. While Sadiq staid in Iraq as the successor to Baqir, al-Hakim fled to Iran where he formed the SCIRI. Sadiq led the Sadrists until his own assassination in 1999, at which point, the movement chose al-Ha'eri as its *Marja*. Al-Hakim, for his part, returned to Iraq after the fall of Saddam, but was killed in a terrorist attack in August of 2003. The SCIRI, then under Abd al-Aziz, switched it's loyalty to Khameini, though this in turn changed as the group gained prominence in Iraqi politics and sought to distance itself from real and alleged Iranian influence. At which point, they chose al-Sistani as their *Marja*. While both al-Ha'eri and al-Hakim abide by Khomeini's doctrine of *vilayat e-faqih*, they differ on one key point. Al-Hakim believes the *Wali*, or leader of the Islamic state, must be a *Marja*. Al-Ha'eri, on the other hand, believes that one need not be of such a rank provided other qualities were present. It is little wonder then that Muqtada would choose to follow al-Ha'eri, given his political ambitions and relatively low rank!

4.1.3 Organizational Design

From its emergence in late 2002 to early 2003, the Jaiysh al-Mahdi and its Sadrist leadership has undergone two transformations in terms of organizational design, representing three distinct types of institutional structure. As it emerged from the regime of Saddam, the Sadrists were a grassroots organization connected through the social networks of the chief clerics of local mosques and Islamic meeting places. The JAM, such as it existed at the time, was a low-level security force which rose to fill the security vacuum left in the wake of the disintegration of the Ba'athist regime. As the demand side for militias grew throughout 2003, the JAM and its Sadrist leadership evolved as well. By early 2004, the JAM was actually an umbrella organization under which a large number of ideologically interrelated but operationally autonomous terrorist and guerilla outfits operated. As this Sadrist network expanded, its unwieldiness gave rise to a series of strategic setbacks culminating in the decision by Muqtada

and his inner circle to scrap the JAM, as it had come to be, and start anew. In effect, the second organizational shift traded a militant movement with a political branch, for a structured political party that maintained a para-military capability in the form of the Mumahidoon and its associated militia, the Promise Day Brigades.

4.2 Constituencies

4.2.1 Constituency: Iraqi

The roots of Sadrist support within Iraqi society stem directly from the movement's history as an Islamic alternative to the communist movements of the 1950's and 60's. Since the organizational structure of the organization, prior to the US invasion, was comprised of politically active social outreach facilities, the natural constituency for the Sadrists were the urban slum dwellers in the Shia dominated South of Iraq who became reliant on such institutions. Thus, the ability of the organization to recruit and retain members has in large part been due to the specialized administrative cells, which allowed the group to usurp many of the basic tasks of governance in Sadrist dominated areas. The US invasion and the subsequent occupation changed this internal structure somewhat… by adding to it a militant component in the form of the JAM… but it did not serve to radically alter the group's domestic constituency.

Oddly enough, while the leadership of the institutionalized Sadrist organization (from here on out referred to as the Najaf leadership) is based out of Najaf, due to the centrality of that city to Shia cultural and religious authority, the main base of support lies far to the North, in the Baghdad slum, first founded by General Qassim as a housing project for the city's Shia residents. Originally called Revolution City, the name was changed to Saddam city after the Ba'athist revolution of 1963 despite the fact that the neighborhood's massive population of communists meant it was a hot bed of anti-Ba'athist sympathies. After the overthrow of Saddam's regime in

2003, the solidly Sadrist population renamed the area, Sadr City, after Sadiq. By the time of the invasion, Sadr City had swelled to hold ~3 million residents. In addition, the Sadrists have a strong presence in most major cities throughout southern Iraq, including in Najaf, Basra, Kut, Kufa, Karbala, Amarah, and Iskandariya, among others. However, the solidly Shia population of Sadr City, in conjunction with the long history of Sadrist activism and outreach in the area, makes this neighborhood of the capital the anchor of support for the Najaf leadership.

4.2.2 Constituency: Iranian

While the base of support for the JAM lies in the urban poor of Southern Iraqi cities, much of its organizational capabilities, for better and for worse, result from the variegated relationship Muqtada and the JAM have forged with Iran. In fact, outside of Shia slums in Iraq, Tehran is arguably the most important constituency of the Sadrists.

The relationship began as a result of the efforts of the al-Quds Force of the Iranian Republican Guards Corps (IRGC-QF). The IRGC-QF was formed in 1979 with the explicit purpose of spreading the Islamic Revolution outside of Iran, and the leadership reports directly to Khameini. As the main instrument of fomenting revolutionary activities abroad, the IRGC-QF has close ties with Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and is the primary driver of covert Iranian activities in Iraq. Headed by Qassem Suleimani since 2005, the IRGC-QF has been estimated to supply between 750,000 to 3 million USD per month to Iraqi militia organizations. Shortly after the fall of the Ba'athists, IRGC-QF activities in Iraq became so massive, that it was forced to move it's command from Tehran to Mehran, on the Iraqi border, in order to better facilitate cross border activities.

The portion of the IRGC-QF tasked to carry out activities within Iraq is the Ramazan Corps. There are three units subordinate to the Ramazan Command and they are divided by

geographic authority[151]. The Zafr Command, led by Mahmud Farhadi, is based in Mehran and controls JAM and Special Group operations in central Iraq, including; Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, Babil, Wasit, and portions of Diyala. The Nasr Command is based in Marivan and controls Iranian operations in the Kurdish regions of the North and some sections of Diyala. The Fajr command is based out of Ahvaz and facilitates operations in Basrah, Dhi Qhar, Maysan, and Muthanna.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Tehran had ordered the Quds Force to organize the militias that Iran had been sheltering into a coherent fighting force[152]. In the early days of the Coalition Occupation, this primarily took the form of the Badr Corps. The SCIRI was sent in immediately after the invasion to take control of Shia dominated areas. Further, they spent much of the early days of the occupation setting up arms distribution networks throughout Eastern Iraq, basing such operations out of the Ilam region of Western Iran[153]. The close working relationship between the IRGC-QF and LH was underscored by the early entry of Hezbollah into Iraq. Some sources state that they came to Iraq as early as 2003, with as many as 800 fighters for training and operational purposes. Specifically, Hezbollah has been training Shia militias in different forms of attack… most seriously the use of explosively formed projectiles, which the Lebanese Hezbollah has used to great effect in Southern Lebanon. Much of the cooperation between LH and Iraqi militias has been organized by Sheibani, an Iranian operative who set up camp in Amarah in 2003, with perhaps 280 fighters sources report were organized into 17 bomb-making teams. Sheibani has proven very influential to the Shi'ite insurgency, mostly as a result of the fact that he set up and maintained the most sophisticated arms network in Iraq, known of as the

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[151] B. Roggio, December, 2007.
[152] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 5.
[153] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 5-7.

Sheibani Network, which funneled massive amounts of weaponry to Shi'ite militias from Iran via Amarah.

While Iran's biggest asset remained the Badr Corps throughout the early days of the insurgency, they hedged their bets by also backing al-Sadr. He was invited to Tehran in June of 2003, where he was granted an audience with Khameini, Rafsanjani, and others[154]. Following Tehran's lead, Hezbollah began trying to establish ties with Muqtada in July of 2003. By August, they had become engaged[155].

> "At the end of that month, according to a U.S. intelligence report, "Hezbollah had established 'a team of 30 to 40 operatives' in Najaf in support of Moqtada Sadr's Shia paramilitary group." The report added that "Hezbollah was recruiting and training members of Sadr's militia. A later report…said that Hezbollah was 'buying rocket-propelled grenades… antitank missiles' and other weapons for Sadr's militia.'" Unconfirmed reports suggested that Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah had sent a senior advisor to deliver funds to Sadr in Najaf[156]."

The scale of Iranian involvement in Iraqi affairs was largely overshadowed by the voracity of the Sunni Insurgency. Nonetheless, Iran went to some lengths in order to disguise their complicity in Iraqi violence[157]. For example, instead of acting directly, they offered bounties to those who killed coalition troops or shot down a helicopter, etc. Direct action taken by Iranian agents in the early days of the conflict was largely limited to attempts to establish death squads intended to eradicate internal threats to Iranian policy. As a result, many of the early extrajudicial killings

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[154] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 7.
[155] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 7.
[156] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 7.
[157] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 9.

were against former members of the Iranian Section of Iraq's Mukhabarat. On the whole however, Iran backed the democratic process, at least until 2003, since they realized it would be Shia dominated[158]. In pursuit of these ends, Tehran helped establish the United Iraqi Alliance, of SCIRI, *al-Dawa*, and the Sadrists[159]. With Iranian backing, the UIA took 128 of 275 seats in December, 15th, 2005 elections.

The activity of Iranian backed groups increased precipitously, however, following the 2005 election victories as Tehran began allowing LH to openly train Iraqi militias for activities within Iraq[160].

> "The three small camps used for training Iraqi militias were, as of summer 2007,
> located near Tehran. Twenty to sixty Iraqis can be trained at once in these
> facilities, and the training courses lasted from four to six weeks[161]."

While initially symbiotic, much of the rogue special group activity (discussed in greater detail below) can be traced to Iranian and Hezbollah training activities[162], which in turn, heavily influenced the operational structure of the Shia resistance. The IRGC-QF and LH trained Iraqis in groups of 20-60, who were then shipped back to Iraq where they kept their same formations (of cells consisting of 20-60). They were then coordinated by Iranian agents within Iraq, such as the front charity the Amin Allah Cultural and Humanitarian Establishment, who was alleged to have coordinated up to 200 rogue JAM fighters. Thus, while Iran was forthcoming in providing Muqtada with military and financial aid, it also undercut the Najaf leadership's ability to control

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[158] Kenneth Katzman, "Iran's Activities and Influence in Iraq" *CRS Report RS22323* September 17th, 2008.
[159] K. Katzman, 2008.
[160] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 9.
[161] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 9.
[162] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 9-10.

the tactical operations of cells under it nominal command by creating other sources of material and financial resources for tactical JAM cells.

Beginning in May of 2006, Tehran and LH began an effort to reorganize the special groups based on the LH model[163]. In June 2006, Qais Khazali, a lead JAM commander was made head of the Special Groups in Iraq by a LH liason named Daqduq. Both Qais and Daqduq reported to the, Director of External Operations for the IRGC, and Deputy Director of the QF, Hajji Yusif. Indeed, interactions between Sadrists and LH were so tight that some Iraqi Special Group militias participated in the Lebanon-Israel war of July of 2006, traveling to Lebanon via Syria[164]. The reorganization was intended to make the groups more responsive to Tehran by virtue of the fact that they would become more reliant on Iran for logistics, intel, and weapons[165]. This movement of command and control from Muqtada to Tehran was aided by the former's loss of the *khoms* when al-Ha'eri broke ranks with Muqtada following the 2004 debacles in Najaf.

Further, Iran was able to implement lessons learned from Hezbollah's experience in Lebanon, where the organization acts in tandem with the government in Beirut, using government institutions to pursue some of the organization's goals. Along these lines, it is likely that the IRGC-QF reorganization was an attempt by Tehran to create a militia capable of seizing control of Iraqi institutions. All of this activity was possible because the Tehran backed UIA won the 2005 elections, which in turn assured that key posts in Government were given to the Sadrist bloc in exchange for Muqtada's joining the Maliki Parliamentary coalition[166]. It's no coincidence that the reorganization was undertaken at the same time as Maliki was forming an

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[163] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 10-11.
[164] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 10-11.
[165] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 10-11.
[166] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 15.

Iraqi government[167], as it was done either as a response to Maliki, or as a response to the formation of an Iraqi government in general.   The salience of militias in general, and Iranian backed groups in particular—as they were better armed and trained—was assured with the outbreak of the Iraqi Civil War following the bombing of the Golden Mosque. By the middle of 2007, as the Awakening was beginning to take root in Sunni areas, Iranian and Hezbollah linked groups accounted for nearly half of all violence in Iraq[168].

4.3   Government Counter Terror Operations

Five operations constitute the main crux of Coalition and Iraqi Security Force (ISF) counter-terror operations against the Jaiysh al-Mahdi and related organizations. The first two of the five discussed below, the Surge of 2007-2008 and the Fardh al-Qanoon operation of 2008 did not directly target the JAM. Rather, they are important for having laid the groundwork for more focused operations aimed at JAM personnel and capabilities.   The final three; Operation Phantom Strike, Operation Knight's Charge and Operation Basha'er es-Salaam, were intended to denigrate the JAM and related special groups in particular.

4.3.1   The Surge

"The Surge" refers to the phased introduction, beginning in January of 2007, of over 20,000 additional American troops into the Iraq War effort. The purpose of the surge was to provide increased security in Baghdad and al-Anbar province long enough for development and rule of law efforts to take hold. While the Surge primarily targeted Sunni radicals, by its conclusion in July of 2008, it had created the conditions whereby Coalition and Iraqi forces could effectively target the JAM[169].

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[167] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 12.
[168] Kimberly Kagan, "Iran's Proxy War Against the United States and the Iraqi Government" *Iraq Report* Institute for the Study of War, p. 3.
[169] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 23.

As hinted at previously, the Sunni insurgency created two conditions that greatly aided the JAM. Firstly, it gave way to the Iraqi Civil War, which pitted Shia and Sunni militias against one another. This massive spike in localized insecurity created an earnest need for security the state could not provide. Utilizing its specialized experience in both jurisprudence and the provision of social services, the JAM quickly filled this vacuum, providing in effect, security rackets. Secondly, the scale of the Sunni insurgency distracted Coalition and Iraqi officials from the matter of Shia violence. The Surge, and the concomitant "Awakening" movement greatly alleviated these two circumstances. As a result, the JAM began to lose the popular legitimacy they enjoyed as a provider of security, the financial benefits of the criminal activities in areas under its control, and immunity from Coalition and government military action. In addition, the Surge emboldened the JAM's political rivals to pick at the edges of the organization[170]. In particular, SCIRI and *al-Da'wa* created political alliances with Kurdish parties to sideline the Sadrists and block their ability to obstruct legislative bills. When the Maliki government achieved this, they also deprived the Sadrists of the Ministries of Health and Transportation. By June of 2008, the time of the Surge redeployment, The Sadrist organization was split between its military, political, and religious factions[171], with the military wing in particular being riven with various factional infighting.

4.3.2 Fardh al-Qanoon

Like the US Surge, the main target of the Fardh al-Qanoon (Baghdad Security Plan) operation was not the JAM, but AQI. As a result, while the Coalition was rampantly going after AQI cells throughout Baghdad and Northern Iraq, they did not choose to engage in clear and hold operations in Sadr City as the target was al-Qaeda and the expectation was that Sadrist

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[170] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 23.
[171] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 23.

resistance would be high. In addition, as Muqtada's bloc was still an integral part of Maliki's coalition, the political landscape was tricky. Instead, they chose to cordon off Sadr City in order to contain the violence there. They could then conduct targeted raids from the outskirts of the Baghdad neighborhood in order to eliminate criminal elements. The JAM reacted, however, by consolidating their control of Sadr City and using that area as a base from which they projected force outward into areas to the North and South. This proved to be a strategic mistake as it boxed the JAM into a geographic space whose margins were entirely controlled by the opposition. Thus, by early 2008 Coalition forces had isolated Sadr City and cut off JAM's command and control lines to Najaf. As a result they were not able to project force out of Sadr City, nor were they able to bring men and supplies into the City.

One unexpected result of both the Surge and Fardh al-Qanoon, was that the true extent of the Shia militia threat was thrown into sharp relief after Sunni groups were largely sidelined in mid 2007[172]. By August 2007, Shia militants accounted for 73% of the attacks on US forces, and the pace of attacks against special groups quickened throughout the summer and fall of 2007.

While the main force of the JAM was cordoned in Sadr City, and as the pressure from AQI let up, US forces increasingly turned their attention to Diyala, which was responsible for the supply lines into Northeastern Baghdad and Sadr City.

> "While Special Groups activity largely centered on Baghdad, complex supply networks moved men and materiel across the Iranian border. Special Groups cells in Baghdad were supplied by two primary lines of communication—a northern supply network ran from the Iranian border through Diyala Province, northeast of Baghdad; a larger southern supply network moved weapons and

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[172] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, pp. 4-5.

fighters across the Iranian border to the cities of Kut, Amarah, and Basra and up

along the Tigris River Valley and Highway 8 corridor into Baghdad[173]."

Further…

" Diyala Province, located northeast of Baghdad province, shares a long eastern

border with Iran. It contained a number of important Special Groups hubs,

including the towns of Khalis, Jadidah, and Rashidiyah, which lie north of

Baghdad, and the areas of Khan Bani Saad and Nahrwan to the east of the

capital. These towns were key nodes along the enemy transit routes from Iran to

east Baghdad and functioned as weapons depots and safe havens for facilitators,

financiers, and trainers[174]."

As these lines into Iran were severed by successive Coalition and ISF operations, Special groups

in Baghdad had to expand their southern smuggling routes by consolidating their control of the

Highway 8 corridor to Iran[175]. Control of Basra was key since it was Iraq's only outlet to the

Gulf, and therefore represents 2/3rds of Iraq's oil exports, most of its custom duties, and most of

its imports[176]. The pullout of the British to the Basra airport following the Tigris uprising left a

vacuum of political control that allowed a plethora of local gangs to rise to the fore, the JAM

being among the most notable. The untenable nature of the situation in the South was the driving

force behind the decision by the Iraqi government to pursue the JAM specifically through a

series of large-scale operations.

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[173] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 5.
[174] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 5.
[175] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 6.
[176] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, pp. 8-9.

4.3.3 Operation Phantom Strike

Operation Phantom Strike began on August 15th, 2007 and, like previous operations, an emphasis was placed on disrupting remaining AQI cells. However, major sub-operations, specifically Marne Anvil, made use of the cordon on Sadr City to target rogue JAM cells. These precision attacks were largely possible due to intel gleaned from the capture of Daqduq and the Khazali Brothers. Special priority in the operation was given to Baghdad in general and Sadr City in particular, as this area had suffered the worst from sectarian warfare.

Attacks on JAM supply lines into Iran as well as on the JAM itself took its toll quite quickly. By late 2007, there was a noticeable decrease in the activity of Iranian backed groups[177]. While some thought this was a result of the Iranian promise to stop aiding insurgents in Iraq, it was more than likely due to the decreased capacity of the Special Groups, and increased efforts by the IRGC-QF to hide their footprint; e.g. increased use of "train the trainer" programs to lessen the chances of Iranian trainers getting caught in Iraq, etc.. Ten such trainers were found in December alone, indicating that these programs were widely used in Baghdad, Wasit Province, and Babil Province. "They were primarily engaged in EFP, IED, rocket-propelled grenade, sniper fire, mortar, rocket, operational security, and computer security training[178]."

During this period, Special Groups prepared for an up-tick in violence by using the remaining southern smuggling routes to supply weapons for caches that were placed in rural areas of Southern Baghdad. These were intended to become re-supply hubs for the escalation of

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[177] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, pp. 6-7.
[178] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 7.

violence that would come in 2008[179]. Following a reorganization the Special Groups began a coordinated offensive against coalition forces, with JAM help[180].

4.3.4 Operation Knight's Charge: Sawlat al-Fursan

The first operation to specifically take the JAM head on was launched not by the Coalition, but by the ISF. Since the coalition was not consulted prior to the launch of the operation, the planning was *ad hoc*, and the operation as a whole was largely a failure in its first days. Poor planning coupled with a fierce resistance created severe challenges, which were exacerbated by the large number of weapons the militants seemed to have been able to procure from Iran. Most pointedly, nearly 1000 ISF soldiers abandoned their posts and/or openly sided with the JAM during the initial phases of the operation.

> "Moreover, the ISF forces lacked proper preparation, command discipline, and
>
> effective logistic support – in part because the Prime Minister rushed them into
>
> action without proper preparation, planning, and staging[181]."

Operation Knight's Charge began with ~30,000 ISF troops who were reinforced with 6600 more troops and 16,000 police officers. Fierce fighting continued until March 30th when al-Sadr ordered a ceasefire. Most JAM fighters then fled to Iran to avoid getting caught in the security sweeps that followed. As many as 5000 Shia militants crossed the border in all[182]. Iran's influence was further displayed as fighting was concluded on March 30th, 2008 by a negotiated solution in Iran, brokered by Qassem Suleimani[183], head of the IRGC.

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[179] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, pg. 7
[180] Marisa Cochrane, "Special Groups Regenerate" Institute for the Study of War Iraq Report 11, Summer, 2007-Summer, 2008, p. 2.
[181] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008 p. 18.
[182] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 2.
[183] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 19.

As a reaction to OKC, JAM groups in Sadr City began increasing indirect fire attacks against the Green Zone. The Shia reaction to Maliki's security offensive in Basra prompted the Coalition to press ahead with the siege of Sadr City despite the fact that Coalition forces wanted more time to prepare. ISF forces complimented Coalition activity in Sadr City by engaging JAM and Special Groups militants in Kut, Hilla, as well as Sadr City. In the end, it was the Sadrists' political arm, rather than its military wing, that brought an end to the fighting.

> "On May 10, after several days of negotiations, Salah al Obeidi, a top Sadrist aide, announced that a deal had been reached to end the fighting. The Sadrist Trend negotiated the deal with the majority bloc in parliament, the United Iraqi Alliance. The fourteen-point agreement stipulated that JAM would cease all armed activities and the government would gain control over the entire district. In exchange, the deal restricted government raids, allowing arrests only for those actively involved in the violence. JAM would not be disbanded, but instead would be prohibited from publicly displaying weapons. The agreement also called for the reopening of roads into the district and an increase in humanitarian assistance in order to relieve the burden on Sadr City residents[184]."

A ceasefire along the lines laid out by al-Obeidi was reached on 05/11/2008, allowing the ISF access to all of Sadr City. Perhaps more importantly, the ceasefire gave Maliki the clout and strategic advantage that he needed to launch subsequent raids. Nevertheless, the JAM was able to maintain the bulk of its forces as most had fled prior to ISF and Coalition attacks… by some accounts, as many as 90% of them by June[185]!

Operation Basha'er as-Salaam

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[184] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, pg. 17
[185] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, pg. 17

With the bulk of the JAM's forces either destroyed or regrouping in Iran, the ISF turned its attention to disrupting the Iranian arms networks that had evaded previous security operations, flourishing in Maysan Province in general, and Amarah in particular[186]. This was, in effect, a strategic assault on the JAM's operational infrastructure. Basha'er as-Salaam began with 4 day amnesty period during which militants could surrender and civilians flee before combat commenced. However…

> "Once the raids began, the ISF went into homes, businesses and public areas throughout the city. Between June 19 and 22, weapons found totaled 1,739 mortar rounds, 873 mines, 445 artillery rounds, 347 rocket-propelled grenades, 267 rockets, 227 missile launchers, 109 improvised explosive devices, 74 grenades, 35 122mm rounds, 27 explosively formed penetrators and 14 missiles[187]."

As in Sadr City, the ISF met little resistance, as the majority of the Shia militias proved unwilling to engage the bulk of the ISF. As one observer put it,

> "It is one thing for street thugs to exploit a power vacuum and deal with other street thugs in a movement like the AQI. It is another to fight to what are increasingly more experience and capable Iraqi Army forces, particularly without broad popular support[188]."

While the operation failed to confront the Shi'ite militias head on, it did succeed in eviscerating the Sheibani Network in eastern Iraq, greatly debilitating the JAM's logistical base and operational capabilities.

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[186] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, pp. 21-22.
[187] "ISF Continue to Clear Amarah of Munitions" Release No. 20080626-06, Multi-National Corps, Iraq, Public Affairs Office, June 26th, 2008.
[188] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 9

4.4   Rival Organizations

Apart from resistance and retaliation from Coalition and ISF forces, the Jaiysh al-Mahdi also faces competition from a variety of other organizations. Some are merely political parties with no armed wing and some are rival Shia militias. Others however, are militias of oppositional Sunni groups such as AQI, wholly opposed to Shia political dominance. Given the complex nature of Iraqi politics, it is often difficult to disaggregate friend from foe. While the Sadrists face political and military opposition from the government of Iraq, they are also a major political player and more often than not represent a substantial fraction of the ruling coalition in Parliament. Further, they have benefited greatly from their role in government, which has alternately provided them with valuable sources of patronage and freedom from official retribution. The JAM's chief rivals, however, are a product not of oppositional communities, but of the Sadrist Trend itself. They are the varied "Special Groups" which have broken off from the mainstream JAM over the course of the Iraqi conflict. The relationship between the JAM and the various Special Groups discussed below alternates between symbiotic and combative. While Special Group forces are ostensibly Sadrist in origin, they operate separately and receive training and support not from the Najaf leadership, but through criminal activities and patronage from Tehran. The Special Groups have not engaged the JAM militarily (though evidence suggests some low level violence amongst particular players), and in fact, the various organizations comprising the Sadrist Trend often work together to accomplish military objectives. However, the behavior of the Special Groups, notably their criminal undertakings as well as their ill-conceived military operations, has consistently undermined the political maneuverings of the Sadrist leadership and the communal support of the JAM.

4.4.1 Al-Da'wa

Together with the SCIRI/ISCI, *al-Da'wa* party represents the largest faction of the United Iraqi Alliance, the Shia political bloc that has ruled Iraq since the 2005 elections. While *al-Da'wa* does not have a military arm, *al-Da'wa* has exploited its appearance as the most moderate and least objectionable of the Shia parties to great extent. Its leaders, Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Nouri al-Maliki, have respectively served as Prime Minister of Iraq and they have from time to time been able to wield the forces of the ISF against their political foes (e.g. the Sadrists). In addition, while beholden to the Sadrists as a key part of his coalition, Maliki has been able to manipulate the parliamentary process to weaken Muqtada's political position and by so doing undermine his popular support amongst the Shia masses.

4.4.2 SCIRI/ISCI

While Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army garners the most headlines of all the Shia militias, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq was until the 2010 elections, the largest Shi'ite political force by far, and its military wing, the Badr Corps, remains the most professional of the Shia militias. The SCIRI was born of a schism within the Sadrist ranks following the murder of Baqir al-Sadr in 1980. The leader of the faction, Baqir al-Hakim, broke with the established clergy in Iraq and established SCIRI in Iran. Throughout the Iran-Iraq war, the Badr Corps fought on the Iranian side and Tehran lent al-Hakim its support so that a revolutionary government could be quickly established should Baghdad fall. Basing its strategy off the use of regional communist party affiliates who seized control as the Red Army advanced on the Eastern Front of WWII, Tehran placed an Iranian Colonel in control of the Badr Corps who answered directly to the Supreme Leader Khomeini[189].

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[189] P. Cockburn, 2008 p. 53.

SCIRI played a large part in the exiled opposition to Saddam and even joined Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress in the mid-1990's[190]. The efficient organization of the SCIRI paid off, and they began post-invasion work in Iraq by sending ~300 workers to Najaf, in order to aid in restoring civil services, the delivery of medical care, and to help retrieve looted goods[191]. Baqir al-Hakim himself returned to Iraq on May 10, 2003[192]. At this point in time the Badr Corps was between 4000-8000 strong. Hakim showed his political astuteness well in the early days of the occupation, for though SCIRI was obviously Iranian backed, Hakim proved himself willing to work with occupational forces. Thus, while they were openly allied to Tehran, the Coalition attacked the nationalist Sadrists, claiming the latter to be Iranian pawns. Despite having relatively little popular support compared to the Sadrists, Hakim's political prowess, coupled with SCIRI's tight control over the Badr Corps allowed the organization to infiltrate the Interior ministry, the Police Forces, and many local governorates. In effect this allowed them to assimilate the Badr Corps into the security forces of Iraq[193]. Given that Article 117 of the Iraqi Constitution allows regional governorates to field their own security forces[194], SCIRI control of governorships in the south made this especially so at the local level. This allowed the SCIRI to engage with political opponents such as the JAM, while making it appear to observers as conflict between SCIRI's opposition and the Government of Iraq, not internecine warfare between two militias.

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[190] Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: US Regime Change Efforts and Post-Saddam Governance" *CRS Report RL31339* November 25th, 2003.
[191] Danna Harman, "A wary US watches an exile's return: Shiite leader sent a moderate message in his speech over the weekend" *the Christian Science Monitor* May 12th, 2003.
[192] P. Cockburn, 2008, pp. 132-133
[193] Patrick Gaughen, "Baghdad Neighborhood Project: Saydiyah" Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder #15, 2007.
[194] Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks" *CRS Report RS21968* August 4, 2008, p. 2.

Following the US Surge, the main conflict for the Jaiysh al-Mahdi was not with the Iraqi government or with Sunni factions, but with a renamed SCIRI, the SIIC/ISCI[195] (Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council or Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, depending upon translation). The group dropped the "Revolutionary" in their title as part of a broader bid to shift themselves away from Iranian control… a move that also included dropping Khameini as its *Marja* and adopting *al-Sistani*. According to local sources, the ISCI and the Badr Corps were always the true threat to the JAM since the US was going to leave eventually, but the rival Shia groups were going to stay and fight for control of Iraq[196].

As a result, the JAM skirmished with the ISCI in Nassariya, Diwaniya, Kut, Najaf, and other majority Shia areas in the South. This internecine fighting culminated in the engagement at the Shabaniyah festival in Karbala (birthday of the Mahdi), on August 28th, 2007, when JAM pilgrims fought ISCI security personnel charged with guarding the cities' shrines. All told, 51 pilgrims died and 100's more were wounded. The fall out was so detrimental to the JAM that Muqtada reacted by freezing all JAM activity on August 29th 2007. Realizing that the JAM's violence was discrediting his movement, Muqtada even went so far as to begin vetting all Friday prayers so that he could remove calls for revenge that might prompt further unsanctioned violence on the part of his subordinates.

4.4.3 The Special Groups

The term 'Special Groups' is a nomer given to renegade Sadrist factions. These groups are either breakaway factions of the JAM, or are still part of the JAM, but operate outside of the control of the Najaf leadership, and engage in criminal and/or violent activity unsanctioned by al-Sadr's inner circle. These Special Groups operate almost wholly within JAM controlled

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[195] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 197.
[196] P. Cockburn, 2008, pp. 197-198.

neighborhoods and are often sometimes indistinguishable from the mainstream JAM, even to the Sadrist leadership. It's important to note the while the Special Groups overlap with the JAM, they are not considered part of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi by Muqtada[197]. In fact, he seems to be as antagonistic towards them as the Coalition. These organizations are the result of various schisms within the Sadrist Trend, which in turn have a variety of causes. Firstly, Muqtada's lack of ability to centrally fund distributed JAM elements created conditions whereby local affiliates were forced to pursue 'entrepreneurial' activities in order to fund their organizations. This in turn has led to the criminality that al-Sadr desperately seeks to rid his organization of, as it robs the JAM of its much needed popular support. Secondly, taking advantage of Muqtada's financial limitations, Iran has stepped in as a major financier of radical Shia elements in Iran. Originally, Tehran had placed its bets on the SCIRI and the Badr Corps. In fact, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the head of the Badr Corps until his death in 2009, had been on the Iranian's payroll since the early 1980's[198]. However, as the SCIRI began to assimilate into the Iraqi Government, they began to distance themselves from Tehran. Thus, Iranian largesse shifted to the 'Special Groups'[199]. As a result, those nodes seeking funding from Iran are notable amongst the crowded field of Shia militias by their additional training and weaponry, as well as the cellular structure adapted from Lebanese Hezbollah trainers during numerous periods of retreat and restructuring. However, while they receive additional operational expertise and capabilities, they also become reliant on Tehran and therefore subject to Iranian direction, which is often at odds with Muqtada's political maneuverings. Thirdly, the outbreak of the Iraqi Civil War triggered a split between the more

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[197] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 20-21.
[198] M. Cochrane, January, 2009.
[199] Bill Roggio, "Iran's Ramazan Corps and the Ratlines into Iraq" *The Long War Journal* December 5th, 2007.

moderate thinkers at the center of the Sadrist movement and the radical anti-Sunni's[200]. This was

a result of the fact that as the Shia were reeling from the attack on the Golden Mosque, al-Sadr

was undergoing a degree of rapprochement with the government in Baghdad. The decision to

engage in political representation with the Iraqi Government, and by extension the Coalition with

whom the government cooperated caused major JAM leaders such as Abu Maha and Ismael al-

Zerjawi (also known as Abu Deraa) to break away from Muqtada who was reluctant to engage in

sectarian violence. Finally, al-Sadr's growing cooperation with Iran troubled a faction of the

Sadrist camp known collectively as the radical millenarians. These groups are marked by their

extreme Arab nationalism, and as a consequence are staunchly anti-Iranian. Located primarily in

Karbala and Basra, the major groups are the Hussain Army (led by Mahmud al-Hassani Sarkhi)

and the Soldiers of Heaven (led by Dhia Abdul Sahra)[201].

While as much as 50% of the Special Group leadership resides outside the country in

areas such as Iran, Lebanon, and Syria, the main operational base of the organization is Sadr

City[202]. However,

> "Special Groups have operated in 9 Nissan, Kadhimiyah and West Rasheed.
>
> South of Baghdad, Special Groups have been active in Karbala, Hillah,
>
> Diwaniyah, Kut, Nasiriyah and Basra. Some Special Groups activity also
>
> occurred just north of Baghdad, in Diyala Province[203]."

While the Special Groups represent a large amount of the violence in post-2007 Iraq, their

distributed organizational design has meant that they have not engaged in the kind of coordinated

insurgent style attacks the more hierarchal elements of the mainstream JAM have attempted

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[200] M. Cochrane, January, 2009.
[201] M. Cochrane, January, 2009.
[202] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 4.
[203] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 4

from time to time. Rather, Special Groups have instead focused on criminal activity, mainly smuggling and running protection rackets, ethnic cleansing of Sunni in mixed areas of Baghdad and low-level terrorist violence such as kidnappings. Leading up to the 2010 elections, the main modus operandi of the Special Groups have been assassination and intimidation campaigns against rival politicians[204].

The history of the Special Groups has been one of ebb and flow with respect to the number and type of organizations that comprise these elements of the Sadrist Trend. Over time, there have been five major organizations operating under the banner of the Special Groups; The Noble Mahdi Army, the Khadamiya Faction, Asaib al-Haq (AAH), Khata'ib Hezbollah, and the criminal groups which have adapted the mantle of Sadrism in order to exploit local populations[205][206].

4.4.3.1 Special Groups: The Noble Mahdi Army

In January of 2007, relations amongst various nodes of the JAM had become so strained that Muqtada himself felt threatened by breakaway factions of his movement. In an effort to regroup and reconsolidate the Sadrists, Muqada fled for Qom, Iran. The intention was to leave behind a segment of the JAM to purge the remaining criminal and Iranian factions of the Mahdi Army that had ceased to answer to him. This group, which remained part of the mainstream JAM, was called the Golden Mahdi Army (GJAM). The actual effect of Muqtada's departure, however, was to drastically undercut the remaining hierarchy within the JAM. As a result, renegade factions of the former JAM in Hurriyah and Baghdad formed the Noble Mahdi Army specifically to target the Golden Mahdi adherents. The Noble Mahdists represent the radical

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[204] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 4.
[205] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 40.
[206] Michael Harari "Shi'a Militias in Iraq" *Institute for the Study of War* Background Update
accessed on August 16th, 2010, at http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Backgrounder_ShiaMilitias.pdf.

Arab Nationalist wing of the Sadrist camp and are largely a reaction against the perceived closeness between Tehran and Muqtada. Following Sadr's relocation to Qom, they have been operating in conjunction with the Coalition and Iraqi Authorities to target pro-Iranian JAM elements[207].

4.4.3.2 Special Groups: The Khadamiyah Faction

The Khadamiyah Faction of the Sadrist movement is located in the Khadamiya neighborhood of Northeastern Iraq, and is home to a number of high profile shrines, including the shrine of Musa al-Kazim (the 7th Imam and descendant of the Prophet through which the al-Sadr's trace their lineage), for which the area is named. The organization is led by brother clerics Hazem al-Araji and Bahaa al-Araji, the later of which was a Sadrist parliamentarian. The brothers were members of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, however they used their access to taxes from the shrines to create a ~300 man militia which they then used to forward their own political area of control. They have since been continually in conflict not only with the mainstream JAM, but also the criminal gangs and Iranian backed Special Groups that also operate in Khadamiyah.

4.4.3.3 Special Groups: Asai'b Ahl al-Haq/the Khazali Network

Following the ISF and Coalition crackdowns in 2007-2008, much of the infrastructure of the Special Groups retreated to Iranian territory. The IRGC-QF and Lebanese Hezbollah then attempted yet another reorganization of the Iranian backed Special Groups. The two major organizations to emerge from this process were Asai'b Ahl al-Haq, also known of as the Khazali Network, and Khata'ib Hezbollah[208][209].

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[207] M. Harari, August 16th, 2010.
[208] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 p. 40.
[209] Michael Harari "Shi'a Militias in Iraq" *Institute for the Study of War* Background Update accessed on August 16th, 2010, at http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Backgrounder_ShiaMilitias.pdf.

Asai'b Ahl al-Haq (The league of the Righteous) emerged in mid 2006 as an Iraqi affiliate of the IRGC-QF and LH[210]. The major leaders of the AAH were Qais Khazali, Akram al-Kaabi, and Abd al-Hadi al-Darraji. Mirroring the leadership of LH, they also answered to a religious authority, Muhammed Tabatabai[211]. Khazali was a student of Sadiq al-Sadr, and had originally been a high commander in Muqtada's JAM. Qais was expelled by Muqtada from the JAM in 2004, because the latter believed he had given unauthorized commands during the battle of Najaf. There was a brief rapprochement between the two men in 2005, and Qais was allowed to return to his command in the JAM, but he quickly split with Muqtada again in 2006. Iran placed Khazali in charge of their Special Groups as early as 2006, though it is not known if Qais had had his final split with Muqtada at that point[212]. In a major blow to Special Group operations, Qais was arrested in Basra on March 20th, 2007 along with his brother, and Ali Mussa Daqduq, a militant from Labanese Hezbollah sent by the IRGC-QF. The loss of Daqduq was especially troubling as he was a high ranking member of Lebanese Hezbollah, tasked with reorganizing the JAM, and other Shia Special Groups… including renegade JAM cells, along the lines of the Lebanese Hezbollah. After Khazali's arrest, Akram al-Kaabi took over. Further underscoring the linkages between the Special Groups and the mainstream JAM, al-Kaabi himself was a high-ranking JAM commander until May of 2007, when he was relieved of his command[213]. Though the reasons for his dismissal are unknown, it is likely that it was due to his participation in a Sadrist Command structure that did not answer to Muqtada. Further, it seems that he used his position in JAM to compliment activities of the AAH[214]. Al-Kaabi was named the head of AAH

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[210] Marissa Cochrane, "Asaib Ahl al-Haq and the Khazali Special Groups Network" Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder #38, January 13th 2008, p. 2.
[211] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 2.
[212] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 19.
[213] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 3.
[214] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 19.

at least by January of 2008, but as the previous point indicates, it is likely that he was a cell member of the Khazali network prior to this.

The Khazali Network received logistical and financial support from Iran via the Sheibani network[215]. Mustafa al-Sheibani was a member of the Badr Corps tasked with coordinating activities in Iraq during the Ba'athist Regime. During the 1990's the Badr Corps organized operations in Iraq into 4 axes. Sheibani was the leader of Axis 3, which dealt with Baghdad. Thus, when the US invasion occurred, he was the best placed to take advantage of the smuggling networks into Iraq[216]. After the invasion, Sheibani operated a large scale Iranian backed smuggling network[217]. Sheibani's Amarah based network became a major source of explosively formed projectiles (EFP's) to militias after the IRGC-QF stepped up their coordination of insurgent activity in 2005/2006.

> "Other weapons smuggled from Iran to Iraq in 2007 included: 81 mm mortars
> (the remainder of the region uses 82 mm mortars); repainted 107 mm rockets
> imported into Iran from China and marked for sale in the open markets; RPG-7;
> 60 mm canisters filled with Iranian-manufactured mortar rounds; and 240 mm
> rockets.76 In addition, earlier in 2007, American troops discovered over 100
> Austrian made Steyr HS50 .50 caliber sniper rifles in Iraq[218]."

The Austrian weapons, in particular, are pertinent as they were specifically purchased from the Austrian government by Tehran under the auspices that they be used against drug smugglers. So there is no doubt that they came with the government's complicity.

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[215] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 20.
[216] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 20.
[217] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 20.
[218] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 17.

In addition to supplying the AAH, Sheibani also supplied the JAM, Badr Corp, and other Special Groups. Further, the network facilitated the movement of trainees into and out of Iran. Iran's control of the weapons flow into Iran, via its control of the Sheibani Network allowed it to control the tempo of the Shia insurgency[219].

AAH began operations in earnest in July of 2006[220], claiming that their initial attacks were in solidarity with LH's Operation True Promise; the operation of July 12th, 2006, in which a Lebanese Hezbollah raid into Israel resulted in the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers and the deaths of three more, sparking the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war. In this same year, AAH was broken up into four branches, each with a geographic area of responsibility[221].

- Imam Ali Brigade: Southern Iraq

- Imam al-Hadi Brigade: East Baghdad

- Imam al-Kazem Brigade: West Baghdad

- Imam al-Askeri Brigade: Diyala and Kirkuk

Following the arrest of its highest-ranking members, AAH ceased activity in the first half of 2007[222]. From mid-2007 onwards, however, they re-emerged and became quite active in Sadr City fighting, often working in conjunction with JAM and other Special Group outfits[223]. They ceased, however, referencing their actions in terms of the responsible brigades inferring that in the interregnum, they had undergone some sort of organizational reshuffling. In 2008, AAH entered into discussions with the Iraqi government in order to gain the release of their top leaders. A peace agreement was reached with Iraqi and US authorities, and Qais was released from custody along with other top AAH leaders. Qais quickly fled to Iran, and AAH spent the

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[219] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 21.
[220] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 4.
[221] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 4.
[222] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 4.
[223] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 4.

summer of 2008 reconsolidating its networks there[224]. In the fall of 2008, they reneged on their peace agreement and returned to Iraq in force. In fact, they had never really abated their attacks against the coalition, though they did shift tactics away from spectacular terrorist attacks to the use of sticky bombs and silenced weapons, which were easier to smuggle and were more stealthy in execution[225]. Further, Khazali underscored his split with Muqtada by emphasizing the leadership of Sadiq, his former teacher[226].

The current state of the AAH finds the network somewhat lessened than it was at its height in 2007-2008. Mostly, this is due to the fact that since their return they have been forced to deal with increased coalition pressure and an increasingly capable ISF. It appears that Khazali has even gone to the lengths of holding a high-level meeting in Qom with Muqtada on Jan 16th, 2010 in order to discuss reintegrating AAH into JAM. However, the previous power struggles between the two leaders proved irreconcilable and the merger failed. Further, al-Sadr has at least twice attempted to reintegrate factions of the AAH back into the mainstream JAM, appealing (unsuccessfully) to al-Kaabi to reintegrate with the Mumahidoon (a JAM phenomenon discussed at length in the subsequent section), and issuing an appeal to AAH members directly to join the newly created Promise Day Brigades.

4.4.3.4 Special Groups: Kata'ib Hezbollah

Kata'ib Hezbollah, or the Hezbollah Brigades, is the second largest Iranian backed militia operating in Iraq. KH was allegedly founded by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandes, a close advisor to IRGC commander Qassem Suleimani and an Iraqi MP from March 2006, to March 2010, however the leadership structure is somewhat uncertain as the organization tightly controls

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[224] M. Cochrane, January, 2008, p. 3.
[225] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 40-43.
[226] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 40-43.

information[227]. KH is highly centralized and operates in a hierarchical fashion. As a result operational and informational security is well controlled. Their professionalism has made them the 'go to' militia for Tehran[228]. To compliment their military activities, KH maintains a public outreach branch in the form of a very sophisticated website replete with multimedia depicting attacks on coalition forces organized by category of attack and constantly updated. KH recently announced a campaign called the "Steps of Karbala" meant to unite the Shia Militias ahead of the US redeployment, a move likely intended by Iran to consolidate control over the various Shia militias. It has since suffered a major blow, when on February 12th, 2010, US and Iraqi Forces launched a sizeable raid against KH forces[229] near the Iranian border north of Amarah. The killing of 10 of its members and the capture of a further 22 seems to have had a severe effect on the tight-knit organization.

4.4.4 Al-Qaeda in Iraq/Sunni Insurgents

Since the succeeding chapter in this dissertation details the organization and tactics of the dominant instigator of sectarian violence in Iraq, al-Qaeda in Iraq, the author will not go into great detail here. Suffice it to say, the JAM has had an equally variegated relationship with AQI as it has had with many other rival organizations. Meaning, that it is at once combative and, to some extent, symbiotic. While there has been little if any evidence of tactical coordination between the Shia militias and the foreign Islamist groups in Iraq which adhere to the al-Qaeda banner, the anti-Shia campaign of the Zarqawists created the social and political conditions which allowed the JAM to embark on its massive expansion between 2005 and 2008. In addition, it is no coincidence that the decline of the Sunni insurgency from 2007 onwards

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[227] Bill Roggio, "Iranian Backed Shia Terror Group Remains a Threat in Iraq: General Odierno" *Long War Journal* July 13th, 2010.
[228] B. Roggio, July 13th, 2010.
[229] B. Roggio, July 13th, 2010.

precipitated, in many ways, the decline of Shia extremism as well, both by removing the main distraction from US and Iraqi authorities as well as by alleviating the security conditions which gave the JAM popular support amongst lower class Shia communities.

4.5 Operational History

4.5.1 2002

Following the assassination of his father and brothers in 1999, Muqtada had to keep a low profile in Iraq. To a large extent, he accomplished this by feigning feeble-mindedness. Many credit this ploy with having also fooled the anti-Ba'athist opposition and US forces as well, as most parties in Iraq failed to take him seriously in the run up to the war. Muqtada, however, had begun to flex his political muscles prior to the US invasion, as Saddam, increasingly pressured by the coming US invasion and concomitant international pressure, found himself in no position to crackdown on every outcropping of internal opposition. Muqtada's first political showing was in calling for a mass protest immediately following Saddam's declaration of a general amnesty for non-political prisoners in 2002. The Sadrists, however, wanted the released of political prisoners as well, in particular, the Sadrists' co-religionists who had been imprisoned during the 1991 Shia uprising, as well as Sadrists who had been imprisoned during the sanctions regime.

4.5.2 2003

For the 1st year of the occupation, the Sadrists continued to lose ground as the dominant Shia approach to the occupation was to push the US into holding elections, which the Shia would of course win. As a result, most Shia did not want to alienate the US immediately.

The Sadrists nonetheless began to build their movement at the grassroots level, while simultaneously adopting an aggressive stance toward the established Shia hierarchy in Iraq. In fact, in a move indicative of the future course of the Iraqi conflict, the first display of organized

violence on the part of the Sadrists was not directed against rival communities, but against a rival power center within the Shia community. On the 10th of April, 2003, followers of Muqtada seized Sheikh Abdel Majid al-Khoei, son of the murdered Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei from the Imam Ali Mosque and stabbed him to death outside of Muqtada's house. Almost immediately, a violent protest by Sadrists surrounded the home of al-Sistani in Najaf and demanded that he leave Iraq within 24 hours. Further violence was averted only by the intervention of local tribes. In reaction to the murder of al-Khoei, sealed arrest warrants were issued for Muqtada, al-Nouri, and al-Yacoubi, who were named as accomplices in the murders. Political realities in Iraq, however, meant that these were not to be enforced until April of the following year. Nonetheless, due to his complicity in the murder of al-Khoei, Muqtada was barred from cooperating in the Iraqi Governing Council[230]. Some specialists have since noted that it is possible that this estrangement from the political process may have been an early reason why Muqtada began building a militia presence.

The formal beginnings of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi began on April 8th, 2003, when Muqtada was deputized by Ayatollah al-Ha'eri[231]. After this point Muqtada began to move very quickly. He began by rebuilding the network of local mosques and Husseineyas that his father had built up in the early days of the sanctions regimes. Using Mosques, Husseineyas, and other religious offices as hubs[232], the Sadrists took physical control of *al-Thawra* (Sadr City) and recruited around 90 clerics who were then tasked with heading up regional offices. This massive diversification of organizational capabilities is the single reason the JAM was able to expand so quickly in the early days of the US occupation. A week after Saddam had fled the Sadrists claimed to have 50,000 volunteers organized in the predominantly Shia east Baghdad, collecting

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[230] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 13-14.
[231] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 117.
[232] Husayniyahs: Shiite gathering places where Shia mourn the death of Imam Ali.

refuse, directing traffic, and distributing hospital meals. Many of these volunteers state that they were never formally organized, but simply came together organically after several days of anarchy. Within months, the Sadrists controlled 90% of the Mosques in Sadr City as well a large portion of the Schools, Hospitals, and Charity Organizations in that area. The nascent JAM began during this period as clerics loyal to Muqtada began to assemble their own militias[233]. The Sadrists also set up committees that would collect looted goods and redistribute them to the correct authorities[234]. Later, sensing an opportunity for additional income, Sadr issued a fatwa saying that looters could keep what they stole provided they delegate 20% of their proceeds to the Sadrist offices.

The creation of the JAM was announced during Friday Prayers on July 18th 2003, from the Kufa Mosque[235].

> "We oppose and refuse the Council, which doesn't represent Iraqis… We call for
>
> the formation of an Islamic army that will obey the religious marjia… We have
>
> to open the doors for the people to register in this great army…[236]"

To join the JAM you had to be recommended by a member, and to register at the local mosque or Husseiniyya. In principle, all followers of the Marji'iyya (the ruling clerics in Najaf) could join, but in practice only followers of al-Sadr did so. Only a few dozen volunteers had responded to al-Sadr's call in July, but those ranks would swell to well over 6000 within a year. In the early days, these forces were concentrated mostly in areas where the Iraqi and Coalition forces were not providing adequate protection against sectarian (Sunni) attacks.

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[233] Craig Smith, "A Nation at War: the Clergy; Iraqi Shiites, Jockeying for Power, Preach an Anti-American Sermon" *The New York Times* April 20th, 2003.

[234] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 130.

[235] Neil MacFarquhar "After the War; Iraqi Unrest; In Shiite Holy City of Najaf, A Sudden Anti-U.S. Storm" *The New York Times* July 21st, 2003.

[236] Richar Oppel and Robert Worth, "After the War: Politics; Top Iraqi Cleric Calls on Nation to Repudiate New Governing Council" *The New York Times,* July 19th, 2003.

From its inception, Muqtada attempted to model his organization based on the hierarchical model of Lebanese Hezbollah,

> "Muqtada al-Sadr sought to model his organization on Lebanese Hezbollah, combining a political party with an armed militia and an organization providing social services. The Hezbollah model gave the Sadrist Movement levers of control over political life through representation in Parliament, control of ministerial offices, the ability to organize popular protests, and the possibility of taking up arms when necessary. Likewise, the Sadr Movement could provide the guidelines for the social and religious life of its constituent population. By early 2004, JAM had evolved into a powerful military force, albeit one poorly trained and organized[237]."

The first battalion graduated in Basra on October 6th, 2003. At this point in time, the JAM was a hybrid organization, with ancillary nodes receiving direction and funds from the Najaf leadership under Muqtada. Command and control was not absolute, but was effective given the fact that the organization was primarily a civil service organization. Early JAM units were organized under the leadership of local Imams, for whom the militants served as bodyguards. The loyalty of the Imams to the Najaf leadership ensured something resembling order in the network. As the organization progressed, however, the Sadrist network expanded under non-clerical leadership, with additional units being assimilated into what would fast become a highly distributed network under the command of local toughs who sometimes did and sometimes did not, answer to Sadrist clergy.

The impetus for this rapid growth, came not from within the organization, but rather was an organic reaction to a massive change in the structural environment of Shia populations caused

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[237] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 13-14.

by the violence being unleashed by Sunni Insurgents. The earliest indication of Zarqawi's looming sectarian campaign came on August 29th, 2003, with the assassination of Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the SCIRI, by Yassin Jarad, Zarqawi's father in law[238]. Jarad, operating under the auspices of *Tawhid w'al Jihad*, detonated a vehicle borne improvised explosive device at the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf. In addition to al-Hakim, the explosion killed as many as a 125 others, with countless more injured. The anti-Shia campaign by the Zarqawists problematized the patient route to power envisioned by the Shia, as the coalition was unable to provide the security necessary to protect vulnerable Shia communities.

The Sadrists responded with their own provocations, both against the Sunni as well as Occupational Authorities. These provocations in turn prompted the Coalition Authorities to begin cracking down on JAM activity. These crackdowns culminated in a series of arrests, including the attempted arrest of Salah al-Obeidi and the arrest of Moayad Kazrajy on charges of hiding arms in a mosque. Following the arrest of Kazrajy, the JAM organized widespread protests, a practice that was to become a central tactic in the JAM's repertoire. In its first coordinated attack on Coalition troops, some JAM elements led a group from the First Armored Brigade into an ambush on Oct, 9th, 2003 resulting in a firefight that lasted over an hour[239] and killed 2 US servicemen as well as 2 JAM militiamen. Yet another mass demonstration was organized for the funeral of the 2 slain JAM members. This protest in particular, set itself apart from previous violent protests as the JAM marched in uniform and for the first time openly carried weapons in public.

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[238] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 136.
[239] Jeffrey White, "To the Brink: Muqtada al-Sadr Challenges the United States" *Policy Watch #794* Washington Institute for Near East Studies, October, 17th, 2003.

During Friday Prayers on October 10th, as the demonstration for the slain JAM members was ongoing, al-Sadr declared the establishment of a shadow government[240]. Muqtada called on further protests in order to legitimize this new government, but the declaration proved ill-conceived and garnered little public support. As a result, the planned demonstration attracted little more than a few hundred participants[241].

Muqtada followed up his words by launching a widespread revolt on October 13th. Initially, the fighting began as a mixed skirmish between rival militias as the JAM attempted to wrest control of the Abbas and Hussein shrines from the *Hawza*[242]. The JAM then engaged US forces for a second time when elements of a militia belonging to Sheikh Mahmoud al-Hassani, an ally of al-Sadr, attacked a US military Police patrol attempting to break up a crowd that had congregated after curfew[243]. The fighting continued on the 14th, when JAM elements took refuge from US forces in the al-Mukayam mosque in Karbala after fighting a pitched battle with rival militias during which Coalition forces arrested 32 militiamen[244]. The attempt to take over the shrines culminated on October 15th, 2003, but ultimately failed. At the time, observers believed the Sadrists chose Karbala in order to test the Ukrainian troops stationed there[245], however subsequent studies of Muqtada's precarious financial situation lend credence to the idea that the real goal was to seize control of the revenue generated by pilgrims visiting the shrines.

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[240] Jeffrey White, 2003.

