

# Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population's Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency

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“A guerrilla war is an intimate affair, fought not merely with weapons but fought in the minds of the men who live in the villages and hills.”

— W. W. Rostow,  
US National Security Advisor, 1962<sup>1</sup>

“We are without allies amongst the Iraqi populace, including those who have benefited from the ouster of Saddam. . . . Across Baghdad, Latifiyah, Mahmudiyah, Salman Pak, Baqubah, Balad, Taji, Baiji, Ramadi, and just about everywhere else you can name, the people absolutely hate us. . . .

The Iraqi people have not bought into what the Americans are selling, and no amount of military activity is going to change this fact.”

— Special Forces Veteran in Iraq<sup>2</sup>

Operation Iraqi Freedom was predicated partially on a presumption of widespread popular support among the Iraqi people for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The theory held that a relatively small military force could topple the Ba’athist regime with swift attacks aimed at key targets. Then, using momentum secured by liberating an oppressed people, a temporary government comprised of expatriate technocrats could step in to rule the country until a government could be elected. Shortly thereafter, the reasoning held, the country would achieve stability and the United States could dramatically reduce troop levels.

This vision was largely deflated shortly after coalition troops dashed north, securing vast swaths of Iraq and quickly destroying remnant military forces. Despite stunning military success, the victory failed to simultaneously

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produce the anticipated wellspring of support. Within three months of the fall of Baghdad, this notion was completely discredited as Iraq found itself in the grip of a nationwide wave of violence. The violence has continued, remaining remarkably consistent despite periodic surges and depressions of attacks. During this time, the coalition flooded the country with hundreds of thousands of troops and billions of dollars in reconstruction aid.<sup>3</sup> Despite significant troop numbers, large sums of money, and a great deal of personal commitment by all forces over the past two years, one thing has remained predictably constant: the population's neutrality. The recent national elections in January present the most marked aberration from the population's general ambivalence; yet it remains to be seen whether this represents the genesis of a paradigm shift.

Using Iraq as a model, this article seeks to examine the relationship between the people and the insurgency, with the ultimate questions being: What role does the civilian population play in the insurgency, and how can this situation be influenced to achieve success? The article examines the traditional military doctrines of insurgency and finds that: (1) though unique, the Iraqi insurgency is following a predictable pattern of development; (2) the civilian population plays a determinative role in the success or failure of the insurgency; and (3) the civilian population can be more effectively influenced through a more selective and efficient application of civil-military operations.<sup>4</sup>

Mao Tse-tung famously noted, "Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation."<sup>5</sup> Army doctrine reflects this philosophy: "The basic factor affecting the birth, survival, and ultimate success of guerrilla movements is the support of an adequate portion of the civilian population in an area of operations."<sup>6</sup> Popular support is equally important in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies: "Success in counterinsurgency goes to the party that achieves the greater popular support."<sup>7</sup>

It is worth highlighting the distinction between insurgencies and guerrilla warfare, as the terms are often used interchangeably.<sup>8</sup> An insurgency is an internal uprising against a ruling power (domestic or foreign) with its foundation rooted in a desire for political or social change. Insurgencies are fueled and subcategorized by any number of motivating causes such as spiritual, separatist, traditionalist, pluralist, economic, and reformist.<sup>9</sup> In an excellent monograph discussing the changing nature of insurgency in the 21st century, Dr. Steven Metz and Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Millen broadly

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categorize insurgencies as either national or liberation insurgencies. The former is characterized by ideological, political, or class differences between the ruling power and the insurgent, while a liberation insurgency is characterized by racial, ethnic, or cultural rifts between the insurgents and the foreign ruling power.<sup>10</sup>

Guerrilla war is a method of warfare characterized by independent or semi-independent indigenous forces operating to harass, delay, or disrupt enemy forces through sabotage, subversion, and raids.<sup>11</sup> In the traditional sense, guerrilla warfare need not be ideologically driven—it is simply a method of warfare. Guerrilla warfare can be seen as a stage through which insurgency moves—a tool to accomplish the ideological goals of the insurgency. This is a critical distinction to the extent that one realizes counterinsurgency operations are necessarily broader than counterinsurgency operations, since guerrilla operations are a subset of an insurgency.<sup>12</sup> The current situation in Iraq may be characterized as an insurgency utilizing guerrilla warfare.

The importance of the population in an insurgency highlights a fundamental vulnerability of counterinsurgency versus insurgency: counterinsurgency needs the positive support of the population, whereas an early-stage insurgency needs only neutrality. Neutrality provides the insurgents freedom of maneuver and the ability to refit, refresh, and recruit. Conversely, neutrality affords the opposing force or coalition no benefits. Coalition forces must win the support of the people; it is simply not enough to maintain their neutrality.

Comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam are common, and frequently erroneous, but occasionally instructive. In Vietnam, the Viet Cong drew their greatest strength from their ability to decentralize and spread their forces through countless hamlets across the countryside. It was not necessary that a village support the Viet Cong, simply that its people not object to their presence. Similarly, in Iraq, the passivity of the population has allowed the insurgents to conduct attacks, maneuver, recover, refit, and recruit in the presence of more than 150,000 coalition troops.

### ***Why Neutrality?***

It is not unreasonable to posit that virtually every attack launched against coalition forces in Iraq has occurred in the presence of noncombatants—individuals who could, if they were so inclined, report the attack anonymously, stop the violence, and increase security. Yet consistently these individuals have been unwilling to step forth and either stop or report such attacks.

Many theories have been suggested in attempting to explain the reasons for the Iraqi population's passivity. Many cite a culture of fear that was cultivated during Saddam's 24-year reign. Indeed, this may be an important

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factor, as Saddam habitually and systematically stamped out insurrection with unabashed violence. Saddam first consolidated power within the Ba’ath party in 1979 through a deftly executed putsch directed against his political rivals, trying and executing 21 colleagues for an “anti-state conspiracy.”<sup>13</sup> He was no less kind with the people of Iraq, ruthlessly quashing Kurd and Shia insurrections. He organized a 30,000-man division of the Fedayeen Saddam (“Saddam’s Self-Sacrificers”), who pledged their lives to protect his. He bribed some Sheiks and had others killed. His security and intelligence establishment (estimated to be as large as 80,000) was focused almost entirely within the country. An equal number of informants fed information on their “suspicious” friends, neighbors, and family members.<sup>14</sup>

In examining the occupation of Iraq, David M. Edelstein argues generally that all successful occupations have three consistent factors: “recognition by the occupied population of the need for occupation”; “the perception by the occupying power and the occupied population of a common threat to the occupied territory”; and “a credible guarantee that it will withdraw and return control to an indigenous government in a timely manner.”<sup>15</sup> At the outset of the occupation, the coalition possessed all three factors in abundance. The instant the occupation began, however, all three factors began degrading and violence increased correspondingly. This is a natural phenomenon, and the success of an occupier lies in his ability to effectuate his goals before these three factors are lost to any appreciable degree—or, as otherwise stated, before “occupation fatigue” sets in.<sup>16</sup>

Edelstein’s theory is supported by public opinion polls recently conducted in Iraq which illustrate an interesting phenomenon: an apparent disconnect in the linkage between security and the insurgency. The vast majority of Iraqis cite security as their greatest concern, yet nearly as many claim to not oppose the insurgency. In essence, the coalition has failed to convince the population of both its ability to bring about peace and stability, and the nefarious nature of the insurgency.

In Iraq, the insurgency has won support—or at least neutrality—though a combination of terror and robust propaganda which portrays the

coalition as an unholy force bent on permanently occupying Iraq and robbing the country of its natural resources, and of perpetuating instability through its heavy-handed approach and lack of respect for the Iraqi people.

Likewise, the coalition has attempted to co-opt the population through a combination of its military show of force and millions of dollars in reconstruction support: the classic carrot-and-stick approach. The fallacy in this approach as applied in Iraq is that the stick is not a stick, and the carrot is not a treat. More specifically, “the stick is not a stick” in that the coalition’s ability to project persuasive and lethal force has been somewhat diminished by two factors: a weak Iraqi judiciary, and an unwillingness to wield unchecked power in the manner of the Hussein regime.

Equally important is the coalition’s use of incentives—primarily in the form of reconstruction projects. “The carrot is not a treat” is an overly broad euphuism that characterizes the three flaws in the application of incentives in Iraq: reconstruction projects are not incentive-based; the reconstruction of Iraq has not progressed in a holistic fashion; and the manner in which reconstruction is occurring fails to empower the government of Iraq.