[241] Ian Fisher, "The Struggle For Iraq; Anti-U.S. Iraqi Cleric Declares Own Government" *The New York Times,* October 12th, 2003.

[242] Dan Murphy, "Iraqi Shiite split widens: A shootout between Shiite factions in Karbala Tuesday killed at least one person and injured dozen" *the Christian Science Monitor,* October 15th, 2003.

[243] Joel Brinkley, "The Struggle for Iraq: Casualties; Clash With Shiites And Bomb Attack Leave 4 G.I.'s Dead" *the New York Times,* October 18th, 2003.

[244] Joel Brinkley "The Struggle for Iraq: The Military; 32 Followers of Defiant Cleric Are Arrested in Raid in Karbala" *The New York Times,* October 22nd, 2003.

[245] Jeffrey White, 2003.

Sadr concluded the year in a somewhat diminished position, by leading a march on City Hall in Baghdad in order to protest the replacement of the Sadrist Council, the chief administrative body in Sadr City, with a CPA appointed city council. The scale, however, turned out to be much less than the JAM hoped for.

4.5.3   2004

2004 began as a year in which al-Sadr and the JAM aught to have made great strides. The organization had grown from a relatively small-scale hybrid network into a fully distributed network of hardcore militants, localized vigilante, and organized criminal racketeers. In addition, popular opinion as well as the provincial authorities in Iraq began to turn on the administration of the CPA following their inability to thwart the AQI bombings of the Ashura Festival[246]. On March 2nd, 2004, Zarqawists successfully detonated IED's at multiple shrines in the holy city of Karbala. Simultaneously, al-Qaeda militants fired mortars, small arms, and detonated a rash of other IED's throughout the city. In the end, 98 pilgrims were dead and at least a further 122 were wounded[247].

Instead, two failed uprisings collectively served to greatly diminished al-Sadr's power by year's end. In addition to a loss of face and the concomitant loss of popular support, al-Sadr lost his primary source of financing when al-Ha'eri broke with him, depriving him of the right to collect the *Marja's khoms*. Further, operational disagreements between al-Sadr and Qais Khazali resulted in a massive rift in the Sadrist camp, as Khazali left, taking a sizeable fraction of the JAM with him.

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[246] Mark Etherington, <u>Revolt on the Tigris: The al-Sadr Uprising and the Governing of Iraq</u> New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
[247] Worldwide Incident Tracking System incident report, accessed on 01/04/2011 at https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?Rcv=Incident&R=261817&nav=t%3DRecords%26 Rcv%3DIncident%26Nf%3Dp_IncidentDate%257CGTEQ%2B20040302%257C%257Cp_IncidentDate %257CLTEQ%2B20040302%26N%3D0.

4.5.3.1 2004: 1st Siege of Najaf

The groundwork for the first siege of Najaf was laid on March 28, 2004, when Coalition forces shut down *al-Hawza*, the Sadrist Newspaper, and arrested Mustafa al-Yacoubi[248] for printing material that incited violence against the Coalition. In this move, later second-guessed as extraordinarily ill-conceived, the Coalition prompted widespread protests across the south of Iraq, which surprised US and Iraqi forces[249]. Muqtada responded to the spiral of antagonism by building up his presence in major southern Iraqi cities. Most disturbing to locals and US officials alike, the JAM began warehousing large caches of arms in population centers, especially mosques, which they knew the US would be loathe to damage in any military action.

In early April, Muqtada seized the initiative by launching major uprisings in Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, and Kufa[250]. By April 4th, widespread rebellion had broken out across the South[251]. Violence began with a JAM assault on a Spanish Garrison between Kufa and Najaf[252]. For the majority of the conflict, fighting consisted of orchestrated insurgent style attacks on police and military outposts, sabotage attacks on lines of communication, and violent protests.

At the height of the fighting, JAM elements had seized control of Kut, Kufa, Najaf, and parts of Karbala, and were contesting control of Nasariya, Hillah, al-Amarah, Diwaniya, Basra and other locations. At what was one of the lowest points of the occupation for the Coalition, a Ukrainian contingent was forced to retreat from Kut on April 7th[253]. Further, the fighting had begun to disrupt Coalition supply lines coming in from Kuwait. However, the revolt did not

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[248] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 p. 14.
[249] Jeffrey White and Ryan Phillips, "The Revolt of Muqtada al-Sadr: Characteristics and Implications" *Policy Watch # 858* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 16th, 2004.
[250] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pg. 14
[251] White and Phillips, 2004.
[252] John Burns, "The Struggle For Iraq: Uprising; 7 U.S. Soldiers Die in Iraq as a Shiite Militia Rises Up" *The New York Times* April 5th, 2004.
[253] White and Phillips, 2004.

garner as much popular support as the Sadrists had hoped, as it was opposed by the *Hawza* as well as many tribal leaders[254]. From the 4th of April to the 7th, the initiative belonged to the JAM. However, from the 9th onward, the US reclaimed much lost territory, forcing Muqtada to call for a negotiated settlement. Beginning in early May, the US moved to push al-Sadr out of cities to the North of his main base of Najaf, attacking JAM units in Karbala and Diwaniya. According to US officials, the strategy was to isolate Muqtada in Najaf in hopes that the senior clergy located there, as well as the SCIRI, who controlled the town, would deal with him[255].

Muqtada negotiated from the Grand Mosque in Kufa, where he had holed himself up for the duration of the conflict, surrounded by a semi organized militia of locals and shopkeepers who had rallied to Muqtada after a local OMS had been raided by US forces[256]. In the end, however, he was able to negotiate a complete stand-down without having to disband or disarm the JAM. Low-level violence continued for some months before Muqtada finally issued an edict in mid-June calling on his fighters who were not from Najaf to cease attacking Coalition forces and return home. Fighters local to the area, however, continued to operate within the city, which as a further compromise, was ruled off limits to US forces. The arrest warrant, issued for Muqtada following the murder of al-Khoei and used by the Americans as a pretext for moving against him, was also suspended by Shi'ite authorities[257]. Over time, this sort of political maneuvering would prove the greatest contributor to the JAM's political, if not military, successes throughout the war.

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[254] White and Phillips, 2004.
[255] Edward Wong and Christine Hauser, "The Struggle for Iraq: Insurgents; Militiamen Go on the Offensive in Two Southern Cities" *The New York Times* May 9th, 2004.
[256] John Burns, "The Struggle for Iraq: Ordeal; Anxious Moments in Grip Of an Outlaw Iraqi Militia" *The New York Times,* April 7th, 2004.
[257] Dexter Filkins and James Glanz, "THE REACH OF WAR: INSURGENCY; Fighters Loyal to Radical Cleric Start Pullout From 2 Iraq Cities" *The New York Times* June 6th, 2004.

The costs to his organization in political support amongst the Shia, was nonetheless high. Even prior to the outbreak of violence, the senior clergy in Najaf had called on the JAM to move out of Najaf and Karbala, and to cease antagonizing Coalition forces. Showing support for the *Hawza*, several thousand protesters organized outside the Imam Ali Mosque in Karbala to demand the withdrawal of the JAM from their city. Following a series of truces with the Americans, JAM units were able to take control of the Imam Ali Mosque, an act that dried up the pilgrimage trade, a mainstay of the city's economic life. Fortunately for the Americans, the damage done to the Shrines and the disruption to city life that entailed the actual fighting was largely laid at Muqtada's feet rather than the Americans, and goodwill toward Muqtada from the local population was largely expended[258].

By the end of the fighting, Coalition forces had lost 7 American soldiers[259], and Muqtada's inner circle went into hiding for several months. As al-Sadr was trying to orchestrate his rebellion, he was simultaneously attempting to make common cause with the Sunni insurgents in Fallujah[260]. It appears that al-Sadr, as well as other Shia militia commanders, gave instructions to some of their followers to travel to Fallujah in order to deliver food aid as well as lend a hand in the defense of the city. While this might have resulted in some low-level coordination between Sunni and Shia organizations, the anteceding events of the coming years shows that it led to little, if any, sustained cooperation.

4.5.3.2 2004: 2nd Siege of Najaf

The fallout from the first seize of Najaf resulted in several months relative quiet in Shi'ite controlled areas. In Najaf, in particular, the Army's 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions had

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[258] John Burns, "The Struggle for Iraq: Politics; Iraq Shiites Urge Cleric to Desist" *the New York Times* May 5th, 2004.
[259] J. Burns, April 5th, 2004.
[260] Jeffrey Gettlemen, "The Struggle for Iraq: Alliances; Ex-Rivals Uniting" *The New York Times,* April 9th, 2004.

been operating under an effective if uneasy truce with local JAM elements since the April fighting. The truce quickly fell apart when these units were replaced on July 31st, by the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, as the Marines immediately engaged the JAM in small scale exchanges[261]. The situation was further aggravated when, on August 3rd, a Marine patrol drove in front of Muqtada's house, violating part of the truce achieved at the end of fighting in spring. On August 5th, the JAM retaliated with an insurgent style raid on an Iraqi police station. The Iraqi police fought back for around five hours before calling for US reinforcements. As the US engaged the insurgents, al-Sadr responded by calling for his own reinforcements, quickly spreading the battle to Sadr City, Diwaniya, Kut, Al Hayy, Nasiriya, Amara and Basra[262]. In Najaf, the insurgents made a stand in the Wadi al-Salam cemetery, the world's largest, which stands adjacent to the Imam Ali Mosque. This placed the Coalition in a tough spot as the area around the Imam Ali Mosque was a no-go area for US forces. However, al-Sistani abruptly left Najaf to seek medical care in London in order to address chest pains. Coalition authorities took this as tacit permission for US forces to move in without risk of invoking a larger Shia resistance[263]. By the time Muqtada returned to Najaf in order to receive the symbolic key of the Imam Ali Shrine (and thus the guardianship of it), US forces had greatly denigrated the JAM's fighting capabilities.

By the time of al-Sistani's return on August 26th 2004, the JAM position in Najaf was so precarious that they were forced to agree to a ceasefire on Sistani's terms. Sistani's terms on Muqtada were, in turn, harsh[264]. Firstly, the JAM was to remove itself from Najaf. Since Najaf was the headquarters of the Sadrist leadership, this further denigrated al-Sadr's ability to control

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[261] Alex Berenson and John F. Burns, "The Conflict in Iraq: Looking Back; the 8 Day Battle for Najaf: From Attack to Stalemate" *the New York Times* August 18th, 2004.
[262] A. Berenson and J. Burns, 2004.
[263] P. Cockburn, 2008.
[264] P. Cockburn, 2008 pp. 163-165.

the tactical operations of Mahdi Army cells. Najaf and Kufa, in turn, were to become de-militarized zones. Secondly, guardianship of the Holy Shrines in Najaf was to be relegated to the Badr Corps under the guise of the ISF. This effectively meant Muqtada had to yield control of Najaf to the *Hawza* and the SCIRI. Thirdly, Sadrist religious schools were to be placed under *Hawza* control. Finally, Muqtada was forced to move his headquarters outside the city, effectively rendering political control to the SCIRI.

In addition to the political costs imposed on the Sadrists as a result of the ceasefire agreement, Muqtada also suffered a break with his *Marja,* al-Ha'eri. Al-Ha'eri, while critical of Muqtada's decisions during the initial Spring uprising, finally broke with Muqtada after the second and issued a Fatwa stating that the Shia should no longer pay him the religious tax. This created an immediate financial burden on the JAM whose financial woes were compounded by the number of dead, whose relatives Muqtada was now obliged to care for. In reaction, al-Sadr stopped giving even the semblance of deference to al-Ha'eri and instead began to turn to Iran for material aid[265]. Muqtada, for his part, had become more appealing to Iran as the Badr Corps and SCIRI became more integrated into the US backed Government.

Financial problems were not the only issues caused by the failed uprisings, however. Ruptures that began during the first offensives came to the fore after the second[266]. Disputes over the conduct of the uprising, coupled with the financial problems resulting from the break with al-Ha'eri resulted in increased infighting within the Sadrist organization[267]. While Muqtada was the official head of the JAM, the actual course of the fighting in Najaf had made apparent the fact that he had difficulty maintaining control. Followers loyal to Sadiq began to openly side against Muqtada. In particular, Qais Khazali and Abd al-Hadi al-Darraji, had led a group of

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[265] Barbara Slavin, 2008, p. 18.
[266] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 15.
[267] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 6.

Sadrists during the uprising and had continually given orders to their men without the consent of Muqtada[268]. After al-Sadr brokered the ceasefire, they refused to abide by it and instead took their group to Sadr City and continued attacking Coalition Forces. Ismail Hafiz al-Lami (Abu Dura) also broke with the JAM at this point. He had fought against coalition forces in Najaf along with the JAM, but following the ceasefire he returned to Sadr City and ran his own militia. In time his work became infamous for it's brutality and scale as he kidnapped, killed and tortured thousands of Sunni from 2004 to 2006, activities that would greatly stain the reputation of Muqtada's organization and make difficult his numerous overtures to make common cause with nationalist Sunni groups. Since none of these commanders relied on Muqtada for material resources, and the decentralized organizational design the JAM had taken on over the preceeding year made punitive actions all but impossible, Muqtada had little choice but to allow these factions to go their own way. The heterogeneous quality of the Sadrist Trend likewise made the ideological costs of schisms with the Najaf leadership minimal, since Muqtada was not the *Marja* of the organization.

For his part, Muqtada disappeared from the public for 8 months and didn't reappear until May 16th 2005[269], at which point he demurred that he was switching from a military to a political tactic.

4.5.4   2005

Muqtada emerged from seclusion in early 2005 to rehabilitate his organization after the Najaf uprisings and play at politics[270]. In March, al-Sadr rejoined with Qais and appointed him, as well as al-Kaabi, as OMS commanders. Riyad al-Nouri and Hazem al-Araji, likewise resumed their posts as the clerical leadership of the organization. Araji headed the social affairs

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[268] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 15.
[269] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 163.
[270] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 16-18.

committee responsible for the Shia poor in Baghdad and Southern Iraq, and he and Nouri began to emphasize social work over armed rebellion. These moves were complimented by Muqtada who claimed that his strategy contained three stages[271].

- Peaceful Resistance

- Armed Resistance

- Political Resistance

"Referring to the current wave of sectarian violence that Mr. Sadr said he wants to help defuse, he said, "Each period of time has its own necessities, and now I see that we face a political and cultural war." He also said: "We cannot face political war in a military action. The military war is to be faced with a military war, but the political war is to be faced with itself[272]."

Muqtada's pledges to pursue a political course were not immediately reflected in JAM behavior. Low-level conflict continued in much of Sadr City following the stand-down in Najaf, despite appeals by al-Sadr that his followers take part in the weapons buy-back program being run by Coalition and Iraqi Police forces[273]. Most JAM followers refused, in no small part due to the fact that Muqtada and the Najaf leadership did not supply these weapons. Rather, they were the private property of the individual militiamen. In late August, JAM elements again used force in Najaf when a crowd of protesters showed up as local militiamen were re-opening a Sadrist office. Mahdi Army fighters retaliated by storming offices of *al-Da'wa* and skirmishing with

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[271] P. Cockburn, 2008 pp. 165-166.

[272] Richar Oppel Jr., "Rebel Shiite Cleric Hints He'll Shift to Politics, Not War" *The New York Times* May 23rd, 2005.

[273] Dexter Filkins and Edward Wong, "Cleric's Militia Begins to Yield Heavy Weapons" *the New York Times* October 12th, 2004.

Badr Corps units[274].   This prompted additional raids against rival Shi'ite political factions throughout southern Iraqi, including the Capital, where another office of *al-Da'wa* was raided along with three SCIRI offices[275]. Muqtada's public declarations at this time, calling for peace, reflect the fact that he likely had little control over the onset of renewed fighting and even had trouble reigning it in.

Muqtada did eventually follow up on his promises to pursue a political course by joining the United Iraqi Alliance in November of 2005[276]. The UIA was a Shia voting bloc that contained al-Sistani and a majority of the *Marji'iyya*, *al-Da'wa*, and was led by SCIRI. Despite the dominant position held by SCIRI, Maliki took the Prime Minister position in the 2005 elections because the Kurds forced a compromise candidate and the leader of *al-Da'wa* was chosen[277]. Sources also report that though SCIRI's chairmen, Adel Abdul Mahdi, was the clear frontrunner, Muqtada's severe aversion to him made SCIRI's ascension impossible. Al-Sadr's participation in the election gained him 30 seats in the January 2006 elections, a number which was soon enlarged to 32 thanks to 2 seats gleaned by the sympathetic Risaliyoon Party. The size of Muqtada's victory was limited, however, due to the mixed messages sent by the Sadrist camp leading up to the vote. Many Shia followers of al-Sadr, it seemed, were unsure as to how the cleric viewed the political process, and did not vote[278], prompting low turnout in heavily Sadrist areas.

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[274] Kirk Semple, "Shiite Cleric's Soldiers Battle Rivals in Najaf and Basra" *The New York Times* August 25th, 2005.

[275] Kirk Semple, "Cleric Urges an End to Clashes With Rival Shiite Groups" *The New York Times* August 26th, 2005.

[276] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pg. 18

[277] Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks" *CRS Report RS21968* August 4, 2008.

[278] Dexter Filkins, "Shiite Faction Ready to Shun Sunday's Election in Iraq" *The New York Times* January 29th, 2005.

All told, Muqtada's victory was two-fold. Firstly, Muqtada was taken seriously for the first time by the political elite in Baghdad. Originally, he was regarded as a young up-start. By 2005, however, he was an integral component to the ruling coalition. This forced Maliki and the SCIRI to grant him some freedom of action as well as immunity from prosecution by the State[279]. In particular, Sadr City was off limits to Coalition forces. Secondly, Muqtada was able to take over the Ministries of Health, Transportation, and Agriculture. This proved a game changer for Muqtada as it represented a source of jobs for militiamen, serving as a surrogate form of patronage in the absence of the *khoms*.

The Sadrists' political expansion was not without its costs, however, as it came on the heels of some further schisms. Many JAM members saw involvement with the political process as a tacit recognition of the US occupation that underwrote it, and many declared their independence from Muqtada as a result. Most damaging was the loss of Ahmed al-Fartousi, the top JAM commander in Basra[280]. As Muqtada entered into political forays, al-Fartousi began to operate independently of the JAM command structure. After being relieved of his post for doing so, he defected with a large contingent of his command and began operating his own militia. Such activities were encouraged by the IRGC-QF's massive expansion of training efforts in Iraq. Aided by LH's operative, Ali Mussa Daqduq, Iranian patronage offered rogue JAM elements the ability to operate outside of Muqtada's chain of command.

4.5.5   2006

After 2005, al-Sadr, though originally anti-Iranian, could no longer refuse Tehran's offers of help[281]. In return for his supplications, he received, financial support, communication equipment and modern weaponry. In exchange, Tehran was able to better influence the

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[279] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 6.
[280] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 p. 21.
[281] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 168.

organization as a whole and take over large sections of it entirely. Iran rightly saw that the real power in Iraq lay in the militias as they controlled the reality on the ground. In fact, most militias were penetrated by the IRGC. Penetration of the JAM was particularly easy, however, due to its loose organizational structure. Iranian agents began offering $800 to anyone who would attack Americans or assassinate Iraqi officials. Iran also began to offer ~$300-400 a month for fighters interested in coming to Iran to train and then return to fight Coalition forces. These enticements were especially effective on the JAM since, as a volunteer force, the JAM was not paid.

The military expansion of the JAM was aided by the Zarqawists' bombing of the al-Askari Mosque in Samarrah on February 22nd, 2005, prompting in earnest the beginning of the Iraqi Civil War. Within hours, thousands of Shia had gathered to show support to the Sadrists, who in turn were responsible for attacks on dozens of mosques, and the murder of countless Sunni, all within 24 hours of the attack.

> ""This is a day we will never forget," said Naseer Sabah, 24, who had left his job
> at a pastry factory without changing clothes to join the black-clad Shiite militia
> fighters clutching pistols, Kalashnikov assault rifles and grenade launchers
> outside Sadr's headquarters. Thousands converged on the Sadr offices, on foot or
> in buses and pickup trucks packed with armed men hanging out the windows[282]."

Muqtada, sensing an opportunity, immediately began trying to re-brand the JAM as the protector of the Shia from AQI[283]. Much to his dismay, however, this reenergized JAM quickly spawned death-squads and began participating in sectarian violence. These groups devolved into elements of territorial expansion as the JAM spread into Sunni and mixed Sunni/Shia areas of

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[282] Ellen Knickmeyer and K.I. Ibrahim, "Bombing Shatters Mosque in Iraq: Attack on Shiite Shrine Sets off Protest, Violence" *The Washington Post* February 23rd, 2006.
[283] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 21-22.

the capital. Using tactics generally associated with ethnic cleansing campaigns, including extra-judicial killings and forced migrations, the JAM and JAM related organizations quickly came to control large swathes of Baghdad[284]. Since al-Sadr's political agreements precluded intervention from ISF or Coalition forces within Sadr City, it became a haven of JAM and Special Group Factions. The reality was, however, that the JAM was no longer a monolithic organization, but an umbrella group of more or less like-minded organizations. Thus, affiliated militias were able to profit from Muqtada's political acumen, but the relationship was largely parasitic, since they paid little attention to his leadership, and consistently undermined his political positions.

Since the Sadrists already controlled many of the mainly Shia sections of Baghdad, this expansion mostly came at the cost of territory previously controlled by AQI or other Sunni organizations. Sunnis from mixed neighborhoods were subjected to systematic violence until they either left of their own accord or were forcibly removed. The JAM units responsible for most of the ethnic cleansing in Baghdad were self-financing and relied on protection rackets for money. In short order, JAM fighters began extorting and intimidating even the local Shia population in order to enhance their capital flow and hence their power. What check on JAM expansion existed came not from Sunni groups or Baghdad, but from rival Shia groups, especially the Badr Corps, who fought JAM militants in Basra as well as Amarah. These rival organizations kept the JAM from taking over municipal governments only by engaging in intense fighting[285].

The massive expansion of the JAM over a short period of time, coupled with the fact that most new elements were financially autonomous caused Muqtada's already tenuous hold on command to grow even more fragile.

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[284] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008, p. 3.
[285] Kirk Semple, "Militias Battle for Iraqi City as Shiite Rivalry Escalates" *The New York Times,* October 21st, 2006.

The explosion of the JAM and JAM affiliated networks, it seems, was to have a downside as the rampant violence invited a crackdown by the ISF as well as rival organizations. On November 30th, 2006, al-Sadr foolishly withdrew his support for al-Maliki due to the latter's refusal to set time lines for a US withdrawal[286]. Thus, Maliki withdrew Baghdad's protection and allowed the US to target individual JAM leaders. Maliki's *al-Da'wa* and al-Hakim's SCIRI met to discuss the problem of militias and they decided to isolate JAM politically and militarily. Under the auspices of Fardh al-Qanoon, US forces were allowed to conduct operations in Sadr City for the first time.

Ironically, the Coalition's job was in many respects made easier by the decentralization of the JAM command structure and the rampant factionalism that had precipitated that organizational shift.

> "In past years, American forays into the area would often draw a storm of grenade attacks. But recent American moves into the area have been carried out relatively peacefully: Mr. Sadr has not ordered attacks because the men being sought were freelancers like Abu Dera…[287]"

As a result, the US was allowed to move against individual JAM units without the risk of provoking the type of widespread revolts that followed the clampdowns in Najaf in 2004. Instead, Coalition forces were allowed to pick at the edges of the organization, first attacking criminal gangs, which then allowed Iraqi government forces to move in and restore order, in turn drying up the markets for protection rackets and depriving the Sadrists of finances wrought from black market enterprises.

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[286] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 p. 22.
[287] S. Tavernise, September 28th, 2006.

4.5.6 2007

Most observers tend to cite the political and military decline of the Sadrists as having begun in December of 2006[288]. The rise of AQI and the sectarian warfare that followed allowed the JAM to enlarge its operations, but that changed as AQI lost ground in 2007[289].

> "By March 2007, a number of US officers and intelligence analysts felt that the Mahdi Army had had [sic] —replaced AQ-I as the most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence in Iraq[290]."

As it happened, the events of 2006 left al-Sadr with little control over his organization, and few military options now that he was at the center of the Coalition's attention. The year of 2007 was therefore largely defined by two ceasefires al-Sadr entered into as well as a severe falling out with political rivals within the UIA[291].

The first of these ceasefires accompanied al-Sadr's first official stand-down of all militia activity, and his subsequent departure for Iran[292]. This was a reaction to the Fardh al-Qanoon (or Baghdad Security Plan) operation, launched on February 14th, 2007. The security plan focused on taking on both Sunni and Shia insurgent elements and consisted largely of a strategy of clearing and holding neighborhoods while providing civilian security. Muqtada was afraid that a confrontation with the Coalition would further complicate his efforts to reassert control over the JAM. In a keen tactical shift, he gave the order for his militants not to engage the Coalition forces. This enabled Muqtada to begin consolidating his grasp of the mainstream JAM while allowing the ISF and Coalition forces to take on those elements outside his command and control.

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[288] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 6.
[289] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 8.
[290] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 8.
[291] M. Cochrane, Summer, 2008 p. 3.
[292] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pp. 23-25.

"In effect, Mr. Sadr was saying, anyone who attacks Americans is by definition

violating the freeze and laying himself open to retaliatory attacks[293]."

The stand down revealed five main rifts within the movement; the Mainstream JAM, the Noble

JAM, the Khadamiyah Faction, AAH/Khazali Network, and the purely criminal gangs[294]. The

mainstream JAM, by this point, consisted mainly of the Sadrist clerical establishment based out

of Najaf. Since this section of the Sadrists seemed to Baghdad the most likely to prove co-

optible by the regime, the government released several key members of the JAM, hoping that

they would help reign in some of the excesses of the Special Groups. These included Ahmed al-

Shaibani and Salah al-Obeidi, however neither was particularly successful at bringing rogue

elements back into the structure of the mainstream JAM. Despite the stand-down, the

mainstream element did maintain an armed wing in the form of the Golden Mahdi Army, whose

purpose was to deal with what the Najaf establishment believed to be criminal elements within

the Sadrist camp. Described as an intelligence service tasked primarily with the maintenance of

internal discipline, the GJAM began operations in February of 2007 and almost immediately

came into violent conflict with Special Group elements. As the surge progressed, GJAM was

dispatched throughout Baghdad to deal with rogue elements before they could be captured and

interrogated by the Coalition.

The Noble Mahdi Army (NJAM) also believed that the JAM had been corrupted by

criminal elements as well as Iranian influence, but thought the best way to deal with it was

through collaboration with the coalition. Operating primarily in the Baghdad neighborhoods of

Shula and Hurriya, the NJAM had a limited reach but was able to provide useful intelligence to

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[293] Stephen Farrell, "Sadr Suspends His Militia's Military Operations" *The New York Times* August 30th,
2007.
[294] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pp. 25-27.

Coalition and ISF forces and was directly responsible for the apprehension of several key militiamen.

The Khadamiyah Faction, led by Sadrist cleric Hazem al-Araji and his brother Bahaa al-Araji competed with other Special Group outfits for control of Northwest Baghdad. Though ostensibly Sadrist, these brothers utilized JAM and Special Group networks to maintain a mafia-life fiefdom in their section of the Capital.

The Khazali Network rejected the stand-down outright and even escalated activity against the Coalition. The AAH operated as though they were JAM, but answered to a different hierarchy. They committed their most notorious attack on January 20th, 2007 when men dressed as American soldiers drove into the Karbala Provincial Joint Coordination Center, where US and Iraqi officials were meeting to plan security for the Ashura pilgrimage. The attack killed five US soldiers and wounded three others. The audacity of the raid prompted a massive crackdown by US forces, culminating in the arrests of Qais and Laith Khazali, as well as the Lebanese Hezbollah operative Daqduq on March 20th, 2007. AAH subsequently reorganized under al-Kaabi and continued to attack coalition forces throughout the fall of 2007 and actually managed to increase the tempo of their operations for the first three months of 2008[295].

The Criminal Gangs were those factions of the JAM that had joined the insurgency for purely mercenary reasons. Predictably, they also rejected the orders to stand down. As a result they were targeted not only by the ISF and Coalition authorities, but by the Golden and Noble JAMs as well.

What little remained of Muqtada's command and control over the larger JAM was eviscerated by the US' surge, which succeeded in decapitating most of the JAM's leadership:

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[295] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 p. 31.

rogue or otherwise[296]. Further, the imposition of order in many of the neighborhoods formerly run by the criminal syndicates robbed them of their racketeering and extortion markets. This accelerated the turn to Iran in many JAM units, as it was the only available source of funding. By late 2007, Iranian backed groups were the primary violent actors in Iraq.

By the late spring and early summer of 2007, it became difficult to decipher al-Sadr's strategy as he stopped appearing in public all together and began issuing his edicts solely through proxies. These edicts were issued via three to four top aides who were switched out every few months and contained sometimes starkly contradictory messages. This makes it difficult to tell whether or not these messages were actually issued by al-Sadr, or whether he was purposefully sending different messages to different audiences. Regardless, his command and control, and consequently the JAM's strategic direction, suffered as a result. By the spring of 2008 it was apparent that al-Sadr was altogether unable to control the militia. In what would prove to be a longstanding suspicion, it was hypothesized at the time that Muqtada's disappearance from public was due to his fear of JAM elements displeased with his decision not to resist the increased US presence.

The second stand-down, or actually a reissuing of the first, followed the disastrous attack on the Karbala Shrine on August 27th. This attack grew out of the growing feud between the Sadrists and the armed wing of ISCI, the Badr Corps. Throughout 2007, as JAM control loosened over the South, the ISCI took control of local governorates, police forces, and even entire Iraqi Army commands, greatly diminishing al-Sadr's local power base[297]. By the summer of 2007, JAM and the Badr Corps were caught in a string of high profile conflicts, mostly involving high-level assassinations against each other. On August 27th, JAM affiliated pilgrims

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[296] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 31.
[297] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 8.

at the Ashura festival started a firefight with the Badr Corps guards of the Karbala Shrine. Likely this was a combination of a reprisal attack against the Badr Corps, and an attempt by the JAM to gain control over the revenue generated by pilgrims visiting the shrine[298]. Unfortunately, the area was thick with such pilgrims. By the end of the fight, 50 pilgrims were dead and over 200 were wounded[299]. Blame for the outbreak of violence was placed squarely on the JAM and it had a deleterious effect on the organization's standing in the community. Immediately following the attack Muqtada declared a six-month suspension of all militia activity[300], including a ban on attacking Coalition troops. In effect, Muqtada was suspending the JAM in order to consolidate his command of Sadrist activities.

Al-Sistani and al-Maliki met and decided to demilitarize the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, forcing all militias from the city… except of course, Badr Corps fighters who were now the legitimate authorities. Muqtada then signed an agreement with the ISCI to reduce tensions between the two organizations, at least during the upcoming month of Ramadan[301]. This also entailed a peace treaty Sadr entered into with al-Hakim, head of the ISCRI.

> "'In the agreement, the two men signed off on three broadly worded points…'
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> 'They called for a cease-fire, an end to negative propaganda in the news media
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> and the formation of joint committees in the provinces to mediate disputes,' Mr.
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> Smeism said[302]."

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[298] "Themes: Jaysh al-Mahdi" Institute for the Study of War, accessed on 12/06/2010, at http://www.understandingwar.org/theme/jaysh-al-madhi.
[299] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 29.
[300] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 29-30.
[301] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 30.
[302] Andrew Kramer, "Two Shiite Leaders in Iraq Reach a Peace Agreement" *The New York Times* October 7th, 2007.

Many of the remaining mainstream JAM commanders did not respect Sadr's order to disband, and began to display autonomy from the start[303]. On this point, al-Sadr was not immune from criticism, even from within his inner circle. A leading Sadrist, Ahmed al-Shaibani disputed this decision in an open statement, despite his strong support of the ceasefire.

Having lost his ability to use the militia to strengthen his political base, he decided to use religious standing to regain control over his movement[304]. By this point, al-Sadr had probably been in Iran since late January or early February. Likely, his reasons for fleeing initially were to evade arrest and/or retribution from his followers for pursuing the initial stand-down. In late 2007, al-Sadr released a statement via al-Obeidi announcing he that would attempt to become an Ayatollah by pursuing religious studies in Qom, and become a *Marjah* like his father[305]. This would allow him to issue fatwas and other religious rulings and to collect the *khoms*, himself, rather than on behalf of another cleric. The original date for completion was thought to be 2010, however, at the time of writing, January of 2011, al-Sadr had only recently returned to Iraq, and it is not yet known what rank he achieved as a result of his studies. While in Qom, al-Sadr studied under the tutelage of al-Ha'eri, suggesting some sort of rapprochement between the two. Alternately, other reports have him studying with Mahmed Hashemi Shahroudi—an odd choice given al-Sadr's nationalism since Shahroudi is the head of the Iranian Judiciary. It's further rumored that his choice of studies centers on the *velayat e-faqih* doctrine.

The rift with the Sadrists' political partners in the UIA occurred on April 16h, 2007 when al-Sadr pulled his political bloc from the parliament in an effort to force the Maliki government

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[303] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 30.
[304] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 30-31.
[305] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 7.

to push through a time frame for the pullout of foreign troops[306]. This drastic move was prompted by on-going conflict with *al-Da'wa* as well as ISCI, though it had yet to erupt in the open warfare to be witnessed in August. Though this move originally placed Maliki's coalition in jeopardy he was able to maintain his majority by pulling in other members of the opposition, especially the Kurds. It did mean, however, that al-Sadr had to cede his ministry positions, costing him perhaps his single greatest source of patronage. In addition, losing his politicians meant that al-Sadr had to rely on a greatly diminished JAM to maintain control of Sadrist territory. Prompted by the obviously weakened state of the Sadrists, opposition parliamentarians sought to make it illegal for political parties to stand for parliament if they also maintained a militia. The intention was to force Muqtada to choose between the JAM and his political aspirations.

4.5.7   2008

As a result of the ceasefires that followed in the wake of the engagement with Badr Corps militants at the Karbala Shrine, early 2008 found the mainstream JAM to be operationally non-existent. In early 2008, Nasser al-Rubai, who was the head of the Sadrist Parliamentary bloc announced an end to the Iranian backed agreement between JAM and the ISCI. Fears were raised that this entailed al-Sadr's intention to not extend the six-month ceasefire, which was due to expire in February 2008[307]. The fact that many top JAM commanders actively worked against the renewal served to justify these fears. As it turns out, JAM concerns were well justified as Government, Coalition, and Badr Corps forces had been attacking them without fear of reprisals, driving many fighters into the ranks of the various special groups. Among the more vocal opponents of extending the freeze were JAM stalwarts, Hazem al-Araji

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[306] Babak Rahimi, "Shi'ite Power Struggle Unfolds in Diwaniya" *Terrorism Focus* vol. 4(11) April 26th, 2007.
[307] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 31-33.

and Ahmad al-Shaibani who had been critical to establishing and maintaining what little direct command and control remained within the mainstream JAM. Nevertheless, on February 22nd, 2008, al-Sadr announced a six-month renewal of the ceasefire. The AAH, at this point in time operating under al-Kaabi, showed their displeasure by launching a massive mortar attack on the Green Zone the very next day, a tactic that quickly became a hallmark of AAH activity. While these attacks had little material effect on Coalition forces, they did effectively communicate to a variety of audiences the intended message that Muqtada did not control the broader Sadrist movement any longer. AAH and other Special Group activity reached such a peak by mid-2008, that the government launched an offensive in June to clear Amarah of militia elements and disrupt the supply lines of Iranian backed groups[308]. Echoing his reactions to earlier government crackdowns, Muqtada once again instructed his forces not to resist coalition forces. Likewise, AAH operatives largely fled to Iran prior to the onset of ISF operations.

With the mainstream JAM officially on stand-down, and Special Group factions in hiding in Iran, Muqtada and his top deputies set about attempting to restructure their organization around a centralized leadership structure. Many within Muqtada's inner circle came to feel that the best manner in which to go about this task was to abolish the JAM as it was, and create an altogether new organization which was leaner, more efficient, and above all, more controllable. As these actions directly challenged the AAH and similar groups, high-ranking Sadrist lieutenants found themselves in the crosshairs of their erstwhile allies. The highest level assassination came on April 11th, 2008, when Riyad al-Nouri, the most senior cleric within the Sadrist leadership and a major proponent of disbanding the JAM was gunned down on his way home from Friday Prayers in Kufa[309]. Just a few days prior, al-Nouri had published a letter to al-

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[308] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 34.
[309] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pp. 35-36.

Sadr justifying the JAM disbandment. Muqtada's own response to this debate seemed an exercise in prevarication… perhaps reflecting his own lack of surety in what to do.

> "Sadr initially seemed to oppose dissolving his militia. He escalated his rhetoric in a statement released by his Najaf office on April 19, 2008, threatening "open war until liberation" if Coalition and Iraqi forces continued their operations in Sadr City. On April 25, 2008, a second statement was read aloud in Sadr City and posted on the Sadr website that backed away from the earlier threats. The announcement clarified that the target of a potential "open war" was Coalition Forces and not the government. It read, "We mean a war against the occupier, nothing else, as there is no war between us and our brothers the Iraqis, regardless of their affiliation, race or sect." That same day, Sadrist MP Salah al-Ugaili reiterated that the freeze on militia violence from last August was still in place. Elements in the movement were wary of provoking a heavier response from the Iraqi government[310]."

The direction favored by al-Sadr was obscured by his removal to Iran and the disarray of the Najaf office after the assassination of al-Nouri. This fence riding posture served to encourage the more radical elements within the Sadrist camp… developments which were made all the more volatile by the fact that the moderates became increasingly afraid al-Sadr's presence in Qom was bringing him under the influence of Iran and the more radical Special Group factions. This concern was given legs when al-Sadr was reportedly placed under house arrest in Qom, beginning in the spring of 2008. In a political ploy, Muqtada declared on April 7th, 2008 that he would only disband the militia if al-Sistani and al-Ha'eri demanded that he do so[311]. This was

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[310] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 36.
[311] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 34.

followed by a declaration from al-Obeidi that Sistani had instructed him not to do so. That al-Sistani would make such a request was highly unlikely. Firstly, because al-Sistani claims he was not in communication with any of the Sadrist command at this time, and secondly because it was unlikely that al-Obeidi was in contact with Muqtada at this time, a fact which in and of itself emphasized the autonomy with which Sadrists acted, even within the inner circles of Muqtada's leadership.

Muqtada's political opponents, sensing that the past two years had greatly weakened the Sadrists' standing, set about marginalizing them politically. Firstly, they passed legislation banning organizations that maintained militias from political participation. This had the effect of driving a wedge between the political and military wings of the Sadrists[312]. The politicos wished to keep their offices and the power and influence that came with them, while JAM commanders obviously opposed the disbandment of the militia. The clerical leadership equivocated. When Muqtada withdrew his six deputies in the Maliki cabinet, leaving the remaining Sadrist Parliamentarians with no power, they began to strike a much more moderate line in order to exercise what little influence remained. Other Politicos sought to find ways around the ban, such as forming a new political party with no ties to the militia, or by running as independent candidates rather than as part of the Sadrist bloc. In the end, the politicos distanced themselves from the Najaf leadership as well as the JAM[313].

The first major push at restructuring came in the form of a statement read at Friday Prayers in Kufa on June 13th 2008[314]. This statement announced the transition of the JAM into a non-violent, civil service oriented organization. The focus of this new organization would be the provision of civil services and social and cultural education programs. As phrased by the Sadrist

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[312] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 34.
[313] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 35.
[314] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 37.

leadership, this group would wage the "intellectual jihad". This new organization would be called the *Mumahidoon…* or those who pave the way (for the return of the hidden Imam). The rhetoric accompanying this organizational re-branding is notable in its theological implications. Al-Sadr, it seems, was shedding his apocalyptic message of the JAM being composed of soldiers in the immediate service of the Imam, to one of preparing the way for his return. This notes a shift from post-millenarianism to pre-millenarianism. This is a difference noted by scholars of religion and violence[315] to signal that an organization is less likely to resort to violent activism. The Mumahidoon would be led by Hazem al-Araji and a council of nine other prominent Sadrist clerics. While the deliberations that gave rise to the Mumahidoon were not transparent, the re-organization is likely to have resulted from an agreement reached between al-Sadr, al-Maliki, and al-Ha'eri during a meeting on June 7th. While the over-all mission of the new Sadrist organization would be peaceful activism, the Mumahidoon would retain an armed wing[316]. This group would come to be known of as the Promise Day Brigades. As al-Sadr envisioned them, they would be well organized and tightly controlled. Their focus would exclude any efforts against the ISF and Iraqi forces and instead be restricted to operations against Coalition forces. Further, they had a number of restrictions placed upon them by Muqtada, in particular a strict prohibition against operations that could result in civilian or ISF casualties. This was likely due to the intense blowback accompanying the Karbala debacle of the previous year. The keeping of an armed faction was likely the result of intense pressure from within the movement to maintain the militia structure, and thus represented something of a compromise.

The PDB did not materialize right away however, as the previous two years had left Muqtada with few experienced fighters and no elite commanders, as they had either joined the

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[315] E. Sprinzak, 1988.
[316] M. Cochrane, January, 2009 pp. 37-39.

AAH, or fled to Iran. The PDB grew quickly, however, as it proved a magnet for other militants whose organizations were engaged in negotiations with the state. The moderate tone of the Mumahidoon was maintained as the Sadrists claimed that the PDB was merely a means of maintaining a para-military capability in the event that the Coalition presence persisted longer than the 2011 deadline agreed to by Baghdad and Washington. In an effort to avoid the negative press that accompanied previous Sadrist violence, Salah al-Obeidi stated that the new Promise Day Brigades would abide by the following six criteria[317]. Firstly, of all the legitimate Sadrists, only the Promise Day Brigades will bare arms, and such arms shall be directed only at the occupiers, not against the ISF or fellow Iraqis (i.e. Sunnis). Secondly, the PDBs will continue in existence for so long as the Coalition occupation exists. Thirdly, anyone who disobeyed the Sadrist command structure would be disowned by al-Sadr. Fourthly, only the PDB will be allowed to conduct the resistance and Muqtada alone will determine who comprises this new group. Fifthly, al-Sadr maintains that the groups will operate in total secrecy. Finally, this new group and its personnel will be authorized by al-Sadr personally via an open letter. Upon the introduction of this new organizational structure, the original JAM was disbanded on August 28th, 2008.

2008 also saw the reorganization of the Special Groups along Lebanese Hezbollah lines. In the winter/spring of 2008, they began a renewed offensive on ISF and Coalition forces, at times drawing on the aid of remaining JAM elements[318] who were ignoring Muqtada's peaceful overtures. Much of this renewed activity took on a different form, as the Special Groups were having to operate in an environment with a much diminished AQI presence, whose assaults had

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[317] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, pp. 23-24.
[318] Marisa Cochrane, "Special Groups Regenerate" Institute for the Study of War Iraq Report 11, Summer 2007-Summer 2008, p. 2.

declined by as much as 80% by some estimates[319]. As a reaction, the Special Groups began using their sophisticated operational expertise to mimic the attacks of AQI, and thus create the illusion of the continued need for Shia militias… a niche they saw themselves as filling[320].

> "Special Groups have also employed tactics that resemble those of AQI. In late November 2007, a Special Groups cell conducted and AQI-style attack in the crowded Ghazil pet market in Eastern Baghdad. A bomb, which was disguised as a birdcage and laden with ball-bearings exploded among the shoppers, killing more than a dozen and wounding close to sixty. According to Coalition reports, "The Special Group's aim appears to have been to demonstrate to Baghdadis the need for militia groups to continue providing their security in Baghdad." Months later, in another attempt to disrupt Baghdad's improving security, another Special Groups cell detonated a car bomb in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad in June 2008. More than sixty people were killed in this attack. By using a car bomb, the hallmark of AQI, an Iranian-linked cell sought to reignite sectarian violence and disrupt Sunni resettlement in the area… in order to maintain its real estate extortion network[321]."

In addition to sowing fear through mass casualty violence, AAH and related groups also sought to reignite the sectarian warfare of 2005-2006 by targeting Sons of Iraq leaders[322]. However, in March of 2008, their activity triggered the ISF counter-offensives of March-June, pushing as many as 5000 militants across the border into Iran.

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[319] Claire Russo and Marisa Cochranem, "Recent Attacks in Iraq: al-Qaeda in Iraq or Special Groups" Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder #35, October 6th 2008, p. 1.
[320] C. Russo and M. Cochrane, 2008, p. 2.
[321] C. Russo and M. Cochrane, 2008, p. 2.
[322] C. Russo and M. Cochrane, 2008, p. 3.

4.5.8   2009

Violent activity in Iraq had dropped precipitously by 2009, and this year was defined largely by activity leading up to the Provincial Elections. For the Sadrists, the structural circumstances of the Mumahidoon did not seem especially promising[323]. Firstly, there was no AQI as a threat to rally Shia round the Sadrists. Secondly, ISF control of neighborhoods had proven much more efficient than when the militias ran it, with the prices of basic commodities such as cooking oil and kerosene having dropped precipitously from where they stood when the JAM ran things. Thirdly, a central tenet of the Sadrist line, a demand for a withdrawal deadline for US troops, was undercut by the Status of Forces Agreement of November of 2008. The SOFA had a withdrawal deadline and was passed despite Sadrist opposition in Parliament, depriving Muqtada of any role in what should have been a political victory for the Sadrists. Fourthly, on April 6th, 2008, in an effort to undercut the support network for the Sadrist Trend, Maliki made his long anticipated statement that organizations maintaining a militia could not run in elections[324]. Since the Mumahidoon continued to maintain the PDB, the Sadrists were not able to run as a voting bloc. As a result, it did not seem that Muqtada would have the necessary infrastructure to sufficiently challenge the ISCI and *al-Da'wa*. Maliki in particular was trying to infringe on Sadrist turf by establishing Tribal councils in Shia neighborhoods intended to both empower the tribes and create patronage networks that would bring them under *al-Da'wa's* control. Showing his political astuteness, however, al-Sadr had al-Obeidi announce that the Mumahidoon would not stand for the provincial elections, but in turn would back independents and tribal candidates. This was billed by the Sadrist organization as a means of avoiding sectarianism, but it actually enabled the Sadrists to accomplish two things. Firstly, it

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[323] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, pp. 42-43.
[324] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 12.

circumnavigated the restrictions around political parties maintaining militias. Secondly, it acted as a buffer from criticism should the movement perform poorly in the polls.

The 2009 Provincial Elections were to be a test of what remained of Muqtada and the Sadrists' political influence. As it turns out, their showing was mixed. Given that they were not running on lists, but were backing independent candidates for office, gauging their success depended on the showing of candidates they endorsed. As expected, the party lost many key elections, in particular in Basra, Maysan (which they previously controlled), and (most damagingly) Sadr City. This is in part due to the political and military damage heaped upon the JAM and the Sadrist leadership from 2007 onwards. However, al-Sadr himself was also to blame, as he did not announce which lists the Sadrist offices would be backing until just before the elections, leaving little time for organizing aggressive campaigns. In the end, Muqtada backed two lists, the Blameless and Reconstruction List and the Trend of the Noble Ones List. While these political plays failed to produce substantial results in what should have been Sadrist strongholds, they did spread Sadrist political influence outside al-Sadr's traditional powerbase, trading the 12.7% of the vote the Sadrists received in three provinces in 2005, for 8.1% of the vote across 11 provinces in the South in 2009[325].

4.5.9   2010

For the most part, the Mumahidoon and the PDB laid low throughout 2010. In total, the year was marked by two main events: the Sadrist showing in the 2010 Parliamentary elections, and the return of al-Sadr from Qom, after three years in exile.

The major event of 2010 was the Parliamentary elections of the 7th of March. While the Mumahidoon was officially banned from participating in elections due to their continued use of

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[325] Joel Wing "How did the Sadrists do in the Provincial Elections?" accessed on 01/12/2011 at http://www.epic-usa.org/node/3596.

the Promise Day Brigades, the Sadrists ran anyway, with little opposition from Maliki, who spent his time instead attempting to disqualify former Ba'athists from standing. The Sadrists ran as a partner in the National Iraqi List, a coalition made up of most of the former members of the United Iraqi Alliance, with the notable exception of Maliki's *al-Da'wa*, who, after a break with the ISCI, decided to run with the State of Law Coalition. It is reported that the partnership with ISCI, a group the JAM had repeatedly sparred with in the past, was a result of cajoling from Tehran[326]. In addition to the ISCI, the Sadrists' partners were the National Reform Trend (now headed by Ibrahim al-Jaafari), the Fadhila Party, and two breakaway factions of *al-Da'wa*; the Islamic Organization and the Domestic Faction. Given the tensions within the broader movement as well as the political blows the organization had received over the previous two years, the Sadrist showing was quite exemplary with Muqtada garnering 40 of the 70 seats won by the NIA compared to the ISCI's 18. The strong showing was largely a result of a centralized message that was able to rally the mass support of the Sadrist movement effectively. The formulation of this message was made possible by a sophisticated electoral campaign that utilized polling data to determine platforms and target key demographics. In the previous election, the Sadrists had large appeal, but sent mixed messages to their constituency, causing many to boycott the elections under the assumption that the Sadrist leadership questioned the legitimacy of the US led democratization process.

> "Although rivals disparaged the Sadrists' election campaign, documents and interviews show an unprecedented discipline that has thrust the group to the brink of perhaps its greatest political influence in Iraq[327]."

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[326] Anthony Shadid, "Followers of Sadr Emerge Stronger After Iraq Elections" *The New York Times* March 16th, 2010.
[327] A. Shadid, March 16th, 2010.

In all, the NIA had the third highest showing in the elections, after Ayad Allawi's Iraqi National Movement (81 seats) and Nuri al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition (79 seats). A number of factors played to Muqtada's favor in the succeeding period, among them, Maliki's inability to win a majority of seats, Allawi's inability to attract Kurds or Shia lists into his coalition— making a government under the INM all but impossible, and the fact that the ISCI faired extremely poorly in the elections, making the Sadrists the dominant party by far within the NIA. The Sadrists took advantage of their position by holding a second ballot so that Iraqis could decide which of five candidates would receive the Sadrists' seats; al-Maliki, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Abdul Adel Mahdi, Ayad Allawi, or Muhammed Jafaar al-Sadr. Even though the Sadrists' 40 seats were not enough to provide either Allawi or Maliki with enough seats to reach the 163 needed to form a majority government, this proved a PR coupe for the group, enhancing it's image as a kingmaker in the Iraqi government. The outcome of the ad hoc election, however, was to support al-Jafaari, the head of the NIA, a choice which was impossible given the necessity of bringing at least one of the two major contenders (Allawi or Maliki) into the coalition, each of whom had far more seats than al-Jafaari. In the end, the Sadrists were able to bloc the formation of a government for 10 months while they attempted to unseat Maliki, whom they widely regarded as the cause of their military defeats in 2008.

In the end, the Sadrists conceded to a Maliki led government with a host of other factions cobbled into a loose but expansive coalition. For their showing, the Sadrists were awarded seven ministries (as opposed to the two they controlled following the 2005 elections), including the ministries of Construction and Habitat, Housing and Development, Labor and Social Affairs, Tourism and Antiquities, Water Resources, Works and Planning, and one of the fifteen Ministry

of State positions. Bolstered by his strong position in the Iraqi government, al-Sadr returned to Iraq on Wednesday, January 6th, 2011 to a strong show of support in Najaf.

4.6   Analysis of Shifts in Organizational Design

4.6.1   The JAM as a Grassroots Community Security Force

Until its official disbandment in 2008, the Jaiysh al-Mahdi and the Sadrist leadership in Najaf suffered from a path dependent leadership strategy that had its roots in the social network developed by Muhammed Sadiq al-Sadr in the 1990's. As related in the introductory sections of this chapter, the Sadrist network consisted of local outreach groups operating out of local mosques, husseiniyyas, and Islamic cultural centers. Tribal leaders were, in turn, brought into this network through the Sha'ria innovations of Sadiq, which allowed them to rule on religious matters. While the local imams and tribal leaders paid deference to Sadiq as their *marjiyya*, they—out of necessity—operated autonomously. In essence, Sadiq laid the groundwork for what would become a hybrid network, incorporating networked franchise nodes into a central hub in the form of Sadiq's inner circle in Najaf. This allowed Sadiq to develop alternative authority structures in Shia areas across parts of Baghdad and southern Iraq in the midst of the Saddam dictatorship.

It was this network that Muqtada reinvigorated and would in short order provide the blueprint for the Jaiysh al-Mahdi a few years after the death of Sadiq. In the early days of 2002-2003, then, the JAM and the Sadrist leadership consisted of the central node in Najaf, and networked nodes across Shia areas in the south of Iraq as Muqtada reopened the Offices of the Martyr al-Sadr his father had founded under Saddam. What paramilitary capabilities the group possessed came in the form of small bodyguard outfits whose sole purpose it was to serve as protection to Sadrist clergy. As these networks evolved, the leaders of the respective OMS's

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became the defacto leaders of the JAM outfits attached to those localized Sadrist outposts. Several factors allowed the Sadrist leadership to maintain some form of command and control over ancillary nodes. First was the spiritual authority of Sadiq al-Sadr, represented in his successor al-Ha'eri, whose position as a *Marja al-Taqlid* commanded deference from his followers. Secondly, and no less importantly, Najaf controlled the finances of the OMS cells as they controlled collection of the *khoms* on al-Ha'eri's behalf. Since the JAM at this point operated under the regional OMS offices, they too answered to the Najaf leadership's authority. Thirdly, the relatively small size of the organization (at least compared to what it would become) aided in the manipulation and control of the network from Najaf. Thus, while the early JAM was in effect, a networked organization, it was populated by an ideological homogenous group of activists who relied upon the Sadrist command structure for ideological and material support.

4.6.2   The Jaiysh al-Mahdi as an Umbrella Group for a Militant Network

Evidence suggests that from the start of the US occupation Muqtada sought to create a Hezbollah style organization with a political leadership at the top, directing a hierarchical quasi-military organization. Despite his efforts at achieving this, however, events conspired to push the JAM in the opposite direction, from a mixed hierarchy/cellular organization, into a wholly decentralized violent *movement*, populated by ideologically similar but operationally autonomous terrorist cells. The reasons for this shift in organizational design are three fold. First, was the tremendous rise in the demand side for militant activism, which caused an explosion of militias in the early days of the Occupation. Second, was the split with al-Ha'eri, which served to undermine the ideological homogeneity within the Sadrist movement, problematizing what netwar theorists posit is the network-centric replacement for direct command and control in a complex networks. And third, was the loss of financial control over

subordinate cells, caused in turn by a loss of al-Ha'eri's *khoms* as well as the rise of Tehran as a major backer of Shia militias and the proliferation of organized criminal activity that took place under the Sadrist banner.

Throughout the fall and winter of 2003, leading into 2004, the demand side of violent networks increased precipitously as security conditions deteriorated throughout the first months of the occupation. The Mahdi Army, in particular gained legitimacy by offering protection and social services that the government could not provide[328]. By the late summer of 2004, the JAM had grown from a starting point of a few hundred fighters, to an estimated 4000-4500 fighters, and by 2008, Multi-National Forces-Iraq placed their numbers from 25,000-45,000 active fighters[329]. The increase in the demand for violent networks grew out of the severe insecurity of Shia communities in the days following the invasion. As the Sadrists moved into areas, setting up civil services and taking over law enforcement duties, they solidified their territorial control by forcing other actors out, namely organs of the state, which they decried as tools of the US occupation. Thus their claim to legitimacy as proponents of law and order in Shia communities became self-reifying. The true feeder of radical Shia violence, however, was the al-Qaeda in Iraq attack on the al-Askariyya Mosque in Samarra. This act triggered the outbreak of the Civil War and the sectarian violence in which the JAM and affiliate groups would eventually become the largest transgressors, despite overt and sustained attempts by the Sadrist leadership to avoid sectarian strife. The civil war also provided the JAM with the ability to expand their territorial control as ethnic cleansing opened up new areas of Baghdad to Shia power blocs.

The trend toward decentralization had begun well before the outright start of the civil war. The two major engagements in Najaf in 2004 underscored the fact that the JAM's growth

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[328] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 14.
[329] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, p. 14.

allowed Muqtada to call upon a large number of fighters from across a large geographic space. But, they also exposed the fact that the decentralized nature of JAM militias made a coordinated defense of JAM territory all but impossible. Eyewitnesses to the violence in Southern Iraq during 2004 remarked not so much at the size of the militias, but at their utter lack of coordination and tactical prowess. Al-Sadr's attempts to bring a political solution to the fighting were ultimately successful, but likewise suffered from an inability of Muqtada's inner circle to effectively command actions on the ground. Unfortunately for the Sadrist command, the outcome of the second siege of Najaf—the break with al-Ha'eri—further served to undermine what central authority remained in the JAM. With the loss of the *khoms* funding, many JAM units in Baghdad and elsewhere became self-financing. This led them to develop protection rackets, which in turn quickly developed into a quasi-mafia system of rent-seeking behavior. As financial incentives replaced ideological affinity with the broader Sadrist movement as a motivation for political mobilization, al-Sadr's hold on the organization was further weakened.

Finally, the factionalism that arose from the two sieges of Najaf, invited Tehran to start openly backing a large number of breakaway JAM factions, as well as elements that remained a part of the mainstream JAM. Iranian largesse coupled with the relative poverty of the Najaf establishment meant many of the Sadrists answered to the IRGC-QF rather than Muqtada. This imbalance of authority was overt as it related to fully autonomous organizations such as the AAH and Khata'ib Hezbollah, but it was also felt within the structure of the mainstream JAM, where it was covert but no less real. Since individual militants were not paid, Tehran's inducements found a receptive audience in many militiamen who still (at least in theory) answered to Muqtada.

While netwar theorists preclude that this sort of networked expansion both within and across organizations is the hallmark of 21st century warfare, from the perspective of the Sadrist leadership, it was having a deleterious effect both on their organization as well as the broader Sadrist movement. The problem, from the point of view of the Najaf leadership, was that the organization was unable to grow and adopt as the ranks of JAM militants expanded. In complex organizations, there are only three mechanisms by which command and control can be asserted over ancillary nodes, a legitimate claim to leadership, the ability to enforce negative sanctions on nodes for non-compliance, and the ability to control the material resources of various elements in an organization. All of these mechanisms of control had been either wholly or largely undermined within the JAM structure, and as the organization became more distributed throughout 2005-2006, these conditions became self-reinforcing, resulting in a vicious cycle of decentralization. As various commands within the JAM structure showed themselves to be operating independently of al-Sadr's leadership, Muqtada attempted to deal with them by evicting them from the Sadrist organization[330]. However, The ideological schism with al-Ha'eri gave renegade commanders an easy method of separating from al-Sadr while maintaining the ideological label of being Sadrists. The propensity of the Sadrist movement to resort to mob violence was also problematized by the lack of ideological legitimacy of the distributed Sadrist command structure. This was made apparent in the complete inability of al-Sadr to reign in Shia violence in the aftermath of the al-Askariyya Shrine attack.

> "Shiekh Ali says that the Mehdi Army did not have the kind of organization that
> could restore order. "We could not control the situation because we are a popular
> movement without a salaried staff. When people went to a Sadrist leader in a

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[330] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 22.

district and he did not agree with an attack on Sunni Mosques, they would leave him, saying he was a coward and feeling let down[331]."

The diffusion of violent capabilities within each node also meant that Muqtada and the Najaf command structure had a limited ability to enforce their command over criminal and renegade elements of their organization. Further, with the majority of the resources for the Shia militias coming either from Tehran or localized predation, Muqtada had no capacity to cut off arms or to curtail financial flows to rogue JAM units. Quite to the contrary, since rogue elements relied upon violent activities, either to sustain funding from Iran, or to extract resources from the local population, they had significant institutional incentives to seek alternative modes of ideological legitimacy in order to mollify the effects of Muqtada's repeated calls to stand down on their own membership.

> "In Basra, a province in southeastern Iraq, Mr. Sadr has less direct control over militiamen, and they have tended to operate to suit their own agenda. Local leaders there have said that he has disciplined some members and fired others, but with little overall effect. He has run through four different leaders in Basra, according to the intelligence official, and has even had to shut offices temporarily, when local leaders ignored him and acted on their own[332]."

The systematic decentralization of command in the larger JAM enterprise caused numerous tactical and strategic problems for the Najaf leadership. Firstly, it led to a loss of popular support among what should have been a solid Sadrist constituency. Secondly, while al-Sadr's political acumen was displayed on numerous occasions following engagements with Iraqi and Coalition forces, his inability to control violence retarded his attempts to convert limited

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[331] P. Cockburn, 2008, p. 184.
[332] Sabrina Tavernise, "Cleric Said to Lose Reins of Parts of Iraqi Militia" *The New York Times* September 28th, 2006.

military successes into lasting political victories. Finally, al-Sadr's limited command and control not only limited his ability to compete with rival organizations, but ultimately proliferated those rival factions, with severe consequences on the Najaf leadership's ability to steer what remained of the mainstream JAM.

The JAM's popular support rested on the Sadrist leadership's claim to be the protector of the Shia under-class. There are three reasons that popular opinion, at least in part, began to turn away from the JAM. The greatest concern for many Shia was their vulnerability to mafia factions masquerading as JAM guerillas. As the JAM moved into territory, they often began a vicious cycle of insecurity and protection rackets, driving out the legitimate authorities, setting themselves up as local governments and then driving up the prices of commodities, utilities, and of course, physical protection. This predatory behavior on the part of ancillary JAM cells, reinforced by local strongman commanders, served as the largest single source of anti-JAM sentiment within the Shia population. In addition to this devolution into organized criminal activities, the JAM's wanton use of violence often provoked disgust from their constituent communities. In the first instance, the JAM was often seen as needlessly provoking counter-actions from Coalition and ISF forces. This was definitely the case with large-scale conflicts such as the two sieges of Najaf, as well as continued low-intensity conflict on the edges of Sadr City. Further, the Jaiysh al-Mahdi's rampant participation in sectarian violence from 2005-2007 was viewed by most Iraqis as counter productive and contrary to the stated aims of the organization as a nationalist movement by and for Iraqis. Finally, the JAM's religious credentials were continually called into question by their constant warring over control of shrines and their continued habit of hiding weapons and materials in mosques and holy places, making them, in turn, targets of Coalition and ISF military activity.

A lesson learned by Muqtada throughout this second phase of the JAM, and one that should be noted by proponents of the 'symbolic terror' school of thought, is that effectively controlling violence means that the ability to call off violence is equally as important to an organization as is the ability to bring it to bear against an adversary in the first place. Time and again, however, Muqtada proved unable to maximize his bargaining position with his state adversaries due to his loose grip on the JAM's violence. Since Muqtada alone did not control the level of violence being unleashed by his organization, he was limited in the concessions he could extract from Baghdad and Washington during peace negotiations. For example, two truces were reached in Najaf after the first siege in 2004; on May 27th, and on June 4th. The first truce was broken by the Sadrists almost immediately. The second was broken within a week when a JAM cell overran a police station, freeing prisoners and inviting looters to scavenge the building[333]. Continual harassment of US forces by JAM elements throughout the summer of 2004 in large part led to the second siege of that year, one which proved costly to the Najaf leadership in both men and popular support. Also at issue was participation in stand-downs and disarmament campaigns. Given that militiamen did not receive their materials from the Sadrist command, Muqtada had a limited ability to command his followers to lay down arms and participate in the numerous peace initiatives he tried to foster, since those weapons were the personal property of his followers.

Perhaps the most obvious consequence of the decentralization of the JAM, was the proliferation of rival organizations which sprung from the JAM (notably Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Khata'ib Hezbollah) which immediately began competing with the remaining JAM for control of the Shia resistance. Given the superiority of funding, and the control of vital smuggling routes

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[333] Edward Wong, "The Reach of War: Politics; Shiite Cleric Is Forming Party That May Play Role in Elections" *The New York Times* June 14th, 2004.

into Iran via the Sheibani network, these rogue JAM militias were better situated to recruit and retain radicals. Opposition to Muqtada's various attempts to reign in these militias created such a violent backlash that it was likely threats emanating from within the Sadrist camp that caused Muqtada to flee to Iran in 2007, effectively decapitating the remaining JAM hierarchy.

As a result of Muqtada's institutional incapacity to respond to current events, the political and military decline of the Sadrists began in earnest by December of 2006[334], and culminated in a series of catastrophic military engagements in early to mid 2008. From Qom Iran, Muqtada announced in the summer of 2008 that the JAM would be disbanded and a new militant structure would take its place.

4.6.3   The Promise Day Brigades: the JAM as the Paramilitary Arm of a Political Party

A full explanation for the reorganization of the JAM was given by Muqtada on July, 30th, 2008[335].

> "Is it right that you abandoned resistance and you are forbidding it? We would like you to give us your frank opinion. Peace upon the mujahid Iraqi people and peace upon every mujahid and resisting man. You should know that I am one of those who believes (that the resistance is a legitimate right by human reason and in Islamic law and by human law.) It is even (a duty). And especially after you know that I have taken letters of permission (precaution) for what has happened in a defensive jihad against the occupiers, and another for the continuity of resistance from more than one marjaia, may God prolong their lives and favor us with their shadow and jihad spirit . . .   But this doesn't mean that every person carrying a weapon will be part of the resistance. There are several orders that

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[334] M. Cochrane, January, 2009, p. 6.
[335] A. Cordesman and J. Ramos, 2008, pp. 24-25.

must be followed, because if the door is open for everyone, this will result in a great blight. Most importantly, the defamation of the reputation of the resistance, and everyone knows that preserving its reputation is everyone's duty. Especially after some of the resisting men have slipped and begun targeting others than the occupiers. They steal Iraq's money with no rights and use its revenues with no permission, and disobey and violate the central command in many instances . . . Even some of those who were protégés of the resistance were targeting our brothers and beloved ones instead of the occupiers, a cause of deep remorse to me. It became necessary to us to dissolve some of the groups and to fire them from the resistance, to preserve the reputation of the Shi'ite belief and the resistance. We make conditions that are not only a leader's conditions, but also those of Islam and human reason. Some of these conditions are: Do not target civilians. Do not target the government, even if it is (unfair) for some. That is not permitted. If the government stands by the occupiers against the resistance in the field of battle, the resistance must limit its damage as much as possible and according to what is necessary. Limit weapons to the hands of the specialized resistance, and none others. Military action of the resistance should not be harmful to the people. Absolutely avoid military actions in cities. Preserve the centrality of command in receiving military orders from its known marjaia, because its dispersion will cause great damage and the greatest blight. It is not permitted to carry weapons – only for the specialized resistance. Everyone else will be specialized in (cultural jihad). Obey the terms and regulations that have been recently issued. Those who want to join the

honorable Iraqi resistance have to commit to the terms made by the known leadership in order to join. Naturally (these) cannot be revealed, for the most important basis of resistance is preserving secrecy by all means. Do not damage the people's services, like electricity, water and others. Do not use the governmental properties, or involve them in resistance actions, where there is no permission from the legitimate marjaia [Shi'a religious leaders]. That is stressed after the current government claims it is (politically) trying to drive the occupier out.

I call on our great marjaia, our bright clerics from all sects and divisions, to embrace honorable resistance as much as possible and in a way that will not endanger their security, which is our duty to preserve, and to issue their fatwahs against signing any agreement between the government and the occupier, even if it is for friendship or any other purpose. And I call upon the Iraqi government again not to sign this agreement, and I inform them I am ready to support it popularly and politically if they do not sign it, especially after some clerics have prohibited signing this document. We hope the Iraqi people will form ranks to stand against this agreement by political and popular, peaceful means. Despite the difficulties that are facing the believers, detentions, raids, and torture in prisons. Therefore, I demand the release of the resisting men whose hands weren't stained by the sectarian wars and the criminal car bombs, and I demand the lawful organizations, and above them the United Nations: look at the circumstances of the prisoners in American and Iraqi prisons, as it is their duty to the oppressed people."

This reorganization of the entire Sadrist command structure, including the JAM, was a reassertion of Muqtada's original desire to model his organization on the rigid hierarchy of Lebanese Hezbollah (whose calculations were, ironically, in part to blame for Muqtada's failure to control his organization to begin with). The Mumahidoon, and the affiliated Promise Day Brigades represent a realignment of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi along three axes; one military, one political, and one ideological.

Militarily, Muqtada sought to trade in his unwieldy network of Sadrist militias for a smaller, more agile, and more controllable cadre of seasoned fighters who would respond to a centralized command structure. Muqtada realized that he required a paramilitary arm in order to remain salient in Iraqi political circles, however he was well aware of how the diffuse nature of the JAM had harmed his movement. Muqtada sought to purge his organization of rogue elements in two broad ways. Firstly he commanded those aspects of the JAM that remained loyal to him to stand down during times of intense conflict with the ISF and Coalition forces. This enabled Muqtada to allow oppositional forces to purge his organization for him, as those units being engaged were by default rogue cells. To compliment this strategy, Muqtada also left behind the Golden Mahdi Army when he left for Qom. The Golden JAM consisted of diehard Sadrist loyalists who continued to answer to the Najaf leadership. While Coalition and ISF forces battled it out with the more militant anti-occupation and anti-Sunni elements of the Shia insurgency, the Golden JAM sought to engage organized criminal elements in JAM controlled areas.

Politically, the nascent Mumahidoon sought to successfully engage in the political process by solidifying the Sadrist base of support in Shia communities. To this end, much of the former mainstream JAM infrastructure was reorganized into a social and civil services

organization. Or, as a Sadrist press release put it, ""an ideological, cultural, religious and social army" to battle "the secular Western tide,…[336]"". The re-imagined JAM concentrates on doling out welfare, providing basic services for constituents, and serving as a political springboard for Muqtada backed Sadrist candidates in the 2009 regional and 2010 national elections. Perhaps most odd, given the Mumahidoon's Islamist roots, was an art exhibition in Baghdad, sponsored by the Sadrists, in commemoration of Imam Hussein[337].

Ideologically, Muqtada sought to reassert control of the Sadrists Trend by invoking multiple shifts in Sadrist rhetoric. Firstly, al-Sadr has sought to remove his reliance on al-Ha'eri as a source of theological support. Since the Shi'ite clerical establishment necessitates deference to a *Marja,* Muqtada has sought to re-establish control over the JAM by becoming a *Marja* himself, and thus one worthy of receiving *khoms* which can then be used to manage the daily concerns of the Mumahidoon. To this end he has been studying to become an Ayatollah during his self-imposed exile in Qom. Initially it was estimated that he would achieve that rank by late 2010. As of January 2011, he has only just returned to Iraq and it is not yet clear what rank he has attained. Given his backing by Tehran, and his political clout in Iraq, it seems simply a matter of time before he can assert spiritual control over the Mumahidoon and the Promise Day Brigades. More subtly, the rhetoric of the Mumahidoon represents a stark contrast to the eschatological theology of the past JAM. Meaning "one who prepares the way", the Mumahidoon ostensibly envisions itself as a cultural defense force, acting as a preservative force of Shia Islam until the return of the Hidden Imam. The focus on non-violent asceticism is

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[336] Steven Lee Meyers, "A New Role for Iraqi Militants: Patrons of the Arts" *The New York Times* February 13th, 2009.
[337] S. Meyers, February 13th, 2009.

decidedly post-millenarian in tone and stands in marked contrast the pre-millenarian[338] exhortations of the JAM's early days.

The results of the JAM's reorganization into the Mumahidoon and Promise Day Brigades have been detailed in the 2010 section of the JAM's operational history. While the new organization has comparatively little capacity to engage in political violence, versus its forbear, its political successes have been astounding. The unified Sadrist message was largely to thank for the strong showing in the 2009 and 2010 elections. In addition, evidence suggests the Sadrists were able to use sophisticated polling data to strategically target key populations in the South. These electoral victories systematically expanded the Najaf leadership's base of support both within and without government. Perhaps most importantly, the Sadrists have been able to sideline their biggest competitor, the ISCI, given the latter's marginal showing in the NIA electoral lists. While it is still too early to come to a definitive conclusion regarding the long-term effects of the Sadrist reorganization, the short-term ramifications have been impressive from an academic perspective.

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[338] Post-millenarians emphasize preconditions that must be met prior to the onset of an apocalyptic event. In other words, the Mahdi will not return until certain preconditions have been met on earth. The emphasis on achieving these preconditions in radical religious organizations is often cited as a cause of escalation. Pre-millenarians, however, believe only a theological event will usher in the post-apocalyptic utopia. Thus these movements ted to be ascetic and focus on 'right living' rather than provoking radical change.

CHAPTER 5

AL-QAEDA IN IRAQ

There is a reason netwar proponents continually harken to the organizational prowess of al-Qaeda as a case study illustrating the advantages of diffuse and complex organizational designs. The organization has (as of now) a relatively long history as a violent organization and has proven itself capable of operating across a wide variety of geographic locations, from the US and Western Europe, to North and East Africa, the Middle East, as well as South, Central, and East Asia. Al-Qaeda has survived the US invasion of Afghanistan with its upper echelons of leadership largely intact and has continued to prove a thorn in the side of Western Governments. Perhaps most importantly, al-Qaeda as an organization, has maintained its violent capabilities against long odds. The question remains, however, of how successful al-Qaeda has been as a radical *political* organization, and what the answer to that question has to say about the continued viability of al-Qaeda as an oppositional political organization in the 21st century.

The organization known of as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is a case in point. Variously known of as the Zarqawi Network, al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers, and al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, AQI has taken the model of al-Qaeda Central (a term used to denote the remaining leadership of the original al-Qaeda organization… likely in hiding in Western Pakistan) and apply it in the context of an ongoing insurgency. As this chapter will illustrate, AQI represents a highly professional organization that was able to network its operations on three levels. On the first level, AQI operated as a network of hierarchical cells, the leadership of each answering to a superior at successively higher levels of the organization. These cells were functionally autonomous, but linked to each other in a highly organized fashion. At the second level, AQI

networked its operations with like-minded insurgent groups, who acted as affiliates of AQI, under the rubric of two successive umbrella organizations, the Mujahideen Shura Council (MSC), and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). The MSC and the ISI brought many organizations under the direction (though not necessarily control) of AQI's leadership and allowed the organization to spread into geographic territories not by conquest, but by assimilating organizations that already operated in those locales. In addition, by merging with Iraqi run organizations, AQI was able to indigenize its operations at a point in time when it was being criticized for its foreign membership, and more importantly, its foreign ideology. On the third level, and as the name insinuates, AQI is an Iraqi based affiliate of a transnational violent salafist network of radicals, who loosely coalesce around the al-Qaeda brand name. Thus, as al-Qaeda has driven much of the speculation on networked terrorists organizations, AQI is an example of how al-Qaeda has managed to maintain relevance after September 11th.

> "Though Mr. Zarqawi reportedly has strong ties to Al Qaeda, American officials say he and Al Qaeda operate separately. He is often cited as an example of how Al Qaeda has transformed itself from a tightly knit organization into a far-flung operation comprising free-lance terrorists, drawing on Mr. bin Laden mostly for inspiration and technique[339]."

Nevertheless, evidence strongly suggests that AQI attempted throughout the Iraqi insurgency to move from being a networked terrorist organization to being a hierarchical (para)military outfit. It attempted to do this first by bringing together the disparate parts of the Iraqi insurgency under its leadership, and later by forming umbrella organizations AQI leadership hoped would

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[339] Dexter Filkins, "THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: REVENGE KILLING; IRAQ TAPE SHOWS THE DECAPITATION OF AN AMERICAN" *The New York Times*, May 12th, 2004.

centralize command and control over affiliate groups. In addition, AQI's own internal structure shows a strong preference for formalized hierarchy. This hierarchy was delineated by internal communications seized by Coalition Forces (discussed in detail below) and reflected in the movement of financial resources across the organization, which in turn were recorded according to institutionalized accounting processes. As a result, AQI had some substantial success as a violent organization. However, at no point did it stand a chance of becoming the dominant political force in the Sunni Triangle, in large part due to the fact that it could never consolidate its operations as a monolithic oppositional force.

5.1   Organizational Background

5.1.1   History

The organizational background of al-Qaeda in Iraq is varied as the organization did not arise from a typical radicalization process of a formerly non-violent organization such as the JAM, nor was it simply borne of a schism within a pre-existing organization as in the case of the Abu Sayyaf Group. Rather, it was formed, and is continually mutating, via a series of mergers, schisms, alliances and co-minglings with other violent organizations, both within Iraq as well as without. The author has therefore divided the evolution of AQI into four stages. The first details the evolution of the Iraqi Salafist cells which formed the first point of contact between al-Qaeda affiliated elements in Afghanistan with militants in Iraq. The second details the evolution of the transnational Zarqawist network, which emerged as an affiliated, but autonomous component of the broader al-Qaeda network in the lead up to the war in Iraq. The third stage relates the merger between the Zarqawist franchise and the local Salafist organizations in Iraqi Kurdistan. The fourth stage of AQI details the formal merger between Zarqawi's Tawhid w'al Jihad organization and al-Qaeda Central, and the history of the organization since that point.

5.1.1.1 History: Evolution of the Iraqi Salafist Cells

The earliest incarnation of what would become the Iraqi component of al-Qaeda evolved in the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan. The earliest salafist organization in this region was the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK). The IMIK came into being during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980's. By siding with the Iranians during a crucial operation, it was the IMIK that invited the Halabja massacre, in which many civilians were killed in chemical weapons attacks after Ba'athist forces had been bested[340]. Following the first Iraq War, the IMIK made good use of its geographic position in the Northeast of the country, which became part of the Kurdish 'no-go' area during the 1990's. During this time the IMIK proved fairly competent at playing the politics of Iraqi Kurdistan, at times siding with the mainstream PDK and at times with the PUK[341], depending upon political circumstances. The IMIK also positioned itself as an oppositional force within Saddam's Iraq, and was listed as an eligible organization to receive US funds under the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998[342].

In the late 1990's, Iran took advantage of a rapprochement between Turkey and the PDK, to bring the IMIK back into Tehran's orbit with the PUK[343]. As a stipulation of the reconciliation, however, the IMIK was not to enforce Sharia in areas under its control. This political concession caused a splinter within the IMIK resulting in two new offshoots, Kurdish Hamas (led by Omar Barzaini) and Tawhid (led by Abu Bakr Howleri), both of which emerged from the hard-core salafist fringes of the organization. Despite these internal divisions, in the spring of 2001, the IMIK took part in local elections and garnered 20% of the vote in PDK/PUK

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[340] "Radical Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Mouse that Roared" *Iraq Briefing: International Crisis Group* Amman/Brussels, February 7th, 2003.
[341] "Radical Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Mouse that Roared" *Iraq Briefing: International Crisis Group* Amman/Brussels, February 7th, 2003.
[342] Kenneth Katzman, 2003, p. 13.
[343] "Radical Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Mouse that Roared" *Iraq Briefing: International Crisis Group* Amman/Brussels, February 7th, 2003.

controlled territories and 50% of the vote in Halabja[344]. This foray into democratic politics served to further splinter the organization, resulting in another offshoot in May of 2001, the Islamic Group of Kurdistan, or *Komeleh Islami*. On September 1st, 2001, the Hamas and Tawhid offshoots of IMIK unified under the leadership of Abdullah al-Shafi and formed Jund al-Islam (Soldiers of Islam) in Tawileh, Iraq[345]. A Jund al-Islam press release of September, 2001 claims that al-Shafii had the blessings of bin Laden[346], and at its founding bin Laden was said to have given Jund al-Islam $300,000 in start-up capital via two London based al-Qaeda agents; Abu Musab al-Suri and Abu Basir[347]. The new organization then declared jihad against the PDK and PUK, who, sensing the changing winds after 9/11, in turn collaborated to crack down on radical Salafi networks operating in their respective areas of influence.

Jund al-Islam responded to the increased pressure from Kurdish Peshmerga forces by fusing with the Islamic Union of Kurdistan (another IMIK offshoot). The two organizations came together under the leadership of Majmeddin Faraj Ahmad, or Mullah Krekar, to form Ansar al-Islam. Krekar had been living in Norway since the early 1990's but had directed Islamist activities in Iraq throughout that time. Further, it is believed that he traveled to Iraq to direct militant activity on a fairly regular basis. The manner of the merger would prove illustrative of successive unification proceedings as it was the result of a long negotiated process, which was overseen by a representative of Zarqawi, al-Shami. The formulation of Ansar al-Islam would also provide a template for the organization of AQI. The leadership structure had an Emir (Krekar), who was aided by two assistants, as well as a functionally differentiated

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[344] "Radical Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Mouse that Roared" *Iraq Briefing: International Crisis Group* Amman/Brussels, February 7th, 2003, p. 3.
[345] "Radical Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan: The Mouse that Roared" *Iraq Briefing: International Crisis Group* Amman/Brussels, February 7th, 2003, p. 4.
[346] Jean Charles Brisard and Damien Martinez, <u>Zarqawi: the New Face of Al-Qaeda</u> New York, NY: Other Press, 2005, p. 109.
[347] J.C. Brisard, 2005.

bureaucracy with a military committee, a religious council, an Islamic Court, and a security council.

Ansar's first order of business was to open up two training camps in the Biyat region of Kurdistan, one at Sargat, and one at Khurmal. As fighters began to poor in, both from Afghanistan, fleeing the US action there, and from the wider Middle East in anticipation of a US invasion of Iraq, Ansar began large-scale cooperation with the nascent Zarqawi network based out of Heart, in Afghanistan. The biggest immediate threat to Ansar, however, was not the US, but the mainstream Kurdish militias, specifically the PUK. Regular engagements with the Peshmerga resulted in an attack on PUK headquarters on February 2nd, 2004, that killed over 100. At this point in time (2001-2003) Ansar fighters were largely trained in Afghanistan, save those who were able to graduate from Ansar bases in Kurdistan. Contact with the Zarqawi network was maintained through al-Shami who remained in Iraq as an intermediary between Krekar and Zarqawi. The detention of Krekar by Norwegian authorities in 2002, allowed Zarqawi to become the dominant influence within Ansar, and it was at this point that the organization began acting as a Zarqawi affiliate. The growth in Ansar's operations required regular cash flows. Ansar was able to fund itself in these early days largely through the imposition of a *Jizyeh* or a tax on those who left their area of control for work. Typically this amounted to 15 dinars a day[348]. These funds were augmented by collecting fines imposed for violations of Shariah. For example, a woman going out in public without a veil might be required to pay a 100 dinar fine[349].

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[348] Zaki Chehab, <u>Inside the Resistance: The Iraqi Insurgency and the Future of the Middle East</u> New York, NY: Nation Books, 2005, p. 38.
[349] Z. Chehab, 2005, p. 38.

5.1.1.2 History: The Evolution of the Zarqawist Network

Despite the widely held assumption to the contrary, the Zarqawi network did not begin as an al-Qaeda affiliate. Rather, it began long before al-Qaeda became a household name, and was the brainchild of Ahmad Fadil Nazzal al-Khaleylah, a member of the Khaleylah clan of the Bani Hassan Tribe, and a native of Zarqa, Jordan. In a manner common to jihadists, al-Khaleylah took the name of his hometown, Zarqawi, and left Jordan for Afghanistan in 1989 settling in Hayatabad, in Pakistan[350]. Zarqawi was too late to serve in the war against the Soviets so he took on a job as a journalist interviewing Mujahideen for their stories. It was during this time that he met a fellow Jordanian jihadist named Abu Muhammed al-Maqdisi, a salafist intellectual who was to become the spiritual reference for Zarqawi's emerging terror network. Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi returned to Jordan in the early nineties and founded Bayt al-Imam, the first terrorist organization association with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, though at its founding the group admittedly consisted of little more than these two men[351]. The goal of Bayt al-Imam was to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy and install a Caliphate along salafist lines. The Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID) had little trouble disrupting the cell and in 1994, Maqdisi and Zarqawi were arrested on conspiracy and weapons charges and sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment in Suwaqah Prison. Zarqawi's following grew in prison and by the time he and Maqdisi were released as part of an amnesty of political prisoners in 1999, he had accrued a small contingent of acolytes.

In early 2000, Zarqawi opened a training camp outside of Herat at the direction of al-Qaeda's military operations chief Sief al-Adel, for which he received funding from the

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[350] J.C. Brisard, 2005.
[351] J.C. Brisard, 2005.

Taliban[352]. It was here that he began assembling the Zarqawist network that would in time be known of as al-Qaeda in Iraq. His lieutenants at this camps were, Abdel Hadi Daghlas, Khaled al-Aruri, Islam Yusif al-Tamouni (aka Abu Hareth), Abu Hamza, and Azmi Abdel Fatah Yussef al Jayusi (Abu Ata), all of whom would come to hold leadership positions in Tawhid w'al Jihad, the organization which would take its name from the sign which hung over the entrance to Zarqawi's Herat camp. By running the camp well, Zarqawi caught the eye of bin Laden who financed $35,000 for an attack in Israel[353]. The proposed attack included three men: Firaz Sulaiman Ali Hijir, Ahmed Muhammed Mustafa, and Ahmet Mahmoud. However, all three were captured at a border checkpoint in Turkey.

Despite the Herat camp's association with al-Qaeda, Zarqawi seems to have been attempting to maintain a certain distance between himself and bin Laden from his earliest days in Afghanistan[354]. Apart from his Afghanistan operations, Zarqawi began nurturing a transnational network, which was benefiting grandly from the Herat camp's strategic location. It was a gateway to Iraq via Iran[355], as well as to Chechnya via Turkmenistan[356]. More importantly, Zarqawi established his own cells in Europe (Germany and Italy) and the Middle East. In addition, he procured his own patronage network, receiving financial assistance from donors in Syria and Jordan, most notably, Bilal Mansour al-Hiyari.

While it's possible that Zarqawi's reluctance to engage more closely with al-Qaeda was due to a sense of personal competition with bin Laden, many of his reservations seem to have arisen from his disagreements regarding al-Qaeda's 'Far Enemy' grand strategy.

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[352] Loretta Napoleoni, "Profile of a Killer" *Foreign Policy* 151 Nov/Dec 2005, p. 41.
[353] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 74.
[354] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 75.
[355] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 78.
[356] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 79.

"Sometime in 2000, in the southern city of Kandahar, Zarqawi finally met Osama bin Laden. The two men came from opposite corners of Arab society; one was rich and powerful, the other was a poor social misfit. Yet both men shared a common aim: the deliverance of Muslims. The problem was agreeing on a strategy for achieving it. Bin Laden, from a wealthy Saudi family, in contact all of his life with Arabia's political elite, had a global, anti-imperialist vision of jihad. He was focused on the "faraway enemy," the United States, who backed Muslim regimes he considered corrupt and illegitimate. Zarqawi, a working-class jihadist who cut his teeth inside Jordan's prisons, was a revolutionary outlaw. His notion of waging jihad was much closer to the terrorism of the 1970s and 1980s, embodied in localized groups such as the Irish Republican Army or Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers.

That's one reason why, contrary to popular belief, Zarqawi did not pledge allegiance to bin Laden at that meeting, despite being invited to join al Qaeda's international terrorist network. Zarqawi's horizon was limited to what he saw as corrupt Arab regimes, especially his native home of Jordan. Some experts have found it implausible that someone as junior as Zarqawi, who was without financial backing, would refuse bin Laden's offer to join al Qaeda. But those who know the Jordanian radical say this kind of behavior is perfectly in line with his personality. "He never followed the orders of others," says a former member of his camp in Herat. "I never heard him praise anyone apart from the Prophet [Muhammad], this was Abu Musab's character. He never followed anyone."

Nor was Zarqawi alone in disagreeing with bin Laden's anti-American vision of jihad. High-ranking leaders inside al Qaeda shared his concerns, including Saif al-Adel, the man in charge of al Qaeda's military operations. Al-Adel encouraged Zarqawi to set up an independent terrorist training camp. Following this advice, Zarqawi moved to northwestern Afghanistan, to the city of Herat, near the Iranian border. In the hills there, Zarqawi set up his own training facility with funding from the Taliban[357]."

Zarqawi's focus on the "Near Enemy" of autocratic and Western friendly governments in the Muslim world did not negate his assembling a truly transnational underground organization, which has since been tied to terrorist plots from Asia to Europe. This was aided in part by the role he played in preparing fallback positions for al-Qaeda Central in the event that they were forced from Afghanistan following the September 11th attacks. The most visible of these secondary organizations were no doubt located in Iraq and Pakistan, however, cells were set up in the Caucasus as well, notably Chechnya, Dagestan, and Georgia[358]. Exactly how these dispersed elements interacted with Zarqawi in Afghanistan, and later Iraq, is unknown. It is known, however that a significant amount of interaction did take place, and that peripheral cells were used as a support network for Zarqawi's activities in the Middle East and Europe. For example, Adnan Muhammed Sadiq (Abu Atiyya) was the Lieutenant of Zarqawi in Georgia. He was captured by Azerbaijan in 2003. At that time it was learned that Atiyya was a chemical expert and that he had trained one Menda Benchalli who was later arrested in France in 2004, while preparing an assault on the Metro[359]. Zarqawi was mentioned as a conspirator in the proceedings. Following the French investigation of Benchalli, French law enforcement alerted

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[357] L. Napoleoni, 2005, p. 40.
[358] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 174.
[359] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 177.

UK authorities to what came to be known of as the Ricin Plot, a planned biological attack on London. The conspirators Mustafa Taleb, Mouloud Feddag, Sidali Feddag, and Samir Feddag were likely sent by Abu Atiyya at Zarqawi's bequest. In addition, ammonium nitrate found at a refugee center in Luton was also linked to Zarqawi via conspirators in Pakistan[360]. An even more high profile Zarqawist cell was responsible for the Glasgow Bombings in 2007. The two men responsible, Bilal Abdulla and Kafeel Ahmed[361] made several attempts to detonate homemade explosives in the midst of highly trafficked areas. The first attack was to park two VBIED's outside of popular nightclubs. The plan was to detonate the explosives as the club closed and the patrons left. The second attack was an attempted suicide VBIED attack on the Glasgow airport. Fortunately, while the culprits were in regular contact with al-Qaeda in Iraq operatives (though intelligence officials refuse to divulge the nature of those contacts) it is obvious that they received no training in the manufacture of explosives, unlike the more sophisticated Madrid train and London Metro bombers[362]. The mixture for all bombs seems to have been off. Both nightclub bombs failed to detonate as the fuses were overcome with petrol fumes, and the airport attack resulted in a fire that killed both assailants but caused little other damage.

5.1.1.3 History: Fusion of the Zarqawist Network with the Iraqi Islamists

Zarqawi's move to Iraq began in 2001 and was sparked by a request from bin Laden. As a result, Zarqawi moved a top lieutenant and three cell members to Iraqi Kurdistan, with orders to reorganize the Islamist opposition in Northern Iraq and create a possible safe zone for al-Qaeda fighters should the US force al-Qaeda from Afghanistan. The lieutenant was Ra'id

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[360] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 178.
[361] Raymond Bonner, Jane Perlez, and Eric Schmitt, "British Inquiry of Failed Plots Points to Iraq's Qaeda Group" the New York Times December 14th, 2007.
[362] R. Bonner, et al, 2007.

Khuraysat (aka Abu Abdel Rahman al-Shami).   The three deputies who aided al-Shami were Mahmoud Muhammed al-Nasour, Mutasim Musa Abdallah Muhammed al-Darikah, and Ibrahim Khuraysat. Al-Shami's greatest achievement was to help develop Jund al-Islam out of the pre-existing Salafist camps in Kurdistan, which would later emerge as Ansar al-Islam[363]. In the early days, Ansar based its activities out of its Northern Iraqi training camp called Sargat. Zarqawi staffed his Iraqi operations with former operatives from Bayt al-Imam, Khaled l-Aruri (Abu Ashraf) and Abdel Hadi Ahmad Mahmoud Daghlas (Abu Ubaydah), both of whom would play a central role in the insurgency. Command of Ansar, however, fell to three individuals: Mullah Krekar in Norway, al-Shami in Kurdistan, and Zarqawi from his base of operations in Herat. In addition, much of the logistical network of Zarqawi's organization existed in Iran at this point and was staffed by Zarqawi associates. Only the operational cells were actually in Iraq[364]. This bureaucratic differentiation of cells would prove crucial to Zarqawi's successes in the coming insurgency, and the loss of them following Operation Phantom Strike would prove detrimental to AQI's capabilities.

During this time Zarqawi paid special attention to growing his European network by fostering cells in the UK and Germany. The EU cells were called Tawhid and it is likely that they were viewed by the organization as extensions of the Ansar network[365]. As he was planning his exit from Iraq, Zarqawi's original plan was to split the network into two parts with one half being based out of Kurdistan to fight the US in Iraq, and the other being based out of Germany to fight in Europe[366]. As it happened, the European cells proved most useful as logistical nodes complimenting the activities of the Middle Eastern networks.

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[363] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 77.
[364] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 79.
[365] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 80.
[366] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 94.

Zarqawi's departure from Iraq was precipitated by an injury he received while attending a meeting with Abu Zubaydah, Saif al-Abdel, and Ramzi bin al-Shibh in Kandahar. With the aid of his German cell, which provided him with travel documents and a satellite phone, he left to seek medical attention in Tehran. While regrouping in Iran, Zarqawi and his associates were arrested by the Iranian Secret Police. In an early example of the complicity of Tehran in the Sunni insurgency, he was allowed to leave two weeks later. At this point he moved to Baghdad's Olympic hospital for further treatment[367]. US intelligence states that he was in Baghdad for two months before moving on to Syria, a fact that is responsible for much of the fodder the Bush administration used to attempt to link Saddam to al-Qaeda operations[368].

Jordanian GID states that in 2002 Zarqawi met with Mullah Krekar and al-Shafi to merge the remnants of Zarqawi's Afghan network with Ansar al-Islam. After this point, Zarqawi fulfilled the fears of the Iraqi salafists and began sidelining the native Ansar activists with his seasoned Afghan fighters. Krekar, in the meantime, was arrested in Iran and deported to the Netherlands where, after serving time in jail, he was then deported to Norway received more prison time before being released. With Krekar under house arrest in Europe, Zarqawi took over Ansar.

On the eve of the US invasion Ansar had around 600 fighters from Afghanistan who were operating under the direction of Zarqawi[369]. While the majority of AQI as well as its predecessors are largely culled from Iraqi salafists, Zarqawi's organization has always benefited from a large compliment of foreign fighters. As a US invasion of Iraq became increasingly likely throughout 2002 to 2003, many foreign fighters made their way to Iraq in order to aid the

[367] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 95.
[368] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 96.
[369] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 120.

Ba'athists[370]. While they came to fight with Saddam initially, they were taken by surprise at the rapid collapse of the regime. Their return home was made difficult by the fact that Saddam's regime had confiscated all their passports and ID's. As a result, many had nowhere to go and found themselves gravitating toward the more universalistic (meaning non-nationalist) groups such as Ansar al-Islam[371].

With Zarqawi's footprint in Iraq growing, a joint US/Kurdish operation was launched against Ansar in March of 2003. The operation included ~100 US Special Operations forces and around 10,000 Peshmerga. This had the effect of merely displacing the organization temporarily as most of the Ansar leadership fled to Iran to avoid US pressure.

The early days of Ansar were marked with what would be a recurring theme in AQI's history, the attempts to organize the entire Sunni insurgency under Zarqawi's banner. In June of 2003, Zarqawi formed Ansar al-Sunna as a distinct offshoot of Ansar al-Islam in a bid to make the organization attractive to non-Kurds. It was created by Abu Abdullah Hassan bin Mahmoud, al-Shami's brother[372]. Ansar al-Sunna immediately began a series of high profile attacks in order to raise its profile in what was fast becoming a crowded pool of insurgent organizations. Ansar al-Sunna perpetrated a suicide bombing of the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad on October 14th, 2003, and was responsible for the assassination of a number of Spanish intelligence agents during an attack on November 29th, 2003. Using these, as well as other high profile attacks as marketing, al-Shafi tried to reorganize the Iraqi resistance movement under Ansar al-Sunna's banner. This proved to have little success and Zarqawi sought an operation that would place him at the forefront of the Sunni Insurgency. That opportunity came in April of 2004, with the kidnapping and subsequent execution of Nicholas Berg. Days before Ansar al-Islam broadcast

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[370] Z. Chehab, 2005.
[371] Z. Chehab, 2005, p. 37.
[372] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 127.

Berg's beheading on its website, Zarqawi announced the formation of a new organization called Tawhid w'al Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad), officially headed by himself. Using the publicity surrounding the Berg beheading, Zarqawi was able to convince a number of organizations to fuse with TwJ[373]. While Zarqawi had nominal command of TwJ, many of the constituent members maintained their own organizational structure, and some even kept their original names, a fact that would lay the groundwork for later schisms in the organization. The original organizations to make up TwJ were Ansar al-Islam, Ansar al-Sunna, Jaiysh Mohammed, Al-Jama'a al-Salafiya, Takfir wal-Hijra, and Jund al-Sham.

As of 2004, the TwJ consisted of ~1000-1500 fighters out of ~8000-12000 total Islamist fighters[374]. Its inner circle was staffed with Zarqawi confidants. Al-Shami, being a Jordanian cleric, became the religious leader of TwJ where he gained notoriety as the first Islamic scholar to justify the killing of the Shia, stating that…

> "If the infidels take Muslims as protectors, and these Muslims refuse to fight, it
>
> is permissible to kill those Muslims[375]"

Zarqawi's brother in law and fellow Bayt al-Imam member, Khaled Mustafa Khalifa al-Aruri (Abu al-Qasaam and Abu Ashraf) became TwJ's director of Special Missions. Longtime Zarqawi co-conspirator Abdel Hadi Mahmoud Daghlas (Abu Ubaydah and Abu Muhammed al-Sham), a founding member of Bayt al-Islam, became one of Zarqawi's chief lieutenants. Nidal Muhammed al-Arubi (Abu Hamza Muhammed) and Abu Muhammed al-Lubnani served as explosives experts for the network and Abu Ali al-Iraqi, a former Ba'athist soldier served as its chief munitions specialist. Perhaps most importantly, TwJ created a media wing run by Abu

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[373] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 131.
[374] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 134.
[375] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 135.

Maysaral al-Iraqi[376], who became responsible for the distribution of beheading videos at the height of AQI's violence.

5.1.1.4 History: The Fusion of Zarqawi's Tawhid w'al Jihad and al-Qaeda

Precisely why Zarqawi finally chose to merge his organization with al-Qaeda Central is unknown. However, it is likely that Zarqawi thought the increased profile of being an al-Qaeda affiliate would be worth the increased likelihood that his network would be viewed as a foreign entity in the Sunni insurgency. After maintaining a professional distance from bin Laden's circle for sometime, Zarqawi finally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda on October 17th, 2004. This required that he take a Ba'yah (an oath of loyalty), pledging fealty to bin Laden as the emir of al-Qaeda. The merger was announced in al-Qaeda Central's online magazine al-Baatar.

> "It should bring great joy to the people of Islam, especially those on the front
> lines, and it was with good tidings of support during this blessed month that
> Tawhid w'al-Jihad's leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (God protect him) and his
> followers announced their allegiance to the Sheikh al-Mujahideen of our time,
> Abu Abdullah Osama bin Laden, God protect him[377]."

However, despite the political niceties of this alliance, al-Qaeda Central had little control over what came to be known of as al-Qaeda in Iraq. It's difficult to tell exactly what benefit al-Qaeda's affiliation brought Zarqawi, since al-Qaeda Central provided no financial support (indeed it actually asked for funds from Zarqawi), but as a marketing tool, Zarqawi might have thought that it would increase his recruitment from abroad.

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[376] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 142.
["377] ZARQAWI'S PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO AL-QAEDA: FROM MU'ASKER AL-BATTAR, ISSUE 21" Jeffrey Pool (Translator) accessed on 02/08/2011 at http://web.archive.org/web/20070930180847/http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=400&issue_id=3179&article_id=2369020.

The affiliation with al-Qaeda did not serve to convince Iraqis that AQI was an organization that was fighting on behalf of Iraqi goals. In an attempt to play down this popular perception Zarqawi announced the formation of the Mujahideen Shura Council on March 23rd, 2006. The MSC merged AQI with a host of marginal salafist organizations; Jaiysh al-Taifa al-Mansourah (Victorious Sect Army), Saraye Ansar al-Tawhid (Ansar al-Tawhid Platoons), Saraya al-Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Jihad Platoons), Saraya al-Ghoraba (the Strangers Platoons), Kitaeb al-Ahwal (the Calamities Brigades), and Jaiysh Ahlul Sunna wa al-Jamma (Army of Ahlul Sunna wa al Jamma) which actually joined the organization some weeks later[378]. This asymmetric alliance allowed Zarqawi and AQI to maintain a central role in the MSC, while simultaneously projecting to the broader insurgency the perception of a domestic organization.

Zarqawi did not live to see the end product of the MSC as he was killed in a US air strike on June 7th, 2006. Following his death, AQI attempted to reorganize its operations by declaring the Islamic State of Iraq in October of the same year. The goal was to create a shadow government in AQI's areas of control and serve as a template for a Caliphate once the US withdrew. The problem with this was that the implicit assumption then was that the ISI was a secessionist organization since the Caliphate would only contain AQI (hence Sunni Triangle) territory. This did not sit well with the Iraqi nationalists and Tribal elements, which were numerically superior to the salafists, though they maintained a lower profile. In the end, the ISI turned out to be another umbrella organization in a similar vein to the MSC. The ISI was placed under the command of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, who was originally thought to be a strawman since he was unknown to salafist circles and AQI had a strong incentive to give an Iraqi face to their operations. In time, however, it was shown that he was real and his name was Hamed

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[378] Mahan Abedin, "Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq: Fact or Fiction?" *Terrorism Focus* vol. 3(12) March 28th, 2006.

Dawood al-Zawy, a former Iraqi army officer[379]. In turn, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, a longtime Zarqawi associate[380] was named AQI's emir in Iraq and the ISI's Minister of War[381].

5.1.2 Ideology

AQI and its affiliated organizations emerged from a common transnational Islamist movement known of broadly as Salafism. The term Salafism was first coined during the Abassid empire and refers to *al-Salaf al-Salih*, or the first three generations of Muslims[382] who were ruled by the four 'rightly guided caliphs. Apolitically, it refers to a return to the pure version of Islam by rejecting all other sources of Islamic learning save for the Qu'ran and the Hadiths[383]. Thus, Salafis reject traditions of Islamic Jurisprudence and instead focus on *ijtihad*, or personal interpretation of scriptures. The emphasis within Salafism is Tawhid, or the oneness of God (sometimes interpreted as monotheism and sometimes unity), and Salafis reject the concept of an intermediary between the individual and God, behavior which they view as polytheism[384].

Salafism evolved with the teachings of Hanbal and Ibn Tamiyyah[385], but is more commonly associated with the contemporary manifestations of Wahhabism and Deobandism. Typically, Salafism takes on an apolitical character and, while fundamentalist in nature, is not normally violent.

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[379] "Report: True Identity of 'Islamic State of Iraq' Leader Revealed, Photos Aired" accessed on 02/08/2011 at http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-502683_162-4077758-502683.html.
[380] Peter Bergen, "al Qaeda, the Organization: a Five Year Forecast" *the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 618 (1) July 2008, p. 17.
[381] David Kilcullen, "Field Notes on Iraq's Tribal Uprising Against al-Qaida" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 1(11) October 2008, pp. 1-5.
[382] Roel Meijer Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Order New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009, p. 3.
[383] R. Meijer, 2009, p. 4.
[384] R. Meijer, 2009, p. 4.
[385] R. Meijer, 2009, p. 4.

5.1.2.1 Ideology: Salafi Jihadism

Al-Qaeda in Iraq has its roots in a politicized version of Salafism known of as Salafi Jihadism. Salafi jihadis reject the quietist tradition of Hanbal in favor of the more militant Ibn Tamiyya. For them, the greater jihad is the struggle to reassert the pure political system envisioned by the contemporaries of the Prophet, through the application of political violence. Adherents of Salafi Jihadism claim that those who reject the concept of Tawhid are unbelievers (Kafirs) and therefore should be excommunicated (takfir) from the faith. This excommunication allows for *jihad* to be waged against such Rafidas (rejectionists), as it is otherwise forbidden in Islam to commit violence against fellow Muslims. For this reason, detractors of Salafi Jihadism often refer to them as *Takfiris*.

5.1.2.2 Ideology: Zarqawism

As difficult as it might be to imagine, but even within the ranks of *takfiris*, there are mainstream and radical elements. Within the confines of the Salafi Jihadi community, Zarqawi is extreme. The difference between Zarqawi and mainstream Salafi Jihadis like Zawahiri however, is not one of theology but of grand strategy. As noted previously, Zarqawi operated outside of al-Qaeda's orbit when he was in Afghanistan, and even operated TwJ independently of bin Laden for some time before merging with al-Qaeda[386]. In large part, the reason for this was ideological[387]. Whereas al-Qaeda had invested itself in a "Far Enemy" approach to revolutionary violence, Zarqawi's experiences with the Jordanian government had given him a "Near Enemy" orientation. The difference lies in the organization's choice as a primary target for terrorist violence. Al-Qaeda had long since focused its ire on the West, the assumption being that the Near Enemy of repressive Muslim regimes could not exist without Western backing.

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[386] Brian Fishman, "After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al-Qaeda in Iraq" *The Washington Quarterly* vol. 29(4) Autmun 2006, pp. 19-32.
[387] B. Fishman, Autumn 2006, p. 21.

Thus, mainstream takfiris could pursue violent jihad against the United States and European targets, but not risk alienating their constituents by engaging in violence against Muslims. Zarqawi, on the other hand, fervently believed in a strategy that targeted the near enemy. As a result, his goal in Iraq was to seize geographic territory, which could then be used as a beachhead for spreading the Caliphate. In this strategy he found an allegory to the Prophet's time in Medina prior to his return to Mecca. According to the Zarqawists, the main obstacles to their success were the Western Powers as well as local Rafidah. The Rafidah, however, were seen of as even more insidious than Western powers since the latter could be forced out, but the former corrupted from within. In particular, Zarqawi viewed Shi'ites as Rafidah[388], and it is no wonder then that the majority of AQI related violence has been geared toward inciting Shia backlash against Sunnis, which would force the latter to engage in defensive violence.

> "Zarqawi's plea for help in causing a sectarian civil war stood no chance with bin Laden, who has consistently said that a victorious defensive jihad against "the aggressive enemy … [is] impossible without all Muslims of all walks and ranks getting together…." (Bin Laden, Declaration of War on the United States, 1 September 1996, al-Islah Website) Bin Laden asserts that the greatest imperative is to suppress sectarian differences until America is defeated. The duty of Muslims, he preaches, is to "overlook some disputed issues" and follow the guidance of the medieval Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah that "work should concentrate on warding off the greater of two evils." Bin Laden holds Shi'a Islam a heresy, but insists it is better for Sunnis to proceed "with the sinful princes.,. [so] that the greater harm is avoided and most of the rules of Islam are established, if not all" (Bin Laden, Declaration of War on the United States, 1

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[388] Ahmed Hashim, "Iraq's Sunni Insurgency" *Adelphi Papers* vol. 48(402) 2008, pp. 34-35.

September 1996, al-Islah Website). Bin Laden has no doubt that America, not

Shi'ism is the source of "greater harm" to Islam[389]."

In a way, the invasion of Iraq enabled the rapprochement between Zarqawi and bin Laden as it

brought together the Near and Far Enemies, rendering the differences in strategy moot.

However, even after Zarqawi joined al-Qaeda, the differences of opinion didn't go away[390].

Eventually, the Zarqawist tactics of targeting Shia and Christians cost him the support of al-

Maqdisi, as well as the broader insurgency, which was at its heart, anti-secessionist[391].

5.1.3 Organizational Design

As stated previously, AQI was able, throughout the course of its history, to network its

operations in three ways; internally—that is the operations of AQI itself were networked within

Iraq as well as internationally—, across affiliates—those that joined the two major umbrella

organizations created by AQI—, and the organization eventually sought a formal alliance with

al-Qaeda Central, making AQI a regional affiliate of the transnational al-Qaeda movement. The

vast majority of AQI's (as well as it's predecessor organizations) activities have been perpetrated

by elements from within its internal network. Therefore this study will focus largely on the

internal organizational design of Zarqawi's terrorist network. However, this section will also

speak to AQI's cooperation with regional and international affiliates.

5.1.3.1 Organizational Design: AQI's Internal Network

As would be expected, the internal organizational structure of the Zarqawi network

seems to have evolved as the organization grew from a Zarqawist franchise (Ansar al-Islam and

Ansar al-Sunna) into a nationwide force under the al-Qaeda banner. Details of the organizational

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[389] Michael Scheuer, "Coalition Warfare Part II: How Zarqawi Fits into Bin Laden's World Front"
Terrorism Focus vol. 2(8) April 2008.
[390] B. Fishman, Autumn 2006, p. 21.
[391] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 13.

structure of the early incarnations of the Zarqawi network are sketchy at best. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, little attention was paid to the Kurdish Islamist groups in the early days of the post-September 11th "War on Terror", who served as the springboard for Zarqawi's Iraqi network. They were comparatively few in number compared to their PDK and PUK competitors, and they had participated in little if any political violence prior to Zarqawi's arrival in 2003. Secondly, prior to the arrival of Zarqawi, the professionalism of these organizations left much to be desired. That meant institutional practices such as financial and administrative record keeping were non-existent and therefore little evidence exists from which we can extrapolate organizational charts.