### ***Need for Civilian Support***

As the insurgency develops and the occupation continues, the need for popular support will become far more acute for both insurgents and the coalition. The insurgency needs ever-increasing popular support to develop into an ideologically cohesive movement and to maintain its momentum. An October poll conducted by the *al-Ahali* newspaper in Baghdad, Mosul, and Dahur found that 63 percent of the respondents thought security would improve if the coalition left Iraq. This roughly corresponds with a poll conducted by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in May 2004. In that poll, the CPA found that only ten percent of the population had confidence in the coalition.<sup>17</sup> Further, the CPA poll found that 63 percent of the population believed conditions would improve when the Iraqi Interim Government took over after the transfer of sovereignty.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, as the occupation continues, the coalition will inadvertently and unavoidably play into insurgent propaganda, which has portrayed the goal of the coalition as the permanent occupation of Iraq.

The insurgency in Iraq is generally attributed to a combination of former regime elements, religious extremists, and foreign fighters.<sup>19</sup> Historically, insurgencies pass through stages of development. As an insurgency moves from one phase or stage to another, these transition points represent weak seams in the insurgency’s development. At each of these points, the insurgency is on the cusp of becoming something more cohesive, more organized, and more deadly. But the failure to make the jump from one stage of

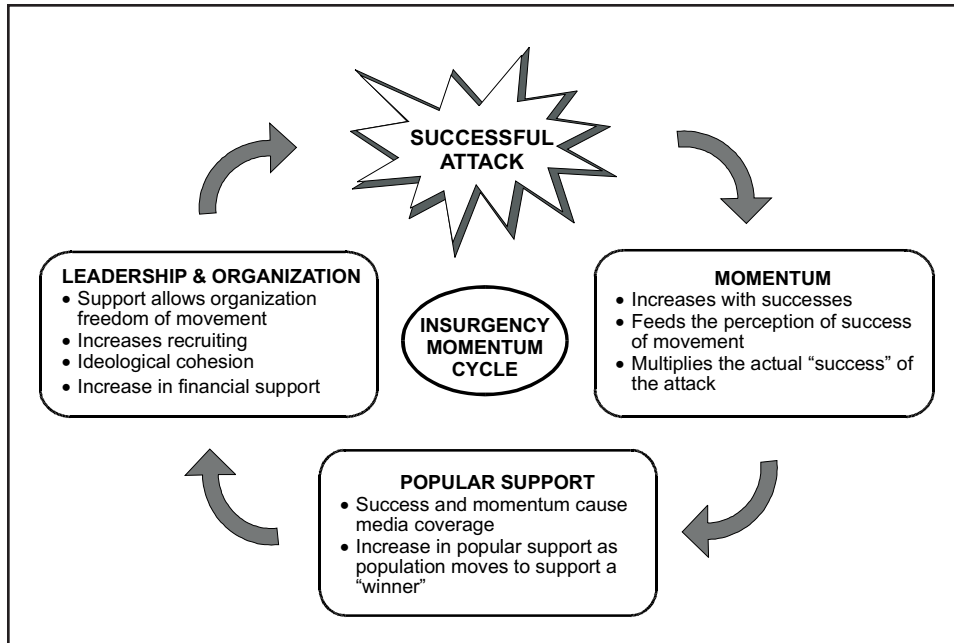


Figure 1. Insurgency momentum cycle.

insurgency to the next spells failure, as the insurgency's momentum is disrupted and the loss of popular support is inevitable.

An insurgency's development is driven by momentum. A movement's momentum is created through successful attacks that reflect leadership, organization, and financial support. These factors are in turn fueled by the popular support for the cause that is created by the perceived momentum of the cause. The cycle can be graphically represented as shown in Figure 1.

An occupying power in a country besieged by an insurgency can more rapidly win the support of portions of the population through a two-pronged approach: first, identify the insurgency transition points; and second, exploit these seams with more effective engagements of the population, using incentive force with the civilian populace while maintaining an effective employment of persuasive force against the insurgents.

### ***Targeting Enemy Seams***

Should the population, even a small but significant part, turn against the insurgency at any of these transition points, the momentum of the insurgency could be destroyed and the conflict may then achieve the much sought-after "tipping point."<sup>20</sup> Conversely, if the occupation drags on, support continues to degrade, and the people start to turn against the occupiers, the opposite can happen and the conflict may tip in the other direction. Once this portion of the population

turns one way or the other and the momentum shifts, there is a significant chance the situation will rapidly improve or deteriorate. It is in this manner that a small portion of the population can dictate the continuation of the insurgency.