That being said, the fact that most all of these organizations broke off from the much larger and more formal Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan, likely means that the successor organizations such as Tawhid, Kurdish Hamas, and later, Ansar al-Islam, kept the hierarchies that existed within the IMIK. Given the small scale of these organizations, and the rather restricted geographic distribution of the organization, it would not have been difficult for Ansar al-Islam and related groups to maintain a small but centralized organizational design.

With the introduction of Tawhid w'al Jihad, however, researches were able to decipher a more comprehensive organizational design. The work in this area by Brisard is especially enlightening. Brisard describes TwJ's organizational design in two parts, that which applies to the leadership, and that which applies to the tactical cells. The leadership, according to Brisard, worked in a series of concentric circles, or strict and successive levels of hierarchies. These would correspond to local, provincial, and national levels of leadership. Each level would mirror the others in style, having an emir, and heads of various executive branches (i.e. Minister of War, Propaganda, etc.). These varying levels were connected to one another via a series of

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intermediaries, who—much like middle management in corporate firms—served as filters of information from one segment of the organization to the next.

What differentiates the TwJ organization from that of a conventional pyramidal hierarchy is the level of autonomy displayed by the provincial and local leaderships from Zarqawi's directorship. This was especially relevant at the tactical level, where operational cells were by necessity autonomous and answerable only to the loose authority of their local emirs. As an organization, the TwJ was headquartered in Fallujah, in Anbar province, but it operated across the Sunni-Triangle, which in turn had been divided by the organization into nine autonomous operational centers[392]. The main fighting force of TwJ consisted of around 500 fighters who were based out of Fallujah, and operated under the command of Abu Nawas al-Falluji. At this time, the Baghdad region was headed by Umar Bazyani who had ~50 men under his command. The Northern Region, which would have included areas of Iraqi Kurdistan was overseen by Hussein Bazyani, who had an unknown number of soldiers under his command. In Anbar, outside of Fallujah, Abu Azzam Abdallah commanded ~60 fighters. In Mosul, Abu Talha commanded a contingent of about 400 militants, which was the largest outside of Fallujah. In addition, sources indicated that there were ~ 50 men in Samarra, ~ 80 men in Diyala (outside of Mosul), and ~ 150 men in al-Qaim, who operated under unknown commanders. Each of these regional zones were further subdivided into attachments, according to the size of the local outfits[393]. The autonomy of these local cells is underscored by the fact that sources within the broader insurgency suggest that the tactical cells of TwJ, which operated in teams of 3 to 5 men,

[392] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 137.
[393] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 137.

were completely unaware as to what the leadership structure of the organization was[394]. This infers that they had little if any contact with higher-ups from within their own organization.

Detailing the inner workings of al-Qaeda in Iraq, however, can be done with considerably more detail. This is almost entirely due to the detailed description of the internal mechanisms of this organization found in seized financial documents from the organization's regional organization in Anbar, it's base of operations at the time. There are two sets of documents that have informed this research. The first of these are known of as the "Travelstar" documents. They were seized just east of Ramadi, near a town called Julaybah, in the home of Ala Daham Hanush, on March 15th, 2007. The second set of documents consisted of nine separate reports detailing financial movements into and out of AQI's Western Anbar sector. They were found by a marine patrol in a ditch in Tuzliyah in January of 2007[395]. Together, these documents detail the financial records of AQI in Anbar from 2005, through the end of 2006, a time frame corresponding to the height of AQI's power.

During this time, Anbar was divided into six geographic sectors, which were in turn controlled by local administrators[396]. These sectors were ar-Rutbah, al-Gharbiyah (Western Anbar), al-Awsat (Central Anbar), at-Ta'mim, ar-Ramadi, and Fallujah and belts. The 'belts' referred to here are the suburbs of Fallujah, and reflect the same terminology used by AQI to refer to staging zones outside of Baghdad. The provincial administration was mirrored in the sectoral administration. Both had a division administrator (an emir in charge of operations) and a bureaucratic section, with commanders overseeing functionally differentiated operations; i.e.

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[394] Z. Chehab, 2005.
[395] Benjamin Bahney, Howard J. Shatz, Carroll Ganier, Reny McPherson, and Barbara Sude, "An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of Al-Qaida in Iraq" Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2010, p. 29.
[396] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 31.

""movement and maintenance," "legal," "military," "security," "medical,"

"spoils," and "media."[397]"

From the documents, it seems that sectoral administrations had a more specific division of labor than the provincial divisions did, perhaps reflecting their proximity to actual organizational operations. However, the provincial administration had several offices that the sectoral administrators did not, denoting the hierarchical chain of command the organization was attempting to keep in place[398]. These included the offices of the Mujahideen Shura Council, which were responsible for coordinating with affiliated organizations, the administrative council which had the responsibility to oversee all bureaucratic sub-units, the General Treasury which oversaw the redistribution of funds from local cells across the entire organization, and the Mail Sector, which dealt with organization-wide communication.

> "The bureaucratic structure AQI employed is called a multidivisional or "M-form" hierarchy, which creates autonomous geographic units (in our case, the sectors) in the periphery, each of which encapsulates a wide range of functions. The central units in M-form hierarchies formulate broad policy and strategy and implement their decisions through administrative apparatuses responsible for governing the state. In this case, AQI had a wide array of functional units contained in both the center (the province) and peripheral (sector) units. Further, a "national" level of AQI bureaucracy may also have existed during this period, given the system we observed in Anbar province. M-form hierarchies minimize contact between the peripheral units, forcing interperipheral relations to be mediated by the center. Perhaps not coincidentally, the CPA and MNF-I also

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[397] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 32.
[398] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 32.

were organized in M-form hierarchies, with different divisions controlling the provinces of Iraq[399]."

One should be careful to differentiate, however, between the ideal types depicted on internal documents, and the realities faced by the 'boots on the ground'. While AQI was most certainly organized according to localized hierarchies networked together by successive layers of leadership, the functional autonomy of the tactical cells, which were divided into Brigades, Battalions, and Groups (according to their relative size) meant that they had little to no contact with these hierarchical elements of the organization. In fact, captured Zarqawi operatives have typically claimed that there are only two ranks in the organization… "executioners" and "commanders", with the former graduating to the latter after 10 executions.[400] The scarce knowledge of the organization's hierarchy from the organization's soldiers might intimate that AQI's strict hierarchies on paper, did not always correspond to realities on the ground.

Just as the organizational design of the Zarqawi network evolved as the organization grew, so too did the financial position of the network. The finances of Ansar al-Islam were widely gleaned by three different methods of income accumulation. The first of these was the receipt of donations from patrons abroad. Mostly, this took the form of donations from Mosques in Pakistan and Europe and redirected donations from charitable organizations in the Persian Gulf. The biggest offenders seem to have been German and British mosques and Saudi charities such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth and the Islamic Relief Organization. The IRO alone has funneled approximately 20 Million USD to Kurdish Islamists since 1994. Secondly, in a manner that would be taken to the extreme by AQI in subsequent years, Ansar was able to make quite a bit of money off the local black market, specifically in the smuggling of fuel and

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[399] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, pp. 32-33.
[400] Stephen Ulph, "The Fall of Zarqawi's Lieutenants" *Terrorism Focus* vol. 2(5) May 2005.

oil and the taxation of smugglers operating in their areas of control[401]. Ansar was also able to raise money by the imposition of taxes (*Jizyeh*) on those who left their area for work. This would typically amount to about 15 dinars a day per person. In addition, the collection of fines issued for violations of Sharia was also a minor source of income[402].

Al-Qaeda in Iraq financed its operations through three primary sources, which were in turn derived from a variety of operations. These sources were, the administrative emirs from each sector, the General Treasury which oversaw disbursement of funds from other aspects of the network, and the Spoils Group which oversaw the liquidation of assets seized from *'Kafirs'*, collaborators, and the like[403].

> "With these revenues, the administrative emir funded the expenses of the general
> emir, a portion of the six sectors' administrative emirs (who pay the expenses of
> their sectors), the border administrative emir, and the Anbar Administrative
> Council. With funds received from the administrative emir, the general emir paid
> the expenses of the General Treasury and the Mujahidin Shura Council. The
> general emir also allocated small amounts of funding to two southern sectors,
> one of which is indicated as being in Basra[404]."

The financial records kept in the Travelstar and Tuzliyah documents detail AQI funding during two accounting periods, from June 2005 to May of 2006, and from June of 2006 to November of the same year. During the first period, AQI in Anbar raised about 373,000 USD per month for a total of 4.5 million USD[405]. 50% (2,302,188 USD) of this revenue was derived from the sale of stolen goods. Apparently, this was earned from the sale of mostly high value capital goods such

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[401] J.C. Brisard, 2005, pp. 116-117.
[402] Z. Chehab, 2005, p. 38.
[403] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 34.
[404] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 34.
[405] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, pp. 36-37.

as construction equipment, generators, etc.. Oil smuggling represented a small portion of this, but it is likely that that percentage increased precipitously in sectors operating in oil-rich regions. 10% of the total revenue for Anbar during this period, or 546,107 USD, came from 'Spoils', which as noted earlier refers to the liquidation of property expropriated from Iraqis deemed apostate by the AQI's Islamic law section. Another 10% of total revenue, or 473,340 USD, came from the sale of cars, which for unknown reasons was not listed under the same section as stolen goods during this period. A further 21% (925,632 USD) of overall revenue was generated by the provincial administration. This fact shows that local cells were required to kick back excess capital to the organization. Finally, 5%, or 233,021 USD was generated by donations, a much lower figure than previously assumed.

The documents detailing AQI in Anbar's financial dealings from June to November 2006, illustrate that as AQI's power in Anbar rose, so did its revenue[406]. During this period, AQI in Anbar generated 4.3 million USD in revenue, or 860,000 USD per month, representing a growth in all sectors of revenue except transfers from other units. 3,993,470 USD was garnered from the liquidation of spoils, the sale of stolen goods (including cars), and looting, all of which were now reported as the same segment of income, denoting a change in accounting principles which occasioned a change in emirs (illustrating that there was little in the way of standardized practices within the organization). 190,000 USD was transferred from other sectors, and 114,479 USD was garnered from donations. This massive increase in income from local economic activity shows how AQI was able to dominate the local economies in areas where it operated, a fact which would greatly upset the power balance within the broader insurgency. In addition, it shows that AQI's regional cells were almost wholly self-perpetuating, requiring little or no financial support from the top echelons of the al-Qaeda leadership. In fact, the travelstar

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[406] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, pp. 37-38.

documents show that the merger between TwJ and al-Qaeda Central likely created a financial burden on AQI, since AQ Central required funds from the self-sustaining insurgency[407].

While AQI was largely an Iraqi concern, its ranks were well staffed with foreign fighters, whose main addition to the insurgency did not come in their relative numbers, but in their contribution of suicide operations, a tactic almost entirely monopolized by foreigners, and the signature tactic of AQI. These foreign fighters were imported mostly from Syrian smuggling networks. These were ad hoc associations, some being run for ideological affinity and some for prophet. Thus while some 'snakeheads' rarely took payment for their services, such as the Abu Abdullah network (recorded in the Sinjar papers), some were positively exploitative of their charges, leaving them with little when they arrived in Iraq[408].

5.1.3.2 Organizational Design: Affiliate Organizations

Al-Qaeda in Iraq developed affiliations with like-minded organizations largely for two reasons. Firstly, it needed to indigenize its operations to counter the arguments being made that it was a foreign organization with foreign leadership. Secondly, it was an attempt to bring larger sections of the insurgency under AQI leadership without having to engage rival organizations in an intra-Sunni rivalry. The method of assimilation into one of the two umbrella groups proposed by AQI (the MSC and ISI, respectively) seems to have varied depending on the size of the organization in question, as well as the particular arrangement the joining organization was able to work out with the AQI command. Some organizations seem to have merged entirely with AQI, such as Takfir w'al Hijra, who claimed their last attack in February of 2005[409]. Other,

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[407] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 15.
[408] Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Becoming a Foreign Fighter: A Second Look at the Sinjar Records" in B. Fishman (ed.) <u>Bombers, Bank Accounts, and Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road in and Out of Iraq</u> West Point, New York: The Harmony Project, The Combating Terrorism Center, 2008, p. 49.
[409] Complete data for terror attacks in Iraq is available through the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/. Accessed on 02/09/2011.

more substantial, organizations such as Ansar al-Sunna, continue to claim attacks in their own name. The inclusion of an MSC administrative council with the Travelstar documents suggests that a separate command was provided for in AQI's structure to deal with operations that involved other MSC members. Further, it is likely that the General Treasury was responsible for funding operations via affiliate nodes when necessary, since local AQI cells typically operated with a surplus.

This same relationship seems to have carried over to the Islamic State of Iraq, with the exception that this latter organization also created a shadow government body, which was meant to serve as an administrative mechanism in areas under al-Qaeda and MSC control. While this likely involved some degree of consolidation of the various sharia committees maintained by the variegated salafist groups comprising the ISI, the impact on the street was likely minimal.

5.2   Constituencies

Al-Qaeda in Iraq is both a national insurgent organization as well as a node in the transnational Zarqawist and al-Qaeda network. It therefore has both domestic and international constituencies. Domestically, AQI's recruits come disproportionately from radicalized Sunni communities within Anbar and Iraqi Kurdistan. Internationally, AQI's ideology and methodology have largely robbed them of any State support. However, they still benefit in men and material resources from a sizeable international non-state community.

5.2.1   Constituencies: Iraqi

Al-Qaeda in Iraq's Iraqi constituency is culled from the homegrown Islamist communities, which sprung up in the latter years of the sanctions regimes as a result of Saddam's religious revivalism. In much the same way that Saddam's efforts to manipulate the

religious sympathies of Shi'ites empowered the Sadrists, so too did salafists gain from a renewed religious fervor amongst Sunni communities.

In the early days of the insurgency, the Zarqawi network recruited largely from Islamist Kurdish factions who had broken away from the dominant Kurdish political parties. However, as the insurgency picked up steam, AQI was able to draw its ranks largely from Anbar province, which was disproportionately hit by the de-Ba'athification measures taken by the CPA.

5.2.2 Constituencies: International

5.2.2.1 Non-State

The majority of al-Qaeda in Iraq is actually Iraqi. Nevertheless, sources continue to maintain that all but the most senior members of the ISI are culled from international Salafist circles. While these international communities have provided AQI with some financial benefits, their primary contribution to the insurgency has been in the provision of manpower, a solid majority of which has been reserved for martyrdom operations. As intimated by the financial records of TwJ and AQI in Anbar, these international salafist communities, especially sympathetic mosques and charitable organizations have been of some help to AQI's Iraqi operations. International support for the transnational Salafists has come mainly from Muslim communities in the Middle East and Western Europe[410]. The author's research suggests that these funds are funneled to Iraq in one of three ways; either by direct donations to militant cells, by the sponsorship of a militant traveling to Iraq, or by donation to a charity serving as a front for AQI fundraising activities.

While AQI does not seem to contain a disproportionate number of foreign fighters, such militants have an extremely high profile in Iraq due to their association with suicide bombings, the hallmark of AQI, and by far the most deadly form attack utilized in the insurgency. Of the

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[410] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 71.

~800 suicide operations carried out in Iraq as of 2007, around 90% of them were carried out by

AQI. Further, 90% of those AQI operations were perpetrated by foreign fighters[411]. In fact, very

few Iraqis participate in suicide attacks, and evidence suggests that when they do, they are

unaware of it; i.e. the perpetrators thought they were planting a bomb with a timer, but it was

actually remote detonated, etc.. The Sinjar Papers note that most of the human smuggling comes

through Syria (the Sinjar organization was responsible for operations North of the Euphrates to

the Turkish border). These networks are facilitated by freelance snakeheads in Syria who charge

around 150$ per person (according to the person's means). ~60% of the foreign recruits come

from Saudi Arabia and Libya, with the remainder coming mostly from North Africa[412].

5.2.2.2 State

Sources who follow the insurgency contend that there is little outside state support for the

Iraqi conflict. Many chose not to because the aid would have to pass through Syria, and

governments who might have an interest in Iraq (Libya, Sudan, N. Korea, etc.) do not trust

Damascus, who might sell them out if they get pressured by Coalition forces. Further, even

without the threat of Syrian backstabbing, most countries who would otherwise be sympathetic

to the insurgency at large (if not AQI in particular) are wary of inciting what many believe to be

an aggressive US[413]. To make matters worse for AQI, neither Ba'athism nor radical Salafism

resonates with many foreign governments[414].

There is, however large-scale non-state support, especially in Syria where many ethnic

and tribal affinities are held with militants on the other side of the border. It is for this reason

that outside of Fallujah, AQI concentrated much of its resources in border and smuggling towns

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[411] Richard Oppel Jr., "Foreign Fighters in Iraq Are Tied to Allies of U.S." *The New York Times*,
November 22nd, 2007.
[412] R. Oppel Jr., November 22nd, 2007.
[413] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 68-69.
[414] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 69.

such as al-Qaim, Sinjar, and Ramadi. However, it is likely that official Syrian support only goes

so far as to turn a blind eye to illicit networks which aid AQI, not because of any ideological

preferences, or geopolitical goals, but because the smuggling networks of Eastern Syria are an

extremely important segment of the Syrian economy, especially after the loss of illicit Syrian

dealings in Lebanon when it was forced out of that country in 2006[415].

There is also significant intelligence stating that Iran supported Ansar al Islam cells[416].

In addition, it is likely that they gave sanctuary to and facilitated the movement of al-Qaeda

fighters fleeing the US engagement in Afghanistan.

> "A report by the Iraq Survey Group noted that a source had reported
> "approximately 320 Ansar al- Islam terrorists being trained in Iran…for
> various attack scenarios including suicide bombings, assassinations, and
> general subversion against U.S. forces in Iraq.'" Another British
> intelligence source "said that Iranian government agencies were also
> secretly helping Ansar al-Islam members cross into Iraq from Iran, as part
> of a plan to mount sniper attacks against coalition forces." American
> sources confirmed this information, adding that "an Iranian was aiding
> Ansar al-Islam 'on how to build and set up' improvised explosive devices,
> known as IEDs. An analyst for the U.S. Central Command offered this
> assessment: 'AI [Ansar al-Islam] is actively attempting to improve IED
> effectiveness and sophistication[417].'"

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[415] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 69.
[416] K. Kagan, 2007, pp. 5-7.
[417] K. Kagan, 2007, p. 7.

That being said, it's extremely difficult to believe that such a relationship continued once Zarqawi's vehement anti-Shi'ism shifted the insurgency from an anti-US campaign to a sectarian civil war.

5.3   Government Counter Terror Operations

Throughout the insurgency, Coalition and Iraqi Forces pursued two broad types of counter-terror operations against al-Qaeda in Iraq; special forces operations, and large scale clear and hold operations akin to those waged against the Jaiysh al-Mahdi in the South.   The former was necessary because Zarqawi's network, by and large, did not operate as a full-scale guerilla outfit which exercised political control over geographic territory… at least not to the same extent that the Shia militias did.   Instead, AQI operated from a series of safehouses in major cities that were in turn connected to munitions warehouses in suburban and rural areas (the 'belts').   This distributed force structure was necessary not only because of the decentralized nature of Zarqawi's network, but also because of the severe competition faced by AQI from rival Sunni organizations.   Where al-Qaeda was able to exert political control over geographic space, large scale clear and hold operations against urban areas serving as insurgent strongholds proved necessary

5.3.1   Special Forces Operations

The size and tempo of the US Special Forces offensive against AQI is considerable.   As of March 2008, the Coalition was maintaining over 5,500 special operations soldiers in Iraq[418].   These paramilitary units are divided into two operational units; the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Arabian Peninsula, which has responsibility for unclassified missions in this theater, and the Joint Special Operations Command Task Force, which is further subdivided into Special Mission Units (SMUs), of

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[418] Sean Naylor, "Special Operations Increase Possible for Iraq" *Navy Times* March 31st, 2008.

which Unit 11 is responsible for operations against AQI[419]. All of these units and SMU's fall under the general command of SOCOM (Special Operations Command). According to US officials, SOCOM conducts between 6-12 attacks per night[420]. These are launched from Forward Operating Bases (FOB's) throughout Iraq so as to be able to react in real time to incoming intelligence. 80-90% of these operations are aimed at AQI and allied organizations[421]. While these operations have been responsible for some high profile attacks, namely the airstrike that killed Zarqawi in 2006, as well as the assassinations of other high ranking al-Qaeda operatives, there does not seem to be any reliable statistical analysis of the effectiveness of these operations at denigrating AQI's organizational capabilities.

5.3.2 Clear and Hold Operations

The larger corps and battalion level offensives that comprise the clear and hold operations waged against AQI and affiliated groups, while more comprehensive in approach, still do not represent the kind of force-on-force engagements one would expect to find in corps level counter-insurgent operations (with the notable exception of the siege of Fallujah). Instead, most successful operations consisted of slowly moving in to insurgent held territory and incrementally expanding zones of security. Kinetic operations targeted not so much the insurgents themselves but their safehouses, weapons caches, and lines of communication. AQI counter-attacks, for their part, rarely escalated to the fire and maneuver style assaults Mahdi militiamen waged against police and military outposts in the South. Rather, al-Qaeda linked insurgents typically responded with spectacular suicide attacks, which cost the Coalition and ISF in lives, but did not

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[419] http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/jsoc.htm
[420] Thom Shanker, "Special Operations: High Profile, but in Shadow" *The New York Times* May 29th, 2007.
[421] T. Shanker, May 29th, 2007.

in any significant way disrupt Coalition activities by depriving them of the battlespace. Instead, what distinguished successful from unsuccessful coalition attacks wasn't necessarily the ability to mete out damage to AQI, but to hold geographic territory once militants deserted a given area.

5.3.3 Operation Vigilant Resolve

The near complete failure of what became known of as the First Battle of Fallujah began when the operation was foisted upon a reluctant command who at the time had little desire to enter the city. Vigilant Resolve was sparked by the violent and public deaths of four Blackwater security guards on March 31st, 2004. The contractors were picking up cooking equipment in neighboring Habbaniya when they were ambushed by Sunni insurgents. The details of their deaths were chronicled by militant videos which showed the Americans being shot, beaten, burned, and drug through the streets of Fallujah before ultimately being displayed hanging from a bridge over a major thoroughfare in the city center. To US commanders, this underscored their concern that Fallujah had come to represent the center of gravity for the insurgency[422]. These events conspired to force a clear and hold operation on the US Marine corps when they preferred to continue their use of special forces and precision air assaults on insurgent safe-houses rather than risk the scale of collateral damage that was likely to accompany a full scale assault of an urban area the size of Fallujah[423]. In addition, while Fallujah was certainly an insurgent stronghold, the size of the insurgency in Fallujah at that time was relatively meager. Estimates made prior to the first assault on Fallujah assumed that there were roughly 1 to 2 dozen insurgent cells in Fallujah with approximately two dozen fighters each[424]. To many on the ground the

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[422] David Isenberg, "Fallujah: the First Iraqi Intifadah" *Asia Times* January 8th, 2008.
[423] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Key General Criticizes April Attack In Fallujah" *The Washington Post* September 13th, 2004.
[424] http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-vigilant-resolve.htm.

threat did not seem to warrant the risk to civilians and therefore the shaky relationship between US forces and the Iraqi government.

The reluctance of US forces notwithstanding, operations began on April 4th when around 2000 marines surrounded Fallujah in an effort to block insurgent movements into and out of the city. Civilians were allowed safe passage out of the city and it is estimated that about 1/3rd of the city's population took advantage of the opportunity to leave. Military action began with a series of air strikes designed to soften the insurgent groups prior to the introduction of ground troops. On April 5th, US forces (mainly the 1st Marine Expeditionary Unit) began concerted operations within the city, with F-15s and Cobra helicopters providing air cover by day and AC-130 gun-ships by night. By April 9th, the civilian damage had become so severe that US Forces had to call for a unilateral ceasefire. Insurgent forces, had effectively manipulated the rules of engagement by American forces by using human shields, attacking from mosques and hospitals, etc. forcing Marines to cause inordinate collateral damage[425]. Over the next several weeks, US forces were pushed into a defensive position and mostly responded with force only to insurgent provocations. Nevertheless, this often resulted in political costly collateral damage. On May 1st, the Marines pulled out of Fallujah, leaving a contingent of former Iraqi soldiers, in the form of the Fallujah Brigades in charge of the city. At this point about 600 Iraqis had died in the conflict, only half of them being insurgents.

5.3.4 Operation al-Fajr

After Marines handed control of the city over to the Fallujah Brigades in May, the former Ba'athists who comprised the militia began stockpiling weapons, coordinating defenses with other relevant organizations, and fortifying the city.

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[425] D. Isenberg, January 8th, 2008.

"Eventually, the 800 AK-47 assault rifles, 27 pickup trucks and 50 radios

the Marines gave the brigade wound up in the hands of the insurgents,

according to Marine officers. Marines manning a checkpoint on the city's

eastern fringe were shot at by gunmen wearing Fallujah Brigade

uniforms[426]."

Most pressing for the Coalition was the presence of Zarqawi in Fallujah, who was basing the

operations of Tawhid, w'al Jihad out of the city. In addition, elections were looming and the

Iraqi government felt that insurgent control of the major cities in Anbar province would

undermine the results[427].

The operation which led to the Second Battle of Fallujah was originally entitled Phantom

Fury but was renamed by the Iraqi Government as al-Fajr in deference to the fact that Iraqi

forces would be taking part in the operation. Al-Fajr began with weeks of preparatory air

assaults on key targets. On Monday November 8th, 2004, 6500 Coalition Forces and 2000 Iraqi

army soldiers began the assault in earnest[428]. CENTCOM acknowledged, however, that an

unknown number of Iraqi forces had deserted prior to engaging with insurgents, a phenomenon

that was occurring simultaneously in conflict against Shia militias in the South. While Insurgent

behavior did continue in Fallujah, AQI lost the city as a base of operations. However, the

Coalition had yet to implement their strategy of targeting fallback positions while advancing

through insurgent controlled territory. This meant that a largely unscathed TwJ was able to

relocate its base of operations to nearby Ramadi and continue to attack targets in Iraq, including

Fallujah from its new command.

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[426] R. Chandrasekaran, September 13th, 2004.
[427] Dexter Filkins and James Glanz, "With Airpower and Armor, Troops Enter Rebel-Held City" *The New York Times* November 8th, 2004.
[428] D. Filkins and J. Glanz, November 8th, 2004.

5.3.5   Operation Together Forward

Operation Together Forward was an early attempt to secure Baghdad, prior to the US surge, which ultimately failed due to a lack of Coalition manpower. The operation came in two phases. The first ran from July 9th to August 6th, of 2006. The second began on August 7th, of the same year. Reminiscent of earlier COIN operations, Together Forward was less of a proactive move against insurgent forces and more of a post hoc reaction to a situation that had come to be untenable. In this case, Coalition action was a desperate attempt to reign in the massive increase in sectarian violence resulting from the AQI bombing of the al-Askariyya Shrine. Ostensibly, Together Forward was to be led by the ISF under Maliki, with Coalition support. However, the requested ISF brigades never materialized and the Coalition ended up bearing the brunt of the fighting[429].

Operating from forward operation bases (FOB's) Coalition Forces did successfully displace insurgent elements within Baghdad. However, due the insufficient number of troops allotted to the operation[430], the Coalition never established a lasting presence outside of the FOBs. The result was that US and Iraqi forces could clear a given area, but could not hold it while moving on to the next objective, causing only momentary displacements of radical activity.

5.3.6   Fardh al-Qanoon (the Baghdad Security Plan)

As previously detailed, Fardh al-Qanoon made use of the Surge Troops in order to re-distribute the US military presence from its high concentration in heavily fortified bases into the Iraqi neighborhoods where AQI and other insurgent elements were taking advantage of the general failure of security. Most importantly, US troops under General Petreaus moved out of

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[429] Kimberley Kagan, "Enforcing the Law: The Baghdad Security Plan Begins" *Iraq Report: February 10th 2007—March 5th, 2007*, Institute for the Study of War, p. 5.
[430] http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-forward-together.htm.

their forward operating bases and into joint security stations (JSSs), which they staffed alongside their Iraqi counterparts. This force structure further devolved into the use of combat outposts (COBs) at the neighborhood level when the security situation permitted, resulting in a large-scale clear and hold operation throughout Baghdad.

The end result was a startling success, especially when compared with the previous year's Together Forward. JAM forces were effectively sealed into Sadr city by the building of a containment wall along two of the canals that define the neighborhood's borders, and AQI remnants had more or less entirely pulled back to Sunni controlled areas in the Baghdad suburbs and Diyala. By this time however, Shia militias had largely forced AQI, as well as many Sunnis, out of Baghdad. AQI's signature suicide bombings seemed useful for creating fear but proved to be of little use in taking and holding territory, especially in the context of a full-blown insurgency, which the JAM were waging as a poorly organized though formidable militia.

5.3.7 Operation Phantom Thunder

In tandem with the Baghdad Security Plan, Coalition Forces made use of the extra manpower enabled by the Surge to undertake the largest Corps level initiative since the end of major combat operations in 2003. Phantom Thunder utilized the same premise as the Baghdad Security Plan of moving tactical units into Iraqi population centers alongside Iraqi forces, simultaneously targeting insurgent centers of gravity along with their fall back positions, and quickly handing over authority to a much more organized ISF than had existed at the time of Operation Together Forward. Phantom Thunder complimented the Baghdad Security Plan through a series of smaller offensives. Marne Torche cleared Southeastern Baghdad, while Arrowhead Ripper targeted AQI assets in Baqubah. Commando Eagle cleared AQI cells from Southwest Baghdad, and Alljah complimented Awakening operations in Anbar province.

The end effect was devastating to AQI /ISI, as the organization was forced from its operation centers in and around Baghdad, as well Anbar and parts of Diyala. This forced the organization to retreat north, up the Diyala and Euphrated River Valleys and into Ninewah Province.

5.3.8 Operation Phantom Strike

In keeping with effecting simultaneous assaults on both AQI safehavens as well as AQI fallback zones, Phantom Strike was a nation-wide counter-terror operation which consisted of multiple operations attacking AQI as well as Shia militants across Iraq. Operation lightening Hammer I and Lightening Hammer II targeted the suburban belts of Baqubah, disrupting AQI's ability to conduct spectaculars in the city, and undermining AQI's attempt to redeploy after facing Coalition forces inside the city. Operation Iron Reaper began in November of 2007, in an effort to clear AQI out of its rear areas in Diyala, mostly along the Diyala River Valley, including Baqubah, Muqdadiyah, and rural areas[431]. Once again, operations in Diyala built on the experiences of the Baghdad Security Plan and overcame AQI's standard, attack—redeploy—attack strategy by attacking multiple areas (including likely fall back positions) simultaneously, and building out from central locations (like Baqubah) in successive waves[432]. Separate operations, such as Raider Reaper, Rock Reaper, and Blackhawk Reaper were aimed at disrupting AQI fallback positions in the Diyala countryside, providing security for victimized communities, and handing out aid[433]. Marne Husky and Marne Torche II focused on clearing the Southern Baghdad suburbs and setting up Concerned Local Citizens groups in those areas.

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[431] Eric Hamilton, "Expanding Security in Diyala" *Iraq Report: December 2007—May 2008*, Institute for the Study of War, p. 3.
[432] Eric Hamilton, "Expanding Security in Diyala" *Iraq Report: December 2007—May 2008*, Institute for the Study of War, p. 6.
[433] Eric Hamilton, "Expanding Security in Diyala" *Iraq Report: December 2007—May 2008*, Institute for the Study of War, p. 6.

Phantom Strike was concluded with operations Marne Courageous and Marne Roundup, which sought out AQI arms caches and depots along the Euphrates River Valley.

5.3.9   Operation Phantom Phoenix

Phantom Phoenix was launched to hold territories seized by the Baghdad Security Plan and Operations Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike and consolidate the security gains made throughout 2007, both by the Awakening Groups as well as by Coalition military operations. The primary crux of the operation was to disrupt AQI's remaining logistical networks in areas addressed by Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike as well as to push AQI's operations further and further north, which had been a consequence of previous operations as well. Phoenix included three major operations aimed at building upon the successes of previous COIN activities under Phantoms Thunder and Strike. The first of these was Operation Iron Harvest, which continued Iron Reaper operations in Muqdadiyah and areas of northern Diyala and pushed into Kirkuk province in order to disrupt AQI activities there. Operation Lion's Roar, otherwise referred to as the Mosul Security Plan, applied the lessons of Fardh al-Qanoon to AQI's last major bastion in Iraq. Marne Thunderbolt, the third major operation of Phoenix was the culmination of Marne Husky and Marne Torche, once again focusing on AQI's southern Baghdad areas of operation.

By the end of operations in Diyala, AQI had been effectively forced to retreat to its final fallback area, Ninewah province, where a much diminished ISI set up headquarters in Mosul.

5.4   Rival Organizations

Attempting to map out the competition AQI faced from rival insurgent organizations is made difficult by the fact that the Iraq insurgency was the most ideologically diverse in recent memory. Gabbay lists three axes of logic underwriting the Iraq insurgency; the anti-US

component, the sectarian component begun and nourished by AQI, and the intra-Sunni insurgency that pitted various Sunni radicals against one another[434]. While these three axes were omnipresent in the Iraqi insurgency, the conflicting motivations for conflict were not mutually exclusive; with various feuding Sunni sects coming together to fight sectarian Shia militias, radical Sunni organizations fighting TwJ and AQI cells in tandem with US troops, and Shia militias alternately fighting alongside Sunni groups against Coalition forces.

While most every Sunni insurgent outfit as well as Shia militia ostensibly fought against the US occupation and Coalition forces, the addition of AQI in the Iraqi battlespace added another dimension by splitting the insurgency between those who fought for purely Iraqi goals (whether Ba'athist, Islamist, or otherwise) and those who fought to implement Sharia within an international context[435]. The sectarian conflict was much more straightforward and was fought largely between AQI and related organizations on the one hand and Mahdi Army and Badr Corps fighters on the other. The vast majority of violence took place as various groups vied for control of strategic areas of Baghdad. However, as was the case between the JAM and other Shia organizations, the major danger to AQI proved not to be the Coalition, though COIN operations from the surge onwards certainly sounded the death knell of AQI, but rival Sunni organizations of almost every stripe.

The Iraq insurgency spawned an innumerable number of radical organizations, however, with the exception of al-Qaeda in Iraq, they all sprang from one of four broad based movements that emerged from the fall of the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad; the Ba'athists and former regime adherents, the Nationalist Islamists, the Iraqi Salafists, and the Tribal Networks[436]. While each

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[434] Michael Gabbay, "The 2008 US Elections and Sunni Insurgent Dynamics in Iraq" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 1(10) September 2008, pp. 13-16.
[435] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 25.
[436] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 17.

of these movements spawned organizations that competed with AQI for territory, manpower, and finances, it was the Tribal networks who would prove fatal to AQI's hold on all but the most peripheral areas of Iraq.

5.4.1 Ba'athists

Following the ouster of Saddam, the only constituencies who were not wholly disillusioned with the Ba'athist party were those at its heart. As a result the Ba'athist insurgent organizations tended to be staffed from the ranks of former regime diehards. Mostly this included army officers, former Republican Guardsmen, intel and paramilitary operatives, and the Fedayeen Saddam, which was set up as an insurgent organization by Saddam in the days leading up to the US invasion[437].

The Ba'athist ideology was strictly secular nationalist in tint. The party creed was "Unity, Freedom, and Socialism", though this referred to Arab unity, freedom from *foreign* control, and a modest system of social welfare[438]. Religion, while useful to maintaining control, was always subservient to interests of the state. However, the 1991 Gulf war shattered the notion of Arab unity, and the sanctions regime that followed--and the severe corruption and patronage that ensued--disabused most of any belief in the party ideology. After the US invasion, the Ba'athists attempted to recreate the party as a revolutionary party and purge it of its corrupt elements[439]. Currently, the Ba'ath view the Shia and the supposed Iranian influence behind them as the main threat of foreign influence and control[440]. Despite this, the Ba'athists

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[437] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 17-18.
[438] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 26.
[439] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 27.
[440] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 27.

tend to disagree with AQI's targeting of civilians and their goal of implementing a Sunni theocracy[441].

The Largest single faction is led by Ibrahim al-Duri, whose leadership is based out of Damascus. Al-Duri's faction is offset by other organizations, such as the 'New Ba'ath Party' run by Muhammed Yunis Ahmed al-Muali, the Fedayeen Saddam, Jaish Mohammed and al-Awda (the Return)[442]. Early on, the professional expertise of the Ba'athists served them well.

> "The Ba'athists and their affiliates are able to show a high degree of
>
> functional specialisation because they previously controlled the state and
>
> its institutions, some of which they recreated in decentralised form in
>
> order to conduct their insurgency[443]."

However, a number of problems prevented them from taking a leading role in the insurgency. Al-Duri, and other factions based in Syria have been hampered by Syrian meddling as Damascus has attempted to develop schisms within the organizations in order to better control them. Jaish Mohammed was heavily damaged in the battle of Fallujah and has since largely melded in with other Islamists. And all factions have been plagued by the fact that Saddam irreparably undermined the sway of the party's ideology. In the end, the Islamists claimed much of the Ba'athists' constituency, claiming that the Ba'athists had fled, and that Ba'athism itself was an infidel doctrine[444].

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[441] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 28.
[442] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 18.
[443] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 44.
[444] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 57.

5.4.2 Nationalist Islamists

The Nationalist Islamists are mostly simple nationalists who are disillusioned by Ba'athists and the Saddam loyalists[445]. Unlike other insurgent organizations, these groups do not necessarily espouse a particular ideology. Instead they simply wish to fight the occupation. The nationalists have been central in attempting to unite the insurgency behind one common cause, a *Muquwama*, or war of national liberation[446]. The nationalists do share an intense hatred of AQI with other sectors of the insurgency, as one prominent nationalist fighter articulated.

> "Look, a full-scale civil war will break out in the next few months. The Kurds only care about their independence. We the Sunnis will be crushed – the Shi'a have more fighters and they are better organized … they are supported by the Iranians. We don't have leadership and no one is more responsible for our disarray than Zarqawi, may God curse him[447]."

5.4.3 Iraqi Salafists

The Iraqi Salafist Organizations are the result of the religious revivalism prevalent in Iraqi society in the 1980's and 90's[448]. This revival had three main causes[449]. First among them was the template of the Iranian Revolution, which gave Sunnis hope that they could establish their own theocracy. Second, was the humiliating defeat of 1991 as well as the sanctions regime that followed, creating chronic unemployment, poverty, and other social ills associated with an economy based wholly on the black market. Third, was Saddam's 'Return to Faith' campaign, which he launched following the al-Shaiban uprising in 1991. Called the *al-Hamla al-Imaniyya*, the Saddam directed revival mandated Qu'ranic studies in the schools, provided money for the

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[445] A. Hashim, 2008.
[446] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 29.
[447] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 29.
[448] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 30.
[449] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 30-31.

building of training centers for Imams, and local clerics were given the freedom to attack international (though not domestic) targets. Salafism caught on in the early days of the US occupation as the chaos and corruption that accompanied the early days of the invasion made Sharia look increasingly attractive to would-be radicals[450].

In the beginning, the Iraqi salafists made common cause with their transnational brethren in TwJ, however they quickly tired of Zarqawi[451]. His killing spree in Iraq and his puritanical interpretation of Islam was at odds with the goals of the local Salafists. Specifically, Zarqawi and the local salafists differed over tactical, strategic, and financial details. Tactically, Iraqis strongly disagreed with Zarqawi's level of violence. Hashim even goes so far as to state that it is likely that other Islamist groups supported the founding of the Mujahideen Shura Council as a means of controlling Zarqawi's activities[452]. Strategically, the local salafists took issue with Zarqawi's continuing attempts at placing the insurgency under his command. This became especially so after the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq. Zarqawi, and other AQI leaders, did themselves no favors by targeting those who challenged their leadership, as these assassination campaigns increased the level of resistance to AQI across the broader insurgency. Financially, AQI began to make enemies when their extortion rackets and black market activities began to eat into the finances of other organizations[453]. When protests were raised against al-Qaeda activities, AQI's leadership typically responded with force. In Diyala, AQI kidnapped and/or killed several major insurgent leaders. Elsewhere AQI forces killed a senior leader of the

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[450] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 31.
[451] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 33.
[452] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 59.
[453] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 59.

1920 Revolution Brigades who was also the nephew of Harith al-Dari the most prominent Sunni cleric in Iraq[454].

In the spring of 2007, the Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI) published a nine page letter urging bin Laden to take ownership of the actions of AQI and to correct the path of the organization[455]. The letter accuses AQI of killing 30 IAI members, of defaming the IAI, and of openly starting conflict with major insurgent organizations. The IAI's letter concluded that AQI's tactics are un-Islamic, and it took specific exception to AQI's use of chlorine gas to attack civilians, their imposition of Taliban style interpretations of Sharia, as well as their assassination campaigns against insurgent leaders who had spoken with American forces.

> "A number of individual IAI commanders also made clear their distaste for AQM. One, Abu Mohammad al-Salmani, said in early 2007 that 'Al-Qaeda has killed more Iraqi Sunnis in Anbar province during the past month than the soldiers of the American occupation have killed within three months. People are tired of the torture. We cannot keep silent anymore[456].'"

While there are a number of minor salafist organizations in Iraq, the two major salafist organizations[457], which are still active are the 1920 Revolution Brigades and the Islamic Army of Iraq. The former is made of former regime elements who have decried Ba'athism. While the 1920 Brigades as one of the most prolific insurgent organizations in Iraq, the group suffered a schism in March of 2007. The IAI, on the other hand is the largest salafist organization in Iraq and is comprised of Islamists, former regime loyalists, foreigners, and a number of other elements. While the IAI and AQI had been known to cooperate from time to time, actions taken

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[454] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 60.
[455] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 60-61.
[456] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 61.
[457] Since Ansar al-Islam and Ansar al-Sunna have intermingled so much with AQI, the author is not including them in this list.

by the al-Qaeda leadership have alienated the organization and it has cooperated with Coalition and ISF forces in attacking AQI's network.

5.4.4   Iraqi Tribes

Of all the organizations this section has detailed so far, only the IAI has had a significant impact on AQI's operations, and most of this came in the waning years of the insurgency as a reaction to AQI's attempt to consolidate the Sunni resistance under the ISI banner.   No organization or group of organizations has been as detrimental to AQI's role in the insurgency as have the Tribes.   Tribal structures are nothing new to insurgencies as they have provided the blueprint for radical organizations in ethnic insurgencies since oppositional groups have been studied.   The hierarchical and highly institutionalized nature of tribal structure serves as a very useful springboard for consolidating opposition to incumbent regimes and/or rival communities. These traditional sources of authority are one of the reasons why ethnic insurgencies have proven among the more successful forms of non-state violence.   Tribal structures vary from region to region, and in Iraq, they are comprised of six levels of affiliation[458].   The most comprehensive of these are the large tribes, or tribal confederations known of as *qabila*.   These are amalgamations of tribes, or *'ashira*.   Tribes, in turn, are comprised of clans; *afkhad*, which are made up of associated households, or *hamoulas*.   Below the level of the household are the house—*bayts*—that refer to one's extended family.   And finally, one's immediate family, the *'ailas*, is the most specific component of the tribal structure.

Tribes can become politicized for a number of reasons.   Usually, the politicization (and perhaps militarization) of the tribe is a result of one of two reasons.   Either the tribe is in a marginalized position *vis a vis* another tribal or ethnic network, or a tribe that was once dominant is having its privileged position threatened by unfolding political events.   It was for this latter

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[458] Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening" *Survival* vol. 50(2) 2008, p. 68.

reason that the Iraqi Sunni tribes eventually became resistant to AQI efforts to dominate the Sunni Triangle as they enjoyed privileged status under Saddam as a lynchpin of his internal security machinations. Broadly speaking, there are four patterns of using tribes to supplement internal state security[459]. The first of these is 'State Tribalism', wherein the professional security services are staffed by members of preferred tribes. One would find this sort of arrangement in relatively modern states that have a problem consolidating internal control. A second model would be a state that allows tribes to assume the role of autonomous paramilitary forces. This is 'Auxiliary Tribalism'. In these cases, there are no official offices of the government responsible for providing internal security and the tribes are allowed to operate with impunity. Only the weakest states would use what is referred to as 'Baronial Tribalism', where tribes take on the form of vassals to a semi-fuedal state. The final form of tribal politicization occurs when a foreign power uses local tribes as a mechanism for colonial control. The politicization of the Sunni tribes occurred during the Ba'athist regime as Saddam used a mixture of state and auxiliary tribalism to control Iraq[460]. As the power of Baghdad diminished throughout the Iran-Iraq and then Gulf Wars, Saddam's regime became increasingly reliant on the tribes to maintain security. Following the 1991 uprisings, the military defeat of the Iraqi Army in Desert Storm, and the economic toll of the sanctions regime, Saddam's government was greatly diminished. As a result, tribes were given weapons and training and became the defacto law enforcement authorities. In addition, Saddam supplemented his diminished legal system by granting deference to tribal customs in matters of jurisprudence. As this wore on, what was originally a system of state tribalism increasingly became one of auxiliary tribalism, and the position of the dominant Sunni tribes increased dramatically as a result.

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[459] A. Long, 2008, pp. 71-72.
[460] A. Long, 2008, pp. 74-75.

This is not to say, however that the tribes resisted AQI from the start. Rather, as the insurgency wore on, AQI made a series of miscalculations, placing them at odds with tribal interests. In summation, there were political, tactical, and financial rationalizations for the eventual conflict that broke out between many of the major Sunni tribes, and AQI/ISI[461].

Firstly, tribes were not interested in a global theocracy such as that espoused by the transnational salafists. The austere version of Wahabbism trumpeted by the AQI rank and file did not appeal to the Iraqi Sunnis by far and large. Rather, their motivations for resistance to the US occupation sprang from grievances arising from very local conditions. As opportunities to change these local conditions presented themselves, namely the concept that taking part in the elections of December 2005, and January 2006 would empower them, the tribes were quick to take advantage. As a result more mainstream tribal elements attempted to halt violence leading up the elections in order to boost Sunni representation in Baghdad, and thus Sunni political power[462]. AQI's violent attempts at deterring such participation in democratic processes inevitably involved the targeting of prominent individuals within tribal circles and invited the first instances of tribal backlash against al-Qaeda related activities.

Secondly, the tribes took sever issue with Zarqawi's tactics. As alluded to previously in this chapter, al-Qaeda in Iraq never took advantage of their security environment in order to develop into a more sophisticated guerilla-style organization. Instead, they used their distributed network to continue to perpetrate terrorist attacks designed to create chaos for the Coalition and Iraqi government and to terrorize Iraqis into conforming to their will. This meant that instead of targeting military units, AQI overwhelmingly targeted Iraqi civilians and police forces, Shi'ite

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[461] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 64.
[462] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 64

and Sunni alike. It took little time for the tribes, to whom the victims of this violence invariably belonged, to express disagreement with Zarqawi and his organization's activities.

> "In the words of Sheikh Osama al-Jada'an, a prominent tribal leader in Anbar later assassinated by AQM: 'We realized that these foreign terrorists were hiding behind the veil of the noble Iraqi resistance. They claim to be striking at the US occupation, but the reality is they are killing innocent Iraqis in the markets, in mosques, in churches, and in our schools[463].'"

Despite the fact that the tribes had ample reason to attack AQI for moral and political reasons, many scholars conclude that it was AQI's infringement on the financial interests of the tribes that eventually led to the open revolt that eventually led to the Awakening and Concerned Local Citizens Councils.

Many tribes, especially the Albu Risha always benefited from controlling a key road in trade from Baghdad to Amman. During the sanctions regimes control of this, and similar, routes became especially important for the functioning of the Iraqi economy, and especially lucrative for those who controlled access to Syrian goods and markets. In addition, the tribes had the right to tax other businessmen and traders who used these trade networks, though this was less a legitimate taxation regime and more of an extortion racket. As the licit Iraqi economy was strangled by the sanctions, this black market activity became the dominant source of revenue for the tribes. As the previous section on organizational design illustrated, al-Qaeda's expansion into Anbar (and presumably other territories) necessitated an expansion into local black market activities as well. In time, AQI took over many of these activities, and disrupted others, such as the 'taxation' revenues, by running kidnapping operations and killing civilians based on identity; activities which discouraged trade and cut into profits. In addition, AQI's radical stance

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[463] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 64.

regarding participating with the Iraqi government meant that tribes were strongly discouraged from bidding on government contracts or seeking government work, cutting off a major source of tribal patronage in the past. Among the first tribes to develop a concrete opposition to AQI, the Albu Risha, were forbidden from bidding on contracts with Coalition forces. In addition, AQI would not allow them to send their sons to work for the local police forces and threatened those who cooperated with the occupation authorities. In contrast, other insurgent groups allowed such cooperation in exchange for a share of profits and of course as a way of procuring intelligence. From a very early stage in Zarqawi's areas of control, however, AQI related organizations enforced their edicts quite violently. Perhaps most importantly, in 2004, al-Qaida killed a number of Albu Risha tribesmen for taking coalition contracts. These most important of these turned out to be Sheikh Bazi'a al-Rishawi (the father of Sheikh Abd al-Sattar, who would go on to found the Anbar Salvation Council) as well as three of al-Sattar's brothers.

It was the Albu Mahal Tribe, who were the first to respond to AQI's aggression. The Albu Mahal did so by forming a military wing called the Hamza Battalions, with the support of the Albu Nimr[464]. Actively opposing AQI proved difficult, however, and in May of 2005, they were forced to approach the Marines for support. The Marines did not reciprocate the Albu Mahal's overtures, and instead embarked on Operation Matador in the relevant area (al-Qaim) without coordination with the Tribes. Without aid from the Coalition, the Hamza Battalions were overrun in Sept of 2005. The Coalition did eventually launch an operation with the help of the Albu Mahal—Operation Steel Curtain—which resulted in much more promising results than the ill-conceived Matador, however for some reason, this model was not duplicated anywhere else at the time. Following the example of the Albu Mahal, the Dulaimi Confederation began opposing AQI in Ramadi in August of 2005, and the Albu Fahd follwed suit towards the end of

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[464] A. Long, pp.78-79.

2006[465]. AQI responded in a manner that would be typical of their dealings with rival tribes by assassinating Shiekh Nasr al-Fahdawi, of the Albu Fahd. While the intention of such retribution was to provoke compliance, the actual outcome of these murders was to honor bound the remaining tribesmen to seek vengeance.

Tensions between the Zarqawists and Sunni tribes exploded in January of 2006 when AQI sent a suicide bomber to attack Sunni police recruits in Ramadi, who were from nearby tribes[466]. The attack killed over 70 recruits who were sent by their tribal elders, firstly because the tribes realized the men needed something to do, and secondly because the Sunnis preferred to be policed by their own, rather than forcing the government to send in recruits from Shia areas. The Anbar tribes responded by informing AQI that they were no longer welcome in Ramadi, sparking a series of retaliatory assassinations of high-ranking Sheikhs by AQI cells. Galvanized by AQI's militant stance against the tribes, the Anbar Salvation Council was founded in August of 2006 by Sheikh Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi with the help of Fasal al-Gaoud from the Albu Nimr, who headed the largest front company responsible for smuggling during Hussein's regime and thus had an interest in keeping AQI from infringing on their financial territory[467]. In all, the ASC combined 25 tribes in opposition to AQI, and they were able to marshal roughly 100 men to form a paramilitary outfit. They attracted money from US forces to form a local police force and immediately began to hunt and kill/kidnap AQI members. Realizing the promise of the in-group policing strategy the ASC represented, the Iraqi government made al-Sattar the counter-terrorism administrator in the region of Ramadi and his tribal militia was deputized into

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[465] A. Long, p. 79.
[466] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 63.
[467] A. Long, p. 83.

"Emergency Response Units"[468]. In addition, the Albu Mahal effectively took over the Iraqi Army Brigade in Ramadi and the Albu Risha took over the police force[469].

Al-Qaeda responded forcefully, stating that…

"We have the right to kill all infidels, like the police and army and all those who support them. This tribal system is un-Islamic. We are proud to kill tribal leaders who are helping the Americans[470]."

The MSC, in turn, released a statement in September of 2006 threatening several tribes and rival organizations of betrayal and treason, singling out the Abu Rughal Tribe and the Albu Mahal Tribe, as well as the latter's military wing, the Hamza Battalions[471]. In October of 2006, the MSC began a concerted campaign against the ASC. Leaders were offered amnesty if they denounced the Iraqi government and accepted AQI's leadership in the insurgency[472]. The MSC then responded with a series of assassinations, including operations that targeted the heads of the ASC Councils in Samarra and Fallujah. Among the most high profile assassinations; Fasal al-Gaoud was killed by AQI in the Mansour Hotel in 2007, and Sheikh al-Sattar himself was murdered on the 13th of September in the same year by an IED placed near his home in Ramadi[473].

Contrary to AQI's wishes, the conflict with the tribes had three effects[474]. To begin with, rather than seek conciliation with al-Qaeda out of fear of violence, the tribal heads were forced to seek revenge in accordance with tribal customs. This in turn gave the US a way to integrate the

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[468] A. Long, p. 80.
[469] A. Long, p. 81.
[470] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 63.
[471] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 63-64.
[472] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 64.
[473] A. Long, p. 83.
[474] Mohammed M. Hafez, "Al-Qaida Losing Ground in Iraq" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 1(1) December 2007, pp. 6-8.

tribes into the Coalition's counter-insurgency strategy. Finally, this intra-Sunni conflict forced the nationalists to choose sides, ending any hope AQI had of incorporating other Sunni organizations into the ISI.

5.5   Operational History

5.5.1   2000

An operational history of the Zarqawi network that evolved into TwJ, and later AQI, the MSC and the ISI, begins in 2000. It was in this year that Zarqawi began his camp in Afghanistan under the auspices of Taliban patronage. While it is apparent that Zarqawi and al-Qaeda Central had a limited amount of overlap, the two networks did interact during this period to forward two major plots. The first of these was to be a major regional attack, which was meant to be the Jordanian component of the transnational 'Millenium Plot'. This plot began when two Jordanians approached Abu Zubaydah regarding a potential attack in Jordan. Zubaydah provided the two agents with some preliminary training in an al-Qaeda camp, but then passed the men on to Zarqawi who had a more entrenched Jordanian network. The two men who were to perpetrate the attack were Ahmed al-Riyati and Ra'id Hijazi. The attack was planned by Zarqawi, and an associate of his, named al-Aruri (later a top deputy in TwJ). The two planners determined three targets to be hit within Jordan; the King Hussein Bridge connecting Jordan and Israel, the spot on the Jordan River where Jesus was purportedly baptized, and the Radisson SAS hotel in Amman. The attack never came to fruition as Jordanian GID intercepted a call between Abu Zubaydah and a Palestinian militant while the two conversed about the plot. As a result the perpetrators were arrested while trying to cross the Turkish border[475].