It is thus critical that the phase seams of the insurgency are identified, targeted, and exploited. US Army Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations and Support Operations*, characterizes these phases as: preinsurgency, organization, guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and postinsurgency.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the Army's Field Manual-Interim 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, specifically references the "common phases of development." Both manuals refer to Mao's seven steps of an insurgency: arousing and organizing the people, achieving internal unification politically, establishing bases, equipping forces, recovering national strength, destroying the enemy's national strength, and regaining lost territories.<sup>22</sup>

The insurgency in Iraq is presently teetering between the first and second steps of Mao's progression. That is to say, the insurgency is busy arousing and organizing the people while working on achieving internal ideological unification. The Army model finds the insurgency moving between the second and third phases. The second phase, organization, is characterized by the insurgents' efforts to establish and expand their organization and ideology, with strikes and demonstrations, small-scale guerrilla activities, and terrorist attacks against government officials.<sup>23</sup> The third phase, guerrilla warfare, is in turn characterized by increased attacks, increased sabotage and terrorism, intensified propaganda, the establishment of shadow governments, and insurgent control of small geographic areas.

Analyzed collectively under the rubric of the three models, the Iraqi insurgency's continued general progression is predictable. Disparate elements will seek to further achieve ideological unification and attempt to secure geographic footholds throughout the country. It is imperative that this transition be recognized and targeted. This is not as commonsensical as it sounds. Two common misperceptions undermine the coalition's ability to recognize and target these transitions. The first concerns the commonly held belief that the insurgency has jumped over the ideological unification step and has moved directly into guerrilla warfare. The second misconception presumes that the various insurgent subgroups are so ideologically diverse that they will never adopt a unifying ideology.

An insurgency is not required to adhere to a strict system of development, a system of gates through which one must pass in order to continue to develop. Insurgencies are bubbling cauldrons of change manifest in a partially organized movement. Ideologies develop and refine as the movement grows. Indeed, as Metz and Millen note, insurgencies can change wildly during the course of their development.



It is true that the groups that constitute the insurgency in Iraq have divergent goals and motivations; indeed, they are often fundamentally in opposition to one another. So the question predictably arises, can these groups ever achieve ideological cohesion? The answer depends on how one defines ideological cohesion. Mao contemplates that insurgencies must have a “clear political objective.” In *On Guerrilla Warfare*, his stated goal is very broad, the “creation of a national united anti-Japanese front . . . [and] emancipation of the Chinese people.”<sup>24</sup> It is not without note that his goal was not the imposition of communism on the Chinese people, but rather the destruction of the Japanese. Similarly, during the early stages of the Vietnam War, the Viet Cong were not trying to persuade the peasants that communism was good, but rather that their lives would be more secure if they cooperated.<sup>25</sup>

While the former regime elements, religious extremists, and foreign fighters in Iraq may never achieve ideological unification in the traditional sense of the term—that is, in a religious or political sense—they can achieve the common goal of “emancipating” the Iraqi people from the coalition. Though this is something less than political or religious ideological unification, it does provide sufficient unification of purpose for continued progression.

By anyone’s measure, the Iraqi elections were a phenomenal success. Nearly 70 percent of the voting population voted, no major attacks occurred on Election Day, and the election has been perceived as fair both within Iraq and in the international community. The formation of the new interim government started slowly, but it quickly gained momentum in early March when the Presidential Council was announced. The large mandate from the vote has permitted and encouraged the cooperation of the interim government. The results have led most notably to a Kurdish President and Shiite Prime Minister, both of whom have reached out publicly to their Sunni brethren.

### ***Effectively Engaging the Population with Force***

Since 28 June 2004, the powers of Iraqi sovereignty have rested solely with the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). The United States has repeatedly emphasized the cooperative nature of the IIG and the Multinational Force in Iraq, particularly with regard to large-scale offensive military operations. The IIG is a representative body attempting to represent the people of Iraq—a populace, as is plainly evident, which is at best neutral toward the coalition.

Fundamental to the defeat of an insurgency is the ruling power’s ability to convince the population that they alone are the source of authority to

conduct the business of the people. This confidence is built and fostered through the competent, just, and robust execution of the traditional functions of a state, such as internal and external security, infrastructure creation and management, and judicial functions. Conversely, public support is undermined where the government appears weak, corrupt, ineffective, or manipulated by another power. To defeat an insurgency, the counterinsurgent must apply a holistic response that combines military, political, and civil aspects in a manner that empowers the ruling power. This article characterizes the application of these aspects as one of three types of force: lethal force, persuasive force, and incentive force. The success of the national elections demonstrated the power of holistic operations.

The conditions for a successful election were set by the coalition military and Iraqi security forces in the months preceding the elections through a combination of lethal, coercive, and incentive force. Starting with operations in Fallujah, the military maintained intense military operations (lethal force) across the country through the elections. These operations were coupled with extensive persuasive force in the form of a robust set of emergency powers passed by the IIG that imposed curfews and movement restrictions on the population, and the installation of barriers and razor wire at thousands of locations across the country. Finally, the coalition flexed incentive force through the use of support packages that prepositioned emergency relief supplies so that they could be immediately dispersed to civilians affected by insurgent attacks. In the end, the public experienced a successful election and perceived a functioning, competent government capable of exercising the functions of a state.

### ***The Stick (Persuasive and Lethal Force)***

In the early stages of the insurgency, it appeared that violence was isolated to the “Sunni triangle,” an area running from Baghdad west to Ramadi, and then north to Mosul. But insurgents quickly expanded beyond this swath of country. With the exception of the Kurd-dominated north, the population throughout Iraq has shown a willingness to passively harbor and aid insurgent activities and personnel.<sup>26</sup> Recent insurgent activity in Najaf, Karballa, Fallujah, Lataifya, Mamoudiya, Yousifya, and Mosul all evidence the insurgency’s drive toward its third phase, guerrilla warfare. In all of these cities, the insurgency has at one time controlled portions of the city or the surrounding region. In each of these locales, the insurgency was driven back through an application of decisive lethal force.

In order to destroy the insurgency militarily, coalition forces must first locate and then isolate the insurgents. When groups of insurgents mass, such as in Fallujah, Najaf, and Karballa, it is quite easy to identify, isolate,

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and destroy them. The task becomes immeasurably more complicated when the insurgency fully adopts Mao’s classic maxim of guerrilla warfare:

In guerrilla warfare, select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy’s rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted, and annihilated.<sup>27</sup>

Before Operation Phantom Fury in Fallujah, the insurgency demonstrated the willingness and ability to suffer an eviction from one stronghold and move to another town or city, taking over and establishing a new base of operations. Phantom Fury, however, may have been the death knell for this strategy. Fallujah represented an attempt by the insurgency to draw the coalition into an engagement in an environment that would most effectively neutralize the technological superiority of the coalition forces. The engagement was disastrous for the insurgency, and the results demonstrated the coalition’s absolute dominance in the application of lethal force. The engagement also demonstrated the increasing sophistication and competency of the Iraqi security forces.

An application of force short of lethal force but more than incentive force may be termed “persuasive force.” This concept is not new. Army doctrine clearly contemplates the use of “stern control and aggressive military measures” against civilians who “stubbornly [resist] pacification.”<sup>28</sup> In Iraq, however, the coalition’s ability to coerce the population through the threat of force has been critically undermined by a number of factors. Coalition forces currently operate in a unique environment: a situation of international armed conflict within a state which is not a party to the conflict.

Coalition forces maintain a strict adherence to the law of armed combat. This translates to the Iraq people as a universal belief that the United States is overly compassionate and nonconfrontational. The population un-

derstands that the US-led coalition will never wield the stick of force in the same manner as Saddam or the insurgency. This is, indeed, a vulnerability. As described by Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., before the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, “Non-Western enemies understand Western military vulnerabilities: aversion to casualties and collateral damage, sensitivity to domestic and world opinion, and lack of commitment to conflicts measured in years rather than months.”<sup>29</sup>

Critics are quick to point to the coalition’s adherence to the law of armed combat as a reason for the coalition’s inability to engage the enemy as necessary. Such criticism was particularly acute after Operation Phantom Fury.<sup>30</sup> The applicability and relevance of the law of armed combat since 9/11 is a matter of debate beyond the scope of this article; it is important to note, however, that “part of the Coalition’s sociological mission is instantiating important concepts into the Iraqi collective conscious, including mercy, restraint, proportional force, and just war.”<sup>31</sup> This estimate is echoed in the US Marine Corps’ *Small Wars Manual*, which declares small wars to be wars of information. In such wars, the emphasis cannot be on destruction, but rather on persuasion: “This shift in emphasis from destruction to persuasion creates a radically different context. Destruction is physical, while persuasion is psychological, which is why small wars may best be viewed as information wars.”<sup>32</sup> In retrospect, it would appear that Phantom Fury was indeed a perfect combination of lethal force (combat operations) and persuasive force (blockades, psychological operations, and arrests).