Despite the failure of the Millenium Plot, bin Laden was significantly enough impressed by Zarqawi's work in Afghanistan to sponsor another attack, this time against an unspecified

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[475] J.C. Brisard, 2005.

target within Israel. Bin Laden is reputed to have fronted ~35,000 USD for the operation which was to be carried out by Zarqawi associates Firaz Suaiman Ali Hijir, Ahmed Muhammed Mustafa, and Ahmet Mahmoud[476]. The end result was thankfully the same as the first, with all three men being arrested at a border checkpoint in Turkey[477].

5.5.2   2001

Two major events defined Zarqawi's operations in 2001; the mergers of the major Kurdish Islamist organizations into Ansar al-Islam (eventually), and the US invasion of Afghanistan and the flight of Zarqawi's Afghani fighters into Iraq.

The formation of the nascent Zarqawi network in Iraq began with schisms within the IMIK. With the prompting of Zarqawi's top lieutenant in Iraq al-Shami, many of these various offshoots came together under the leadership of Mullah Krekar in the form of Jund al-Islam. Following the arrest of Mullah Krekar by Norwegian authorities, Zarqawi took control of a re-named Ansar al-Islam via his proxy al-Shami.

Zarqawi's own move to Iraq was preceded by the US invasion of Afghanistan and the militant leader's wounding during a US attack on an al-Qaeda meeting he was attending in Kandahar. At the time it was reported that Zarqawi's wounds were so severe that he likely had to have at least one leg amputated. As it turns out he did receive wounds to his stomach and legs, but was able to flee to Tehran to receive treatment, with the logistical aid of his German cell.

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[476] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 74.
[477] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 83.

5.5.3 2002

For a large part of 2002, Zarqawi was likely in Syria as Saddam was virulently hunting for him in Iraq to ward off calls by the Bush administration that his presence there constituted proof of Ba'athist ties to al-Qaeda Central. As a result the kinetic operations of the emerging Zarqawi network in Iraq were limited mostly to defensive operations against the PDK and PUK Peshmerga.

Zarqawi did pull off one major attack that year when, on October 28th, he was finally able to carry out a terrorist attack in his home country of Jordan, when a Zarqawist cell assassinated USAID representative Laurence Foley, outside his home in Amman. This was his first successful spectacular attack and his first successful collaboration with al-Qaeda.

5.5.4 2003

An intercepted satellite phone conversation led intelligence agents to the handler responsible for the Foley assassination. As a result the US administration was able to name Zarqawi's network as having been responsible for the attack[478]. It's possible that naming Zarqawi as the culprit was meant to entice Saddam to kill him as Baghdad was eager to avoid even the semblance of complicity with al-Qaeda. By this point, however, Saddam's reach into Kurdistan had been so diminished that he had little ability to disrupt the nascent Ansar al-Islam/Sunna network Zarqawi was assembling in Northern Iraq.

This is not to say that all was going smoothly for Ansar during the first months of the Iraq War. Captured internal Ansar documents suggest that the attempts to provoke widespread resistance to the US occupation were not going as planned. The documents offered the first suggestion that the organization was considering transforming the conflict from a war of national

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[478] Patrick Tyler, "THREATS AND RESPONSES: TERROR NETWORK; Intelligence Break Led U.S. to Tie Envoy Killing to Iraq Qaeda Cell" *the New York Times,* February 6th, 2003.

liberation, one in which any number of organizations representing any number of ideological dispositions could participate, into a sectarian conflict by provoking retaliation from the Shia[479]. This would transform it into an ethnic conflict, where Sunni-Islamist groups would have greater weight. These documents also suggest, that throughout the first year of the war, Ansar al-Sunna committed itself mostly to directing suicide bombings against civilians seeking to aid the occupational government. Mostly this took the form of mingling suicide bombers amongst recruits for military and police units[480].

Perhaps most importantly, this captured communiqué intimates that the al-Qaeda Central remnants in Afghanistan and Pakistan were in fact not coordinating with the Zarqawists in Iraq at that time.

> "… in his January plea to Mr. bin Laden, Mr. Zarqawi referred to a divide between his group and the Qaeda network. He approached the Qaeda chief as a fellow terror network leader with a proposal that might be mutually beneficial. Mr. Zarqawi told Mr. bin Laden that any Qaeda recruits sent to Iraq to fight would "work under your banner." Mr. Zarqawi concluded by saying he would not harbor ill will if Mr. bin Laden refused to provide additional men.
>
> "We are brothers," Mr. Zarqawi wrote, "and the disagreement will not spoil friendship."[481]"

By the end of the year however, it had become apparent that al-Qaeda Central rebuffed the call for recruits Zarqawi said would be needed to carry out the sectarian escalation[482], underscoring

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[479] Dexter Filkins, "THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: INTELLIGENCE; U.S. Says Files Seek Qaeda Aid In Iraq Conflict" *the New York Times*, February 9th, 2004.
[480] Edward Wong, "THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: COMBAT; Up to 80 Killed In Bomb Blasts At 2 Iraqi Sites" *The New York Times,* February 11th, 2004.
[481] Don Van Natta Jr., "Who Is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi?" *The New York Times,* October 10th, 2004.

the severity of the strategic rift between Zarqawi's extreme takfiri stance and al-Qaeda's Far Enemy approach to the jihad.

5.5.5   2004

In the beginning of 2004, Ansar al-Islam spent much of its time reconstituting it's Kurdish cells and attempting to establish networks across a broad range of cities in Iraq, including Erbil, Mosul, Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Fallujah[483]. They were not, however, moving men around, but attempting to recruit new members to establish cells in these cities.

Zarqawi's Iraqi activities in the spring of 2004 were overshadowed by activities across Zarqawi's transnational networks. On March 11th, the Abu Hafs al-Masri Birgades detonated a string of explosives in a Madird train station in reaction to the Spanish decision to send troops to Iraq in support of the US led Coalition. The claim of responsibility by Abu Hafs was released by a communiqué sent from Ansar al-Islam[484], who devoted a special page on its website to the events. The perpetrators were led by a top al-Qaeda operative in Spain, Jamal Zougan and Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas (Abu Dahdah). Zougan was supervised by Abdelaziz Benyiach, who was an associate of Khaled al-Aruri, the Zarqawi lieutenant who helped plan the failed Millenium Plot in Jordan[485]. Zarqawi's internationalist tendencies were further put on display when, in April, he backed a plot to detonate three trucks laden with up to 20 tons of explosives and (reportedly) chemical weapons, in Amman[486]. The attack was meant to target the Office of the Prime Minister of Jordan, the headquarters of the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate, the

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[482] Douglas Jehl, "Al Qaeda Rebuffs Iraqi Terror Group, U.S. Officials Say" *The New York Times,* February 21st, 2004.
[483] Jeffrey Gettleman, "Anti-U.S. Kurdish Militants Rebounding, Officials Say" *The New York Times,* February 25th, 2004.
[484] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 181.
[485] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 183.
[486] Anthony Cordesman, "The Zarqawi Attack on Jordan: A Single Point Does Not Make a Trend" CSIS Monograph, November 15th, 2005.

US Embassy in Amman, and other unspecified targets. At the time, journalists reported that the assault was capable of killing 80,000 and wounding a further 160,000[487]. The cell responsible was directed by Zarqawi from Iraq and was overseen in Jordan by al-Jayushi, a Zarqawi operative who had moved with Zarqawi to Iraq, but received seed money to start his own cell in Jordan[488]. Operational costs were covered by a Zarqawist cell in Syria, which served as the Zarqawi network's logistical hub in the Middle East. According to the BND (German Intelligence), the operation cost over 280,000 USD and the money was funneled through intermediaries in Syra. The trucks were halted by alerted Jordanian authorities in Irbid[489].

The operation that was to cement Zarqawi's reputation in the crowded field of the Iraqi insurgency occurred on May 7th, when Nicholas Berg was beheaded. On May 11th, 2004, a Malaysian website, Muntada al-Ansar, broadcast the beheading of Nicholas Berg, at the hands of what was probably, Zarqawi himself. Taking advantage of the publicity resulting from Berg's gruesome murder, on May 13th, Ansar al-Sunna announced its merger with at least five other groups to from Tawhid, W'al Jihad, under the command of Zarqawi.

TwJ continued to grow but maintained roughly the same repertoire of violent activities that the organization perpetrated under the guise of Ansar al-Sunna and Ansar al-Islam. These included kidnappings for ransom, videotaped beheadings, and suicide attacks against Iraqi Infrastructure, Coalition and international targets, and civilians who were 'cooperating' with occupational forces (i.e. police and military recruits at recruitment stations).

By the end of Spring, 2004, however TwJ's network had spread across most Sunni dominated areas and the center of gravity for Zarqawi's network had moved from Kurdistan to Anbar, where Zarqawi had set up headquarters in Fallujah. Early attempts to place a US presence

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[487] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 88.
[488] J.C. Brisard, 2005, p. 89.
[489] A. Cordesman, November 15th, 2005.

in the city had been met with unrest, and as a result Fallujah had not been immediately occupied by US troops. Instead, Coalition forces allowed control to be seized by an elected town council that was, at least ostensibly, pro-American. In reality, however, insurgent organizations permeated the city, including Zarqawi's TwJ. Reacting to Zarqawi's presence in the city, the US had launched a series of aerial assaults on Fallujah in early 2004, targeting Zarqawist safe-houses. Following the deaths of the Blackwater contractors, Coalition forces besieged Fallujah from March to May of 2004. The collateral damage was such that the Marines relented the first assault and turned over the governorship of the city to local leaders. These in turn established what came to be called the Fallujah Brigade. This group was made up of ~ 2000 militiamen and former Ba'athists[490]. These in turn colluded with Zarqawi's Tawhid W'al Jihad, among a number of other insurgent organzations, in order to establish a safe haven for anti-occupation forces[491]. These safe houses became the target of air raids by US forces, who were loathe to re-enter the city following the first battle in Fallujah, however these attacks resulted in high collateral damage and did little to dislodge Zarqawi's growing presence in the city[492]. In the meantime, Falluja quickly became notable as a manufacturing hub for IEDs and VBIEDs which were taking a toll on Coalition and Iraqi forces in the Capital[493]. As a result, US forces returned in November of 2004 and cleared the city of insurgents by December of the same year. US operations had apparently been aided greatly by a schism that had opened up between Zarqawi and the TwJ on one side, and the remainder of the insurgency on the other. This was exacerbated by the US contention that the expulsion of foreign fighters from the city was a pre-

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[490] Edward Wong, "THE REACH OF WAR: THE MILITARY; Strike Aimed at Terrorists Kills 17 in Falluja" *The New York Times*, June 20th, 2004.
[491] Kimberly Kagan, "the Anbar Awakening: Displacing al-Qaeda from its Stronghold in Western Iraq" *Iraq Report August 21 2006 – March 30th 2007*, Institute for the Study of War, p. 2.
[492] E. Wong, June 20th, 2004.
[493] Dexter Filkins, "THE REACH OF WAR: INSURGENTS; Falluja Pullout Left Haven Of Insurgents, Officials Say" *The New York Times*, July 8th, 2004.

requisite for avoiding a second siege[494]. Because of this threat, as well as internal friction between TwJ and rival insurgents, local fighters, especially local tribesmen began turning on the foreign networks[495]. In particular, they singled out Tawhid w'al Jihad and Zarqawi for defaming the resistance with their tactics. A top Zarqawi operative, Abu Abdullah Suri was even killed by tribesmen after being chased by a truck full of insurgents through the streets of Fallujah. Foreigners, in the end, were forced to congregate in the commercial district because they were rejected from the residential areas for drawing US firepower[496]. This lack of affection for the foreigners was noted by the US due to the lack of popular reaction to continued targeting of foreign fighter safe-houses by US air power[497]. Religion seemed to be one of the key reasons for the schism, as austere interpretations of Islam are alien to this area. Women began to be accosted on the roads for not wearing full covering, despite the fact that such garb is very rare in Iraqi society, and Fallujan man killed a Kuwaiti after the latter forbade him to pray at the tomb of an ancestor[498]. Tactics proved a further source of friction as foreigners were blamed for the IEDs which exploded regularly in Iraq during this period, and for the killing of Westerners[499].

Seeing what happened in the October (2004) assault on Samarra made the locals serious about avoiding an exchange with the Coalition. However, the chief negotiator for the city, Khalid al-Jumali, was forced to break off negotiations between the insurgents in charge of

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[494] "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying in Fallujah; Locals, Fearing Invasion, Turn Against Foreign Arabs" *Washington Post* October 12th, 2004.
[495] "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying in Fallujah; Locals, Fearing Invasion, Turn Against Foreign Arabs" *Washington Post* October 12th, 2004.
[496] "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying in Fallujah; Locals, Fearing Invasion, Turn Against Foreign Arabs" *Washington Post* October 12th, 2004.
[497] Fooad al-Shiekhly and Jeffrey Gettleman, "THE REACH OF WAR: FALLUJA; Iraqi Official Says U.S. Raid Aimed to Kill Foreign Rebels" *The New York Times*, June 21st, 2004.
[498] "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying in Fallujah; Locals, Fearing Invasion, Turn Against Foreign Arabs" *Washington Post* October 12th, 2004.
[499] "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying in Fallujah; Locals, Fearing Invasion, Turn Against Foreign Arabs" *Washington Post* October 12th, 2004.

Fallujah, and the Coalition and Iraqi Government forces on October 18th, due to his inability to control the various networks which comprised the militants in Fallujah[500]. Thus, Operation al-Fajr proceeded despite the problems TwJ was having consolidating their position in the city. TwJ's behavior during the ensuing battle was notable however, as the militants were able to engage in guerilla style tactics for the first time, when they took over multiple police stations and prepared to engage coalition forces in pitched battles[501]. By the end of Operation al-Fajr, all TwJ forces had left the city[502]. After the loss of Fallujah, Zarqawi moved his base of operations to Ramadi, maintaining TwJ's center of gravity in Anbar province[503].

In the midst of the fighting in Fallujah, on October 17th, Zarqawi formally announced the fusion of TwJ with al-Qaeda, resulting in the formation of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

5.5.6 2005

In 2005, al-Qaeda in Iraq found itself in conflict along three axes; a sectarian battle with Shia militias, an increasingly intense conflict with rival Sunni organizations, and an international campaign focused on pressuring the governments of Muslim countries to refrain from interacting with the Maliki government in Baghdad. Pursuantly, most of the damage inflicted upon AQI during this time was not the result of Coalition COIN efforts, but was a consequence of reprisals by Shia and Sunni factions and international condemnation from Salafist circles.

In 2005, AQI began attempting to consolidate its hold on its geographical territory by pushing out rival Sunni organizations[504]. This was in tandem with the elections, in which many Sunni groups were pursuing a dual track of armed opposition while attempting to gain a foothold

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[500] Dexter Filkins, "Iraqi Government's Peace Talks With Falluja Break Off; U.S. Drive Against Rebels Expected" *The New York Times*, October 19th, 2004.
[501] Jeffrey Gettleman, "THE REACH OF WAR: COMBAT; Attacks in 5 Iraqi Cities Leave More Than 100 Dead" *The New York Times*, June 25th, 2004.
[502] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 2.
[503] B. Bahney *et al*, p. 14.
[504] P. Gaughen, 2007, p. 6.

in the emerging political structure[505]. AQI was likely reacting to this, and trying to simultaneous eliminate political rivals while dissuading Sunnis from joining the political process.

At the same time, AQI was fighting a losing battle against Shia militias in Baghdad. While JAM associated militias were vastly expanding their base of operations outside of Sadr City, AQI was able to move into some Sunni and mixed Sunni/Shia areas. Whether AQI was infringing upon the turf of a rival Sunni org, or was perpetrating ethnic cleansing by moving into a Shia neighborhood, the method of the group's violence did not change appreciably. Most of their violence was geared toward preventing the introduction of government services into areas under their control, such as police checkpoints, military outposts, etc. Unlike their counterparts in the Shia militias, AQI did not attempt to move into the business of public service, as their decentralized cell structure was ill suited to complex and high profile activities such as garbage collection. To compensate, AQI secured its political patronage through violence and fear. It systematically targeted residents for not conforming to their interpretation of Sharia, taking work from the Iraqi government or the Coalition, or criticizing the organization. This meant that throughout 2005, the provision of public services in areas under AQI control was all but impossible. By 2006, the lack of garbage collection made the spread of infectious disease a severe problem for residents of Baghdad[506]. This regime of fear was made possible by the control of local businesses, which served as intelligence gathering hubs. Bakeries, in particular became a prime target for Sunni insurgents in general and AQI in particular. Shia bakers would be driven out of Sunni and Mixed neighborhoods, and then reopened under Sunni management. Since most Iraqis have to visit the bakery each day, these were prime intelligence culling

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[505] P. Gaughen, 2007, p. 6.
[506] P. Gaughen, 2007, p. 7.

locations. In addition, the food industry proved a principle service, which could be denied to rival populations[507].

Internationally, AQI began a campaign of trying to undermine US efforts to entreat Arab governments to open up diplomatic relations with the new Iraqi government as part of a broader campaign of increasing the legitimacy of the new Iraqi government. AQI pursued this strategy through violence in Iraq as well as abroad. On July 3rd, al-Qaeda in Iraq assassinated the Egyptian ambassador to Iraq, Ihab al-Sherif[508]. This was followed on July 21st, with the kidnapping of two Algerian diplomats who were later executed on the 27th of the same month. Among the victims was Ali Billaroussi, the top Algerian diplomat in Iraq[509]. While the strategy of terrorizing Muslim diplomats did achieve some of the desired results for AQI, the strategy provoked some blow back as well. On the one hand, an assault of the convoys of the Bahraini and Pakistani ambassadors did prompt both countries to recall their diplomatic missions[510]. On the other hand, the assault on the Egyptian ambassador earned them the ire of both al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Gihad, two Egyptian organizations to which AQ was once closely linked[511]. The problems with international opprobrium within salafist circles that AQI encountered after assassinating the Egyptian ambassador, were compounded by Zarqawi's decision to sentence Abderrahim Boualem and Abdelkrim al Mouhafidi (2 Moroccan diplomats) to death for supporting tyrants[512].

Internationally, Zarqawi continued his longstanding desire to carry out spectacular attacks in the Middle East, especially Jordan. In August, AQI spokesman Abu Mayarsa al-Iraqi

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[507] P. Gaughen, 2007, p. 6.
[508] M. Scheuer, April 2008.
[509] James Glanz, "In Web Posting, Terrorist Group Says Algerian Diplomats Were Slain" *The New York Times,* July 28th, 2005.
[510] J. Glanz, July 28th, 2005.
[511] M. Scheuer, April 2008.
[512] M. Scheuer, April 2008.

claimed responsibility for a Katyusha rocket attack on a US ship at port in Aqaba, showing the continued resilience of Zarqawi's Jordanian cells[513]. These Jordanian cells were further put on display on Wednesday, November 9th when three simultaneous bombings targeted the Grand Hyatt Hotel, the Radisson SAS, and the Days Inn Hotel in Amman, killing 57 and wounding a further 100[514]. The fact that the majority of the victims were Jordanians attending a wedding banquet backfired on Zarqawi's group, compounding the already considerable consternation with AQI that was permeating international salafist circles. Random, anti-Zaqawi, demonstrations began at 1am on November 10th, in the Jordanian capital, echoing the sentiments not only of ordinary Arabs, but also of many salafi radicals. In fact, the reaction against Zarqawi was so vicious, that he was forced to put out a video explaining his rationale for the attacks.

> "Mr. Zarqawi did not apologize for the attacks — far from it — but he was clearly
> stunned by the vehemence of the reaction. "As for those Muslims who were
> killed," Mr. Zarqawi said on the tape, "we have not thought for even one moment
> about targeting them, even if they are sinful people[515]."

While violent activities were confined mostly to the Middle East, the continued importance of Zarqawi's European networks were again illustrated when, in late November, Belgian authorities disrupted a recruitment cell by arresting 14 radicals across 3 cities in Belgium after a Belgian

[513] The Associated Press "Zarqawi's Group Claims Jordan Attack" August 28th, 2005.
[514] Hassan Fatah and Michael Slackman, "3 Hotels Bombed in Jordan; At Least 57 Die" *The New York Times,* November 10th, 2005.
[515] Dexter Filkins, "Iraq Qaeda Chief Seems to Pursue a Lower Profile" *The New York Times*, March 25th, 2006.

woman participated in a suicide attack in Iraq[516]. The cell members were charged with providing travel documents and logistics to radicals wishing to fight in Iraq.

5.5.7   2006

2006 marked the apex of power for AQI as determined by its membership and the size of its territorial expansion. As a result, it also represents the nadir of the insurgency for the Coalition's perspective, as determined by the sheer quantity of violence that accompanied the sectarian conflict that would emerge as a full-scale civil war in February. Alternately, 2006 also marked a turning point in AQI's history as tribal opposition to it and its tactics reached a critical mass by years end.

The tribal revolt began in December of 2005 when tribal elements in Anbar founded the Anbar People's Council to fight AQI cells in that province. AQI's response was typical in the brutality it meted out to oppositional forces. By January of 2006, half the members of the APC had been killed by AQI activities[517].

While tribal antipathies simmered, AQI attempted to capitalize on the fact that it currently held the highest profile of any insurgent organization. AQI's answer to the distributed nature of the Sunni insurgency was to create umbrella organizations under which various factions could be brought together under Zarqawi's control. On January 15th 2006, AQI declared the formation of the Mujahideen Shura Council, an umbrella group which also included 5 other radical organizations[518]. They then ceased to claim attacks in the name of AQI[519], though this would not always be the case. Further, Zarqawi's profile became markedly lower in an attempt to give the semblance of command and control to Abdullah Rashid al-Baghdadi, the nominal

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[516] Dan Bilefsky, "Belgian Police Arrest 14 in Suspected Terror Cell" *The New York Times* December 1st, 2005.
[517] B. Bahney *et al*, 2010, p. 21.
[518] D. Filkins, March 25th, 2006.
[519] D. Filkins, March 25th, 2006.

head of the MSC[520]. There was also evidence that AQI, under the guise of the MSC, was both toning down its rhetoric against the Shia *and* desisting in certain tactics that had garnered Zarqawi negative attention in salafist circles, especially beheadings[521]. This would be undone, however, when AQI took formal responsibility for the bombing of the al-Askariyya mosque, the starting event for the civil war.

On February 22nd, 2006, an AQI team, lead by AQI's emir of Salahuddin province, Haitahm al-Badri, attacked the al-Askariyya Mosque in Samarrah. The Shrine is the mausoleum of the 10th and 11th Imams, and rests near the site where the 12th Imam entered occultation. It is therefore among the most revered sites in Shia Islam. The bombs killed no one but caused major structural damage to the mosque, causing the dome to collapse.   The attack was led by al-Badri but also included two other Iraqis and at least four Saudis[522]. AQI, perhaps fearing the popular backlash such an attack would provoke, did not claim responsibility for this act right away. As it bore the hallmarks of an AQI attack, however, formal confirmation from Zarqawi of AQI's complicity was not necessary.

A major player in Iraqi Islamist circles, Abu Usama al-Iraqi called on bin Laden to sever all ties with AQI, claiming the organization was un-Islamic and should be led by an Iraqi, not foreigners[523].

> "In February, Al-Zawraa, a pro-insurgent satellite channel owned by Misha'an al-
> Jiburi, a former Ba'athist, attacked AQM and the ISI, charging them with
> extremism, sectarianism, terrorism and arrogance towards other insurgent groups.
> Al-Jiburi himself openly rejected the ISI's pretensions to leadership of the

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[520] D. Filkins, March 25th, 2006.
[521] D. Filkins, March 25th, 2006.
[522] Edward Wong, "Prisoner Links Iraqi to Attack on Shiite Shrine, Official Says" *The New York Times*, June 29th, 2006.
[523] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 61.

insurgency, describing AQM as a sectarian group made up of foreigners, whose

global agenda had harmed and divided Iraqis[524]."

The Mujahideen Shura Council began a media campaign in response to the unexpectedly severe

insurgent backlash[525]. This was meant to establish Abu Hamza al-Muhajir as the successor to

Zarqawi and the MSC as the umbrella for the Insurgency[526]. The MSC tried to blame the US for

sowing the seeds of discord among the insurgency[527], but this had little resonance with the

insurgency at large. Further, these attempts at damage control had little effect on Tribal

dissatisfaction, and prominent tribes in Anbar began resisting AQI efforts by forming the Anbar

Salvation Council in September of 2006[528].

Nonetheless, AQI seemed to be at its apex towards the end of 2006[529]. They controlled

large swathes of West Baghdad, in particular Dora and Ghaziliyah and were showing themselves

to be capable of sustaining very high levels of violence. Despite popular discontent with AQI,

the activities of the Shia militias forced much of the Sunni population to accept AQI as

security[530].

As AQI's preponderance grew the organization's center of gravity shifted from Anbar

province to Baghdad, though much of the leadership remained in Anbar and Diyala provinces.

While AQI's political organization remained a distributed violent network that undertook little in

the way of complex governance, the organization was able to spread through much of central and

northern Iraq by controlling key access corridors which allowed it to smuggle men and materials

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[524] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 62.
[525] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 61.
[526] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 61.
[527] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 61.
[528] Edward Wong, "Iraqi Sheiks Assail Cleric for Backing Qaeda" *The New York Times* November 19th, 2006.
[529] Eric Hamilton, "Developments Fighting Al-Qaeda in Iraq" Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder #21, January 2008, p. 1.
[530] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 1.

from Syria into its rear positions, that in turn serviced the forward positions (namely in Baghdad) by serving as staging areas and bomb manufacturing hubs for attacks in the cities. The following diagram, drawn by Zarqawi, and obtained by MNF-I, shows that AQI depended upon concentric rings of control around Baghdad, which allowed them to ferry men, finances, and munitions in and out of the city. The arrows facing into the city show the corridors AQI created in order to infiltrate human and material resources into the city. The arrows to the south show AQI's efforts to project power out of Baghdad into areas directly to the South, probably Wasit and North Babil[531].
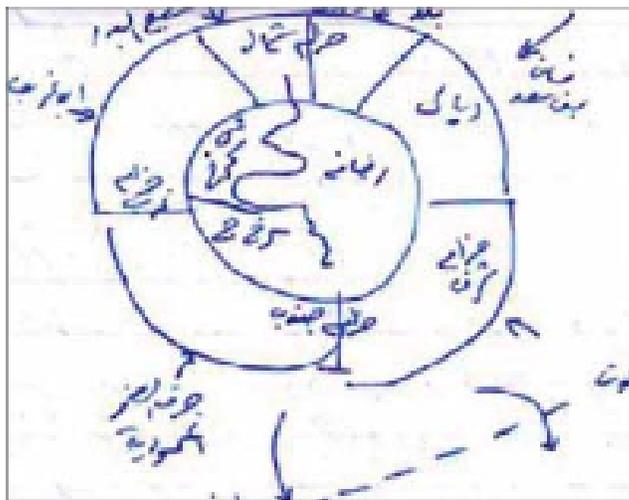
Figure 5-1: AQI Map of Baghdad Operations[532]

The same basic pattern of operations used by AQI to infiltrate Baghdad, was applicable on a national level as well. The following map shows areas under AQI control (as of December

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[531] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 2.
[532] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 2.

2006) in the dark red. The light red indicates areas where AQI enjoyed freedom of movement

and therefore represents transit corridors for goods, men, and munitions.
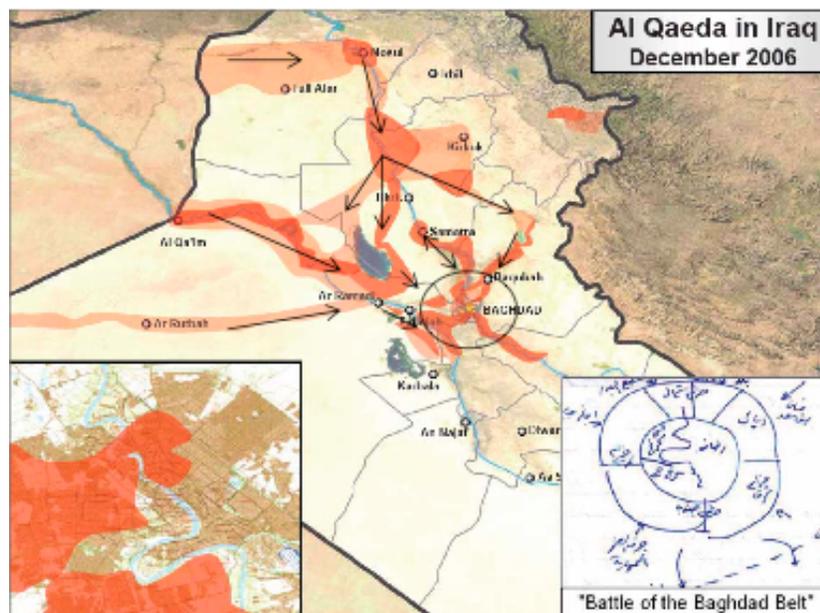
Figure 5-2: AQI Lines of Control as of December 2006[533]

The reliance of AQI on these corridors meant that the organization operated on East-West

and North South Axes[534]. From East to West, AQI's zones of control ran from the Syrian border

towns of Sinjar and al-Qaim to Mosul (via Tal Afar) and Ramadi, respectively. From North to

South, AQI's lines of control ran from Mosul to Baghdad, via the Euphrates River Valley,

through to Ramadi. Ramadi represented a key hub since it connected the East-West and North

South Axes. From Ramadi, the lines ran into Baghdad from Fallujah, and East from Baghdad

into Baqubah and Samarra[535].

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[533] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 3.
[534] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 3.
[535] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 3.

Anbar connects western Baghdad with the Syrian and Jordanian borders. It is therefore a prime conduit for foreign fighters trying to make their way to Iraq[536]. Fighters can enter on the south bank of the Euphrates in al-Qaim or the North bank in Rumiyah, and then move on to Haditha and Hit, respectively before being funneled, via Ramadi, to points further afield. Even if fighters try to enter via the Syrian desert, the Jordanian and Syrian roads converge in Rutbah, from which they must travel to either Ramadi or Fallujah to move on[537]. To move North, travelers must pass through Rumiyah, Rawah, or Haditha, from whence they can get to Tal Afar (a major AQI stronghold at the time) and Mosul (the latterday HQ for AQI),

> "Foreign fighters crossed the border un-armed, evading arrest. They then proceeded along the cities of the Euphrates to rural training camps or staging areas, such as those near As Zaidon, south-east of Falluja; Karma, toward Lake Tharthar; or Wadi Sakron, near Barwanah in the Haditha Triad. Insurgents supplied trained fighters from large weapons caches in the Euphrates River Valley[538]."

The Euphrates River Valley apparently contained a large proportion of Saddam era munitions caches, which were looted by insurgent elements before coalition forces brought them under control[539]. Ultimately Zarqawi set up operational command in Baqubah, Diyala Province. But most of the rest of the AQI leadership continued to be based out of Anbar[540]. AQI was supported by many local leaders in this area, and the insurgency in Anbar increased appreciably in the spring of 2006[541]. Transit zones outside cities were very important for the construction of

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[536] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 3.
[537] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 3.
[538] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 5.
[539] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 5.
[540] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 2.
[541] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 2.

IEDs and VBIEDs[542]. IEDs were used largely to target strategic transit routes in between metropolitan areas, ensuring continued AQI control of the countryside. VBIEDs were increasingly used to target Shia and Coalition targets within urban settings.

As the insurgency in Baghdad worsened leading up to and including the early part of 2006, the US shifted its focus to securing Baghdad. Operations in the provinces continued, but were considered merely shaping operations to aid Coalition forces in Baghdad[543]. Given its strategic location as a highly connective node in the AQI network, the clearing of Ramadi was perhaps the most important of these shaping activities. Using a strategy that would serve as a blueprint for the later Baghdad Security Plan US forces moved into Ramadi by slowly extending out from their Forward Operating Bases via the establishment of more localized Combat Outposts[544]. Eventually a Joint Security Station was set up in the city center to oversee the 8 COBs operating throughout Ramadi by October, 2006[545]. The clearing operation went well but it assumed that coalition forces would be able to transfer authority to ISF personnel at some point. Few natives, however, came forward to join the police forces[546]. Of the 3000 policemen authorized for Ramadi, only 300 had joined by August[547]… a result of the intimidation campaign waged by AQI against Sunni who were willing to cooperate with the Iraqi government. While these operations against their fellow Sunni were tactically successful, the strategic costs would prove to be high. Sheikh Abu Ali Jassim had encouraged many of his tribesmen to join the police forces and was murdered by AQI as a result. The insult was compounded by the fact that

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[542] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 3.
[543] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 3.
[544] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 6.
[545] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[546] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 6.
[547] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.

his body was disposed of in a field, and not returned for proper burial[548]. Soon after, local Sheikhs began to organize as a result of this and by October of 2006, 11 Sheikhs had joined the movement that would be called "the Awakening"[549].

The greatest single blow to AQI in 2006, however, came on June 8th, when the US launched simultaneous assaults on 18 locations in Iraq[550]. The operations targeted key figures that SOCOM had been tracking in order to determine the whereabouts of Zarqawi. Zarqawi and AQI spiritual advisor Abdul Rahman were killed when the Coalition launched an airstrike on a house where the two were meeting with other insurgent leaders[551]. Following a brief period of uncertainty, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir was named the successor of Zarqawi, and head of AQI.

At the end of October, AQI, in an attempt to reorganize after the death of Zarqawi, declared the Islamic State of Iraq[552]. In many ways, this was an attempt by the remaining leadership of AQI to redefine itself after the public relations disaster of Zarqawi[553]. However, the declaration of the ISI was not to have the desired effect on AQI's public relations debacle. The ISI envisioned itself as a shadow government and springboard for what ISI adherents hoped would be the Caliphate. It was headed by an emir and cabinet, which oversaw all subordinate organizations. Though the extent of the ISI's leadership over organizations operating under its umbrella is debatable, the leadership nonetheless claimed dominion over all Sunnis in Iraq, and stated it was the duty of all Muslims to move to within its borders. The head of the new organization was Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir took over as Minister of

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[548] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[549] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[550] Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Insurgent Leader Al-Zarqawi Killed in Iraq" *The Washington Post* June 8th, 2006.
[551] E. Knickmeyer and J. Finer, June 8th, 2006.
[552] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[553] B. Fishman, July 2008.

War. Emirs were sent to various provinces in order to establish ISI control[554]. They set up councils to impose Sharia, and keeping contact with AQI networks, they used terror to impose their version of Islamic order on local populations[555]. While the ISI was intended as a way for AQI to consolidate a larger section of the Sunni insurgency under its leadership, the heavy handed tactics used by AQI to impose the authority of the ISI, only served to drive more and more Sheikhs into the Awakening[556].

5.5.8 2007

Up until 2007, AQI enjoyed relative freedom of movement across their zones of control. On the one hand, this allowed them to move men and materials from Syria to rear bases and from rear bases to conflict zones. On the other hand, by 2007, AQI's operations in Baghdad had become dependent upon their control of these suburban and rural areas which contained their logistical nodes. For the Baghdad theatre, this meant AQI operations were contingent upon control of the suburban areas ringing the city[557]. It was in these areas that the bomb factories were located, enabling the militants to conduct their hallmark suicide, IED, and VBIED bombings. Whereas 2006 saw the zenith AQI power, 2007 marked two major occurrences that began to displace the geographic control of AQI[558], and thus threaten their hegemonic position within the insurgency. The first of these was the Anbar Awakening, which displaced AQI from their Western fall back positions, robbed them of their supply networks, and proceeded to reclaim AQI black market enterprises as their own. The second of these was the Surge of 2007, which--coupled with a shift in US COIN strategy--forced AQI out of Baghdad and into a long retreat northward.

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[554] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[555] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[556] K. Kagan, March 2007, p. 7.
[557] Michael Gordon, "Sunni Militants Disrupt Plan to Calm Baghdad" *the New York Times* March 18th, 2007.
[558] E. Hamilton, January 2008, pp. 3-5.

While the Surge gave the Coalition the manpower it lacked in previous operations, such as Together Forward, I and II, allowing Coalition and Iraqi forces to engage in holding operations (after the clearing part of the equation--which had hitherto been the mainstay of Coalition—had been accomplished) its true strength lay in the fact that it incorporated a new form of COIN strategy. Specifically, it coincided with a shift from one of indigenization (holding FOB's while Iraqi troops were trained in the hopes that they would replace US troops as time wore on) to a strategy of active counter-insurgency.

The most obvious manifestation of this new strategy was the Fardh al Qanoon operation. As stated previously, the Baghdad Security Plan, moved Coalition troops out of Forward operating bases (FOB's) and into smaller, more dispersed Joint Security Stations (JSS'). From here, tactical commands were distributed to even smaller Combat Outposts (COP's), which were eventually located in all major neighborhoods. COPs allowed ISF and Coalition forces to work more effectively with local populations to root out insurgent organizations.

Fardh al-Qanoon was followed by the Corps level offensive called Operation Phantom Thunder, in June of 2007, whose purpose was to target the support belts around Baghdad.

> "During Phantom Thunder Coalition Forces cleared Baqubah and the
> surrounding area to the northeast of Baghdad, Arab Jabour to the south, and the
> area between Baghdad, Fallujah, and the shores of Lake Tharthar to the
> northwest[559]."

Since the Surge and major Coalition operations occurred in tandem with the spread of Awakening Councils, operations against AQI elements were often aided by rival Sunni insurgent

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[559] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 4.

oganizations. For example, the 1920 Revolution Brigades aided in the sweep of Baqubah as Coalition forces pushed into Diyala Province[560].

Phantom Thunder was succeeded by Operation Phantom Strike, which ran from August to December of 2007.

> "Phantom Strike continued targeted operations in and around Baghdad and also pushed out beyond the belts in order to deny AQI from regrouping in new safe havens and cut the lines of support that channeled violence into Baghdad. In Multi-National Division – North (MND-North) Coalition Forces pushed up the Diyala River Valley to Muqdadiyah, squeezed the Za'ab triangle to the east of Kirkuk, and conducted a series of targeted operations up the Tigris River Valley. In Multi-National Division – Center (MND-Center) Coalition Forces continued to clear the southern belt focusing on Arab Jabour and Hawr Rajab on the southern outskirts of Baghdad and pushing out into Yusufiyah, Mahmudiyah and Salman Pak further south[561]."

Phantom Strike and Phantom Thunder were the largest coordinated Coalition operations since March of 2003[562], and their ambition was largely matched by their results, as they were extremely successful at shrinking AQI's areas of control and robbing them of their lines of support.

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[560] M. Gordon and D. Cave, June 19th, 2007.
[561] E. Hamilton, January 2008, pp. 4-5.
[562] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 5.
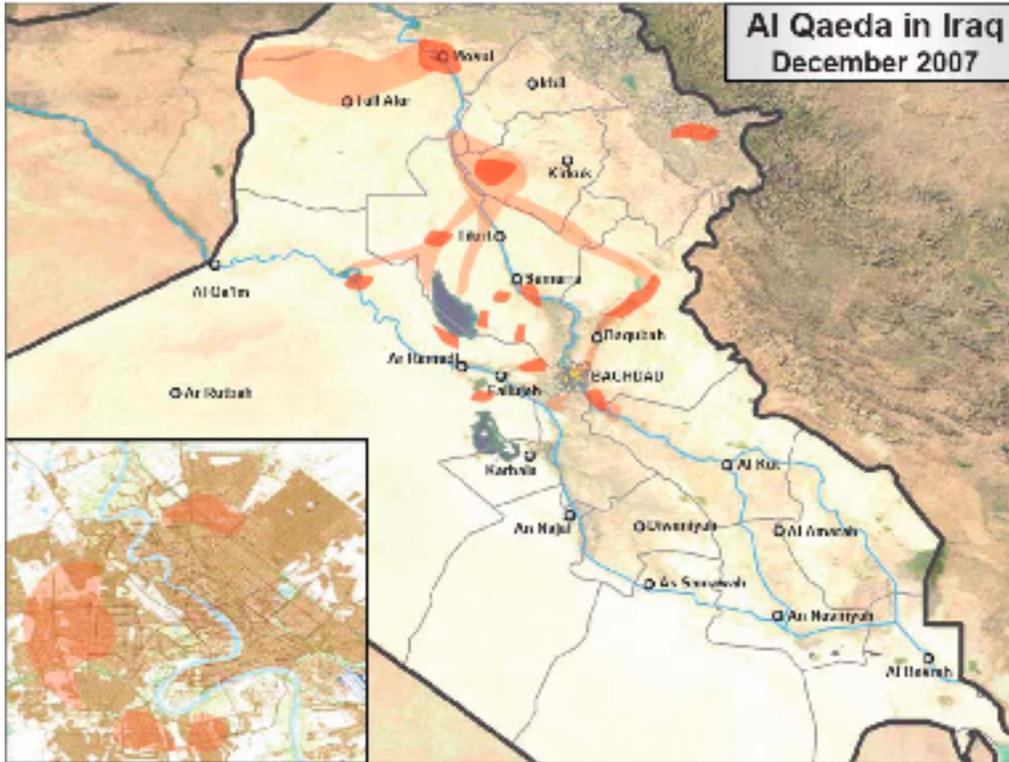
Figure 5-3: AQI Lines of Control as of December 2007[563].

By the close of 2007, AQI and related organizations had been pushed back to the areas of control outlined in the above figure, and even these areas were being addressed by Operation Phantom Phoenix[564].

> "Indeed in the beginning of January the red area above Baqubah was cleared in Operation Raider Harvest, the one southeast of Baghdad was cleared in Operation Marne Thunderbolt, and a series of coordinated operations around Samarra have cleared a number of the areas between Samarra and Lake Tharthar.

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563 E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 5.
564 E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 5.

These operations continue to push AQI north where Mosul is the last population

center in Iraq that AQI controls[565]."

By the close of the year, AQI had been compressed from the North South and East West axes

that it enjoyed in 2006, to the northern corridor centered in Mosul, which has since the defacto

HQ of AQI[566], and is the current capital of the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Qaeda Central attempted

to address the diminishing fortunes of the ISI by sending two seasoned fighters from Pakistan in

order to reorganize the failing organization. Abu Yasir al-Sa`udi, and Hamdan al-Hajji were sent

in November of 2007, however they were killed in February of 2008.

5.5.9 2008

By 2008, Mosul had become the epicenter of the Sunni insurgency after the Awakenings

and the Surge pushed the ISI out of southern areas[567]. Anbar province noted a decline in

incidents from 976 in January 2007 to 158 in the same month a year later[568]. Babil, likewise,

benefited from a similar stabilization, going from 544 incidents in January 2007 to 180 in

January of 2008[569]. The success of the Baghdad Security Plan was reflected in Baghdad's

numbers which saw a monthly average of 1259 incidents in January of 2007 diminish to 425

incidents for the first month of 2008[570].

"Yet, the most stubborn holdout has been Ninawa, where incidents actually

increased from 463 per month in January 2007 to 685 per month in January 2008

and later to an all- time high of 747 incidents in February 2008[571]."

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[565] E. Hamilton, January 2008, p. 5.
[566] E. Hamilton, January 2008, pg. 6.
[567] Michael Knights, "Al-Qaida in Iraq: Lessons from the Mosul Security Operation" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 1(7) June 2008.
[568] M. Knights, 2008, p. 2.
[569] M. Knights, 2008, p. 2.
[570] M. Knights, 2008, p. 2.
[571] M. Knights, 2008, p. 2.

In large part this was due to the fact that unlike the largely Sunni areas of Anbar and Diyala, Ninewa has a highly diverse population, with ample numbers of Kurds, Assyrian Christians, Shia Turkmen, among others[572]. Further, the Iraqi Army in the area is dominated by Kurds, which led to a well-justified fear amongst the various minorities of ethnic cleansing by Kurdish forces[573]. Nevertheless, the high concentration of AQI/ISI targets in a relatively small area made AQI quite vulnerable to Coalition action, even if they did escape large-scale Awakening movements. In the early days of 2008, at least 30 AQI operatives were killed or captured, including the emir of Eastern Mosul: Ibrahim Ahmad Umar al-Sabawi, the emir of northeastern Mosul: Ayyad Jassim Muhammed 'Ali, and the emir of southeastern Mosul: Abu Yassir al-Sa'udi. Another 200 tier 1 and tier 2 AQI/ISI commanders were captured halfway through the Mosul Security Operation. Finally, the overall emir of Mosul, Abd al-Khaliq Awad Ismail al-Sabawi was captured with his son in Tikrit on May 20th. AQI's second in command, Abu Qaswarah, was killed by coalition forces on Oct. 5 2008. He was shot and then detonated his suicide vest.

5.5.10 2009

The operational tempo of AQI/ISI was much diminished by 2009. In what was likely an attempt to offset a much-reduced footprint in Iraq, the ISI compensated by mounting fewer, but more devastating attacks.

On June 24th, 2009 a suicide bomber detonated an IED killing 72 people at a market place in the Sadrist stronghold of Sadr City. The attack wounded a further 127 people[574]. AQI followed this attack up on August 19th, with an attack on government buildings in Baghdad.

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[572] M. Knights, June 2008.
[573] M. Knights, June 2008.
[574] Alexander Mayer, "al-Qaeda in Iraq: Last Stand or Sign of Resilience" *The Long War Journal* May 12th, 2010.

These bombings killed 95 and wounded a further 536[575]. On October 25th, AQI detonated two VBIEDs, at the Justice Ministry and Baghdad Provincial Government Building, respectively. The dual attacks killed over 155 people and wounded more than 500[576]. Finally, AQI rounded out the year with a string of four VBIED detonations in Baghdad, targeting a courthouse, a judicial training center, a Finance Ministry building, and a police checkpoint. This last spectacular killed more than 112 people and wounded an additional unknown number of civilians[577].

It is likely that AQI/ISI had hoped these provocations would re-ignite the sectarian conflict under which AQI had originally flourished, however, the Iraqi government as well as the *Hawza* establishment were collectively able to reign in Shia retaliation.

5.5.11 2010

After the high profile attacks of 2009, AQI seems to have shifted to perpetrating more numerous but lower profile coordinated attacks, as these are easier to pull off without high level coordination[578]. This coordination became increasingly difficult as ever-greater numbers of the AQI/ISI leadership were neutralized throughout 2010[579]. On January 22, Coalition forces killed Abu Khalaf, AQI's senior foreign fighter facilitator[580]. AQI's emir of Baghdad, Manaf Abdulrehim al Rawi was captured in March of 2010, and likely supplied Coalition forces with the intel necessary to neutralize both Abu Ayyab al-Masri (head of AQI after the death of Abu Hamza) and al-Baghdadi (head of ISI) in Thartar, Salah al Din Province. The raid that killed

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[575] A. Mayer, 2010.
[576] A. Mayer, 2010.
[577] A. Mayer, 2010.
[578] A. Mayer, 2010.
[579] A. Mayer, 2010.
[580] A. Mayer, 2010.

these two men in turn led to the evidence which led Coalition forces to Ahmed Ali Abbas Dahir al Ubayd, AQI's operations commander for Northern Iraq[581].

AQI came back from the assassination of al-Baghdadi with a string of bombings on April 4, 2010 targeting the Egyptian, Iranian, and German embassies in Baghdad. However, this could not undo the extremely negative effects of the deaths of al-Masri and al-Baghdadi as apparently the organization had not learned from the death of Zarqawi and had not implemented a succession plan.

On May 10, 2010 AQI undertook 24 coordinated bombings, killing 119 and injured 350[582]. This was the largest coordinated bombing in two years, but did little in the way of reigniting the sectarian strife of 2006-2007[583].

5.6   Analysis of Organizational Design

Al-Qaeda in Iraq's organizational history differs tremendously from that of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, in that AQI maintained a roughly static organizational design throughout its history, regardless of how large or small the organizational membership was at any particular time. Instead of adopting ever more complex institutions to take advantage of increased personnel, AQI kept the same distributed network design of Ansar, all the way through to the establishment of the ISI. Growth occurred in three ways. Firstly, pre-existing organizations joined the Zarqawi network. In some instances they kept their name and structure and simply acted as a local affiliate of Ansar, TwJ, AQI, or one of the umbrella organizations established by AQI in the latter days of the insurgency. In other cases, the organization adopted the AQI name and claimed attacks under AQI's banner. In either event, the new cells were simply grafted on to the M-form hierarchies discussed in the organizational design chapter. They were not assimilated into pre-

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[581] A. Mayer, 2010.
[582] A. Mayer, 2010.
[583] A. Mayer, 2010.

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existing regiments to form battalions or given functionally differentiated roles other than what they already possessed. Secondly, lieutenants could be promoted by being given seed money and told to go and start new cells in other areas. It was in this manner that AQI first spread out of Kurdistan and into Anbar, Diyala, and Ninewa, and this was the manner in which many AQI related cells were developed in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Western Europe. In these cases, the existing network merely begat new cells who were networked to regional emirs and functioned according to localized hierarchies. Finally, when individual cells became quite large, they could divide up into new cells, typically with the goal of spreading into new territories. For example, much of the Anbar network was likely set up as fighters funneled in from Iraq to Kurdistan, where they reorganized and then moved to new territories. Likewise, foreign fighters coming in from Syria and Jordan were moved from border towns like Sinjar and al-Qaim to staging areas in Mosul and Ramadi, from whence they would be distributed to where the organization thought they were needed most, either as replacements for fighters who were killed, captured, or had left, or as new units operating according to the pre-existing network design of AQI. At the height of al-Qaeda in Iraq's power, the organization attempted to use its pre-eminence in the insurgency to unite the Sunni organizations under its banner. It went about this by creating the Mujahideen Shura Council and the Islamic State of Iraq, respectively. However, these did not represent totally new organizations, as many of the constituent organizations of ISI had also participated in TwJ and AQI in the past. Rather, AQI just copied it's own organizational design and added another layer of bureaucratic management. Just as the leadership nodes of autonomous cells of AQI interacted with the leadership nodes of AQI's national body, so did the leadership nodes of the national body interact with the leadership of the MSC and ISI, respectively. Apart from the creation of a new leadership layer, and the addition

of a few more localized cells (from organizations who joined the umbrella groups) little else changed.

There are two possible explanations for this. The first of these places the onus on institutional standard operating procedures. By the time Zarqawi moved his operations to Iraq, he had been an established terrorist for some time. Further, he ran a Taliban affiliated training camp, which obviously had some overlap with al-Qaeda Central activities in Afghanistan. Both Zarqawi and the al-Qaeda hierarchy in Afghanistan were therefore experienced professionals used to establishing conspiratorial cells in austere security environments such as Middle Eastern police states and western states with highly competent intelligence and law enforcement communities. To do this successfully they would have implemented established standard operating procedures to dictate the formation of new cells and the relationship of those cells with the center and with each other. It's entirely possible that Ansar/TwJ/AQI simply grafted a network design developed for a terrorist organization onto an insurgency, using what they knew about organizing political violence at the time, to formulate their plan of action in Iraq.

Most scholars would agree that the single greatest hurdle facing the Sunni insurgency in Iraq was the chaotic and crowded field of organizations that comprised the resistance, broadly conceived. This proliferation of organizations largely resulted from the fact that unlike the Shia and the Kurds, the Sunni did not have well-organized political factions prior to 2003. What political organization they did have came in the form of Ba'ath party membership. After the sanctions regime and the two Gulf Wars, however, this political organization had little appeal or relevance. As a result there was little to unify the insurgency outside of the political entrepreneurship of individual group leaders, whose internecine petty rivalries only served to

undermine efforts at unifying Sunni opposition to the occupation and Shia dominated government.

Nevertheless, the need to unify the insurgency into a monolithic resistance was foremost in the minds of many insurgence leaders, as evidenced by the prolific use of umbrella organizations to bring together like-minded organizations. While, the most high-profile of these were the MSC and ISI, they were by no means the only attempts at consolidating centralized organizations from variegated groups.

> "In April 2007, some of the smaller insurgent organisations announced the
> formation of the Iraqi Resistance Popular Front, and called upon others to join it
> in the 'battle for liberation and to build an independent state'. In the same month,
> another 'front' was formed in Anbar province, under the umbrella of the IAI.
> Meanwhile, nine other insurgent groups established a 'National Resistance
> Coordination Bureau' in an attempt to unify the resistance and put an end to
> factionalism and infighting. Participating groups included Ansar al-Sunna, the
> Muslims' Army, the Army of the Naqshbandi Way, the Islamic Front for the
> Iraqi Resistance, the 1920 Revolution Brigades, the al-Faruq Brigade, the
> Mustafa Battalion and the Ansar Allah battalion. In May 2007, the IAI, the AM
> and Ansar al-Sunna formed the Joint Resistance Front (JRF), calling on the 1920
> Revolution Brigades to join them (it did not do so)[584]."

Much of the impetus for these concerted efforts came from the acknowledgement that to be successful groups needed political as well as military wings[585]. Whether due to petty rivalries or a lack of strategic fore sight, the Sunni groups did not so much attempt to consolidate their

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[584] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 58.
[585] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 58.

organizations into one single paramilitary outfit as they sought to create a unified front by facilitating mergers and alliances between myriad organizations. Given the lack of integration of units and the inability of any center to affect command and control, these networks proved fragmentary. Some groups seceded from their alliances immediately, some mergers only proved to effect portions of the organizations involved, and many organizations belonged to multiple organizations at once and as result it was not uncommon to have alliance partners in open conflict with allied groups from another umbrella outfit. The only organizations to accomplish a thorough centralization of command and control, and as a result field a thoroughly hierarchical paramilitary fighting force were the tribes. Using culturally embedded hierarchies, many tribes, including the Albu Risha, the Albu Mahal, and al-Nimr among others, fielded first guerilla outfits that cleared neighborhoods of AQI and other rival organizations, and then paramilitary units in the form of the 'Emergency Response Units', which cleared whole towns and cities. Security was maintained when these units were formalized into Iraqi Army and Police outfits. It's little wonder that the dominant military and political power in the Sunni Triangle has, since 2007, been the tribes.

CHAPTER 6

THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

This analysis of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) represents a control case testing the generalizability of this study's assumptions regarding the applicability of the netwar hypothesis to terrorism. Since both of the previous cases operated within the context of the Iraqi Insurgency, it is necessary to see if networks operating in different environments fare better or worse than those already visited. As a control case should, ASG represents a stark departure from both the Jaiysh al-Mahdi, and al-Qaeda in Iraq. While it is a highly decentralized network of (supposedly) Islamist militants, ASG has several peculiar attributes, which make it an interesting subject of study. Firstly, while it was originally designed as a professional terrorist organization with rigid lines of command and control, it almost immediately devolved into a highly distributed social network organized according to kinship and social ties. Therefore it has a traditional, though highly complex, organizational design distinct from those observed in the JAM and AQI. Secondly, the ASG is nearly twice as old as either AQI or the JAM. Thus, its longevity seemingly places it at odds with the assumptions of the theory of revolutionary terror regarding the long-term viability of distributed command and control relationships in violent organizations. Finally, ASG is the opposite of AQI, in that it is an indigenous organization that has tied itself to a transnational salafist agenda, rather than a transnational salafist network which attempted to graft itself unto a local insurgency. Thus, it should be able to control for the argument that AQI failed not because of a lack of institutional capacity, but because its foreign leadership and transnational ideology failed to win over sufficient constituencies in Iraq.