Unheralded but equally effective are the countless smaller-scale offensive operations successfully run by US brigades throughout Iraq every day.<sup>33</sup> In the long run, however, operational success is largely dependent on the support of the Iraqi Interim Government. Large operations are contingent on IIG approval and limitations. Further, operations are frequently dependent on support provided by the Iraqi army, police, Ministry of Interior commandos, or any number of ministry agencies.

To neutralize an insurgency, the counterinsurgent must institute “political action that discredits the insurgency, its programs, and its leaders,” while at the same time establishing trust and confidence in the ruling power.<sup>34</sup> An effective police capacity coupled with a legitimate independent judiciary is critical in order to neutralize the insurgency and empower the sitting government. More broadly, the government must root out corruption across every government agency. An encouraging development came with the announcement of Ibrahim Jaafari and Jalal Talabani as Prime Minister and President, respectively. Shortly after their appointment, both spoke of the need to aggressively eradicate corruption within the government. At about the same time, the Iraqi office charged with policing corruption

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***“The reconstruction focus should shift from trying to appease powerbrokers to empowering the Iraqi government.”***

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within the government announced that a number of high-level criminal indictments relating to corruption would follow shortly. Though corruption appears to be a broad problem across the government, corruption within certain ministries presents a particularly acute problem in the stabilization and reconstruction process.

Since the transfer of sovereignty, the execution of lethal engagements and the ability of coalition forces to detain insurgents has become necessarily dependent on the Iraqi judicial system. When functioning properly, a judiciary based on the rule of law provides a powerful example of persuasive force. The judiciary, however, like many aspects of the sitting government, is undermined by instances of corruption and institutional weaknesses. The Coalition Provisional Authority established the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI) as the nation’s highest criminal court. The CCCI hears virtually all of the cases brought against individuals charged with attacking coalition forces. The CCCI and all Iraqi criminal courts operate under the Iraqi Penal Code of 1969, a modern and sophisticated criminal code drawn from British and American criminal codes.<sup>35</sup> It provides substantial rights and enumerates the penalties for numerous crimes. Coalition Provisional Authority Order 3A (revised and amended), still in effect in Iraq, supplements the 1969 Penal Code by providing mandatory minimum punishments for violations of weapons control laws.<sup>36</sup> The CCCI has shown a habitual reluctance, however, to apply the standards enunciated in either the 1969 Code or CPA Order 3A.

Many Iraqi civilians will claim the judiciary, like the rest of the government, is rife with corruption. The ineffectiveness of the system, however, may more realistically be the result of institutional disorganization and lack of security for the courts and the judges. Regardless of the causes, a weak judicial system that fails to execute its charge fundamentally undermines coalition efforts to project effective persuasive force. The coalition has taken steps in the past to assist the judiciary in updating its institutional operations, most notably the 1st Cavalry Division’s efforts to modernize the judiciary’s record-keeping systems. The coalition should continue to assist the judiciary as necessary with training, equipment and supplies, and security.

### *The Carrot (Incentive Force)*

The “carrot approach” presumes first a goal and second a motivating factor to encourage the people to work toward that goal. In Iraq, the goal is a supportive population that resists insurgent activity and fosters stability, and the motivating factor is billions of dollars of reconstruction projects. As noted earlier, the fallacy of this approach as frequently applied in Iraq has been threefold: (1) reconstruction projects are not incentive based; (2) the reconstruction process is not holistic in nature; and (3) the reconstruction process often undermines the authority of the Iraqi government.

Most critical, perhaps, is the general failure to establish the link between behavior and reward. Often, the reconstruction projects in a particular town or section of a city are not initiated as a reward for the peaceful nature of that geographic locale. Indeed, reconstruction projects are more frequently targeted at the most restless locales in an effort to persuade the people in those areas that the coalition is the better of the two sides because it provides projects and employment. This tactic provides little incentive for the people to turn against the insurgents and risk their lives for the benefit of the coalition. By merely remaining passive, they reap the benefits of the projects while maintaining their personal safety from the insurgent threat.

A more effective system would treat reconstruction projects as an incentive through which the incentive-giver can influence the activity or behavior of the population. Adopting this approach would require a cessation of all reconstruction projects in sectors or cities that present a level of violence above a threshold established by the local commander. The population would be given notice that the projects have stopped because the security situation does not permit their continuation.