6.1   Organizational Background

6.1.1   History

6.1.1.1 History: Moro Militancy

While the Abu Sayyaf Group is a Salafist organization with ties to international and regional Islamist organizations, its true roots lay in the longstanding secessionist tradition of the Moro population of the Southern Philippines[586]. This tradition of resistance began with the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines with Miguel Loez de Legasi's arrival in Manila in 1571[587]. By this point in time, the Philippines was a predominantly Muslim settlement as Islam had been spreading north from the Indonesian Archipelago for around 150 years[588]. The Spanish began a process of conversion to Christianity, a process that was spread to the Lowlands and Mindanao in 1629.   However, the Muslims of the south were to maintain a relative level of independence until the 19th Century. During the interim, the Southerners developed Sultunates in Sulu, Maguindanao, and Maranao. While the whole of the Philippines was under nominal Spanish control, the Sulu archipelago itself was not made a protectorate until the Spanish used steam powered warships to expand their political control in 1876. Until this time, the Sultunates of the south had conducted foreign affairs with the British and Dutch independently[589].

This was also the first time the term Moro began being applied to the Muslim Filipino population. The nomer was given to them by the Spanish as a variation on Moor, whom the Spanish had been fighting in Iberia for some time[590]. Prior to that, the groups that made up the Islamic communities in the south were known by their linguistic identities such as Tausog,

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[586] Mark Turner, "The Management of Violence in a Conflict Organization: the Case of the Abu Sayyaf" *Public Organization Review* vol. 3, 2003, pp. 390-391.
[587] Angel Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" *Adelphi Papers* vol. 43(358) 2003, p. 48.
[588] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 48.
[589] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 48.
[590] M. Turner, 2003, pp. 390-391.

Maranao, Maguindanao, etc. Though it was the colonialists who first classified them according to religion, Moro nationalists would come to assume the mantle of this identity, and turn it into a rallying cry for self-determination and oppression[591]. This mobilization was made easier by the treatment of the Moros by their Spanish occupiers, the latter having developed an acute hatred of Muslims by this time. Moro raids on Christian communities contributed to this negative racial attitude.

The history of Moro resistance to encroachment from Manila began with the Moro Wars. These resulted from Spanish attempts to control the trade routes controlled by the Moro Sultanates[592]. The Moro Wars were actually a series of low-level conflicts which began in 1565, and did not end until the late 19th century when the final Sultanates came under Spanish control. What could be termed 'Moro terrorism' began during this time and took the form of anti-Christian raids, which the Moros themselves viewed as a cultural counter-offensive to Spanish encroachment. This propensity for resistance continued in Moro communities after the Spanish relinquished control to the Americans, who finally managed to put down the Moro insurgency at the battle of Bud Jado.

The ASG, in particular, derives its following from the Tausog ethnicity, whose history of violent jihad has roots in the conflict with colonial Spain. The Tausog developed a tradition of the 'Martyr Warrior' referred to in Tausog as 'Parang Sabil'. The Spanish term for these fighters was Juramentados, or 'one who has taken an oath'. In a manner indicative of the highly formalized rituals of 21st century suicide bombers, the Parang Sabil prepared their bodies before battle so that they would appear before God in the most favorable light possible. Following a formal consultation with the family of the would-be martyr, they would be granted permission to

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[591] M. Turner, 2003, p. 392
[592] M. Turner, 2003, pp. 390-391.

engage in holy war by their Sultan. The candidate would then be clothed in a white robe called a Jubba and given an 'anting-anting' (a spiritual talisman). If he died in battle his body would be washed again, and wrapped in a white shroud prior to burial. If he survived the battle, however, then it was believed that he would be allowed to enter paradise forty years after the battle[593].

While the Americans were the literal inheritors of Spanish colonialism, some of the Moro leaders were reticent to see Washington leave following the awarding of Filipino independence in 1946, as the treatment of Moros by Christian Filipinos had become quite harsh[594]. Their fears of rule from Manila proved well founded as labor shortages and overcrowding in the Northern islands after independence resulted in the Capital encouraging Christians to move to the South. In many areas of the south, the settlers made the Moros a minority. This, in turn, prompted renewed ethnic tensions and by the 1960's, armed gangs had been practicing sectarian violence for some time[595]. Christian attacks on Muslim military recruits and civilians convinced the Moros that Manila was attempting to assimilate the Muslim south into a Christian dominated polity[596].

6.1.1.2 History: The Modern Moro Insurgency

By the 1970's, the southern Philippines was home to high levels of political violence and social dislocation[597]. This ongoing conflict led to the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) by Nur Misauri, an ethnic Tausog. The main MNLF objective was the founding of an independent Bangsamoro Republic (an independent Moro state) in Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan[598]. The MNLF would quickly become the main protagonist in an insurgency,

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[593] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 48.
[594] M. Turner, 2003, p. 391.
[595] M. Turner, 2003, p. 391.
[596] M. Turner, 2003, p. 391.
[597] M. Turner, 2003, p. 391.
[598] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 49.

which began in earnest after the Marcos government declared martial law in 1972[599]. Fighting

continued unabated until 1975, at which point the MNLF sought to procure political concessions

from Manila through peace negotiations. At this point the MNLF abandoned calls for a

Bangsamoro Republic in favor of an autonomous area within Mindanao. To this end Misauri

entered into talks with Marcos in 1976 amidst continued, though sporadic, violence. These

negotiations were undertaken under the auspices of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

which would ultimately result in the Tripoli Agreement of 1996. The Tripoli Agreement created

an autonomous Moro region spanning 13 provinces in Mindanao and Sulu. Further, Marcos

created the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, which made Islamic Civil Law applicable to Filipino

Muslims regardless of their location. However, infighting immediately broke out on both sides

of the aisle, and as a result the agreement was never fully implemented[600]. Manila was hampered

by Christian constituencies who were concerned for the treatment of the, now numerous,

Christian communities in the south, and the MNLF was stricken by two large schisms which

resulted in the creation of two new organizations.

The Tripoli Agreements caused two splinter groups to grow out of the MNLF[601]. The

first of these, the Banga Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), was led by two Moro

expatriates living in Saudi Arabia at the time and was fated to ignominy. The second of these

however, the MNLF-Salamat Faction, was to have a long term effect on the security situation in

the southern Philippines and Southeast Asia. This faction was led by Hashim Salamat, the

former vice chairman of the MNLF central committee. He had been educated at al-Azhar

University in Cairo and had lived in Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan[602]… a biography that

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[599] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 49.
[600] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 52.
[601] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 50.
[602] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" pp. 50-51.

would find echoes in later faction leaders who would be similarly influenced by the salafist ideologies of Qutb and Mawdudi. Later renamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), its membership is culled largely from the Maguindanaos in Cotabato, the Maranaos in Lanao del Sur, and the Iranos in North Cotabato and Basilan, while the Tausogs of Sulu largely stayed with the MNLF. The MILF maintained itself through funding received from Islamic charities, legitimate business, and extortion and kidnapping rackets (though the organization vehemently denies this last charge)[603].

The autonomous region debated during the Tripoli Agreement was finally provided for in the 1985 constitution, though the final status of what would become known as the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) would not be decided until Ramos and Misauri reached an agreement (known of as the Davao Consensus) in 1996[604]. The MILF was not a party to the negotiations as they refused to compromise their secessionist agenda for an autonomous political entity. As a result, the MNLF dominated the Moro side of the negotiations, and Misauri was named chairman of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development, and was shortly thereafter elected Governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao[605]. The ARMM came to comprise four non-contiguous provinces; Sulu, Tawi Tawi, Maguindanao, and Lanao del Sur. Though there are seventeen historically Moro provinces, only four opted for inclusion under a 1989 plebescite[606]. The management of the ARMM under Misauri proved inefficient and corrupt, resulting in large-scale dissatisfaction with the MNLF's leadership. In 2001, Misauri was ousted as Governor and replaced with a rival from the MNLF. Misauri launched a rebellion to block the election, but it failed and he was forced to flee to Sabah in

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[603] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 51.
[604] M. Turner, 2003, p. 391.
[605] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 52.
[606] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 52.

Malaysia where he was arrested and handed over to Philippine authorities[607]. As the MNLF's standing began to wane, the MILF rose in prominence as the primary insurgent organization in the south. Full scale conflict between Manila and the MILF began in early 2002. Shortly thereafter, most of the major MILF bases were overrun by government forces, however, the MILF was able to effectively reengineer itself as a rural guerilla organization.

6.1.1.3 History: The Abu Sayyaf Group

Many aspects of the ASG's history are speculative. However, it is known that the organization began as *al-Hurakatul al-Islamiyyah* (AHAI), under the leadership of Ustadz Abdurajack Abubakar Janjalani [608]. Janjalani was an MNLF member who was sent to Libya for Islamic education[609]. Following the conclusion of his studies, it is likely (though unproven) that Janjalani fought in the Afghan war with the International Islamic Brigades, under the command of Abdul Rasul Abu Sayyaf[610]. Upon Janjalani's return to the Philippines, he began an Islamic study group called *Jamaa Tableegh*. The AHAI formed out of Jamaa Tableegh's membership in 1989, though in its early days it was likely just an alliance between a number of secessionist organizations rather than a firm organization. In 1990, Janjalani formed the Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters to wage a violent battle against the Philippine government on behalf of the AHAI[611]. It was this militant faction of AHAI that likely served as the prototype for the ASG. As Janjalani became better known in militant Moro circles, he officially declared the existence of the organization, with himself as emir, in 1993[612].

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[607] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[608] Rommel Banlaoi, "The Sources of the Abu Sayyaf's Resilience in the Southern Philippines" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 3(5) May 2010, p. 17.
[609] M. Turner, 2003.
[610] Angela Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[611] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 6.
[612] R. Banlaoi, May 2010 p. 17.

The majority of AHAI activity during its early days, however, was not violence but militant proselytizing. Janjalani began sermonizing and distributing *khutbahs* (Sermons) using the pin name Abu Sayyaf in deference to his Afghan commander Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. The police knew he was involved with the MNLF, but was unaware of the nature of his organization, so they simply referred to AHAI as the Group of Abu Sayyaf[613].

"To elaborate his real motive in establishing the ASG amidst various speculations about the nature and objectives of the said organization, Janjalani issued an undated public proclamation, presumably written between 1993 and 1994, which aptly stressed what he called the "Four Basic Truths" about the ASG, to wit:

- It is not to create another faction in the Muslim struggle which is against the teaching of Islam, especially the Quran, but to serve as a bridge and balance between the MILF and MNLF whose revolutionary roles and leadership cannot be ignored or usurped;

- Its ultimate goal is the establishment of a purely Islamic government whose "nature, meaning, emblem and objective" are basic to peace;

- Its advocacy of war is necessity for as long as there exist oppression, injustice, capricious ambitions and arbitrary claims imposed on the Muslims; and,

- It believes that "war disturbs peace only for the attainment of the true and real objective of humanity – the establishment of justice and

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[613] R. Banloai, May, 2010 p. 17.

righteousness for all under the law of the noble Quran and the purified sunnah[614]."

He was largely successful at attracting youth who had been schooled in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan, and Egypt, as well as some local militants[615]."

Like the MNLF and MILF, the ASG wanted an independent theocracy in the Southern Philippines, but unlike its two rivals, it was tied to an international Salafist agenda[616]. This Salafist bent was underwritten by Janjalani's strong ties to numerous Afghan radicals, including bin Laden. There is even some evidence that Muhammed Jamal Khalifa, a bin Laden lieutenant who headed the International Islamic Relief Organization helped to found the ASG[617]. In addition, ASG received funding from al-Qaeda Central throughout the mid 1990's, through Khalifa, who put together a support network in the Philippines. However, this cooperative relationship was cut off in the mid 90's after Manila discovered and subsequently dismantled Khalifa's network. After that ASG has made money by operating kidnapping and extortion rackets, appropriating *zakat* from local communities, serving as bodyguards to local politicians, counterfeiting goods, and drug smuggling[618].

The first act of terror by ASG was a grenade attack on a Christian Missionary ship, the MV Doulos, in Zamboanga City in 1991[619]. Further, the press release claiming responsibility for the act was the first time the Janjalani group used the term "Abu Sayyaf Group" to refer to themselves. The ASG followed up the Doulos attack with a string of anti-Christian attacks,

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[614] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, pp. 5-6.
[615] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[616] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[617] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[618] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 18.
[619] Eliza Griswold, "Waging Peace in the Philippines: With Innovative Tactics, US Forces Make Headway in the 'War on Terror'" *Smithsonian Magazine* December, 2006.

including the high profile assassination of a priest and a bombing of a convent in Zamboanga City. Though they would not formally declare the existence of their organizational command for two more years, the ASG began kidnapping as a mainstay of their operational repertoire during this time. For its part, Manila claimed that they had destroyed the organization despite the escalating number of attacks by ASG related cells.

The ASG benefited from a windfall in 1996 when they were reinforced by a large number of renegade MNLF guerillas disillusioned by the Davao Consensus. The newly empowered organization took advantage of the influx of veteran fighters to launch a full scale insurgent style attack on the village of Ipil, during which the ASG robbed several banks, took numerous civilians hostage, and set fire to much of the town. In the end, this attack killed 54 people and signaled to Manila that the ASG was now a force to be reckoned with[620].

For a time, much of the ASG's banditry was simply that, organized criminal activity that simply used terrorist tactics as a modus operandi, and the international community regarded it as such as well. Much of the interim banditry was the result of a series of schisms that followed the death of Janjalani. After Abdurajak Janjalani was killed in 1998, the ASG broke into three distinct groups, all of which became violent kidnapping outfits[621]. One was led by Khaddafy Janajalani, another by Ghalib Andarang (Commander Robot), and a third by Abu Sabaya. While Khaddafy Janjalani continued to try to reorganize the ASG as a centralized salafist outfit, the disunion was driven by conflict between Ghalib Andarang and Abu Sabaya. After Abdurajak's death the group became a kidnapping and ransom organization[622]. In March of 2000 the ASG kidnapped 58 students from a school in Basilan, followed by an even more daring operation in

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[620] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 53.
[621] Zachary Abuza, "The Moro Islamic Liberation Front at 20: State of the Revolution" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 28(6) 2005, p. 471.
[622] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 54.

which 21 tourists were abducted from a resort in Sabah, Malaysia. This latter operation netted ASG 26 million USD, which was paid to the group using Libya as an intermediary. This massive influx in capital allowed the ASG to expand its operations in the south, though many of the new recruits were motivated by the financial incentives of membership rather than an adherence to Janjalani's salafist rhetoric. Further operations in the near term included the beheading of several teachers on Jolo Island (a technique borrowed from al-Qaeda and used to great extent by the ASG) and an attack on the Los Palmas Resort in Palawan, Philippines on May 27th, 2001, in which 20 tourists were taken hostage. This last attack included the taking of three American hostages, one of whom was subsequently beheaded. These, as well as other lower profile attacks earned the ASG the scorn of the AFP and sparked a massive crackdown on renegade Moro organizations by Manila. Khaddafy Janjalani was so pressed by the backlash that he tried to seek negotiations with Manila. But he did not control the other factions of the organizations under Sabaya and Robot and therefore had little leverage with which to bargain.

This disharmony amongst fighting units was only solved after Abu Sabaya was killed in 2002, and Commander Robot was arrested in December of 2003[623]. Following these developments, Khadaffy Janjalani attempted to retake command and unify the organization, at least for a time[624]. This, ironically, was aided by the US' decision to label the ASG a foreign terrorist group after 9/11, which allowed Washington to start funding/aiding Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) operations in Mindanao[625]. This had the effect, however, of pushing the ASG back into its previous position as an insurgent organization. For his part, Khaddafy Janjalani attempted to reenergize the ASG as a legitimate national liberation movement based on the religious doctrines of his brother. To do this he sought help from the MILF in order to develop a

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[623] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 471.
[624] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 472.
[625] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 18.

more legitimate revenue stream (at least from the perspective of would-be militants. The MILF, on the other hand wanted to use the ASG so that it could better penetrate the Sulu Archipelago, which is Tausog dominated and therefore solidly MNLF territory[626].

After a lull in political violence, the ASG came back in 2008 with a string of kidnappings.   The first of these was in June of 2008 when the ASG kidnapped Cel Drillion, a popular Filipino Journalist. This was followed by the kidnapping of three ICRC workers in January 2009 and two Chinese nationals in November of 2009. These were complimented by a smattering of local kidnappings as well. The resulting money allowed ASG to begin to attract new recruits[627], though, as before, it had the effect of attracting financially minded criminals rather than the salafi-jihadists Janjalani seemingly hoped to court.

6.1.2   Ideology

The Abu Sayyaf Group and its predecessors Jamaa Tableegh and the AHAI, respectively, were undoubtedly organized as salafist alternatives to the Moro nationalist organizations that made up the Southern Muslim resistance to Manila's rule. However, at present, ASG's salafist bent is meant more as a means of procuring funding from abroad and facilitating cooperation with other salafist organizations… namely Jemaah Islamiyyah, than it is a prime motivational factor to its rank and file. In reality, the salience of membership in ASG is reflected more in the tribal and familial ties that undergird the social networks of Mindanao, and the financial incentives related to the organization's numerous criminal enterprises.

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[626] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 471.
[627] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 18.

Despite the radical differences in ideology between the secular MNLF, the salafist ASG, and the criminal 'Lost Commands[628]', familial and social bonds tend to outweigh ideological differences and there is considerable intermingling between these and other non-state actors in the southern Philippines[629]. There are actually very few doctrinal disputes despite vastly different rhetoric. The reality is that dogma matters little to the rank and file…

> ""A great number of factors motivated individual Muslims to fight for or otherwise support the armed separatist movement—self-defense, revenge, plunder, defense of local communities, social pressure, armed coercion, and personal ambition, among others. The idea of fighting for Bangsamoro—for a nation of Philippine Muslims united by culture and history—was but one of those motivating factors and, if we use the popular songs and stories of the rebellion as indicators, not an especially potent one."[630]"

As a result, ideology plays little role in the ASG's resilience. Unlike AQI or the Sadrists, the Abu Sayyaf does not draw meaningful support from any Islamist movement. Further, while its ranks are filled with nationalists, there are other, more effective nationalist organizations operating in Mindanao and Sulu, namely the MNLF and the MILF. Rather, ASG's resilience is rooted in its ability to provide material inducements to recruits[631]. ASG's operations are currently done in conjunction with organized criminal elements and many of its current

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[628] 'Lost Commands' is the term applied to break away factions of mainstream organizations who organize small bands to engage in criminal behavior. All Moro organizations spawn them and participation does not necessarily mean one gives up membership in the dominant organization, since such behavior is more or less socially acceptable in southern Philippine society.
[629] Eduardo F Ugarte, "The 'Lost Command' of Julhani Jillang: An Alliance from the Southwest Philippines" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 32(4) 2008, p. 313.
[630] McKenna quoted in Eduardo F Ugarte "The 'Lost Command' of Julhani Jillang: An Alliance from the Southwest Philippines" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 32(4) 2008, p. 314.
[631] R. Banloai, May 2010, p. 19.

commanders are actually organized crime figures rather than salafist diehards, such as Commander Alpader Parad[632].

> "The ASG, therefore, has become a resilient group because its existence is enmeshed in a complex situation in the southern Philippines where rebels and terrorists connive with ordinary bandits, who collude with local politicians. All these various interests perpetrate violence on an island marred by more than 400 years of ethnic conflict, banditry and rebellion[633]."

Sources will point out however, that there are some ideologically minded leaders within ASG[634], notably Yasser Igasan, Khair Mundos, and Isnilon Hapilon, to name three. But these individuals are a distinct minority within the organization and while Igasan is the nominal Emir, he has no armed contingent[635].

6.1.3 Organizational Design

Meaningfully, the ASG is networked on two levels. Firstly, the ASG is a network of Tausog militants who use familial and social networks to organize violent undertakings, whether for political or material considerations. Further, however, ASG is a component of the Southeast Asian salafist network developed in the 1990's by al-Qaeda operatives in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

6.1.3.1 Organizational Design: Internal Organization

The Abu Sayyaf Group, as conceived by Abdurajak Janjalani (as well as his brother), was to be a highly structured organization, consciously modeled on Hezbollah. However, the nascent ASG quickly devolved into a highly decentralized network of autonomous cells, organized

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[632] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 19.
[633] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 19.
[634] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 19.
[635] R. Banlaoi, May 2010, p. 19.

according to longstanding traditional clan networks. At present, the ASG represents a loose coalition of warlord outfits mixing political rhetoric with organized criminal activities. As such is more a function of the grey economy endemic to the Southern Philippines than it is an outgrowth of the international salafist movement.

Neverthless,…

"When Janjalani formed the ASG, his original vision was to form a highly organized, systematic, and disciplined organization of fanatical secessionist Islamic fighters in the Southern Philippines[636]."

Initially, the ASG was led by an Islamic Executive Council comprised of 15 emirs with Janjalani at the head[637]. Beneath the IEC were two major committees. The first of these was the *Jamiatul Al-Islamia Revolutionary Tabligh*, which was in charge of educational and fundraising activities. The second was the *Al-Misuaratt Khutbah Committee*, which had the duty of overseeing tactical and propaganda activities[638]. A military arm was formed called the *Mujahidden Al-Sharifullah*, which answered directly to the IEC, and was composed of three units; the demolition team responsible for bombing operations, the Mobile Force Team responsible for operational logistics, and the campaign propaganda team, which was responsible for intelligence and propaganda activities. The activities of the IEC and the rest of the organization were directed by a consultative assembly called the *Majlis Shura*[639].

Intelligence records suggest that the loose coalition of organizations that comprise ASG today was not what Janjalani had in mind when he founded the organization[640]. This

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[636] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 8.
[637] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 8.
[638] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 9.
[639] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 9.
[640] Eduardo F. Ugarte "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf, 1993-2000" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* vol. 31(2) 2008, pp. 125-144.

decentralization began during the lifetime of Janjalani, but it was completed with his death during firefight with the PNP in Lamitan Town on Basilan in December 1998, creating a leadership vacuum from which the organization has yet to recover[641].

> "With no overall Amir at the helm of the organization, every faction of the ASG went on its own and the group became a mere network of various armed groups with their own respective Amirs commanding their own respective loyal followers operating mainly in Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi[642]."

Rather than following the rigid hierarchy outlined by Janjalani the new organizational structure revolved around the charisma of local 'commanders'. This strongman-centered style of political organization has deep roots in Moro culture, and the term 'commander' was first used in the Philippines when the Hukbalahap (Huks) clashed with the Philippine Constabulary in Luzon during the 1960's[643]. Khaddafy Janjalani was selected as Abdurajak's replacement in July of 1999[644]. Until his death in 2006, Khaddafy made numerous attempts to both reestablish the hierarchical elements of the ASG envisioned by his brother as well as the salafist ideology that informed the group's founding. Nevertheless, Khaddafy was unable to repair the rift in the organization and since the turn of the century the ASG has been divided into two factions; a Basilan based faction under the leadership of Khaddafy Janjalani and later Isnilon Hapilon, and a Sulu based faction that was originally headed by Commander Robot (Ghalib Andalang) though it is not known who currently (if anyone) runs the Sulu operation[645]. These two main factions

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[641] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 126.
[642] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 10.
[643] Eduardo F Ugarte "The 'Lost Command' of Julhani Jillang: An Alliance from the Southwest Philippines" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* vol. 32(4) 2008, p. 313.
[644] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 10.
[645] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, pp. 10-11.

were, in turn, merely coalitions (medial alliances discussed below) of ASG affiliated outfits with their own commanders.

The Basilan based faction was composed of ten armed groups who had about 73 militants between them. The three major commanders were Khadaffy Janjalani, Abu Sabaya, and Isnilon Hapilon. However, only Hapilon was left after the deaths of Janjalani and Sabaya in 2006 and 2002 respectively[646].

Table 6-1: Basilan-Based Faction of the ASG[647]

Name of Group	Known Leaders of the Group
Ampul Group	Mauran Ampu or Abu Mauran
Apting Group	Abu Apting
Danggatil Group	Moto Danggantil or Mata Danggatil
Hapilon Group	Sahiron Hapilon
Isnilon Group	Isnilon Hapilon
Jainuddin Group	Nadjalin Jainuddin
Janjalani Group	Hector Janjalani or Abu Abral
Kaw Jaljalis Group	Kalaw Jaljalis or Boy Granada
Salagin Group	Abu Salagin
Masiraji Sali Group	Hamsiraji Sali

The Sulu group was responsible for most of the high profile kidnappings attributed the ASG. It was composed of sixteen armed groups with an unknown combined manpower. Following Commander Robot's arrest in December of 2003 and subsequent death during a jailbreak on March 15th, 2005, it is unknown who heads this faction, or whether it has wholly degenerated into a loose network of independent local commanders[648].

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[646] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 11.
[647] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 11.
[648] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 12.

Table 6-2: Sulu-Based Faction of the ASG[649]

Name of Group	Known Leaders of the Group
Robot Group	Galib Andang (Commander Robot)
Amil Group	Julius Aminulla Amil
Asiri Group	Basiri Asiri
Badja Group	Datu Panglima Badja
Bauddin Group	Salapuddin Bauddin
Hayudini Group	Nidzmi Hayudinni (Commander Takulong)
Hadji Radzpal Group	Hadji Radzpal or Abu Rayhan
Irijani Group	Mudjahid Irijani
Jamal Group	Yahiya Jamal or Abu Alvarez
Kalim Group	Pati Kalim
Landi Group	Kumander Landi
Mali Group	Sulaiman Mali
Saabdula Group	Nadzmi Saabulla (Commander Global)
Sahiron Group	Radullah Sahiron
Sali Group	Hesseim Sali
Shariff Group	Wahid Shariff

Suffice it to say, these groups lacked the organizational or ideological cohesion of the organization as it existed under Abdurujak Janjalani. While some commanders have salafist motivations, many are driven purely by financial motivations. In addition, most of the affiliated 'Groups' do not answer to any ASG hierarchy and are extremely personalistic[650].

A problem with providing detailed statistics on the present state of the network is that the network itself is highly fluid. The reasons for this will be detailed below in the section on tribal banditry in the Philippines. However, estimates fairly consistently place the total number of hardcore (i.e. fulltime) fighters at around 100. These are offset, however by at least 200 part time militants who might join an operation here and there, aid in repulsing an AFP offensive should it come into their area, or give shelter to ASG fighters when needed. Further, it is

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[649] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 12.

[650] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 12.

believed that at present there are at least 30 foreign fighters in the ASG ranks, most of whom likely hail from JI. As of 2009, all of these are presently spread out amongst 18 cells operating in Sulu, Basilan, and Zamboanga[651]. After the death of Khadaffy Janjalani, however, the Philippine National Police (PNP) suspect that there is little if any organizational cohesion in these groups, apart from the occasional ad hoc alliance discussed below. This is evidenced by the fact that the ASG has, to date, been unable to elect an emir as a replacement to Khadaffy. Radullah Sahiron is thought to be the closest to an emir the organization has, but his age and acute diabetes hamper his ability to lead effectively. Sources believe only ~60% of fighters are loyal to him[652]. Further, some doubt he is even still alive[653]. More realistically, Isnilon Hapilon is likely the highest ranked field commander. Nevertheless, while there is probably an informal or nominal hierarchy amongst these groups, the structure is best defined by the considerable autonomy afforded to each commander. Further, it is not likely that the ASG has established a complex organization with functional differentiation of cells[654]. Rather, the group has continued to operate according to the traditional tribal networks that have served as the basis for the *Yakan* (Bandit) tradition in Sulu culture for some time.

As stated previously, the nature of the ASG network is extremely hard to detail as it does not follow the organizational design of typical terrorist organizations. Instead, the ASG has made maximum use of the native tribal alliance system in Mindanao and Sulu to offset the ~100 hard core members with a revolving membership of locals and ad hoc groups who come together for specific operations and then blend back into the local population. Given the socially acceptable nature of banditry, or 'Yakan' in Sulu society, members do not necessarily have to

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[651] Peter Chalk, "The Philippines Continued Success Against Extremists" *CTC Sentinel* vol. 2(8) August 2009, pp. 1-4.
[652] P. Chalk, 2009.
[653] "Sahiron, Jemaah Islamiyyah Leader Killed in Clashes?" *The Philippine Star*, December 19th, 2008.
[654] M. Turner, 2009, p. 397.

live in the underground, as one would expect from terrorist cells in other locations. Thus, 'exit' (even if it is only temporary) does not result from any institutional process, as one would find in European or Middle Eastern terror networks, but is a function of an individual's own preferences at any given point in time. Additionally, the decision to join an organization is not the result of an organizational recruitment process, but is determined by ethno-linguistic identity and familial connections[655].

> "Internal coordination is further facilitated by trust, ''a coordinating mechanism based on shared values and norms supporting collective cooperation and collaboration within uncertain environments'' (Reed, 2001, p. 201)[656]."

The system of collaboration discussed by Reed developed as a model by which Yakan could be pursued. The network structure of the ASG is therefore not an innovation of the information revolution, but is merely one example of a tradition Filipino political alliance. Ugarte explains these alliance structures using Kiefer's 'Segmentary State Model'.

> "Kiefer considered the traditional Tausug polity to be a "segmentary or pyramidal state" because it consisted of sections that were "functionally and structurally equal on each level of the system." The segments were comprised of alliances or factions of differing sizes, which assembled according to certain principles. The structural equivalence of the segments, "on each level of the system," was due not only to their common features but also to the absence of a central authority in whom power was concentrated and from whom it flowed to subordinate chiefs in the margins. Instead, power was dispersed among the factions and was delegated upward—ultimately to the sultan—"only for specific

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[655] M. Turner, 2009, p. 397.
[656] Reed (2001), quoted in M. Turner, 2009, p. 397.

purposes and situations which [were] determined by the lower segment." The similarities between the factions arose not just from their shared basic purpose but also from the lack in the polity of "functional specialization in the performance of political roles"[657]"

These 'segmentary' alliances were based on two fundamental building blocks; dyadic friendship ties, and ties of reciprocity (i.e. exchange of military, political, and/or financial favors, etc.)[658]. They are 'ad hoc' in that they are formed in response to certain opportunities or threats. They are 'segmentary' in that they take place at three levels, depending upon the size and nature of the goal they were formed to pursue.

> "Traditionally the establishment of such relationships between leaders, he argued, enabled the formation of a pyramid of armed bands, of which minimal alliances comprised the base, medial alliances occupied the middle, and maximal alliances formed the apex. Together, these three forms of alliance groups comprised what Kiefer called a "system of segmentary factions[659].""

While alliances form in response to conflict, whether for defensive or offensive purposes, they do not form anew each time. Rather, each commander relies upon a core of supporters (which may expand or contract over time) throughout his life.

The lowest level of the pyramidal model supplied by Kiefer is the 'minimal alliance group'. This style of organization is reflected in the individual cells noted under the Basilan and Sulu based factions of the ASG referenced above. These alliances are formed within specific communities, typically amongst kin, but close friendship ties are also common to such alliances. These minimal alliances are formed to serve a military purpose. Historically this entailed

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[657] Eduardo F Ugarte, "The 'Lost Command' of Julhani Jillang", pp. 311-312.
[658] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 130.
[659] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 130.

communal protection or backing an ally in the event of a feud with a third party, etc. However, in the case of the ASG, such cells form in order to undertake certain operations, often for financial rather than political rationalizations. While these alliances are temporal, given their situation specific rationale, they are also the most stable of the alliance structures indigenous to the southern Philippines[660].

Sulu has a long history of these sorts of alliances in banditry, where historically these alliances consisted of no more than 25 individuals. Anthropological research on southern Philippine culture shows that the ASG are but a modern incarnation of these taditional *Yakan* networks.

> "The prevalence of kinship ties within minimal alliance groups and, to a lesser
> extent, between the heads of larger coalitions is attested to by their presence in
> the case studies and commonness in the wider literature. The most obvious
> example is of course the three Janjalani brothers—Abdurajak, Khaddafy, and
> Hector—who at one stage were all associated with the Abu Sayyaf. In the case
> studies, there is one uncle–nephew pairing: Jul Jillang, the MNLF "lost
> command" leader whose followers kidnapped Fr. Blanco in 1993, and his
> nephew Basirul Ampul ("Commander Virgin Killer"), whose group traded guns
> and ammunition for the priest. There is also one set of brothers: the Commanders
> Cesar ("Habib") and Patta who reportedly received P5 million each as their share
> of the P45.5 million distributed by Ghalib Andang in 2000. In her memoir of her
> and her husband Martin's roughly year-long captivity (May 2001–June 2002)
> with the Abu Sayyaf, Gracia Burnham observes that among her captors were two
> brothers, Isnilon Totoni Hapilon ("Musab") and Bakkal Hapilon ("Omar"), and

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[660] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", pp. 130-132.

their nephew, a youth named Akmad. Apart from a clique comprised of a few older principals, her captors did not make up a permanent force but were regularly replaced by other young men from the same local community/ies[661]."

The personalistic qualities of the minimal alliance system are also reflected in the ASG network. Given the situation specific qualities of the alliances, their size is determined by the situation, as well as the given leader's ability to marshal resources, both human and material, toward meeting the specified goal. As a result, the individual cells have no distinct boundaries creating a network with blurry edges[662]. What cohesion exists is the result of the leader, who typically holds such a rank by having the most "consanguinal and affinal connections" amongst their communities[663]. The leader activates the group, sets the agenda, and arranges alliances with other organizations. In return, the leader is responsible for ensuring financial disbursement to constituent members as well as providing protection for the group. The centrality of leaders to minimal alliances is mirrored by the prominence of ASG commanders and the relative obscurity of their members[664].

Medial alliance groups are achieved when two or more communal leaders enter into a dyadic "friendship" in order to bring several minimal alliances together to form a coalition of usually around 500 fighters[665]. Like minimal alliances they are situation- and leader-centric, however they are less permanent than minimal alliances for several reasons. Firstly, they typically disband after the achievement of their aim. Secondly, they are borne out of ties between leaders rather than communities and as a result, reciprocity is not as strong at is in small community level groups. Thirdly, given the distributed nature of conflict in the southern

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[661] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", pp. 131-132.
[662] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 132.
[663] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 132.
[664] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 132.
[665] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 133.

Philippines, the larger the organization, the more likely it is that it will contain two or more individuals who are enemies. Fourthly, since the medial alliance is, in essence, a coalition, it is more likely that the distribution of resources will breed conflict[666].

> "An example of such an environmental change and the deleterious impact it had on the Abu Sayyaf's configuration was the P245 million received by Ghalib Andang and Mujib Susukan (of which they both reputedly pocketed P200 million) in late July–early August 2000 for the release of some Sipadan hostages. The division of the spoils soon led to complaints from Abu Sayyaf factional leaders of "favoritism and [the] unfair distribution of ransom money." Andang, who was apparently in control of the funds and their disbursement, had questioned the long "lists of names of alleged Abu Sayyaf members," amounting to more than 3,000, submitted by the leaders. Doubtful that all those listed deserved compensation, Andang had asked the leaders to present the "'claimants' in person," then ordered the removal of all unverified petitioners. This had angered some leaders. On 9 September Galib Andang was traveling with two government couriers, holding P170 million in ransom for the release of more European Sipadan hostages, when their caravan of vehicles was ambushed by rival Abu Sayyaf factions, intent on stealing the ransom. The ambush developed into a two-hour battle, allegedly involving the use of M-79 howitzers, in which more than a dozen gunmen from all sides were killed[667]."

Fifthly, the parties to the coalition retain their communal identities rather than adopt corporate, or network-wide identities. That is why the leaders are paid with the understanding that their

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[666] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", pp. 133-134.
[667] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 134.

followers will be taken care of out of their share, rather than every member receiving a portion[668]. Since these coalitions are amalgams of localized commanders, the leadership dynamics are somewhat complicated and informal. The closest thing to an overall commander would be the leader who initially formed the coalition, since he would be the individual to 'own' the dispute in question, and he would therefore be obliged to host other cells as they arrived[669].

Maximal alliances are less coalitions and represent more of a widespread military alliance amongst high level commanders[670]. The leaders would either be very powerful community leaders, or men with a military background. The last time such systems were used in the southern Philippines (according to Ugarte) was during the intermittent succession struggles endemic to the Sultanates. Ugarte asserts that there is no evidence that the ASG has ever reached this level of organization.

6.1.3.2 Organizational Design: Transnational Networks

Like AQI, the Abu Sayyaf Group compliments its domestic network with transnational linkages to other radical cells. However, unlike Zarqawi, who directed most of the auxiliary cells in the AQI network, ASG benefits from cooperation with a number of distinct regional organizations, namely, Jemaah Islamiyyah (the closest thing to a regional affiliate al-Qaeda has in Southeast Asia) and the MILF, who cooperates with ASG in return for financial incentives.

The transnational linkages likely grew out of Abdurajak's social and personal ties to international salafists gleaned from his educational and military experience abroad. Over the years, the ASG has continually tapped these international resources for training and financial aid. By the mid 1990's these sources had come to include; Hezbollah in Iran, Jamaat-Islami and Hizbul-Mujahideen in Pakistan, Hizb-Islami in Afghanistan, The Islamic Liberation Front in

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[668] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 134.
[669] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 134.
[670] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf", p. 137.

Algeria, the International Harakatul Al-Islamia in Libya, al-Gamaa al-Islamiya in Egypt, and the International Islamic Relief Foundation[671].   Support from these non-State partners was complimented by limited state support in the late 1980's and early 1990's from Libya and Malaysia.   However, state sponsorship proved hard to come by the mid 1990's.   Since the decline of state support seems to coincide with ASG overtures to al-Qaeda Central in the early to mid 90's, it's likely that Abdurajak was attempting to offset a decline in revenue by reaching out to bin Laden.

Whether at the behest or local militants or not, al-Qaeda first moved into Southeast Asia in the early 1990's when it set up an office in Manila[672].   This was run by bin Laden's brother in law, Muhammed Jamal Khalifa, but it also served as a base of operations for Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Shiekh Mohammed while they planned "Oplan Bojinka", a now infamous, though ultimately failed plot to crash 5 airlines in the pacific simultaneously, as well as crash an airliner into CIA headquarters, and assassinate the Pope during his visit to Manila in 1995[673].   Following a fire in Yousef's apartment, and the subsequent discovery of his laptop, the PNP unraveled much of al-Qaeda's Manila cell, arresting Yousef and forcing Khalifa to flee.   After this, cooperation between the ASG and al-Qaeda declined precipitously, a fact likely exacerbated by the turn to organized criminal activities by ASG units which stood in contrast al-Qaeda Central's staunch Islamist ideology.   This lull was eased somewhat when, in the early 2000's, the organizations facilitated a degree of rapprochement.   Likely, the post 9/11 crackdown on al-Qaeda operations left them short of potential allies.   Additionally, JI use of Mindanao training grounds brought the al-Qaeda affiliate into iterated contact with ASG cells.   Finally, Khadaffy

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[671] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 7.
[672] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 2.
[673] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 2.

Janjalani's attempt to reinvigorate ASG's salafist bent likely endeared ASG to bin Laden once again[674]. By 2002, roughly a fifth of al-Qaeda Central's operations were based out of Southeast Asia, where lax border and financial controls made it easy to launder money and move men and equipment[675].

While it's almost certain that, at least some, factions of the ASG benefited financially from their alliance with al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda's greatest contribution to the ASG was not in financial assistance, but in establishing the inter-organizational networks that fostered cooperation between the MILF, the ASG, and Indonesia's Jemaa Islamiyyah. While the MILF was often reticent to engage with ASG, JI has proven a very helpful ally to ASG over the past decade. Al-Qaeda, in turn, was integral to the development of JI, which, while autonomous, coordinated heavily with al-Qaeda's own network[676]. For its part, the Abu Sayyaf and MILF have provided JI with one of their last strongholds. After crackdowns by the Indonesian authorities in 2007 and 2009, much of the JI network seems to have been dismantled. They are now thought to operate only in Indonesia and the Philippines, where they maintain a small presence. Sources even indicate that JI likely made the Philippines a primary base for JI operations after the 2007-2009 crackdown by Indonesian forces, and for at least a time, their forces were indistinguishable from ASG militants on Jolo[677].

JI's history stretches back to the 1960's, when its founders, Abu Bakar Baasyir and Abdullah Sungkar created an Islamist organization modeled off of the Darul Islam movement

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[674] Larry Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of U.S.-Philippines Anti-Terrorism Cooperation" Congressional Research Service Report RL31265, January 24th, 2007, p. 5.
[675] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 3.
[676] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 3.
[677] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 4.

that fought the Dutch in the 40's[678]. In the 1980's, Baasyir and Sungkar moved to Malaysia where they set up a base of operations sending fighters to Afghanistan. This nascent militant network evolved into Jemmaa Islamiyya by either 1991 or 1992[679]. Within a few years, JI began cooperating with al-Qaeda Central to build a regional Islamist network in Southeast Asia. After the fall of Suharo in 1998, JI moved back to Indonesia from Malaysia[680].

Like ASG, JI's structure was originally rigid and highly formalized. Areas of control were divided out by *Manitqis*; Mantiqi I was responsible for Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, Mantiqi II oversaw operations in Java, Mantiqi III operated networks in the Philippines, Sabah, and Sulawesi, and Mantiqi IV's areas of responsibility were Australia and Papua. Each Mantiqi was further subdivided into *Wakalah* (branches) with a *Qoaid Wakalah* (branch leader) at its head. The *Wakalah* were further subdivided into functionally differentiated cells, or *Fiah*; i.e. fundraising, security, religious work, operations, etc..[681] The role of Baasyir and Sungkar became that of spiritual advisors. The entire network reports(ed) to a *Syura* (Regional Leadership Council) at whose head sat Hambali. Hambali was also a member of al-Qaeda's Shura Council, and his position within JI effectively tied the organization to al-Qaeda[682], though it should be noted that his arrest in 2003 undermined much of the inter-organizational cooperation between al-Qaeda and JI[683].

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[678] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 5.
[679] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 5.
[680] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 5.
[681] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 61.
[682] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines and Thailand" p. 63.
[683] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 6.

While this was the formal structure of JI, in reality, the JI habit of starting up local cells and training indigenous fighters throughout Southeast Asia has meant that the organization is much more loosely controlled than their organizational structure would indicate[684]. To this end, JI had forged extensive contacts with other groups in the region, including MILF, the ASG, and separatists in Narithiwat, Thailand[685].

JI's Maniqi III had responsibility for the Philippines and therefore oversaw the relations between JI and ASG[686]. Most coordination took place through MILF camps with ASG involvement, however, a special training area was established in Camp Abu Bakar, where JI and ASG militants were trained in bomb-making, weapons, surveillance, sabotage, communication and cell formation[687] by MILF and al-Qaeda trainers. The largest joint training operation, however, was Camp Hudaibiyah. According to Mohammed Nasir bin Abas, the former head of Mantiqi III…

> "I helped establish Camp Hudaibiyah in Moro in 1994 by the order of Abdullah
> Sungkar. I trained MILF members. Funding came from Abdullah Sungkar. I was
> given 2000 RM. In 1996 I went home to Johor. There weren't any JI cadets yet
> but the preparations were finished. I was succeeded by Umar Patek who was my
> junior in Afghanistan and who trained in Moro in 1995. In 1998, Camp
> Hudaibiyah began training 17 Indonesians from Java. I helped arrange their trips
> to Moro. I watched over the camp twice, once for two months in 1999 and once

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[684] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 6.
[685] Angel Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" *Adelphi Papers* vol. 43(358) 2003, p. 61.
[686] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 465.
[687] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 465.

for three weeks in 2000.When I was there Abubakar Bashir visited Camp

Hudaibiyah and he was accompanied by Ustad Mustofa."[688]"

Hudaibiyah was also a center of ASG training. In particular, noted bomb makers Dulmatin and

Umar Patek, who were responsible for the 2002 Bali bombings, trained ASG operatives at this

facility[689]. By mid-2005, JI had trained as many as 60 ASG militants in bomb-making at various

Philippines based camps.   PNP estimates that there were as many as 60 JI operatives

collaborating with ASG as of April of 2005[690], though the most current estimates place the

numbers between 25-30 JI radicals under the leadership of Fausan Abdullah[691]. JI's connections

with ASG became increasingly important after the mid-2000's when, in answer to international

pressure to desist in collaborating with al-Qaeda affiliated organizations, the MILF issued an

official statement to its members that they were no longer to tolerate JI members. It's important

not to make too much of this, however as several factors imply that some level of cooperation is

indeed continuing. During his interrogation, Hambali confessing to giving $27,000 dollars (out

of a total of $100,000 given to him for the Bali attack by Khalid Shiekh Mohammed) to the

MILF[692]. In addition, in March of 2005, Malaysian authorities arrested six JI militants and two

al-Qaeda operatives attempting to enter Sabah, Malaysia from Mindanao. One of the militants

was the head of the Hudaibiyah camp, Zulkifli[693]. Further, following his arrest, JI radical Tawfiq

Riefqi acknowledged that some joint training operations on Mindanao continue, though nothing

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[688] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 465.
[689] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 18.
[690] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 16.
[691] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 17.
[692] Z. Abuza, 2005, pp. 465-466.
[693] Z. Abuza, 2005, pp. 465-466.

on the scale of previous efforts, such as the Hudaibiyah Camp. At present, Riefqi states that MILF can only train about 20 people at a time[694].

6.2   Constituencies

While originally conceived of as a universalistic Islamist movement, the organizational devolution into an inter-connected series of *Yakan* outfits had meant that the ASG has increasingly come to rely upon the familial and kinship ties that undergird these types of bandit networks. That means that the ASG has little domestic constituency outside of its dominant Tausog ethnic community, and little (though certainly some) international support due to its association with organized crime.

6.2.1   Constituencies: Domestic

The ASG began with about 1000 adherents during the early days of Abdurajak's AHAI. By 1998, the ASG had raised this number to around 1300, a figure that would represent the Zenith of ASG's membership[695]. This number, as stated earlier, is offset by the organization's ability to draw on local Tausog populations (as well as militants from other organizations) for specific operations.

The ASG's communal acceptance stems, in large part, from the centrality of the *Yakan* culture to Tausog economic life. This innate constituency results from the fact that the ASG operates in an environment of limited state control, where protection rackets and banditry are common place and acceptable means of capital accumulation[696]. Thus, it is not that the organization is able to tap into illicit economic activity in order to fund operations, much like AQI's experience in Anbar province, but that the ASG perpetuates its membership by making

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[694] Z. Abuza, 2005, pp. 465-466.
[695] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 13.
[696] M. Turner, 2009.

itself an integral component of the local economy. It is no surprise then that the islands of Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi Tawi, where the ASG operate are among the poorest in the Philippines[697].

While the ASG has its fingers in any number of illicit enterprises, from gun running, to smuggling, to drug distribution, its primary contribution to the local economy has been in the addition of kidnapping revenues to the local black economy. Among the commanders most responsible for making this a mainstay of ASG activity was Commander Robot, who in the early 2000's was responsible for a number of high profile kidnappings. Earnings from operations led by Robot, among others, has greatly aided ASG's recruitment, though these recruits are seeking a share of the kidnapping trade, not the goal of an Islamic State[698]. Thus, the ASG is not an abnormality in Sulu and Mindanao, but is in fact part of the Tausog social and economic culture and can enjoy considerable communal support as a result[699]. Recruitment is based on material inducements, which hold a lot of sway in the Sulu Archipelago. Further, this trade has created unlikely constituencies within the Filipino security services. There is much evidence to suggest that the AFP and PNP have been complicit in allowing the ASG to continue, whether as a way to divide and conquer with the other Moro groups, as a means of justifying continued expenditures in an otherwise bloated security apparatus[700], or due to the financial considerations of local commanders.

6.2.2   Constituencies: International

Historically, state sponsorship has been helpful in the Moro struggle. The Libyans, in particular were quite generous in the 1970's, and the Malaysians even provided sanctuary for Moro separatists in Sabah for a time. In the early days, the AHAI benefited from Libyan and

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[697] Fabio Scarpello, "US, Philippines Rethink Anti-Terror Tactics" *Asia Times,* June 19th, 2010.
[698] M. Turner, 2009.
[699] M. Turner, 2009, p. 393.
[700] M. Turner, 2009, p. 393.

Malaysian aid as well, though the type and quantity of aid given to Janjalani is unknown. Currently, however, ASG foreign aid mostly comes from other salafist organizations who perceive their struggle as part of the larger jihad against the US and Zionism[701]. This became a major issue in the mid 1990's, however intelligence sources believe this aid has declined precipitously in the 2000's, despite a slight up-tick in inter-organizational cooperation amongst Southeast Asian radicals. While ASG does enjoy some support from al-Qaeda (via JI), there is not much evidence that they are well thought of in international salafist circles due to their organized criminal activities, and relatively low levels of anti-establishment terrorism.

6.3 Government Counter-Terror Operations

In addition to the lack of economic and political development in the south, the ASG has also benefited from a counter-terror strategy from Manila, which has proven uneven. The US's response to this regional al-Qaeda connected network, has likewise proven inconsistent due to concerns and disagreements with Manila's COIN operations. To its credit, however, Manila does realize that the ASG represents a distinct threat apart from the other mainstream Moro groups, in that it is more of an organized criminal network than a true insurgency and it takes advantage of the lack of formal state institutions to enrich members through the informal economy. Therefore Manila realizes that there should be a two-pronged approach to COIN operations in Mindanao, consisting of equal parts state building programs and (para)military operations. Reflecting Manila's consensus, the US has tended to bifurcate its COIN aid along these lines as well.

Though Manila has a long history of insurgency and counter-insurgency, they formed the Inter-Agency Task Force Against International Terrorism on September 24th, 2001[702] specifically

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[701] M. Turner, 2009, p. 395
[702] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, pp. 21-23.

to deal with the ASG. This was followed by the Anti-Money Laundering Act of September 29th, 2001. Manila's legislative framework was meant to coordinate all counter-terrorism related activities across government bodies: a precursor to the 'whole of government' approach championed today. Enforcement of CT legislation was overseen by the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) until it was shuttered in 2004 in favor of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF) which answers directly to the President of the Philippines and is chaired by the Executive Secretary[703]. While the ATTF allows for action on a federal level, it places a lot of emphasis on coordinating activities at the regional, local, and village levels. However, these municipal authorities simply pay lip service to the importance of thwarting terrorism related activities. In reality, they lack the manpower, financial resources, and political will to do much about it. As a result, the real CT power Manila wields comes in the form of its internal intelligence gathering capabilities, but these are in turn hampered by poor information sharing between local, federal, and military agencies[704].

As previously stated, Manila ostensibly recognizes that the resilience of the ASG is largely due to the economic situation in the South. Their COIN strategy is therefore one of "Whole of Government", which seeks to use developmental carrots in tandem with military and law enforcement sticks to dissuade villagers from supporting ASG cells. Pursuantly, the AFP seeks to augment their kinetic operations with a nation-building campaign.

> "We are embarking on a campaign design that has an operational mix of 20%
> intelligence-driven combat operations and 80% civil-military operations and

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[703] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 23.
[704] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 28.

nation building. This is complemented with non-military operations such as legal

warfare, information operation and counter-organization[705]."

These civil-military operations mostly comprise infrastructure projects such as the building of schools, roads, hospitals, and sanitation equipment, but so far they have not had a sizeable impact of the relative level of development in the southern Islands.

6.3.1 Armed Forces of the Philippines: Kinetic Operations

Most deployments of any scale tend to have occurred as a reaction to upswings in violence rather than as part of a concerted and consistent COIN campaign. After the Sabah operation in 2000, Estrada ordered 1500 AFP troops to Jolo to crackdown on ASG operations[706]. This was mirrored a year later when, after the Palawan operation, Manila ordered 4500 troops to Basilan in retaliation. While initial AFP actions were very successful at denigrating the ASG, from 2002-2005, the ASG and AFP seemed to have fought themselves to a standstill[707]. Once again, however, this was not due to the operational prowess of the ASG, but the massive corruption of the AFP. The ASG has been documented bribing AFP commanders to receive arms, supplies, and of course, leniency in COIN operations. The most obvious case was the encirclement of the ASG in Lamitan, a town in Mindanao, where the AFP had tracked the group responsible for the Dos Palmas raid in Palawan[708]. During the siege, several AFP units pulled out without explanation and the ASG fighters escaped through the hole[709]. In addition, many former hostages have testified to ASG bribery of local security forces, and most small arms in

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[705] Lieutenant General Ben Dolorfino, quoted in F. Scarpello, June 19th, 2010.
[706] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, pp. 7-8.
[707] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 8.
[708] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 8.
[709] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 8.

the hands of militants are M-14s, M-16s, and Garand rifles, which could only have been procured from corrupt AFP elements[710].

In 2006, Manila attempted to regain some momentum with *Oplan (Operation) Ultimatum.* The operation was launched on August 1st, and involved the deployment of 6000 AFP forces on the Island of Jolo. The purpose of the operation was to target cells led by Khaddafy Janjalani, as well as JI bomb-makers, Dulmatin and Umar Patek who were wanted by Indonesian authorities for their part in the Bali bombings[711]. Oplan Ultimatum eviscerated much of the ASG's top leadership, including Khaddafy Janajalani and Abu Sulaiman, which in turn resulted in a massive decline in membership[712]. At the beginning of Oplan Ultimatum, the organization had about 522 members[713], but by the operation's completion in 2007, the ASG was at an estimated membership of ~200[714]. More importantly, Oplan Ultimatum ended up killing the top leaders of the ASG: Khaddafy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman. Either Yasser Igasan or Isnilon Hapilon took over after their deaths, but either way, the organization has not regained its previous strength.

6.3.2 International COIN Aid

Manila receives foreign counter-insurgency aid from two primary sources, the American and Australian governments. Australian support is largely funneled to the Philippines National Police. AFP COIN operations and capabilities are aided by Washington. Regardless of the source or the recipient of the aid, all foreign support is used against ASG. This is because the MILF is in peace talks and Manila fears bringing in the US will complicate that, and the NPA

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[710] P. Chalk, September, 2009.
[711] Rommel Banlaoi, "THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP AND TERRORISM IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES SEVEN YEARS AFTER 9/11: THREAT AND RESPONSE" Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research Monograph No. 2, September, 2008, p. 4.
[712] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 18.
[713] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 13.
[714] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 18.

(Communist Guerillas in the North) is considered to be a local threat whereas ASG is transnational. US Support is funneled through the Joint United States Military Assistance Group. The end of US support is to help create a well-rounded "All of Government Response" to counter-terrorism, which parallels at least the lip service that Manila pays to 'Hearts and Minds' COIN techniques.

As stated previously, however, US support has not been consistent, but has come in a number of waves. The first of these came in the late 1990's when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo entered into an agreement with Clinton to allow US forces to provide aid to the Armed Forces of the Philippines in order to stamp out ASG. This was done under the provisions of the Visiting Force Agreement of 1999[715], but little came of the agreement immediately. After 9/11, US support became much more forthcoming. For her part, Arroyo saw the International War on Terror as a means of tapping US resourced for the war on the ASG. The US was given access to Filipino airfields and over flight permission for Filipino airspace to support Operation Enduring Freedom, and Manila received US military training, COIN advice, and 160 US Special Forces deployed in Mindanao and Basilan[716]. In 2002, the US again offered more substantial assistance to the Philippine Armed Forces through the Visiting Forces Agreement. As a result, US troops deployed under the rubric of Operation Balikatan[717]. From January to July of 2002, the US committed 1300 troops and 90 million USD to help fund anti-terrorism activities in the Philippines[718].

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[715] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 16.
[716] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 54.
[717] F. Scarpello, June 19th, 2010.
[718] Larry Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of U.S.-Philippines Anti-Terrorism Cooperation" Congressional Research Service Report RL31265, January 24th, 2007.

"The U.S. troops included 160 Special Operations personnel and over 300

troops, primarily Navy engineers, to undertake "civic action" projects such as

road-building on Basilan[719].""

In addition, 450 troops were sent in 2005 to cooperate in two operations in Western Mindanao

and the Sulu Islands, respectively[720]. While US Special Operations forces have deployed on the

ground with AFP, US forces have only reported firing their weapons on two occasions, as the

rules of engagement worked out with Manila confine to the US to a largely support role with

AFP troops taking operational responsibility[721]. In theory, 2 man special-forces units can

accompany AFP elements on operations in Basilan[722]. Military commanders on the ground

wanted to implement this immediately but the DoD was reluctant to place US troops under

Filipino command, and the reality is that this was never really implemented[723]. Rather, US

forces are primarily deployed to provide logistical and intelligence support to AFP operations.

For its part, US supplied intelligence has proven integral to key operations, such as intercepting

Abu Sabaya at sea in June of 2002[724]. Perhaps more importantly, US forces also run 'civic

action projects' providing medical care, building schools, water sanitation, etc[725].

While the AFP and the PNP have been successful at targeting ASG leaders, there are

persistent problems with Manila's COIN strategy[726]. Firstly, the terrain of the south is an

insurgent's dream. Not only is it mountainous and heavily forested, but it is divided out amongst

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[719] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 10.
[720] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 19.
[721] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 10.
[722] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 10.
[723] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 10.
[724] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 12.
[725] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 19.
[726] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007.

innumerable islands which have served as havens for smugglers since the time of the Sultunates. Secondly, Manila has to balance COIN activities in the south with a need to keep the MNLF and MILF involved in their respective peace processes. Kinetic operations therefore have to be careful not to elicit negative responses from either of these much larger organizations, a priority which makes targeting ASG cells difficult given the considerable overlap in organizational membership (discussed in greater detail below). Thirdly, the AFP has historically suffered from inadequate military equipment, such as communication technologies, night vision goggles and even proper boots and attire for the southern climate. Finally, a major problem in Filipino counter terror operations are the nagging and apparently well founded accusations that local military and law enforcement are often in connivance with the ASG[727]. If Manila is going to address the problem of banditry in the south, it will first have to deal with the rampant corruption within the AFP's ranks.

6.4   Rival Organizations

The nature of the broader Moro insurgency in the Philippines is unique in that it is populated not so much with rival organizations, but with alternative organizations. Whereas in Iraq, a considerable portion of the over all violence was inter-organizational, in the Philippines, there is considerable cooperation and overlap between Moro groups. Largely, this is because all groups are motivated more by kinship and social ties than by the ideologies that superficially differentiate the various organizations of the south. Nevertheless, individual organizations do represent distinct choices for potential radicals, and each engage with Manila in their own way as reflected in the fact that each are pursuing their own peace agreement with the government, or refusing peace altogether, in the case of the ASG. The relative success of one or the other at procuring political and economic concessions from the Philippine government determines the

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[727] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 28.

relative payoffs of membership, which invariably would involve taking market share from other organizations.

6.4.1 The Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement (RSIM)

The RSIM is an urban mujahideen organization with around 70 members based out of Luzon, as of spring 2005[728]. The RSIM's manpower largely stems from convert communities, mostly Christians who converted to Islam while working the Middle East[729]. The RSIM received start up money from Khadaffy Janjalani as well as some Saudi financiers[730]. The RSIM has numerous contacts with ASG elements, and an RSIM operative named Redento Cain Dellosa was convicted of planting the bomb on Superferry 14, which proved to be ASG's most destructive attack to date[731]. Ties between the ASG and the RSIM are cemented by a fair amount of inter-marrying. One sister of the RSIM's leader Ahmed Santos was married to ASG leader Abu Soleiman. Another was married to Khadaffy Janjalani himself[732].

6.4.2 Moro National Liberation Front

Originally founded as a non-violent pro-independence movement in the 1960's, the Moro Independence Movement was reorganized in 1972 as the Moro National Liberation Front. Founded by Nur Misauri, an ethnic Taurog, the objective of the MNLF was the founding of an independent Bangsamoro Republic in Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan[733]. As such, it was the first Moro separatist group of modern times. However, by 1975, the MNLF had abandoned the fight to pursue negotiations with Manila, giving up on an independent state and working toward an autonomous area within Mindanao. Peace between Manila and the MNLF was finally

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[728] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 18.
[729] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 7.
[730] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 19.
[731] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 19.
[732] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 20.
[733] A. Rabasa, "Muslim Separatism in the Philippines" p. 49.

achieved on 9/26/1996, with the Tripoli Peace Accords which established the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. For his part in the agreement, Misauri was made governor of Mindanao.

The ASG was founded as an offshoot of the MNLF, as many of the MNLF's membership took issue with giving up on full independence for the south. Given the Tausog makeup of much of the MNLF rank and file, there remains a large degree of interaction between ASG and MNLF cells, and on occasion MNLF fighters have been known to serve as mercenaries in ASG activities[734].

6.4.3   Moro Islamic Liberation Front

While the MNLF was the forerunner of violent Moro nationalist organizations, the MILF quickly became the largest Moro political organization, violent or otherwise. Further, given the continued activity of the MILF, the shared interest in organized criminal activity, as well as an ill-defined Islamist agenda, the MILF maintains coordinated interactions with ASG constituent cells and there is considerable overlap in operations, training, and even membership[735].

The origins of the MNLF stem from 1975 when the MNLF began to pursue negotiations with Manila, giving up on an independent state and working toward an autonomous area within Mindanao. The Negotiation process caused two splinter groups to grow out of the MNLF[736]. The first of these was the Banga Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), which was led by two expats living in Saudi Arabia and ultimately came to naught. The second, was originally referred to as the MNLF-Salamat Faction. The Salamat Faction broke off from the mainstream MNLF in 1978[737], and was soon renamed the MILF. The group was led by Hashim Salamat[738], the former

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[734] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, pp. 17-18.
[735] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 18.
[736] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 50.
[737] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 453.

vice chairmen of the MNLF Central Committee. Educated at al-Azhar University in Cairo,

Salamat also lived in Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan where he was introduced to and heavily

influenced by Qutb and Mawdudi. Whereas the MNLF and the ASG remain solidly Tausog, the

MILF draws its members from the Maguindanaos in Cotabato, the Maranaos in Lanao del Sur,

and the Iranos in North Cotabato and Basilan[739].

The MILF quickly gained traction, as well as a large base of support. The 1996 Tripoli

Agreement proved a windfall for the organization in terms of recruitment as many who did not

wish to engage in peace talks with the government, for either financial or political motivations,

opted joined up. In 1996, in a move intended as a spoiler for the Tripoli Agreement, the MNLF

held a "Bangsomoro People's Consultative Council" that drew 200,000 and ended in calls for an

independent Muslim State[740]. The MILF and its supporters wanted full independence for

Mindanao as well as the following areas; Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Sultan

Kudarat, South Cotabato, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, and Palawan[741]. The MILF

funded its activities via state support (mostly Libyan), donations from charities, legitimate

businesses that served as fronts, and extortion and kidnapping rackets, though the organization

maintains this last revenue stream is mere government propaganda[742]. Like the ASG, as Libyan

funding dried up, the MILF turned to al-Qaeda for financing. These connections were facilitated

by the fact that large numbers of Moro fighters (500-700) trained and fought in Afghanistan

during the Soviet invasion[743]. When Mohammed Jamal Khalifa became al-Qaeda's agent in the

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[738] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" pp. 50-51.
[739] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 51.
[740] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 2.
[741] A. Abuza, 2005, p. 454.
[742] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 51.
[743] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 51.

Philippines he began to channel money into the Moro cause[744]. In exchange for access to al-Qaeda trainers, the MILF had to open their territory to other fighters in Southeast Asia, namely JI and ASG, resulting in outfits such as Camp Hudaibiyah[745].

By the mid 90's, the MILF had approximately 35,000-45,000 members[746], and had established fortified base camps and quasi-governmental administrative units[747]. As a result they were able to field viable guerilla groups against AFP forces. Further, they complimented rural guerilla warfare with urban terrorism. Nonetheless, the MILF had to undergo major restructuring in the late 90's and early 2000's in order to effectively assimilate a mass migration of ~5000 MNLF soldiers who rejected the Tripoli Agreement[748]. Firm areas of operations were set around given base commands and tactical cells were transformed into quasi-military formations replete with divisions, brigades, battalions, and companies. This large footprint apparently made them vulnerable to air assault, however, and after the loss of Camp Abu Bakar, the MILF adopted a mixed approach using conventional and guerilla force structures. Presently, the MILF is divided into 9 Base Commands[749]. Each of these is comprised of Base Brigades, but it's important to note that these are smaller than conventional brigades, ranging from 1200-3000 fighters apiece, which are further subdivided into combat platoons.

A major shock to the organization came on July 13th, 2003 when Hashim Salamat was killed. Though the organization's Vice-Chairman for Military Affairs, Ebrahim al-Haj Murad

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[744] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 51.
[745] A. Rabasa, "Terrorist Networks in Southeast Asia" p. 52.
[746] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 2.
[747] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 2.
[748] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 462.
[749] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 462.

(Haji Murad), who was groomed for the position and was unopposed in his assumption of leadership, took over, the organization nonetheless became highly factionalized[750].

The military prowess of the MILF earned it a political victory, when in 2003, the organization fought the AFP into a ceasefire. International monitors, headed by Malaysia, came in to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire. By 2008, the MILF obtained a degree of autonomy for the areas under their control when they signed a memorandum of agreement with Manila to establish the "Bangsamoro Judicial Entity", an independent, Muslim dominated political entity that would have an 'associative' relationship with the Philippine Government. Christians on Mindanao as well as other entrenched interests filed suit to halt the implementation of the agreement. The Supreme Court ruled the agreement unconstitutional in October of 2008, and renewed fighting broke out[751]. The MILF fought the government to a standstill again in July of 2009, and once again Manila agreed to hold peace talks. At present, the MILF remains the largest Moro insurgent organization with an estimated membership presently between 10,000 and 12,000 militants[752].

While there are numerous links between the MILF and the ASG, they are not uncomplicated. For their part, most MILF do not like ASG as they see them as 'un-Islamic thugs'[753]. Nevertheless, al-Qaeda operative Omar al-Faruq attempted to combine the two organizations in the late 90's, but these efforts came to naught over differences of ideology and tactics[754].

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[750] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 459.
[751] "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Congressional Research Service Report No. RL34194, October 16th, 2009, p. 18.
[752] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, p. 2.
[753] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 470.
[754] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 470.

"But this belies the fact that for three to four years in the early 1990s, despite some rivalry and competition over resources, Muhammad Jamal Khalifa was able to forge close working ties. Khalifa established the Darul Imam Shafi'ie Center (DISC) in 1988–1989; funded by the Saudi Charity the International Islamic Relief Organization, which Khalifa also controlled. DISC has a mosque/madrasa in Marawi where the MILF and ASG sent operatives for religious training before going on to military training in MILF camps. It is believed to have graduated three classes of militants between 1990 and 1993. The classes, of roughly 50 cadets each, were divided between MILF and ASG. Abdurajak Janjalani was a graduate of the class of '92.[755]"

In addition, the fact that the MILF provided safe haven to ASG cells operating in its territory (which is also off limits to AFP action) has been well documented[756]. This often bleeds over into tactical cooperation as well. Philippine Intelligence states that ASG has used MILF supplied boats during actions on Tawi Tawi, and numerous kidnapping victims have testified to having observed meetings between the ASG and the MILF, meaning the two organizations were interacting while the ASG was involved in an operation.

The likely reason for this reluctant cooperation, apart from meeting the demands of international partners, is that the MILF benefits to some degree from having the ASG around. Firstly, the ASG keeps the AFP spread thin, and Manila is therefore less able to pursue MILF crackdowns. Secondly, ASG activities give MILF elements plausible denial gives the MILF an inroad into the Sulu archipelago, which is solidly Tausog (and therefore MNLF) territory[757].

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[755] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 470.
[756] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 471.
[757] Z. Abuza, 2005, p. 471.

6.5 Operational History

Tracing the operational history of the ASG is difficult in that the organization has not obtained the media coverage that either the JAM or AQI receive. Nor has the organization really gone through the dramatic shifts that defined the chronologies of the two previous case studies. Rather, the organization has remained fairly static in its organizational design, and its fortunes have waxed in waned not so much from outside pressure but from the amount of money the organization was able to glean from its most recent kidnapping exploits. The following section nonetheless details the tactical operations that have been ascribed to the ASG from the period of 1994 to the present[758].

6.5.1 1994

In the first year in which the START database records an action by an ASG cell, the organization committed a string of actions that would prove a highly consistent indicator of ASG actions over the next two decades: grenade attacks against soft targets (often Christians and Christian institutions), bombing attacks on shopping areas, attacks on Filipino law enforcement, and small- and large-scale kidnapping operations. This began with a grenade attack on a carnival in Isulan town, which killed eleven and wounded nearly twice as many more. ASG then dynamited a shopping center in Zamboanga city that killed 3 and wounded 33 on July 5th. Three more were killed with a similar explosion in General Santos City three days later. The ASG began its kidnapping operations with an operation that took 74 people hostage after a firefight that left 16 dead in Isabela on the same day as the bombings in General Santos City. The

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[758] The sources for this data come from two primary sources unless otherwise noted in the footnotes. From 1994 through 2008, the data is taken from the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database which collects incident data through the end of 2008. From 2009 to July of 2010, the data is taken from the National Counter Terrorism Center's Worldwide Incident Tracking System which collects data on terrorism incidents beginning in 2004. These databases are available online at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/, and https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?N=0, respectively.

hostages were later released for a ransom of 7400 USD. On August 31st, an ASG cell attacked a Catholic Church and took the priest hostage after killing 2 and wounding 3. In the ASG stronghold of Basilan Island, the group felt bold enough to launch a mortar attack on an AFP outpost, but the group returned to low level kidnapping later in the year when they kidnapped a village elder along with another hostage in November.

6.5.2 1995

It would seem that the organization got a taste for kidnapping revenues within its first year of large scale operations, as 1995 was dominated by such attacks. It began in January with the kidnapping of five reporters on Basilan Island. Two more Filipino hostages were taken in January, but the ASG began to show its teeth with this operation as both victims were later executed. This was followed up by the kidnapping in late February of Eduard Tsang, a Filipino who was held on a 2 million USD ransom. Tsang was released some months later for an unknown sum. Four sales representatives from the cosmetics firm Zamboanga Zizmord were taken hostage in February as well. Just under 20,000 USD was demanded in ransom for their release and at least one victim was killed, though it is unknown if a ransom was paid for the other three, or if they were ever released at all. Emboldened by success with low-level kidnappings, an ASG outfit attempted to generate a larger return by committing a barricaded hostage taking in Ipil in which at least 100 hostages were taken in a stand off with Filipino forces. This was the first of several similar operations. It did not work out well for the cells involved, as at least 114 were killed in the subsequent firefight, including 41 of the assailants.

6.5.3 1996

In 1996 the ASG was reinforced by a large number of renegade MNLF guerillas, who were either disillusioned by the ongoing Tripoli process or were intrigued by the revenue

potential of the past two years of ASG activity. In March, the reinvigorated organization detonated two bombs at two different Catholic churches in Zamboanga City. A third bomb detonated at a public square in Basilan, however no casualties were reported in either event. Zamboanga was again hit in the same month when two more bombings were reported at a meat market and a Cathedral. The group tried to compliment their low-level terror operations with an insurgent style attack on an AFP unit in Patikul, on Jolo Islands. Four people were reported killed in the onslaught, but it is likely that at least some of these were the assailants themselves. This was followed up in August by an attack on a military convoy that killed four and injured a further three.

6.5.4 1997

From August of 1996 until the spring of 1998, ASG activity was relatively low key. 1997 in particular proved a very slow year for ASG operations. The only verified attack was the taking of four Filipno hostages from Glan in mid-June. Three of these were later rescued with one fatality.

6.5.5 1998

In March of 1998, the ASG conducted its first attack of the year with a bombing of the Police headquarters in Isabela City, which fortunately resulted in only one injury. This was followed in the same month, when units of the ASG raided the village of Abungabung in Basilan province. They took two civilians hostage, demanding 8100 USD in ransom. Both victims were later executed. The ASG then raided a police station in Isabela City where they killed two and wounded a further three. This return to political terrorism would prove short lived, and by fall the ASG had returned to kidnapping as an operational mainstay. This began when the ASG conducted a raid on the town of Sibuco, where they kidnapped an Italian priest as well as 12

others. All were later released after an unknown ransom was paid. Shortly thereafter, three Chinese nationals were taken from their home on Tawi Tawi. They were similarly released. The kidnapping spree continued in October with the kidnapping of Carlos Gemarino, a Filipino from Diplahan, for whose release a 103,000 USD ransom was demanded. His fate is unknown. The final attack of the year was likely a grenade attack on a shopping center in Zamboanga that killed no one but injured 15.

The defining moment of the year for the ASG, was not an ASG act, but PNP action during a firefight on December 18th, as this exchange resulted in the death of Abdurajak Janjalani. Though Khadaffy Janjalani would eventually take over as the nominal head of the organization, he did not do so immediately, and the intermittent vacuum of authority allowed the organization to fragment into a number of autonomous cells, loosely organized around factions led by the younger Janjalani and Ghalib Andang, respectively[759]

6.5.6 1999

In retaliation for the death of Janjalani, the ASG conducted a string of attacks in early 1999. In the first, the ASG started a fire in Jolo City and then threw grenades into a crowd that had gathered to watch firemen put it out. Ten people were killed and further 74 were wounded. The ASG then threw grenades into a restaurant frequented by AFP troops in Isabela City, injuring four. Also in the first week of January, the ASG detonated a bomb on a bus in Impasugong City, killing one and injuring ten more. Two other bombs were placed on buses in Davao City, but failed to produce any casualties. In late June, the ASG conducted a grenade attack on a revival being held by the Jesus Miracle Crusade. The attack produced no fatalities, but nine were injured in the blast.

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[759] Seth Mydan, "A NATION CHALLENGED: THE PHILIPPINES; Muslim Separatists Terrorize Filipinos With Kidnappings for Money and 'Marriages" *the New York Times* January 13th, 2002.

After an initial burst of terrorist activity, the ASG returned to kidnapping when two Belgian tourists were taken from Zamboanga City. Both were released shortly after an unknown ransom was likely paid. Another kidnapping occurred in August when the granddaughter of the Mayor of Lamitan was seized by the ASG. In addition, two Filipino businessmen were seized from Tipo Tipo in October. One was released within days after a ransom of 1500 USD was paid, however the fate of the second victim is unknown. Finally, the wife of a village councilman was abducted in November and held for an unspecified ransom. What became of her is likewise unknown.

6.5.7   2000

The tempo of ASG actions increased dramatically in 2000, likely as a result of the windfall in revenues the organization received in the previous year. This began in February with the abduction of an accountant in Sulu, but 2000 would be a banner year for all forms of attack. An AFP Sergeant was assassinated in Jolo in retaliation for a hostage rescue a few days earlier that killed six suspected ASG gunmen, and three bombs were detonated on February 20th, in Isabela city; one at a jail, one at a restaurant, and one at a police station. The first major ASG operation of 2000 was undertaken on the 20th of March when the ASG took 70 hostages from local schools in the south. The cells involved demanded the release of Ramzi Yousef and Shiekh Rahman from US custody in return of the hostages. Two hostages were beheaded by the organization and several more were killed in the rescue attempt. It's unknown how many ASG militants died in the ensuing firefight.

The ASG became international news when they crossed into Malaysian territory where they raided a resort in Sipadah, Sabah. Twenty-two hostages were taken, including ten Malaysians, two French, three Germans, a Lebanese, two South Africans, and two Finns. All

were later released after an unprecedented 26 million USD ransom was paid to the organization. This payment, coupled with the cash generated from other kidnapping operations prompted a spike in membership, which in turn resulted in a massive increase in tactical operations. Evidence suggests, the ASG used funds from the Sabah operation to fund the purchase of speedboats and communications equipment, which in turn enabled them to do a follow up attack on Palawan the following year.

More immediately, however, ASG cells followed up the Sabah operation with a grenade attack on bank in Jolo, coupled with simultaneous bombings in Jolo and Zamboanga, on the 25th of May. Seven soldiers were wounded four days later when the ASG launched an attack on a military convoy. In early June, ten journalists came to interview hostages who had been taken by ASG. They were in turn taken hostage and released only after a 25,000 USD ransom had been paid. Another, reporter, this one from Der Spiegel, was taken hostage the 2nd of July and released on the 23rd of the same month after a ransom of 230,000 USD was paid for his release. This targeting of the media occurred yet again in August, when three French reporters were taken hostage. One was released shortly thereafter and the other two escaped in September. Another high profile kidnapping occurred with the taking of Jeffrey Schilling on August 28th. He would be held for nearly a year before a successful rescue mission freed him. In a first, an ASG militant committed what was apparently a suicide attack when he detonated a bomb on a ferry in Zamboanga, killing one and injuring nine others. And, the final attack of the year came on December 28th when the ASG assassinated a Catholic Priest in Jolo.

6.5.8   2001

The ASG went silent for much of the spring of 2001 after a January kidnapping (done in conjunction with MILF cells) that targeted a six year old ended in a successful AFP rescue

operation. The ASG was active again in March, however when they attacked a local doctor and took a village elder as hostage outside of the town of Lamitan. In a rare massing of strength, the ASG attacked a van full of AFP soldiers in Talipao. The attack is noteworthy in that the ASG was able to field about 100 troops to pull it off.

Later in the year, twenty hostages were taken in one of the highest profile ASG attacks of all time. The operation targeted the Dos Palmas Resort on Palawan. It was led by Khadaffy Janjalani. Of the twenty hostages, three of which were beheaded. Fourteen others were released over time. The last three were an American couple, the Burnhams, and a Filipino nurse. While fleeing with their hostages, the ASG contingent responsible seized a hospital and neighboring church in Lamitan. The AFP surrounded the group, but inexplicably allowed them to slip through a whole in the cordon. It's likely the action was purposeful and committed by corrupt elements of the AFP. The result was that not only were the militants allowed to escape, but they also managed to seize another five hostages during the siege.

As their numbers swelled due to a massive increase in funding, 100 ASG fighters seized a plantation in Tairan, where they took fifty people hostage. Fifteen were later taken as kidnapping victims. This was repeated shortly thereafter with a similar raid on the city of Balugo. Thirty-four people were taken hostage and at least four of them were later beheaded. In an attack illustrating the descent into banditry the ASG had undertaken, a group of militants fired into a van in Sumisap indiscriminately and then robbed the passengers of their luggage. This viciousness was repeated on a group of lumberjacks in late August when ASG terrorists killed three after four others managed to escape. The final operation of the year was a kidnapping in November, when a Canadian was taken hostage in Zamboanga. A 130,000 USD ransom was demanded for his release.

6.5.9   2002

Early 2002 was marked by gruesome but low-level violence from the ASG. Militants fired on a public bus in January, and in February an ASG cell assassinated a local farmer who was suspected of being a military informant. In early February, they conducted an insurgent style assault on a group of AFP soldiers in Paitkul, killing five. On the 21st of April, the ASG conducted two bombings in General Santos City, the first targeting a shopping center and the second a residential subdivision. 14 people were killed in the attacks. All was quiet until June when two Filipinos were beheaded as suspected collaborators with US and AFP forces.

Attempting to capitalize on the gains of the previous year, the ASG reportedly demanded 53 million Filipino Pesos for the release of the Burnhams, or about 1 million USD[760]. The US reportedly paid 300,000 USD in ransom to free the Burnhams. However, this money did not go to the ASG faction under Abu Sabaya who held the hostages but to Khaddafy Janjalani's group in Jolo. For whatever reason, Janjalani refused to deliver the money to Sabaya and the hostages were not freed[761]. The organization then offered to free the couple for an additional 11 million Filipino Pesos (~200,000 USD)[762]. On June 7th, a botched raid on an ASG camp in Zamboanga Del Norte, Mindanao resulted in the death of Martin Burnham and Ediborah Yap, a nurse who was being held captive with the Burnhams. Gracia Burnham was wounded in the assault but survived[763].

On April 21st, the ASG responded to the introduction of US Forces on Luzon, under the auspices of a joint military training exercise, by detonating three bombs in succession in General

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[760] Richard Bonner, "A Nation Challenged: Asian Arena; Philippines Terror Group Seeks Money for Couple" *The New York Times* March 9th, 2002.
[761] L. Niksch, January 24th, 2007, pg. 11.
[762] Raymond Bonner, "A NATION CHALLENGED: THE PHILIPPINES; Given $300,000, Abductors Refuse to Free 2 Americans" *The New York Times* April 27th, 2002.
[763] Jane Perlez, "Muslims' U.S. Hostage Is Killed In Gun Battle in the Philippines" *the New York Times* June 8th, 2002.

Santos City. The first detonated outside a department store and shortly thereafter two more bombs exploded; one at a radio station where a warning had previously been called in and the second at a bus depot. At least 14 were killed and a further 45 wounded[764]. At some point in June, the group seized three Indonesian sailors off of a Singaporean owned fishing vessel operating near the coast of Jolo[765]. Of the three, one would die in captivity, one would escape, and one would eventually be freed[766].

In a rare victory for Manila, on June 21st, ASG commander Abu Sabaya (Aldam Tilao) was killed when Filipino forces tracked his boat to waters off the coast of Zamboanga Island[767].

Operations for 2002 did not abate, however. On August 20th, ASG rebels kidnapped six Filipino Jehovah's Witnesses who were selling Avon cosmetics door to door in Jolo[768]. The group originally kidnapped eight individuals, but two of them were Muslims and were released on Wednesday. Two men and four women remained as hostages. The two men were beheaded on Thursday the 22nd of August and dumped in a market. The fate of the women is unknown. In September, an attack on a group of US humanitarian workers backfired when their Filipino escorts returned fire killing one militant, but on October 2nd, an ASG suicide bomber managed to kill an American soldier outside of a Karoake bar in Zamboanga City. The bar was located near Camp General Enrile, where US Forces conduct training exercises with the AFP[769]. This attack was followed up on the 17th of October with two bombings in shopping districts in Zamboanga

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[764] "A Nation Challenged: Asian Arena; Bomb Kills 14 in the Philippines After Warnings by Militants" *The New York Times* April 22nd, 2002.
[765] "THREATS AND RESPONSES; Militant Leader Captured in Philippines" *The New York Times*, January 3rd, 2003.
[766] Seth Mydans, "World Briefing | Asia: Philippines: Hostage Freed" *The New York Times,* April 12th, 2003.
[767] Raymond Bonner and Eric Schmidt, "Philippines Reports a Top Muslim Rebel Leader Dies in Clash" *The New York Times* June 22nd, 2002.
[768] "Filipino Rebels Kill 2 Jehovah's Witnesses" *The New York Times*, August 22nd, 2002.
[769] Carlos Conde, "THREATS AND RESPONSES: ASIAN ARENA; An American Soldier Is Killed By a Bomb in the Philippines" *The New York Times* October 3rd, 2002.

City. Three were killed and seventy-five were injured. After a string of low profile bombings throughout the south, the ASG kidnapped another foreigner, a Taiwanese national, from Bongao. On November 14th, the PNP arrested an ASG bomber, Abdulmulkim Edris, who had been dispatched to Manila in order to orchestrate a series of VBIED bombings in the capital, reportedly targeting the US Embassy, shopping malls, and the Filipino Stock Exchange[770].

6.5.10 2003

In an effort to clear ASG elements out of Jolo, the AFP began stepped up operations on the Island. On January 4th, the organization was forced into a skirmish with AFP troops, in which at least five ASG militants were killed and numerous others were wounded[771]. This was followed up in late February with the death of ASG Commander Mujib Susukan, who died after a firefight at his hideout on Jolo Island[772]. On March 4th, a suicide bomber from the ASG detonated himself inside the Davao International Airport, killing 23 and injuring another 150 people. In April, the ASG kidnapped a Filipino woman, however, after couriers attempting to pay her 12,000 USD ransom were executed, she successfully escaped. In August, ASG operative Sabdullah Kamsa placed a bomb in a market in Koronadal City. The bomb killed three and wounded twenty-two.

In a major blow to the organization, Ghalib Andang (Commander Robot) was detained on December 8th, after being wounded in a firefight on Sulu Island[773]. Robot was the leader of the Sulu based faction of ASG, and his loss led to a degeneration of the units under his command.

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[770] "THREATS AND RESPONSES; Bombing Suspect Held in Philippines" *The New York Times,* November 15th, 2002.
[771] "Filipino Troops Said to Kill 5 Muslim Rebels" *the New York Times*, January 5th, 2003.
[772] "THREATS AND RESPONSES: BRIEFLY NOTED; FILIPINO REBEL REPORTED KILLED" *The New York Times*, February 20th, 2003.
[773] "Rebel Seized in Philippines" *The New York Times,* December 8th, 2003.

6.5.11 2004

After the capture of Robot, the leader most associated with organized criminal attacks, the operational tempo of the organization diminished appreciably. Perhaps in an attempt to compensate, on February 27th, 2004, the ASG committed the worst terrorist attack in Philippine history when a bomb hidden aboard Superferry 14 ignited a fire that killed 116 people[774]. In March of 2004, several ASG bombers, including at least one involved in the Superferry 14 bombing were arrested in Manila while planning a string of attacks on shopping centers in the Capital[775]. Another bomb was detonated at a courthouse in which ASG guerillas were about to be tried on charges of kidnapping. A kidnapping followed when two Malaysians and one Indonesian were taken from a Tugboat in Philippine waters. All three died in captivity when the 178,000 USD ransom was not paid. A final hostage for 2004 was taken shortly thereafter from a hospital in the city of Parang.

With the incarceration of Commander Robot, Khaddaffi Janjalani was the only remaining ASG commander with a well known presence. According to experts, after this point he became the only glue holding the organization together[776].

6.5.12 2005

In January a Basilan based cell suffered a set back when an attack on a local militiaman backfired, resulting in the death of the group's leader Tanakalun Lianson. Perhaps in an attempt to reorganize after the death of Commander Robot the ASG reportedly developed an "Urban Squad" in 2005 in order to perpetrate bombings in major cities[777]. In February the ASG undertook a series of bombings in response to stepped up AFP activity on Sulu. The bombs

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[774] "World Briefing | Asia: The Philippines: Bomb Caused Ferry Fire" *The New York Times*, October 12th, 2004.
[775] "4 Suspects with TNT Held in Manila" *The New York Times*, March 31st, 2004.
[776] P. Chalk, 2009.
[777] R. Banlaoi, September 2008, p. 15.

struck three cities simultaneously; one in the financial district of Makati City that killed six and wounded forty, one in a shopping mall in General Santos City that killed four and wounded over twenty-four, and one at a bus terminal in Davao City that killed one and wounded five more[778].

Two ASG militants seized a jail in an attempt to lead an escape attempt. PNP forces raided the jail, killing 22 inmates, including the ASG militants[779]. Among the dead was Ghalib Andang. While the loss of Commander Robot was a serious blow to the organization, his death gave Khadaffy Janjalani the opportunity to reengineer the ASG as a salafist outfit once more[780].

ASG, in an answer to continued AFP operations struck at Zamboanga City, where the Filipino military's southern command is based, with two bombs that wounded 26, but killed none[781]. In August, the group once again attempted a ferry bombing. This one, in Lamitan, wounded 30 but killed none, however. In September, Khadaffy Janjalani was mortally wounded in a firefight with AFP sources. An unidentified ASG militant later led Filipino authorities to his grave. Afterwards DNA comparisons with his imprisoned brother confirmed that the remains were those of the ASG leader[782].

6.5.13 2006

Once again, the loss of a key leader seriously denigrated ASG operations. In February, an ASG branch raided a series of Christian families in the town of Patikul. In the ensuing violence, the gunmen killed five civilians. The South was quiet for much of the spring, but a local official's daughter was taken hostage in May, and in July an ASG cell ambushed an AFP patrol, killing two soldiers. In the first two weeks of October, three ASG bombs detonated in

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[778] Carlos Conde "World Briefing | Asia: The Philippines: Bombs In 3 Cities Kill 11" *The New York Times*, February 15th, 2005.
[779] "Firefight at Jail South of Manila Leaves 22 Dead" *The New York Times* March 15th, 2005.
[780] E. Ugarte, "The Alliance System of the Abu Sayyaf" p. 127.
[781] 2 Bombs Injure 26 in Southern Philippines" *The Associated Press*, August 11th, 2005.
[782] "DNA Test Confirms Death of Philippine Separatist Leader" *The Associated Press* January 21st, 2007.

Makilala, Tacurong, and Cotabato City, killing at least six and wounding a further thirty[783]. October also saw another high profile kidnapping operation when four USAID contractors were taken from a construction site in Parang. All four hostages managed to escape, however.

ASG continued to respond to Manila's crackdown with terrorist attacks when they detonated two near simultaneous bombings in Mindanao and Jolo, respectively[784]. The first of these was an IED placed at a public market in Pagadian City which caused no casualties. The second bomb detonated outside of a hostel hosting police officers involved in PNP operations on Jolo, wounding three people.

6.5.14 2007

The ASG showed that it was still capable and willing to engage in political terrorism when local units planted a series of bombs in Cotobato City in an attempt to cause unrest leading up to the ASEAN summits on Mindanao. In mid-January, the AFP responded to the low level terrorism of 2006 by launching an attack on the camp of Abu Soleiman, one of the last remaining ASG commanders with a region-wide presence. Abu Soleiman was killed in the operation[785]. In April, seven Filipino laborers were taken hostage and 105,000 USD was demanded in ransom. Regardless, all the victims were found beheaded days later.

The AFP continued to press the ASG in Sulu, however, and the ASG responded in Jolo by launching one of only a few ambushes on Philippine forces, killing two AFP marines. In November, the ASG retaliated with the high profile assassination of Wahab Akbar, a legislator whose family controls much of Basilan Island, an ASG stronghold, where the congressman had vowed to stamp out ASG activity, despite the fact that he himself was reported to have once been

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[783] "World Briefing | Asia: The Philippines: Another Bomb Explodes In South" *The New York Times,* October 12th, 2006.
[784] "3 Wounded in Latest Explosion in Troubled Southern Philippines" *Reuters* October 16th, 2006.
[785] "World Briefing | Asia: Philippines: Top Abu Sayyaf Rebel Reported Killed" *The New York Times* January 17th, 2007.

an ASG member[786]. The bombing took place at the Philippine House of Representatives as Mr. Akbar was walking to his car. Two other people were killed and several more were wounded[787].

6.5.15 2008

In April, an ASG cell managed to plant two IED's in Zamboanga City, one under a Cathedral and one next to an office for the Department of Foreign Affairs. Some injuries were reported but no fatalities occurred. Attacks on Catholic targets continued the next month with an IED attack on a church that likewise caused no casualties.

The organization was not content with these low-level attacks, however and came back in 2008 with a string of kidnappings. The resulting money allowed ASG to begin to attract new recruits[788]. Operations began in June 2008 with the kidnapping of Cel Drillion a popular Filipino Journalist, which netted the terrorists approximately 27,000 USD. Several kidnappings of locals took place during this time as well, Including three Catholics from Basilan who were released after 6,370 USD was paid in ransom, and a mother and daughter who were taken from Parang and whose whereabouts are presently unknown. Seven construction workers were also taken from Tuburan but were later released. A high school principal was also released after being abducted from Parang.

6.5.16 2009

With the loss of most of its main politically oriented leaders, the ASG began 2009 with an attempt to procure material incentives for members and constituents. Three teachers were abducted from Zamboanga in late January but were released unharmed. A male midwife was also kidnapped a few days later in Lamitan, but he escaped his captors. A nine year old was

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[786] Carlos Conde, "Lawmaker Killed in Manila Bombing Linked to Insurgents in '90s" *The New York Times* November 15th, 2007.
[787] Carlos Conde, "3 Dead in Blast at Philippine Congress" *The New York Times,* November 14th, 2007.
[788] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 18.

abducted on the 31st, but was subsequently released unharmed. This pattern would be repeated in June and July when two humanitarian workers taken from Talipeo and a child kidnapped from Lamitan were both were released shortly after being taken.

In March however, the ASG returned to terrorism with a grenade attack on a videoke bar in Jolo that killed two people and wounded three others. This was followed in late April by two IED attacks on a bridge and power station in Iligan, and an assassination attempt on the provincial governor of Sulu in mid-May.

The break from kidnapping and ransom activities didn't last however, and three ICRC workers were kidnapped by ASG militants while working on a humanitarian water project on Sulu Island[789]. The kidnapping sparked a decisive response from the AFP who pursued the rebels on Sulu. The ensuing conflict escalated quickly and six rebels and three soldiers had been killed by mid-March[790]. In June, the ASG cooperated with the MILF in order to attack a police patrol. Nine PNP officers were killed in the assault. In July, ASG cells returned to bombings and placed three IED's in Jolo. Two of them were discovered by authorities, but a third detonated in front of a hardware store, killing two civilians and wounding fourteen others. The AFP followed up their spring assaults with a simultaneous attack on two ASG bases in August of 2009. The fighting was intense and resulted in at least twenty dead among the ASG and twenty-three killed on the side of the AFP[791].

The ASG proved resilient, however and continued its kidnapping spree by taking a gas station attendant from his shop in Liloy. He was released after a little more than 1600 USD in ransom was paid. In October, the ASG once again attacked a shopping district detonating a

[789] Carlos Conde, "3 Red Cross Workers Abducted in Philippines" *The New York Times*, January 11th, 2009.
[790] Carlos Conde, "Soldiers in Philippines Clash With Abductors" *The New York Times*, March 17th, 2009.
[791] "Filipino Soldiers Attack Militants Tied to Al Qaeda" *The Associated Press*, August 13th, 2009.

VBIED in a commercial district in Lamitan. November was marked by the beheading of a school principal who had been taken hostage in late October, and the taking of two Chinese nationals as hostages. The principal was killed after failing to procure a ransom for three weeks[792], it's unknown what became of the Chinese nationals. The final attack of the year came a soldier was wounded while guarding a cathedral in Jolo after an ASG grenade attack.

6.5.17 2010

The last year for which data is available began when a grenade was thrown at the home of the mayor of Lamitan in January. In early February a political party being held for a mayoral candidate in Sumisip was targeted by an IED. The next week, two road workers were abducted from a construction site in Maimburg while working on a US funded project. They were both later released unharmed, however, in March another US funded project in Indanan was targeted by small arms fire.

Kidnapping continued to play a prominent role in the ASG's repertoire in 2010 when the wife of an education ministry official was kidnapped in Lamitan. In Zamboanga, the MILF and ASG conspired together to target at the home of a German national. The German was killed and another civilian was taken hostage.

As of April 2010, ASG had an estimated 445 forces; 200 in Sulu, 130 in Basilan, 90 in Zamboanaga City, 20 in Tawi Tawi and around 5 in Marawi City[793]. In Sulu, 46% of 251 villages were affected by ASG activities. In Basilan, 25 % of villages were affected[794]. The ASG took advantage of their numerical increase since 2008 to launch an attack on Isabela which involved detonating multiple IED's and then strafing the responders with small arms fire. The attack killed nine people, including one policeman and three soldiers. The group again attacked

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[792] "WORLD BRIEFING | ASIA; The Philippines: Captive Is Beheaded" *Reuters* November 10th, 2009.
[793] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 19.
[794] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 19.

police in Isabela with small arms fire the next day. In mid-may, the ASG attacked Basilan police officers again, this time in Sumisip. Two police officers were killed in the attack. Sumisip saw another attack in May when on the 27th, ASG gunmen took 3 hostages after barricading themselves in a bus. All hostages were executed in the following days. In July, the last month for which exhaustive data is available, a Japanese civilian was abducted from Pangutaran.

However, the year ended with a string of victories of Manila and US COIN forces. Abdukarim Sali, a commander who had worked under Janjalani, was killed in Lantawan after a ten minute firefight with troops[795]. It was a big victory given that Sali commanded the Janjalani cell responsible for the 2001 assault on the Los Palmas resort. Gafur Jumdail, a subcommander was also killed earlier in September[796]. As of late 2010, the number of active ASG troops had decreased to around 400, spread over several islands[797].

6.6   Analysis of Organizational Design

After an initial stint as something resembling a hierarchical revolutionary group, the Abu Sayyaf Group quickly, and organically, decentralized into a loose coalition of militants organized along the lines of traditional Filipino minimal alliance systems. These organizations, commonly used in local bandit outfits (*Yakan*) consist of a revolving membership of foot soldiers who answer to a local strongman, or 'commander'. The commander position is typically afforded to the individual with the largest number of communal ties, or who has the necessary dyadic connections with other leaders to connect local militants with other aspects of the organization. While there are some full time terrorists in this network, the majority serves on a voluntary basis, coming and going as they please.

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[795] Carlos H. Conde, "Philippine Troops Kill Wanted Militant" *New York Times* September 19th, 2010.
[796] C. Conde, September 19th, 2010.
[797] C. Conde, September 19th, 2010.

The Abu Sayyaf Group represents a trying case for this analysis of the netwar hypothesis in that the organization's continued viability after nearly two decades of active militancy lends credence to many of the tenets of the netwar school which speak to organizational resilience in highly distributed networks. Further, the nature of the violence meted out by the ASG on out-groups also reflects the new terrorism's contention that contemporary right wing organizations seek the elimination of broadly defined communities and therefore do not labor under the same constraints of violence conventional terrorist organizations have. Ultimately, however, students of terrorism will have to question the viability of the ASG as a *political* organization as kidnapping for ransom has become the organization's greatest single tactic… by far. Further, evidence suggests that many of the politically oriented actions of the ASG such as infrastructure attacks and assassinations are actually mercenary actions perpetrated in exchange for payments and favors from local politicians or other organizations who do not wish to place themselves in jeopardy. This was a practice common among decentralized cell networks in the last wave of terror, when many of the larger names such as Sigenobou (the Japanese Red Army) and Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (Carlos) turned their respective leftist outfits into terror for hire organizations in order to maintain relevance. Whether or not this makes the organization in question a viable political institution, however, remains in doubt.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis chapter of this study is composed of three sections. The first of these details the presence or absence of the institutional mechanisms for managing terrorist organizations described in the methodology chapter across all cases. These mechanisms are: ability to manipulate ideology, the linkage of tactical cells to command and control nodes, a bureaucratic differentiation of cellular functions, and an institutionalized process of succession. The second section analyzes the degree to which each case study was able to perform according to the various metrics of organizational success laid out in this study. These are: the recruitment and retention of members, the quantity and quality of violence, organizational resilience, and institutional innovation/adaptability. This chapter will then conclude with a summary of key findings, implications for future research, and some remarks regarding the limitations of this study.

7.1 Institutional Mechanisms for Managing Successful Terrorist Organizations

The netwar hypothesis assumes that networks both empower and motivate non-state militants in their conflict with either an incumbent regime (such as the near enemy doctrine detailed in the al-Qaeda in Iraq case study) or an ill-defined *system* (such as the transnational Salafi-jihadi emphasis on the far enemy). However, networks—as described by netwar theorists—only aid insurgent organizations in their ability to mete out violence and withstand government reactions to their violence. The underlying assumption is then that terrorist violence, in and of itself, is a means of resistance and need not procure any additional goals for

the organization and its constituent community(ies) in order to achieve some degree of success. If however, terrorist violence is not meant as a symbolic gesture, but rather the procurement of radical political change, then an organization will need to do more than achieve symbolic ends to prove itself 'successful' in the revolutionary sense. Rather, a revolutionary organization will need to continuously enlarge its base of support within constituent communities while simultaneously eroding state capacity, both in terms of governance as well as the monopoly on violence. The mechanisms for accomplishing these goals are four fold.

7.1.1 Ideology

Terrorist organizations often represent the violent outgrowth of broader and more acceptable political movements. One could be forgiven then for assuming that the resonance of the radical ideology within broader communities would *a priori* determine the violent organization's ability to recruit and retain members. There are several fallacies in this argument, however. First, it assumes that all radicals are necessarily disposed to violence. In fact, most are not and holding extreme political views does not necessarily make one a militant. Second, it assumes that radicalized populations have only one choice should they choose to join a violent organization. As the case studies investigated in this dissertation illustrate, there are often numerous violent organizations competing for the same base of support in any given conflict. Promulgating a salient ideology is therefore less about dogma and more a function of message control. In fact, political (and even theological) doctrines are malleable and require strategic direction in order to have an impact on recruitment and retention. It must be consistent, and yet flexible enough to be engineered to relate to localized grievances and circumstances. The ability of an organization to achieve effective message control relies upon the ability of centralized leadership to promulgate an ideology that aggregates the interests of constituent communities

resulting in a lowest common denominator political platform that appeals to the broadest constituency possible without being contradictory in nature. In decentralized organizations, this ability can be undermined in one of two ways. Firstly, in loosely coupled networks, the center has a limited or nonexistent ability to enforce directives on geographically distant cells. To compensate, a rigid ideological doctrine is promulgated and ideological conformity replaces punitive actions as a means of command and control. This results in a highly structured dogma, which may or may not be applicable to local circumstances or even attractive to local populations from a cultural standpoint. As a result, recruitment could be seriously compromised by the organization's inability to forward a coherent and resonate message. Secondly, as organizations grow, the ideological diversity of the group's membership grows as well. When coupled with the diffusion of authority in polycephalus networks this creates the preconditions for serious ideological schisms within the larger organization, making it difficult for the organization to retain key aspects of the radical network.

7.1.1.1 Jaiysh al-Mahdi

The case of the JAM is an excellent example of the pros and cons of promoting a common ideology as a means of recruitment and retention of personnel. Muqtada and his inner circle in Najaf benefited greatly from the widespread resonance of the Sadrist ideology amongst the Shia poor in southern Iraq. However, the distributed nature the organization took on as the JAM grew throughout Sadr City and other urban areas in the south quickly created incentives for organizational schisms. Localized outfits such as the Khadamiyah Faction under the al-Araji brothers had political and economic incentives not to obey Muqtada's call to stand down militarily or to refrain from organized criminal behavior. This non-compliance was defensible due to the ability of local commanders to create alternative sources of authority. This was

possible according to Shia clerical hierarchies as Muqtada was not a Marjah. Thus, non-compliant aspects of al-Sadr's network, such as those run by the Khazali brothers (among numerous other cells) could simply claim to be following the legacy of Sadiq al-Sadr instead of Muqtada, a tact made easy by the emphasis in Shi'ism on religious learning rather than clerical lineage. Muqtada's recognition that a lack of message control was undermining his ability to direct the JAM as well as the broader Sadrist movement was likely what led him to substitute the post-millenarian ideology that underwrote the JAM, and its emphasis on violent political action, with the pre-millenarian ideology of the *Mumahidoon*, with its emphasis on social services and (mostly) non-violent activism. Not only did the less militant rhetoric of the Mumahidoon appeal to a population that was weary of violence, but the pre-millenarian disposition of the reorganized Najaf leadership justified the cooperation of the Sadrists with the Iraqi government and allowed them to mount a coordinated and effective electoral campaign for the 2010 elections. Further, the lessened emphasis on violence from the Sadrist leadership drew stark distinctions between the reorganized Mumahidoon and the renegade 'Special Groups' who were continuing to operate under the banner of Sadrism. Thus, Muqtada was able to consolidate his base of support while labeling rival groups as criminal.

The SCIRI also accomplished this feat of ideological reorientation when, faced with continued criticisms for its Iranian ties, the organization renamed themselves the ISCI, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. They complimented the dropping of 'Revolution' from their name with the switching of organizational Marjahs, from Khameini to al-Sistani, reflecting a move away from the Khomeinist doctrine of *vilayet e-faqih* to the quietest doctrine of al-Sistani and the *Hawza* establishment of Najaf and in effect re-branding themselves as an Iraqi nationalist movement without Islamist political objectives.

In both cases, the radical shift in emphasis shows that ideology is malleable, even to militant religious organizations, and when used successfully it is a means of solving for collective action problems, not for tying the organization to a rigid political doctrine when it becomes counter productive.

7.1.1.2 Al-Qaeda in Iraq

Whereas the diversity of interests within the Sadrists undermined their expansion at the height of the Iraqi Civil War, the rigid imposition of theological dogma across the AQI network was the cause of problems on two levels for the Zarqawi network. Firstly, al-Qaeda in Iraq made no attempts to assimilate local interests in Iraq with its ideological disposition. Quite to the contrary, Zarqawi and his successors maintained control over the AQI network by enforcing a rigid Taliban-style Wahhabist/Deobandi doctrine on subordinate cells, cells that were expected to do likewise on local populations. As a result, AQI was unable and unwilling to properly communicate with nationalists, tribal elements, and/or native salafists whose interests were inherently contrary to AQI's stated goal of using the Sunni dominated areas of Iraq as a springboard for the Salafist state. While Zarqawism was effective at drawing out the most radical elements of international Salafi-jihadi communities (thus the long supply of foreign recruits for martyrdom operations), it was not so effective at reaching out to native Iraqis: the nationalists were non-secessionist, the tribes had economic interests that were undermined by AQI's actions, and local Islamists were non-takfiri and shunned both the austere version of Wahhabism espoused by Zarqawi and the wanton targeting of Shia.

Trans-nationally, al-Qaeda Central was greatly harmed by the international condemnation amongst Salafi-jihadis generated by Zarqawi's tactics. Zawahiri attempted to speak to this situation in his communications to Zarqawi in which he pleaded with his field commander to

desist in engaging in doctrinal disputes with locals and to stop targeting the Shia. However, Zawahiri had no direct command and control over Zarqawi's actions and was unable to control AQI's operations despite the fact that they were conducted under al-Qaeda's banner. Zarqawi's doctrinal differences with al-Qaeda's leadership in Pakistan could not be remedied by direct command and control.

7.1.1.3 The Abu Sayyaf Group

As an insurgent organization, the ASG represents something of an enigma. On the one hand, the lack of formalized command and control has denigrated the ability of network leadership to promote a common ideology or to grow the organization beyond its current state as a small nuisance in a crowded Moro insurgency. Nevertheless, the organization has managed to substitute political incentives for the promise of material gain, and thus has maintained relevance despite the predictions of the theory of revolutionary violence.

The case study of the Abu Sayyaf Group suggests that Abdurajak Janjalani and his brother and successor Khadaffy saw the ASG as a vehicle for fomenting an Islamist revolution in the Philippines along salafist lines. It is apparent, however that this doctrine has little resonance with the rank and file Tausog communities in which the ASG compete with the MNLF for support. Instead, members react to the material incentives gleaned from the kidnapping, mercenary, and smuggling operations perpetrated as part of the organization's repertoire. Since the provision of illicit revenues does not necessitate complex organizational structures, the ASG has never developed the command and control system necessary to reunify the network under an Islamist ideology. As a result, it has self-perpetuated according to the traditional bandit networks common in Tausog and Mindanao culture.

7.1.2   Linkage of Tactical Cells to Command and Control Hubs

Violence is a necessary condition for terrorism, but if it is to be successful at procuring political change, it must be undertaken according to certain principles.   Firstly, it must be directed at out-groups.   Secondly, it must not be wanton or it will risk turning off potential constituencies.   Thirdly, and most importantly, violence must be blamed on enemies and therefore viewed as defensive.   As a result, the violence of a radical organization must be carefully controlled, or it will be pursued to the detriment of the organization's revolutionary goals.   There are three organizational mechanisms for managing violence; a legitimate claim to authority from the hub, an ability to enforce decisions through punitive action, and the ability to control the distribution of organizational resources.

The management of violence is necessary as three aspects of insurgent organizations make counter-productive violence likely.   Firstly, tactical cells in an organization often suffer from selection bias in membership.   Secondly, local cells often face strong incentives to engage in violent behavior, which turn off those communities affected by it.   Thirdly, the isolated operating environment of illicit organizations can lead to groupthink and cause organizations to pursue counter-productive strategies.

The selection bias alluded to above results when those who have an interest in violence self-select into the tactical cells of an organization, and those who have an interest in political strategy opt to join leadership arms of the network.   This results in an organization where those most likely to commit counter-productive violence are placed in a capacity to do just that, unless the leadership nodes have the power to direct their activities.   Incentives for violent behavior at the local level can be financial, personal, or political.   Financial incentives for violence result from the fact that insurgent groups often have to engage in some degree of organized criminal

activity in order to sustain their operations. This criminal element to revolutionary activity can corrupt local cells as well as attract recruits who are not interested in insurgency so much as personal enrichment. The problem with organized criminal activity, from the organization's perspective, is that it is often predatory in nature. If left unchecked, this predation will be associated with the violent organization amongst those communities victimized by the illicit behavior. While less of a problem than organized criminal activities, personal motivations for violence, often revenge killings, can negatively effect an organization by contributing to the overall level of chaos in insurgent and post-conflict environments. What an organization wants to avoid is the perception that things were better under government control. Finally, political power in unstable environments is often defined by one's violent capabilities. By placing such abilities in local cells, terror networks create incentives for local leaders to use their capabilities to enhance their own political power, this at once adds to the over all chaos of insurgent environments and creates incentives for organizational schisms when leadership nodes attempt to reassert control over renegade factions. Finally, due to the security considerations inherent in terrorist undertakings, decision-makers often surround themselves with a closed inner-circle. If the organization does not institute a consultative decision making process, this fact can lead to groupthink, and cause organizations to pursue counter-productive strategies of violence.