The impact of reconstruction projects is often further diluted by awarding construction projects to those individuals claiming to represent the community, often Sheiks, Imams, or prominent businesspersons.<sup>37</sup> The extent to which these individuals represent the people, or have the ability to control the people, can rarely be quantified. A stated goal of operations in Iraq is the restoration of the rule of law.<sup>38</sup> Awarding contracts to allegedly well-connected persons simply widens the wealth gap, increases resentment toward the coalition, and strengthens the positions of people of unknown character. More critically, this process undermines the power of the government because the coalition is empowering nonstate actors (Sheiks, Imams, etc.) to act in a state-like manner—executing infrastructure projects, building and staffing medical clinics, maintaining security, and providing disaster relief. The reconstruction focus should shift from trying to appease power-brokers to empowering the Iraqi government.



The way to achieve this end involves selecting construction companies based on competency not connections, managing fewer projects to ensure better quality, and training and empowering local and national governments to execute their own reconstruction projects. Further, just as the Iraqi army and police are provided with extensive military and police training, the Iraqi government should be furnished with reconstruction training. This latter point highlights the third issue with reconstruction assistance: the piecemeal nature of the reconstruction.

During the course of operations in Iraq, the vast majority of the reconstruction was, and continues to be, conducted and administered by the military. The Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have also contributed significantly to the reconstruction process, though their efforts have been limited at times due to the security situation and, initially, because of organizational obstacles.<sup>39</sup> The Iraqi government has participated on a somewhat diminished scale due to their lack of resources and lack of institutional skill and knowledge. The participation of the State Department and USAID largely has been a component of security and coordination, whereas the participation of the Iraqi government has been a function of resources and ability. Closer coordination between all parties and an emphasis on assisting the Iraqi government would produce more reliable projects, spread the wealth across the population, and empower the Iraqi government.

### ***Conclusion***

The coalition does not face an abstract threat in Iraq. Rather, the enemy can be described as an insurgency of disparate elements rapidly developing into a more cohesive entity with a single, short-term goal: removal of the coalition from Iraq. The development of the insurgency can be seen through the ever-increasing sophistication and frequency of attacks against the coalition, attempts to control parts of the country, robust propaganda capacity, and increasing support among the formerly neutral population. Concurrently, however, the recent national elections have demonstrated the population's enthusiasm for representative government, and, more important, the population's willingness to directly participate in the pursuit of this goal.

The success of the elections has presented a window in which large segments of the population may be co-opted into actively rejecting the insurgency. At this time, it is not enough for the coalition to attempt to maintain the population's neutrality; similarly, it is not necessary to win over the whole population. The coalition should reevaluate its nonlethal targeting to more effectively engage portions of the population in an effort to disrupt insurgency momentum and tip the conflict away from further violent progression.

More effective lethal targeting of the insurgency requires the full and unconditional support of the Iraqi Interim Government and subsequent governments. This must come through a number of avenues, including unconditional support for coalition military operations, a campaign against corruption, support in recruiting and training Iraqi security forces, and the maintenance of an independent judiciary based on the rule of law.

The timing of this shift is critical, as the Iraqi government has gained significant momentum resulting from the successful operations in Fallujah and the elections in January. The coalition cannot afford to continue to expend effort and money on ineffective civil engagements. Incentive targeting of the population in the form of reconstruction projects needs to be restructured so that it produces a quantifiable result in a manner that empowers the Iraqi government. Concurrently, lethal targeting of the insurgency, or the threat thereof, must remain credible.

Both the short- and long-term prospects for Iraq remain uncertain. What can be made certain are the steadfast efforts by all members of the coalition to continue to work toward a more stable and secure Iraq. Many factors point to this as a ripe time to surge ahead with a holistic reconstruction effort: the institutional framework for success has been established, the money has been allocated, the security situation has stabilized, and, most important, through their participation in the elections, the Iraqi public has shown its willingness and desire to side with a new Iraq.

#### NOTES

1. W. W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in Underdeveloped Areas," reprinted in Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-25, *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* (rpt.; 2 January 1990 [originally published in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 1962]), p. 59.

2. Thomas E. Ricks, "Troops Climbing First Rung of Steep Ladder," *The Washington Post*, 17 November 2004, p. 15.

3. The money invested in the reconstruction of Iraq is difficult to quantify since the reconstruction money has come from many sources, including seized monies, oil money, donated money, and US appropriated money. The total would certainly be more than the \$180 million set aside in the 2004 Supplemental Appropriations Bill.

4. For an excellent historical perspective of the insurgency and Iraq, see Ian F. W. Beckett, *Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005).

5. Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-18, *Mao Tse-Tung, On Guerrilla Warfare* (rpt.; 5 April 1989 [originally published in 1961]), trans. Samuel B. Griffith, p. 44.

6. US Army, Field Manual 31-21, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington: GPO, 23 March 1955), p. 10.

7. US Army, Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington: GPO, February 2003), p. 3-4.

8. It is argued by some that the traditional military nature of guerrilla warfare was fundamentally altered in the 1930s and 40s when social, economic, psychosocial, and political elements of insurgencies became intrinsically fused with the military tactic of guerrilla warfare. Thus, it is argued, "modern revolutionary guerrilla warfare was increasingly termed insurgency, guerrilla tactics being employed strategically to achieve a particular political and/or ideological end." Beckett, p. 2.

9. See Beckett.

10. Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004).



11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. Brian Manthe, "United States Military Doctrine and the Conduct of Counter-Insurgency Operations: Fixing the Disconnect," White Paper, US Naval War College, 18 May 2001.
13. David Hiro, *Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm* (New York: Thunder's Mountain Press/Nation Books, 2002). This book provides an excellent discussion of life under Saddam Hussein immediately prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom.
14. This element of the security apparatus provides some explanation for the population's unwillingness to use even anonymous tip hotlines. This phenomenon also may be explained by the Iraqi police's propensity to arrest witnesses of crimes and those who report crimes.
15. David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, 29 (Summer 2004), 49-91.
16. Beckett, p. 4.
17. "Iraqis' Opinion on U.S. 'Grim,'" *Washington Times*, 17 June 2004, p. 1.
18. *Ibid.*
19. An unquantifiable, but undoubtedly large, portion of the violence can be attributed to criminal activity. For a discussion of the significance of criminal gangs and insurgencies, see Max G. Manwaring, *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2005).
20. The term "tipping point" has been in popular use since the 1970s to describe the "White Flight" from the inner city. The term was most recently popularized by Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000). The idea holds that epidemics, ideas, trends, social phenomena, and movements have a discernible point at which they explode and become widespread.
21. Field Manual 3-07, pp. D-5, D-6.
22. US Army, Field Manual-Interim 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington: GPO, 1 October 2004), p. 1-8; Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-18, p. 43.
23. Field Manual 3-07, pp. D-5, D-6.
24. Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-18, pp. 42-44.
25. Rostow, p. 61.
26. Kurdish north Iraq has been by far the most peaceful region in Iraq. Tensions are mounting, however, as the Kurds continue to move ever closer to exerting control over the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and reversing Saddam's "Arabization" of the region. Furthermore, Kurdish stability is perpetually threatened by the continued feud between the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).
27. Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-18, p. 46.
28. Field Manual 31-21, p. 48. "In areas where the majority of the civilian population continues to be hostile and stubbornly resists pacification, stern control and aggressive military measures may be used in accordance with international law."
29. Robert H. Scales, Jr., "Adaptive Enemies: Achieving Victory by Avoiding Defeat," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 23 (Autumn/Winter 1999-2000), pp. 7-14.
30. See generally, Diana West, "Marine Just Doing His Job," *Washington Times*, 19 November 2004, p. 23; "War is Hell," *New York Daily News*, 17 November 2004.
31. Robert Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, 34 (Spring 2004), 21.
32. US Marine Corps, "Small Wars Manual Annex" (2004), draft copy, p. 53.
33. Indeed, many of the brigade reconstruction projects were adopted by larger units.
34. Field Manual 3-07, p. 3-4.
35. Iraqi Penal Code (1969).
36. Coalition Provisional Authority Order 3A (Revised) (Amended), 27 June 2004.
37. A Sheik is a tribal leader. An Imam is a religious leader.
38. See e.g., John Yoo, *Statement to Subcommittee on the Constitution*, 25 June 2003, [http://www.aei.org/news/newsID.17825/news\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/news/newsID.17825/news_detail.asp); and Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2004/34 on the importance of the rule of law in post-conflict societies, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8209.doc.htm>.
39. The US Agency for International Development is the government agency charged with "long-range economic and social development assistance." Despite this charge, the US military has taken the lead in both planning and executing reconstruction projects. The oft-stated reason is that only the military can operate in the present security situation. This is a common fallacy. The Department of State and USAID can develop and manage a comprehensive reconstruction program immaterial of the security situation. At the strategic level, the threat is minimal, and at the tactical level, military units are eager to support embedded USAID staff. That is not to say military participation is improper. 10 U.S.C., sec. 3062, and Department of Defense Directive 5100.1 specifically contemplate military participation in the advancement of US national policy.