7.1.2.1 Jaiysh al-Mahdi

Until its reorganization as the Mumahidoon, the JAM suffered immensely from financial personal, and political incentives for violence from local cells throughout Baghdad as well as other major cities. By the end of 2008, much of the remaining Mahdi Army cells still operating against the Coalition and ISF were renegade special group operations that had broken off from the mainstream JAM for financial and political reasons. Financially, they were benefiting

greatly from the local protection rackets they set up in areas cleared of government control. Politically, many such as the al-Araji brothers, had used their JAM militias as springboards for their own political goals. Muqtada's continuous attempts to bring renegade elements back into the JAM persistently failed to reconsolidate the organization. Financial and political incentives for violence were compounded by a preponderance of local grievances in Shia communities resulting from years of repression under Saddam's regime. As a result, many Mahdi militiamen used their positions in order to exact revenge on regime adherents who they viewed as responsible for injustices committed in the past. Revenge killing amounted to a substantial fraction of post-conflict violence in the immediate aftermath of the US occupation and contributed to the substantial levels of insecurity observed. While initially conducive to the JAM's prevention of government services returning to Sadr City, this chaos eventually robbed the Sadrists of popular support as populations tired of the high levels of insecurity. Once government services began being reintroduced under the auspices of the Baghdad Security Plan, most Iraqi Shia welcomed the return of the government.

By appealing to other centers of authority (Khameini, Sadiq al-Sadr, etc.) renegade cell leaders effectively undermined Muqtada's ability to appeal to his position in the Sadrist movement as a means of authority. Further, the devolution of material power to local militias meant that initially Muqtada was unable to enforce decisions on ancillary nodes in a physical manner. Finally, Muqtada's loss of the *khoms* in 2004, coupled with the ability of local outfits to extract rents from local populations meant that the Najaf leadership was unable to control the distribution of material assets in the organization. As a result, Muqtada had no carrots with which to entice compliance. This eased somewhat with the introduction of Iranian aid into the Sadrist coffers. However, given the liberal quality with which Tehran's aid was showered upon

numerous centers of authority within the Shia resistance, much of the centralizing effects of this revenue stream were offset by its wide distribution. All of this changed, however, with the re-engineering of the JAM into the Mumahidoon. Firstly, Muqtada's commitment to establishing himself as a Marjah will likely eliminate rival claims to authority within the Sadrist camp (though al-Ha'eri will still be able to do this to some extent from Qom). Secondly, the establishment of the Golden Mahdi Army and subsequently the Promise Day Brigades has given Muqtada a tool with which he is able to target rogue Mahdi Army cells. Finally, Muqtada's political fortunes, a result of a modern campaign utilizing advanced polling data to target critical populations and a well oiled PR machine, gives him an ample source of patronage with which to reward compliance. This is further complimented by his advanced clerical rank (though it is yet undetermined what rank he has attained), which is likely to give him renewed access to khoms and a regular income.

7.1.2.2 Al-Qaeda in Iraq

AQI's localized hierarchies and institutional mechanisms likely aided in the fact that AQI did not suffer from the internal disintegration that plagued the Sadrists. Rather, the problem with AQI was the lack of a consultative decision-making process, which allowed a severe level of groupthink to permeate the organization's leadership. As the historical accounting of the evolution of the Zarqawist network shows, Zarqawi began his Iraq network by sending close associates (al-Shami) to begin to consolidate salafist groups in northern Iraq. When he himself moved to Iraq, Zarqawi brought with him his lieutenants from his Afghanistan camp, all of whom were close associates and shared his "near enemy" strategy and extreme takfiri Salafist orientation. As time wore on, numerous authorities in the international Salafist network attempted to reach out to AQI's leadership to prompt them to shift tactics, including Zawahiri

and Maqdisi, people who were, at least in theory, spiritual advisors to the Zarqawi network. Fragmentation came as the myriad organizations that had allied themselves with AQI came to be disillusioned by AQI's continued attempts at sparking a sectarian conflict with the Shia, and broke off, either to join the tribal resistance to AQI, or other native Iraqi Salafist groups such as the Islamic Army of Iraq.

7.1.2.3 Abu Sayyaf Group

Once again ASG's dissent into organized crime makes it an outlier in many respects. Firstly, the denigration of the organization into a kidnapping and mercenary outfit effectively destroyed any form of centralized command and control the organization might once have had, and with it any chance of becoming an effective revolutionary movement. However, its inability to control for financial incentives for violence have only cost it support from international Salafist circles. Domestically, the ASG has managed to ingratiate itself in local communities by fulfilling the culturally acceptable role of a bandit (yakan) outfit.

7.1.3 Bureaucratic Differentiation of Cellular Functions

The end goal of revolutionary violence is to create constituencies for the organization and to create a crisis of governance whereby the state cannot provide for the area under insurgent influence. If the violence is only effective at ridding a given area of elements of government control, but not at replacing that governing structure then one of two things will happen, either a rival organization will come to fill the void, or the ensuing chaos will eventually undermine popular support for the group. As a result, a functional differentiation of cells is necessary for a violent outfit for two reasons. Firstly, it provides the organization with the level of expertise necessary to increase the quality of their violence, and thus pose a more serious challenge to the

state. Secondly, establishing a system of governance in areas under the organization's control requires an administrative capacity that tactical cells are unlikely to possess.

7.1.3.1 Jaiysh al-Mahdi

The initial burst in membership the Sadrist Trend enjoyed in the early days of the US occupation was almost certainly a result of the widespread support the Sadrist movement enjoyed as a provider of civil services during the sanctions regime. As the movement splintered, however, the administrative capacity of the organization decreased as its control over local Sadrist militias dwindled. The degree to which the Shia populations of Baghdad welcomed the return of government services after the Baghdad Security Plan, despite continued opposition to the Coalition and the Maliki government, speaks of the inability of the JAM (as it came to be) to provide effective services. After the re-engineering of the Sadrist movement from 2008-2009, the JAM was able to create viable political arms, social service wings, and military capabilities to forward its role as the representative of the Shia lower classes. This required a break with a large section of its previous organizational structure that had been organized primarily as a militia network. The realignment of command and control based on Muqtada's leadership placed an emphasis on transforming those militias still loyal to Muqtada into social service wings, however, this has been too recent a development to assess its impact as of yet.

7.1.3.2 Al-Qaeda in Iraq

AQI was able to develop a functional differentiation between financial administration and military operations. This was reflected in the localized hierarchies described by al-Qaeda administrators in the Sinjar, Travelstar, and Tuzliyeh papers. This functional differentiation of technical expertise enabled AQI to be very effective in the local black markets and to distribute the proceeds from illicit dealings throughout the organization with some degree of equity. These

activities were complimented by specialized logistics cells, such as those in al-Qaim and Sinjar (recruitment and smuggling cells for men and material coming in from Syria) as well as the bomb-making cells distributed throughout the suburban belts of major urban centers. It was likely this functional differentiation that allowed AQI to maintain a substantial operational tempo up until 2007. That being said, captured documents give no indication that the organization developed cells to provide for social services in areas under AQI's control, despite the fact that at their peak, their geographic territory extended over vast swathes of majority Sunni areas in Iraq. Further, AQI lacked a political wing that could have served as an outreach to local Sunni communities, and most importantly, AQI lacked any means of effective local governance, which was limited to *ad hoc* sharia committees that inconsistently enforced AQI's particular take on Islamic practices.

7.1.3.3 The Abu Sayyaf Group

As a completely decentralized network, the ASG's cells are almost all functionally autonomous. Some fighters no doubt have experience as trainers in MILF run camps, but most evidence suggest that what few ASG members did receive formal training in tactics and weapons received it from foreign operatives (usually al-Qaeda or JI) or from MILF militants who did benefit from an organization with specialized branches. As a result the ASG has never been able to perform more complex tasks than simple bombings and the occasional massing of guerilla style formations. And even these actions have been perpetrated with relatively little functional expertise. There is no record of ASG militants ever winning a small arms exchange with AFP forces, and the majority of ASG bombings were extremely simplistic affairs involving the throwing of grenades or the remote detonation of rewired 81mm shells.

7.1.4 Institutionalized Process of Succession

While this is a rather esoteric institutional attribute to mention as being central to the success of a violent organization, the delineation of a clear line of succession is necessary in terrorist organizations due to high attrition rates amongst militant populations in general and those in leadership roles in particular. In order to maintain organizational cohesion in the face of government COIN operations, continuity of leadership is of the utmost necessity. Despite netwar contentions that distributed organizations are relatively immune from leadership targeting, multiple concentrations of authority in decentralized networks make it likely the death of key leaders will result in the further devolution of the organization or in high levels of intra-organizational conflict that can in turn result in decay from within.

7.1.4.1 Jaiysh al-Mahdi

The JAM has not experienced the loss of high-ranking membership so an analysis of their succession contingencies lacks points of observation from which to extrapolate data.

7.1.4.2 Al-Qaeda in Iraq

Despite the claims of netwar theorists to the contrary, there are multiple points of observation within the history of AQI, which suggest that organizations lacking clear succession strategies are disproportionately susceptible to systemic disruption due to the neutralization of key nodes in the network. This was not just the case with the death of Zarqawi in 2006, but also with the death of his eventual replacement Abu Hamza al-Muhajir in 2010, as well as that of Omar al-Baghdadi. In each case the loss of leadership cost the organization in terms of central direction and there was a relative lull in operations (after sporadic retaliatory attacks in the immediate-term) after each death.

7.1.4.3 The Abu Sayyaf Group

The history of the ASG also yields multiple points of observation of systemic disruption resulting from the targeting of high-ranking leaders who lacked any obvious successor. To begin with, the death of Abdurajak effectively ended the organization as the hierarchical entity envisioned by the early AHAI adherents, and split the organization into two loose medial alliances around Khadaffy Janjalani and Ghalib Andang, respectively. The subsequent deaths of major commanders such as Abu Sabaya, Ghalib Andang, and Khadaffy Janjalani each successively made coordinating activities across autonomous cells more difficult. This was reflected not only in the diminution of the organization into more and more autonomous cells, but in the interruption of the operational tempo of the ASG network as a whole.

7.2 Comparative Analysis of Organizational Performance

7.2.1 Recruitment and Retention of Members

This analysis shows that two of the above described mechanisms enabled organizations to grow, sometimes at prodigious rates, by incorporating new members, both at the individual level (attracting and assimilating new recruits) as well at the institutional level (incorporating new cells). The first of these is having a readily identifiable ideology, preferably with a brand name. This attracts new members and encourages other organizations to couple with the network. The second of these is having a bureaucratic differentiation of cells. This second factor enables violent organizations to expand by providing the institutional capacity necessary to perform complex tasks. In turn, the ability to perform these tasks aids in recruitment for two reasons. Firstly, specialized cells enable the organization to usefully assimilate new additions into the existing institutional architecture of the violent group in question. Secondly, functionally specialized cells are better able to manipulate incentives to would-be radicals. Most often, these

incentives take the form of the provision of public goods such as security and civil services. Not only do members benefit from these services themselves but, the provision of them raises the profile of the organization within the community and members receive a certain level of prestige as a result. The cases of the JAM and ASG illustrate, however, that functionally undifferentiated cells can compensate for their inability to provide complex goods by offering financial incentives to individual members.

Alternately, the respective histories of the three organizations surveyed in this dissertation illustrate that there are three reasons a violent organization might suffer from an inability to retain membership. The first of these is an inability to communicate an effective message to potential constituencies in the form of a salient political platform. While populations might initially be drawn to organizations such as AQI and the JAM due to their association with a recognizable movement, the inability to speak to local grievances will, over time, result in the loss of membership to organizations better suited to address local circumstances. The ability of leadership nodes to direct tactical cells is the second mechanism necessary for the preservation of membership. In cases where command and control over violent cells was found to be lacking three major trends were observed. Firstly, the organizations in questions suffered from an inability to prevent organizational schisms once their group reached a critical mass. Further, the inability to control the quantity of violence unleashed by their tactical cells resulted in a loss of popular support amongst both domestic and international constituencies. Third, the propagation of popular support at the local level was shown to be contingent on the insurgent group's ability to provide governance to areas cleared of government services. The history of each case study illustrated that the ability to undertake complex governance (i.e. municipal management) requires a complex organization with highly specialized cells.

7.2.1.1 Recruitment and Expansion

The two larger organizations in this study, the JAM and AQI, saw periods of massive growth immediately after the US invasion. The Sadrists were able to accomplish this in large part due to the association of their movement with Shia resistance to Saddam. As a result, for working and lower class Shia, Muqtada had the name recognition to rally new recruits to his cause. Likewise, Zarqawi's network expanded precipitously in the days leading up to, and immediately after, the US invasion. The nascent AQI accomplished this by targeting pre-existing salafist cells with whom they shared an ideological affinity. In this exercise, the appeal of Salafi-radicalism helped to bridge the gap between Zarqawi's Arab Afghan fighters, and the networks of Iraqi Salafi-Jihadis. The Abu Sayyaf Group, or the AHAI, was able to accomplish a similar feat when they broke off from the secular MNLF. Appealing to the broad Salafist ideology many of the foreign educated Tausog radicals had been introduced to in Libya, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf, Abdurajak Janjalani was able to convince around 1000 MNLF fighters to join his network.

Whereas the JAM grew as a result of the mobilization of communities, AQI only recruited significant numbers of *individuals* from abroad. Most of its Iraqi membership came from the assimilation of pre-existing organizations into the AQI command structure. This was made possible by the system of localized hierarchies that AQI established to direct network action at the local level. The assimilation of individuals into the network was accomplished by employing specialized recruitment cells, such as the Sinjar organization, which functioned as processing and referral centers for militants coming in from abroad. After being debriefed in a safehouse, these individuals were then directed to that aspect of the organization most in need of fighters, or more likely, began to undergo indoctrination for martyrdom operations. JAM did not

have a systematic mechanism by which new outfits or individuals could be assimilated into the Sadrist network. Rather, localized militias self-selected into the Mahdi Army through local clerics or community leaders who claimed a Sadrist disposition. This was made possible by the massive grassroots civil service network developed by Sadiq al-Sadr during the sanctions regime and re-invigorated by Muqtada following the US invasion. The centrality of local Offices of the Martyr al-Sadr, to local community life throughout the Shia south gave the Sadrist leadership in Najaf the footprint they needed in local communities to expand at a precipitous pace in the early days of the US occupation. The ASG, on the other hand, had little to no functional differentiation of cells and therefore no institutionalized process of integrating new members into the organization. Rather, Tausog fighters who wished to join the ASG did so through kinship or personal connections. The group did circumvent the need for functional specialization, however, by manipulating the financial incentives of both members as well as communities in which they operated. Thus, contrary to the suppositions of this study, the ASG was able to attract new members despite limited successes in procuring political goals.

7.2.1.2 Retention and Decline

In terms of perpetuating an organization, attracting new recruits is simply one half of the equation. Retaining membership, not just from the expected attrition of conflict, but from exit, is the other half. Once again, this study has found that the retention of manpower is a function of a number of organizational attributes; the ability to manipulate ideology, the ability to control levels of violence through command and control relationships between leadership nodes and tactical cells, and the continued ability of an organization to perform complex tasks via functionally differentiated cells.

The need to retain some degree of flexibility in radical ideologies is illustrated by the

divergent cases of the JAM and AQI. Facing severe levels of institutional decline, the re-branding of the JAM as the pre-millenarian Mumahidoon was necessary in order to distance the Najaf leadership and the remnants of the mainstream JAM from the actions of rogue Sadrist militias. Further, the political victories of 2010 were a direct result of an about-face on the organization's policy of cooperation with the Iraqi government and the US occupation. In stark contrast, AQI continued throughout its history to espouse a militant 'Near Enemy' tafkiri form of Salafi jihadism that was not only alien to rank and file Iraqis, but that even other Salafists found excessive. The ISI's attempt to bring about a Sunni caliphate alienated the nationalists who were staunchly anti-federalist and anti-secessionist. The expansion of Sharia committees that imposed random fines on people, the movement into organized criminal activities, and the targeting of Shi'as all served to marginalize the financial interests of the tribes. Finally, in areas under its control AQI insisted on enforcing a Taliban-style version of Sharia that was drawn not from Iraqi traditions but from Wahhabi and Deobandi interpretations of Islam.

> "Al-Qa`ida has had to confront the uncomfortable reality that attempts at mass
> mobilization result in more voices, and more voices mean greater variation in
> opinion and interpretation. This debate or dissent creates an internal dilemma
> for a group that relies on a single and immutable ideology."[798]

The Abu Sayyaf Group, on the other hand, seems to have substituted full time membership with a revolving door of radicals who joined ASG cells for one off operations. As a result, the perpetuation of the organization was a reflection of the number of communal connections a given cell leader could claim, and the amount of money available to pay fighters.

    While the reorganization of the Mahdi Army ultimately appears to have saved the

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[798] "Al-Qa'ida's Five Aspects of Power" The Combating Terrorism Center *CTC Sentinel* vol. 2(1) January 2009, p. 3.

Sadrists from ignominy, the necessity of such a radical reformulation of the group was necessitated by the trajectory of the organization from 2003-2007. During this period, the JAM continually decentralized its command and control into autonomous cells, which together comprised the broader Sadrist Militia Movement. However, unlike AQI, the JAM did not have the localized hierarchies necessary to effectively stitch together myriad militia groups under an umbrella organization. As a result, this localization of decision-making effectively multiplied the amount of vested interests nested within the Sadrist camp. When pressed militarily, these (often mutually exclusive) interests gave way to massive amounts of internal dissension, as well as organizational exit, precisely the processes Crenshaw states spell doom for radical organizations. The inability to retain members cost the JAM both absolute and relative power, as it robbed it of manpower, which then filled the ranks of rival organizations (mostly the special groups), and who in turn, began immediately competing with the JAM for material and human resources.

While AQI's expansion differed markedly from that of the JAM, the nature of their network nonetheless had similar shortcomings. This is mostly a result of the fact that organizations that joined AQI maintained their own command structure and even, as was often the case, their organizational names prior to the merger. Thus, the alliance was more nominal than otherwise and such alliances often proved fragmentary. For example, when Zarqawi declared the Mujahideen Shura Council, several organizations named by Zarqawi as part of the new group disavowed ever having joined. This was likely a result of AQI having struck a deal with merely part of the other organization[799]. The fact that cells in an insurgent group had the localized authority to negotiate a merger with another group without all aspects of the initial

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[799] Ansar al-Islam Group Profile, The National Counter-Terrorism Center, accessed on 01/27/2011 at http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/ai.html.

organization being aware of it speaks to the decentralized and chaotic nature of the Sunni insurgency. Further, even when organizations were wholly integrated into the Zarqawist network, the lack of command and control meant that they could largely come and go as they pleased. Ansar al-Sunna, a pre-immanent component of the ISI, had to change its name back to Ansar al-Islam in May of 2007, due to the fact that a sizeable portion of the network reneged on their agreement with AQI and instead entered into an alliance with the Islamic Army of Iraq, one of the largest Salafist competitors with AQI[800]. This impermanence is reflected in the medial alliance systems of ASG cells. While nominally a part of the Abu Sayyaf network, individual cells often have the option of non-cooperation in ASG activities based on the interests of local commanders.

Perhaps an even greater stumbling block to recruitment and retention in both the JAM as well as AQI has been the inordinate amount of violence that came to be associated with both groups by their respective communities. In the case of the Sadrists, this was a direct result of the inability of the Najaf leadership to control local militias. While the rampant criminality and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Sadrist groups was obviously undermining his movement, Muqtada was unable to deter such activities as the JAM's tactical cells did not answer to the center. It was to avoid a repetition of this phenomenon that the reorganized Promise Day Brigades were to be staffed only by appointees of Muqtada himself. Autonomous ASG cells also perpetrated large amounts of organized crime. Locally, however, their activities, provided they were directed against out-groups (non-Tausogs), seems to be culturally acceptable and therefore has not invited the kind of backlash from Sulu communities that the JAM suffered in southern Iraq.

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[800] Ansar al-Islam Group Profile, The National Counter-Terrorism Center, accessed on 01/27/2011 at http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/ai.html.

Retention of members within the JAM was eased during the early days of the insurgency by the fact the JAM evolved out of pre-existing social networks. The organization therefore had a considerable ability to provide rudimentary social and civil services to their constituent communities. However, as the Iraqi Civil War wore on, the functional autonomy of much of the JAM's network made it difficult for the leadership to mobilize significant percentages of the organization's resources. As a result, the tasks of daily governance were devolved to the functionally undifferentiated local militias rather than the Sadrist leadership. Services in such areas declined precipitously as a result, robbing Muqtada's organization of much of the popular legitimacy it once enjoyed. Al-Qaeda in Iraq, on the other hand, never evolved the capacity to undertake the daily mechanisms of governance. Whereas the Sadrists developed a quasi welfare state to shore up support in their areas of control, AQI never developed the institutional capacity for such complex tasks as road building, garbage collection, power generation, and the like. The organization did provide a black market economy, however the organized criminal activity that this entailed actually proved to be a further source of instability since it meant the organization was taking market share away from the communities that controlled these illicit networks prior to AQI. As a result the organization attempted to mitigate the lack of social services with tyrannical rule. Critics of the organization quickly found themselves to be the targets of AQI violence, and organizations and individuals who refused to join AQI, the MSC, or the ISI were routinely targeted for retaliation. Further, local Sharia committees used their positions to terrorize locals into complicity with AQI authority.

7.2.2 Level and Quality of Violence

The theory of revolutionary terrorism states that violence is a means of political change rather than an end. Netwar, theorists however, emphasize the destructive capabilities of small

groups to an extent that means and ends are often conflated. Thus, violence has been included as a metric of organizational performance in deference to the claims of netwar theorists. As it turns out, the empirical analysis of this dissertation shows mixed results for the claims of netwar theorists that decentralized networks are more efficient violence actors. These modest results in favor of netwar claims are further caveated if one breaks the concept of violence out into two categories: quantity and quality. In short, none of the mechanisms of centralized control outlined in this dissertation proved necessary for an organization to remain salient as a violent actor. All organizations surveyed in this research were able to maintain unacceptable levels of violence (from a counter-terror perspective) despite their level of decentralization. That being said, however, a functional differentiation of cells made individual acts of violence more effective in terms of their destructive potential. Further, only organizations displaying a functional differentiation of operational units were able to escalate their violence to more sophisticated forms of combat, thus increasing the quality of their violence.

Despite the decentralized nature of their respective networks, both the JAM and AQI were able to maintain operational tempos that forced government forces, as well as government services out of their respective areas of control. For the JAM this included Sadr City, Kufa, Amarah, Basra, and other Shia dominated areas. AQI, for its part created massive levels of violence in Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala, and Ninewa provinces. While the violence of the ASG did not reach levels observed in Iraq, the organization has proven itself capable of causing high levels of insecurity through the use of low-tech attacks such as grenade assaults and the remote detonation of rewired surplus munitions. In the case of each organization, individual acts of terrorism had a much greater impact when they were facilitated by cells with specialized operational expertise. Amongst the JAM, the most effective violence was meted out by units

that received specialized training in Iran under the coordination of the IRGC-QF. This was especially so following the introduction of explosively formed projectiles into the insurgent repertoire. For its part, AQI's operational tempo was made possible by the specialized staging units in the suburban belts responsible for IED and VBIED manufacturing. Even the ASG benefited from functionally specialized cells, as the majority of their more sophisticated activities, such as the Superferry 14 bombing, were made possible by the specialized training ASG radicals received from MILF and JI run camps.

As stated in the theory chapter of this dissertation, an organization must be market-reacting as well as market-shaping, in order to be successful. As it relates to non-state political violence, this means that a violent organization should be able to take advantage of the destabilizing attributes of terror campaigns in order to formulate a more sophisticated challenge to the state and thus further their political objectives. The terrorist group must be able to grow the organization by incorporating increased human and material resources into a rational command structure, which will then be able to further the political and military objectives of the organization. The case of the JAM illustrates the difficulty of moving from terror to more sophisticated forms of resistance with a decentralized organization organizational structure. As Najaf, Karbala, and the final sieges of Sadr City in 2008 show, al-Sadr was able to call upon the distributed JAM network for large-scale confrontations. However, in each case the JAM failed to conform to a specific command structure and was never able to engage with Coalition, ISF, or rival militant factions effectively. Likewise, AQI never developed into a more sophisticated paramilitary fighting force. Instead, both the targets of violence and the method of attack used by AQI in 2010 remained startlingly similar to what was observed in the early days of the TwJ. Out of 142 incidents claimed by AQI (as of 2008) in the GTD2 database, the largest single target

for attacks were civilians and private property (72 incidents or slightly more than 50% of overall attacks). A very distant second was military targets with 31 incidents and police with 32 (roughly 22% of overall attacks a piece). Further, style of attack did not vary in relative terms over time, though 2005 to late 2006 saw all forms of attack increase precipitously. Of 142 incidents, 91 (64%) were bombings that entailed no coordinated offensive. These were mostly roadside IEDs and suicide VBIEDs. Only 32 incidents (22%) entailed a guerilla style attack with small arms. The remaining 14% of attacks were assassinations of rivals, kidnappings, and sabotage of infrastructure. Oddly enough, the proportions remain steady for attacks claimed in the name of the ISI: of 40 over-all incidents reported, 20 were perpetrated against civilians and private property, with 8 (20%) perpetrated against military and police targets[801].

In the end, AQI and related organizations were only able to engage in two large-scale guerilla confrontations. The first of these was mounted during the second siege of Fallujah when al-Qaeda units stayed behind, as Zarqawi's inner circle fled, in order to mount a defense of AQI positions in the city. While they did not appreciably slow the Coalition advance into Fallujah, US forces in the city noted with unease that AQ-affiliated forces were able for the first time to mount fire and maneuver operations. Secondly, AQI mounted one of the largest guerilla operations of the Sunni insurgency when they attacked the Abu Ghraib Forward Operating Base on April 4th, 2005[802]. The attack was well coordinated and began with a rocket and mortar attack. There were then two main assaults on the compound. The first was a feint meant to distract defenders from the second assault, which proved to be the main insurgent push. US airpower responded and the attack was dispersed before any insurgents breached the FOB.

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[801] Statistics were gleaned from the Global Terrorism Database maintained by the University of Maryland's START Center, accessed on 02/17/2011 at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.
[802] Ellen Knickmeyer, "Zarqawi Said to Be Behind Iraq Raid: Assault on Abu Ghraib May Signal New Tactics" *The Washington Post*, April 5th, 2005.

The pattern of violence displayed by AQI over the course of its history corresponds to the predictions of the theory of revolutionary violence espoused by this report. While the structural circumstances for violence changed appreciably, this only served to affect the operational tempo of insurgent organizations. The same phenomenon was observed with the JAM's experience in Sadr City during the height of the sectarian violence. The downfall of AQI was that their style of attack did not change. Rather, they maintained the same repertoire of terrorist activities because they lacked the institutional capacity to develop into a more effective political organization. Unlike, the JAM, who reconstituted their organization into a more centralized oppositional organization, the AQI network never shifted organizational design. Since institutional processes did not change, the formula of violence did not change. Over the long term, this proved counter-productive as the window for filling the security void closed and populations began blaming the Zarqawists rather than Baghdad for their present situation. ASG similarly failed to alter its institutional processes, and as a result, the level of violence the organization was able to maintain at any given point, was directly related to the profits extracted from rent-seeking activities in previous cycles of violence. This is directly related to the organization's minimal alliance design, as this system was developed for banditry and low levels of clan warfare. Thus the minimal alliance is unsuited for more complex forms of violence like guerilla warfare as it is difficult to muster large numbers of fighters for a given task, especially if the risks are high and financial incentives low. Further, even when large numbers come together to form a medial alliance, which has occurred only a handful of times in the organization's history, the lack of a formal hierarchy makes coordinating paramilitary activity difficult. In addition, the medial alliances necessary for one cell to operate out of its area of activity are often fractious and prone to generating internal conflict, as was illustrated by Janjalani's refusal to turn

over the ransom money he received for the Burnham's release to the Sabaya led cell which actually held the captives.

As a result, the organization was able to procure a revenue stream for its members, but it was never able to graduate into more sophisticated modes of violence for a number of reasons. Firstly, the ASG was never capable of fomenting enough unrest that either Manila or other Moro organizations ceded a political vacuum to the group. While the southern Philippines certainly suffers from a crisis of governance, the ASG did not cause it, and it has never filled it. Secondly, the reliance on part time fighters means that the ASG has never been able to field sophisticated fighting forces. Thirdly, and most compellingly, by emphasizing material rather than political incentives, the ASG attracts militants who are not interested in the risks of political violence, but are motivated by the opportunity to engage in rent seeking behavior. While the ASG does engage in political terrorism, an overview of the tactical history of the ASG aptly shows that the emphasis on organizational action was firmly placed on procuring ransom payments.

7.2.3 Resilience

The capacity to resist government COIN measures by complicating a state's ability to disrupt systemic functions is a key ingredient in netwar contentions that polycephalus and acephalus networks are superior to hierarchies in asymmetrical conflicts. Indeed, the findings of this study confirm this to an extent. If the goal is to perpetuate the capacity of an organization to commit some level of terrorist violence, then no mechanism of centralized organizational control appears to be necessary for the group in question. If however, one defines resilience as the ability to retain broader organizational capabilities, and as a result remain relevant as a political organization, then an organization needs strategic control over tactical cells, a bureaucratic differentiation of cells and an institutionalized process of succession.

The case studies detail government COIN measures taken against all three organizations. While some government campaigns were ill-conceived and poorly executed, when taken as a whole, each organization was subjected to severe pressure, both from their own government as well as international counter-terror efforts. The Mahdi Army was able to utilize a degree of command and control over a portion of its organization. As a result, those elements that continued to answer to the Najaf leadership were not targeted directly by Coalition and ISF actions. AQI and the ASG, on the other hand, had little in the way of a political arm that could serve as a mechanism for diversifying into other areas of political activism. As a result they received no reprieve from COIN operations. Nonetheless, AQI remains active in Mosul and has proven its resilience by continuing to carry out operations in Baghdad up to the present. Similarly, the ASG has been active in kidnapping and low level terror operations throughout 2010. The continued viability of both organizations shows that decentralized networks are in fact difficult for governments to dismantle in their entirety.

This definition of resilience, however, only speaks to an institution's ability to retain a minimum of functionality in the face of government action. For an organization to compete with rival militant groups, it needs to retain sufficient organizational capabilities to maintain political relevance. This requires strategic control over tactical cells, a functional differentiation of cells so that the organization can branch off into other modes of political activism should it be prudent, and an institutionalized process of succession to avoid systemic disruption in the event key nodes of a network are neutralized.

Throughout the majority of its existence, the JAM continually lost ground, not to the ISF or Coalition forces, who were unable to engage the JAM, but from rival Shia factions and break away elements of its own organization such as Asai'b ahl al-Haq and the Noble Mahdi Army,

among others. The retention of a centralized decision-making process, some degree of specialized expertise in the provision of social services, and a political arm allowed the leadership to realize that the JAM's true strength lie in reorganizing itself into a political and social services organization that maintains a militia rather than yet another militia with some political representation and civil service capacity. In pursuit of this realignment, the Najaf leadership were actually able to use Iraqi and US COIN efforts to their advantage by ordering stand-downs and allowing Coalition and ISF forces to purge their organization of rogue cells.

Al-Qaeda's system of networking a national organization of autonomous cells via localized hierarchies, which in turn were connected to successively higher levels of leadership, meant that in theory AQI had a centralized leadership apparatus like the JAM. In reality this performed more like a center of gravity. This malleability would prove useful in the face of withering attacks from Tribal groups as well as from Iraqi government and Coalition operations. However, AQI was thoroughly dependent on control of certain key territories, which served as the logistical hubs for the organization. These were the transit corridors from al-Qaim to Baghdad via Ramadi, in the South, and from Sinjar to Mosul via Tal Afar in the North, as well as the suburban belts around major urban areas. The importance of these areas was interrelated. The suburban belts served as staging areas for IED and VBIED assaults. AQI bombing campaigns prevented Coalition and Iraqi forces from moving into the rural hinterlands that comprised AQI's transit and logistical networks. These corridors were in turn necessary in order to sustain AQI's freedom to move men, materials, and operations. This functional differentiation enabled AQI to maintain the high level of violence the network produced throughout the insurgency. Once the Coalition began clearing AQI fallback positions, from the Baghdad Security Plan to Operation Lion's Roar in Mosul, AQI's institutional capacity for violence was

greatly diminished as it destroyed the group's logistical and manufacturing support base. Presently, AQI maintains an ability to conduct attacks, but at a much lower tempo than before 2007/2008. Thus, while the organization is still operational, it is also largely irrelevant, as it can no longer compete with other centers of power, such as the ISF or local tribal militias.

As stated at the beginning of this section, the ASG is notable among the case studies analyzed in this study in its relative longevity. This resilience, however, is firmly rooted in the ASG's ability to provide material inducements to recruits[803], which in turn is reflected in the fact that the ASG's operations are currently done in conjunction with organized criminal elements. Further, many of its current commanders, such as Alpader Parad[804], are actually organized crime figures rather than Salafist diehards. Their position in the south is guaranteed not by force, as was the case with AQI, or by the provision of quasi-governmental services such as the Sadrists, but by the fact that local politicians also line their pockets with illicit ASG funds and use ASG groups as their own personal militias. Thus, despite damage done to the network by Operation Ultimatum, the ASG remains a threat and is even gaining strength once again, as evidenced by a string of kidnappings the group was able to pull off in 2009[805]and 2010. Further, while the overall trend of the organization has been to lose ground since the loss of Khadaffy Janjalani, the organization has staged something of a comeback in recent years, from a low of ~390 personnel in December of 2009, to the 445 estimated in April of 2010[806].

However, these things only speak to the longevity of the group, not to the resilience of their capabilities. As it relates to this latter metric, both AQI and the ASG have been done a disservice by their respective institutional arrangements. Netwar theorists assume networks are

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[803] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 19.
[804] R. Banlaoi, May, 2010 p. 19.
[805] F. Scarpello, June 19th, 2010.
[806] F. Scarpello, June 19th, 2010.

resilient to strategic attacks due to the random distribution of violent cells in the network. The fact is however, that terror groups do not organize according to a random pattern. Abu Sayyaf operates according to a system of regional 'Commanders'. Commander status is in turn determined by the relative levels of connectivity and centrality a militant has in Tausog social and tribal networks. Thus the ASG is not randomly distributed but operates according to a power law distribution. As a result, the ASG has proven very susceptible to systemic disruption as a result of the death or imprisonment of its core leaders. The network suffered massive disruption after the deaths of all major leaders; Abdurajak, Janjalani (1998), Abu Sabaya (2002), Commander Robot (2003), Khaddafy Janjalani (2006), and Abu Soleiman (2007) etc.. In each case organizational capabilities were diminished because the minimal alliance system did not provide for a succession mechanism amongst the nominal medial alliance that comprised the broader ASG network, and leadership vacuums developed after each death or imprisonment. AQI, for its part, also suffered systemic disruption following the death of Zarqawi, al-Muhajir, and al-Baghdadi. This was largely due to the proliferation of leadership positions within the alliance of myriad organizations that comprised AQI, the MSC, and the ISI. Without a designated successor, authority naturally flowed to lower echelons of the group.

7.2.4   Adaptability

Whereas the theory of revolutionary terror requires terrorist groups to be both market shaping as well as market reacting, the netwar conception of adaptability is slightly different. Netwar theorists assume that the information technology revolution has enabled decentralized networks to become 'learning organizations'. This concept assumes that networks can useful integrate IT into their organizational architecture and that the short distances information needs to travel between nodes in a network enable the group to adapt organizational behavior to shifts

in circumstances. As it turns out, however, IT served a minimum function in the more successful organizations, and when it was used, it required a specialized cell or cells to make proper use of the technology. In addition, instituting lessons learned and adapting to changing environments requires tight command and control over tactical cells in order to direct network action.

Neither the JAM nor the ASG utilized IT to any great extent in coordinating their respective groups. Quite to the contrary, the JAM stands as a testament to the assertions of this study, which state that diffuse organizations are less capable of instituting significant use of new technologies. Throughout the entirety of the JAM's existence, the primary mode of communication between the Najaf leadership and the tactical cells of the Mahdi Army was by open letters from Muqtada, which were then read aloud during Friday Prayers at Sadrist mosques. This proved time and time again to be an inefficient means of relaying information and on many occasions, localized interpretations of al-Sadr's intended messages served to muddle the intentions of the Sadrist command, resulting in contradictory statements being made at various locations throughout the network. These Friday Prayers were complimented by the maintenance of a website, however the sparse availability of internet access in the Shia slums means this likely played a marginal role in intra-network communications. In a similar vein, the ASG uses IT very little in its command and control operations. While the organization did participate in rigorous training, at least among full time soldiers, this training was not done online but via face-to-face interactions with trainers in jihadist camps and through on the job experience. Since the ASG organizational structure relies on kinship ties, it does not recruit outside of the larger Tausog network, and therefore, unlike al-Qaeda in Iraq, it never used websites as propaganda. The ASG does utilize cell and satellite phones to communicate, but the

eavesdropping abilities of US and Filipino forces mean that the normal mode of communication amongst disparate cells is decidedly low-tech, i.e. human couriers.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq, on the other hand, did make prodigious use of IT in its recruitment efforts, as well as in managing its daily operations. However, this was not a result of innovation of functionally autonomous cells, but was a direct result of specialized cells operating according to strategic direction from AQI hierarchies. In brief, AQI relied upon IT for three main purposes; recruitment from abroad, the development of new weapons technology, and for detailed record keeping, which helped them manage the human and financial aspects of their organization.

Recruitment from abroad was facilitated by a proliferation of radical websites which not only served to communicate the organization's Salafi jihadi ideology to constituent communities in the Middle East and Europe, but also served as a platform for more recruitment oriented media such as martyrdom videos, recordings of insurgent attacks, and of course, the beheading videos for which AQI became infamous. The distribution of this media was managed by AQI's information ministry, led by Abu Maysara al-Iraqi[807]. In line with netwar assumptions, these websites served both as a motivator for violence, by airing propaganda meant to induce radicals to come join the cause, as well as an enabler of violence insomuch as it gave instructions to radicals as to how to actually make their way to the frontlines. Given the volume of foreign fighters who flocked to Iraq during the height of the insurgency, it can only be assumed that these virtual recruitment grounds were successful in staffing AQI's Iraqi operations.

The distribution of advanced technology also served to increase the destructive potential of AQI related organizations. However, contrary to popular belief, it was not a large ingredient in AQI's conventional bomb-making proficiency. AQI's prolific use of IED and VBIEDs was

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[807] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 44-45.

aided not so much by the internet but by the fact that so many of the groups original fighters received formal training in explosives, either in Afghan training camps, or in military service in Iraq. This expertise was shared vis a vis the functionally differentiated IED manufacturing cells, which no doubt also served as a training ground for insurgent apprentices. However, AQI related organizations are unique in the history of insurgent behavior, in their chemical weapons capability[808]. In the early days of the insurgency, Ba'athist organizations such as Jaiysh Muhammed attempted to develop tabun and mustard gas by recruiting chemists from the former regime[809]. However, none of these attempts ever resulted in a useable weapon. AQI on the other hand, did manage to field chemical weapons in the form of a string of Chlorine gas attacks from January to February of 2007[810]. AQI emir at the time, al-Muhajir, attempted to build upon these operations successes by issuing an open call to those with scientific backgrounds to join the organization. It is not yet known if this resulted in any increase in AQI's WMD capabilities, however.

Information and communication technologies also allowed the organization to maintain detailed records regarding a number of aspects of the organization, including the comings and goings of foreign fighters, as well as the financial dealings of the network as a whole. This enabled the organization to maintain detailed human resources records as well as to efficiently manage the financial resources of the organization.

The discovery of the Sinjar documents unveiled AQI's attempts to keep detailed records on all foreign recruits who had come into Iraq via Sinjar (on the Syrian border), as well as disciplinary records of AQI subordinates in the Sinjar cell. This meant that AQI was able to

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[808] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 49.
[809] Bob Drogin, "Report: Iraq insurgents seeking chemical, germ weapons" *The Seattle Times* October 10th, 2004.
[810] A. Hashim, 2008, pp. 49-50.

keep track of the comings and goings of foreign recruits as wells as the activities of AQI foot soldiers on the cellular level. It's likely that AQI was trying to mimic the success of al-Qaeda central when it developed its list of international fighters from a list of foreign fighters who journeyed through Peshawar on their way to fight Soviets in Afghanistan.

Financially, the Travelstar and Tuzliyeh documents illustrate the fact that AQI operatives compiled detailed reports on financial earnings as well as disbursements. On the one hand, this ensured that the money collected from the given cell's community went to the location in the organization where it would prove most effective. On the other hand, this infers that the organization was aware that its criminal undertakings could backfire with respect to popular support, as rent-seeking behavior alienates the local population. In the end, AQI required two signatures for every cash disbursement, one when the money was received by the operative, and another to show how the money was spent. Since this creates a security nightmare for operators, a covert organization would only use such a system if they were concerned about being cheated or if they felt they had to show to their public that the money was being spent in a certain manner. Both seem to have been the case with AQI[811].

Of the three organizations surveyed here, only the JAM eventually proved successful at adapting to shifting circumstances in order to maintain political relevance. In the end this was a result of the fact that the Najaf leadership retained the loyalty of key elements if its organization, leaving Muqtada with a functioning political branch, a coterie of civil service providers, and a core of JAM militants. This diverse assortment of organizational capabilities gave the JAM the flexibility it needed to re-invent itself as a powerful political entity.

This is in stark contrast to both AQI and the ASG, neither of whom was able to innovate organizational processes, and as a result neither proved able to shift their behavior to suit

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[811] J. Shapiro, 2008, pp. 72-73.

changing structural circumstances. The ASG did not noticeable adapt to any shifts in structural circumstances, nor did the organization implement any discernable processes by which lessons learned could be distributed to other nodes in the network. The organizational structure remained rigid throughout the organization's history, which did allow it to maintain relevance despite a diminished capacity following Oplan Ultimatum. However, this was accomplished by manipulating the incentive structure of the organization and emphasizing material payoffs from violence. This is reflected in the fact that kidnappings (while always a dominant tactic) increased appreciably as a percentage of overall actions after 2007. Other than substituting political violence for organized criminal activities, however, the organization's repertoire of tactical actions has remained more or less static. This pattern is mirrored in AQI, though for different reasons.

Hashim observes that there were three major divides with the insurgency; the mainstream insurgency (meaning the nationalists and Ba'athists) vs. the Islamists, the domestic Islamists vs. the transnational salafists, and the tribes vs. the transnational salafists[812]. Because AQI as an organization seemed virtually incapable of reacting to the shifting moods of what should have been its constituency, AQI continually found itself on the receiving end of all three conflict dyads. AQI made three major mistakes, which cost it the domestic support it needed to resist Coalition and ISF COIN operations; it consistently targeted fellow Muslims, it attempted to dominate the insurgency through the development of the Islamic State of Iraq, and it engaged in wanton infighting with other Sunni organizations[813].

Firstly, AQI continually targeted Muslims in its operations. There were three reasons for this. To begin with, al-Qaeda's 'Near Enemy' strategy singled out the Shia as a primary target

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[812] A. Hashim, 2008, p. 56.
[813] Brian Fishman, "Using the Mistakes of al Qaeda's Franchises to Undermine its Strategies" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 618(1) July 2008, pp. 46-54.

for attacks. This was underwritten by a desire to stoke sectarian aggression which would in turn undermine the US' ability to govern Iraq once Saddam Hussein's regime was removed. While many salafists differentiated the 'rejectionist' Shia from what they considered to be true 'Muslims', most ordinary Iraqis did not, and found the targeting of the Shia distasteful and counter-productive given their numerical superiority. Further, the organization's reliance on IED and VBIED style attacks resulted in massive collateral damage, and as the statistics quoted in the beginning of this chapter note, more than half of AQI's victims were Iraqi civilians. Finally, AQI attacked Muslim civilians in order to dissuade them from working with the occupation. Typically this took the form of assassinations against Sunni who took government contracts or bombing recruiting stations where the unemployed had gathered to seek work with the local military or police units. The end result was to simultaneously dissuade those targeted from undertaking such acts as well as to stoke resentment against AQI.

Secondly, AQI alienated a large part of the resistance with the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq. The ISI signaled two things to most Iraqis. First, it was emblematic of AQI's repeated attempts to dominate the insurgency, despite the fact that they were not the largest organization, nor were they the most successful in attacking the occupation. Secondly, the ISI's shadow government signaled a secessionist bent most insurgent organizations were striving to avoid. The Caliphate envisioned by AQI would inevitably entail the breaking off of the majority Sunni section of Iraq into an autonomous region. The nationalists and national-Islamists who comprised the majority of the insurgency were rabidly opposed to the idea of breaking up the Iraqi state. Rather, they simply wished to restore their dominant position within that state.

Finally, AQI overwhelmingly relied on violence in order to maintain its areas of operations. This meant that al-Qaeda cells not only targeted individuals, but also rival Sunni

organizations in an attempt to enforce its will on the broader insurgency. This was especially noticeable during the formation of the MSC, and later the ISI, when AQI targeted those organizations who refused to cooperate with the new organizations. In addition, when tribal elements began to push back against AQI, the organization responded with force instead of trying to negotiate with the interests of the Sunni tribes.

In the end, however, AQI never adapted to their circumstances, and continued unabated with the same tactics that were leading to popular discontent. This is in spite of repeated calls from al-Qaeda Central's leadership in Pakistan for Zarqawi to shift directions in his approach to the insurgency. In particular, Zawahiri wrote a letter to Zarqawi in July of 2005 in order to express concerns that the doctrinal rigidity as well as the near enemy grand strategy of AQI was costing it the support of the Iraqi street.

> "From the standpoint of not highlighting the doctrinal differences which the masses do not understand, such as this one is Matridi or this one is Ashari or this one is Salafi, and from the standpoint of doing justice to the people, for there may be in the world a heresy or an inadequacy in a side which may have something to give to jihad, fighting, and sacrifice for God. We have seen magnificent examples in the Afghan jihad, and the prince of believers, Mullah Muhammad Omar - may God protect him - himself is of Hanafi adherence, Matridi doctrine, but he stood in the history of Islam with a stance rarely taken. You are the richer if you know the stances of the authentic ulema on rulers in times of jihad and the defense of the Muslim holy sites. And more than that, their stances on doing justice to the people and not denying their merit."

In addition, Zawahiri seemed extremely concerned about the affect AQI's targeting of the Shia was having on the popular perception of AQI's network in Iraq…

> "…many of your Muslim admirers amongst the common folk are wondering about your attacks on the Shia. The sharpness of this questioning increases when the attacks are on one of their mosques, and it increases more when the attacks are on the mausoleum of Imam Ali Bin Abi Talib, may God honor him. My opinion is that this matter won't be acceptable to the Muslim populace however much you have tried to explain it, and aversion to this will continue."

Zawahiri's inability to enforce the concerns of al-Qaeda Central on their local affiliate in Iraq was to prove devastating to AQI's prospects in the long term. In short, AQI refused to adapt to changing circumstances, and without enforcement of strategic direction from the top, their activities continue to cost them, as well as their AQ sponsors in Pakistan, much in the way of popular sentiments and support. AQI continued, to the best of its ability, to target individuals and organizations who did not share their adherence to a Wahabbist inspired version of Islam, and as their fortunes fell, they continued to try to remedy their worsening circumstances by mounting assaults on the Shia. Directly contradicting Zawahiri's suggestions, Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi (Chief of AQI's Sharia Committee) restated AQI's near enemy doctrine in an online posting in May of 2005.

> "Apostasy is a greater transgression than original disbelief, and the apostate is a greater enemy.… [T]he enemy who is close to the Muslims is more dangerous. When you fight him, you avert his evil and the evil of those who stand behind

him. If the Muslims occupy themselves with fighting the far enemy, the near enemy will seize the chance to hurt the Muslims[814]."

7.3   Conclusion

Netwar theorists contend that distributed networks represent the future of conflict as they enable small groups to threaten states through an increased capacity to commit acts of violence as well as resist state reactions to their provocations. The results of this study show that decentralized networks do indeed have an immense capacity for violence, and can resist statist COIN operations, though not to the extent claimed by netwar theorists. However, the case studies investigated in this report illustrate a number of factors that the netwar hypothesis either ignores, or glosses over. Firstly, there are two types of violence; violence that is market shaping and violence that is market reactive. Secondly, there are two types of resilience, operational and political.

Market shaping violence reflects the role of tactical operations in terrorist campaigns. In this context violence is a means of growing the organization by serving as subversive propaganda for the insurgent organization, as well as weakening a state to an extent that more effective modes of violence, such as guerilla and civil conflict, become possible. To shape an organization's marketplace successfully violence must be pursued in conjunction with an institutional message that is relevant to the community from whence the group is hoping to rally support, and must be managed in such a way as to avoid inciting backlash from the radical mileu. If done successfully, market shaping activities can grow the organization to the point at which government forces and services can be forced from the area under the influence of the radical organization. Once this occurs, however, a violent organization must be market reactive. This entails moving into functional areas of governance such as providing civil services, employment,

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[814] B. Fishman, Autumn 2006, p. 21.

law-enforcement, etc., as well as being able to escalate to more sophisticated levels of violence when the opportunity arises. While netwar theorists focus on an organization's ability to sustain an operational tempo and inflict unacceptable damage on a state through mass casualty terror attacks, it ignores the role of violence in successful terrorism. The most successful actors in the Iraqi Insurgency were not the most violent: AQI and the Special Groups, but those most able to offer viable political alternatives to the status quo, provide for their constituencies, and field effective paramilitary units, such as the ISCI, the Sons of Iraq groups, and the reorganized Sadrist trend under the Mumahidoon.

Further, the netwar theorists ignore the fact that organizational resilience requires more than merely perpetuating the existence of *some* violent cells: operational resilience. Rather, it also requires the organization maintain some degree of relevance: political resilience. The former of these refers to an organization's ability to continue violent operations by maintaining the minimum human and material resources necessary to engage in violent acts. The continued attribution of suicide operations to AQI cells, and the ASG's continued ability to commit kidnapping operations speaks to the ability of decentralized organizational designs to insulate violent organizations from external pressures. However, the cases of the JAM prior to 2008, AQI, and the ASG all illustrate that decentralization creates *internal* pressures which can rob terrorist groups of political resilience, or the ability to continue as a viable oppositional organization. In order to be politically resilient an organization must be able to recruit and retain members by forwarding a viable political message and creating some degree of political success, whether by asserting control over some geographic space or winning political concessions from the incumbent regime. Some organizations have proven that they can continue long after they've lost political relevance. Networked institutional designs have often aided this. However, the

inability to retain existing members and reach new audiences ultimately undermines such organizations as the Anarchists, the KKK, and (quite likely) al-Qaeda.

7.4   Implications and Areas for Future Research

The cases studies in this investigation have yielded insight into several factors of violent activism not directly addressed by this study, but that have significant implications for academics and counter-terror practitioners. The most notable of these are the role of ideology in violent organizations and the effects of financial incentives for membership on institutional behavior.

As the case of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi shows, even theological organizations need to show flexibility in their ideological orientation to remain salient as circumstances change. This illustrates that radical ideologies are less of an immutable motivation for political violence and more of a solution to collective action problems. Academics and policymakers focusing on radicalization should be interested in the processes of ideology formation that organizations undergo, and how these consultative mechanisms do or do not result in ideological re-interpretation as the circumstances of a radical organization change over time. In addition, counter-radicalization practitioners might be better served by focusing on questioning the applicability of a given radical ideology to the circumstances of an at risk population rather than attempting to counter the internal logic of the ideology itself.

The Abu Sayyaf Group is certainly not the first organization to emphasize material incentives in order to recruit and retain members. Anecdotal evidence for this sort of behavior can be found as far back as the period of *La Violencia* in Colombia, where the culture of banditry fused with the more conventional political violence that plagued the country throughout the 1950's. Social Revolutionaries of the 1950's and 60's also included criminal activity such as bank robberies in their repertoire of political violence. Little academic research has been done,

however, on how organizations integrate organized criminal activities into their revolutionary strategy. More importantly, little attention has been given to the effects on organizational behavior an emphasis on material benefits of membership might have. From a counter-terror point of view, this raises interesting questions about the role of rule of law, in particular anti-corruption campaigns, in broader counter-terror strategies.

7.5 Shortcomings and Limitations of this Study

The findings of this study are limited by two major shortcomings of the research design. The first of these reflects the complexity of organizational design in terrorist movements. In short, there are no purely decentralized, nor purely hierarchical, violent organizations. As the case studies show, each organization has its own method of command and control and the extent of centralization across organizations is highly variable. The research design in this dissertation attempted to compensate for this by forwarding four mechanisms of command and control, the presence or absence of which reflects the relative level of centralization in a given organization at a given point in time. As with all studies of illicit organizations, this study is troubled by the availability of pertinent data. It is hoped that the evidence presented in this study represents a significant test of the netwar hypothesis and that the findings of this research go a long way toward underlining the centrality of effective command and control in successful terrorist campaigns. However, as more specific data becomes available regarding the internal mechanisms of violent organizations, this study should be subjected to a more thorough testing of both the theory of netwar and the theory of revolutionary terrorism.

Secondly, the case of the Abu Sayyaf Group yielded ambivalent findings regarding the ability of a decentralized organization to recruit and retain members. While the organization has remained a salient actor in the southern Philippines, it has done so by moving into organized

criminal activity and emphasizing the material benefits of membership. As a result it is questionable as to whether or not the organization remains a *political* group. Nevertheless, this case study was intended as a control case to ensure the generalizability of the findings in the first two cases outside of the context of the Iraq insurgency. As it stands, the ASG is unable to provide that generalizability. Thus, the applicability of the findings of this dissertation are limited the circumstances of the Jaiysh al-Mahdi and al-Qaeda in Iraq, respectively. Future research should be undertaken with an eye towards expanding this study to the investigation of a wide number of terrorist groups.

APPENDIX A:

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AHAI	al-Harakay al-Islamiyyah
AAH	As'aib Ahl al-Haq
AQ	al-Qaeda (Central Command)
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
CBRN	Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Weapons
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
GJAM	Golden Mahdi Army
IAI	Islamic Army of Iraq
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
INC	Iraqi National Congress
IMIK	Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan
IRGC	Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution
IRGC-QF	Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution-Quds Force
ISCI	Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
JAM	Mahdi Army
JI	Jemaah Islamiyyah
KH	Khataib Hezbollah
LH	Lebanese Hezbollah
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NIA	National Iraqi Alliance
NJAM	Noble Mahdi Army
OMS	Offices of the Martyr al-Sadr
PDK	Kurdish Democratic Party
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RSIM	Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SCIRI	Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
TwJ	Tawhid w'al Jihad
UIA	United Iraqi Alliance
VBIED	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device