Coalition 'Victory' in Iraq as a Result of the 'Surge' and 'Anbar Awakening'

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Did the coalition achieve 'victory' in the Iraq War as a result of the 'surge' and Anbar Awakening?

On May 1 2003, President Bush made an accelerated landing on the USS Lincoln proclaiming to the world under the infamous 'mission accomplished' banner that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended…in the battle for Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed" (Walsh, 2003). The Iraq War was to last another eight brutal years however, contributing to the death of over 4800 coalition troops (ICCC, 2013) and achieving limited strategic gains. This essay will refute the notion that the coalition achieved victory in Iraq, maintaining that the insufficient post-war planning created a security vacuum that gave rise to a communal civil war, an insurgency against coalition forces and the Iraqi government, proliferated the presence of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and increased Iran's influence and power in the region – one of the so called "Axes of evil"(Bush, 2002). However, this essay will analyse two phenomena – the surge of 2007 and the Sunni Awakening movement; or 'Anbar Awakening' of late 2006, and demonstrate that the synergistic interaction between the two contributed to a dramatic drop in the levels of violence, paving the way for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Despite the reduction in violence, I will demonstrate that this only held short-term benefits for Iraq to provide the U.S. with an exit strategy, coming at the expense "of a long term goal of a stable, unitary Iraq" (Simon, 2008: 58).

The night of the 19th March 2003 marked the start of the Iraq War; with hundreds of Tomahawk cruise missiles and other precision guided munitions reigning down from the night's sky onto Baghdad (Rogers, 2013: 1). Iraq's ageing military stood no chance against the might of the U.S. led coalition forces, with Baghdad falling by April 9. The crushing defeat that Saddam's conventional forces suffered however did not signal a victory for the coalition, as unbeknown to them, eight years of insurgent conflict lay ahead. There are many factors that contributed to this, which will be addressed subsequently, however it was ultimately "the rush into a large military operation [that] precluded making adequate arrangements for the post war political environment and humanitarian needs" (Keen, 2006: 108).

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was established as the transitional government of Iraq after Saddam's removal from power. The CPA, under Paul Bremer made two key decisions that led to the emergence of violence in Iraq, which has continued to the present day. The first was issuing the order of de-Ba'athification of Iraq – removing all public sector workers affiliated with the Ba'ath Party from office and banning them from future employment in the public sector (CPA, 2003). This had two negative effects: removing those who had experience of running the internal affairs of Iraq in exchange for inexperienced exiles to make up the interim government council, as well as alienating and antagonising the Sunnis which pushed them towards insurgency (Dodge, 2007). The second key decision that led to the emergence of sustained violence in Iraq was the disbandment of the Iraqi army. This removed 300,000 trained soldiers not only from positions that could have aided security provisions, but also from their jobs and sources of income. This caused anger and unrest, with exclamations such as "if they don't pay us, we'll start problems. We have guns at home. If they don't pay us, if they make our children suffer, they'll hear from us" (Hashim, 2006: 96), showing how the CPA's decision directly contributed to the insurgency and ensuing violence. These two factors contributed to a security vacuum in Iraq, which was filled by the emergence of various militias by which Iraqi people aligned themselves with according to their religious sect to guarantee their survival, which led to "violence unfolding on multiple levels," (Arnold, 2008: 25). This security vacuum aggravated and inflamed the sectarian divide in Iraqi

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society, primarily between the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. As well as the manifestation of violence between these sects, insurgent attacks on coalition and Iraqi security forces increased, which very much set the scene for the ensuing years.

This spread of sectarian violence provided al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a jihadist group of mainly Sunni fighters, with fertile ground to wage a guerrilla war against Shiite militias, coalition forces and the Iraqi government (Masters and Laub, 2013). Rising to prominence after the invasion as the Islamic State of Iraq, it wasn't until 2004 that the group pledged their allegiance to Osama bin-Laden, arriving at a "marriage of convenience" (Simon, 2008: 61) with other Sunni insurgent groups, sharing a common goal of "reversing the triumph of the Shiites and restoring the Sunnis to their lost position of power" (ibid: 61). For al-Qaeda, the link with the Sunni insurgents provides additional purposes – establishing an al-Qaeda dominated mini state as a base for carrying out jihad against enemies outside of Iraq, and to seize a leading role in the insurgency to block any potential power-sharing agreements between the Sunnis and Shiites that could lead to their selling out by the Sunnis (ibid: 62). The constant violence provided al-Qaeda with the perfect breeding ground for their extremist ideology, enabling them to expand their recruitment and resources, assert their dominance and utilise Iraq as a base for many of their operations – such as the November 2005 attack on Western hotels in Jordan which was directed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the then leader of AQI. The bombing of the Shiite al-Askari Mosque at Samarra in February 2006 dramatically increased the sectarian violence in Iraq, with retaliatory attacks leading to the deaths of thousands of Iraqis in the subsequent days alone (Knickmeyer, 2010). The escalation of violence was described by retired four-star General David Patraeus as "out of control", with the situation in Iraq by the end of 2006 being "dire" (Patraeus, 2013: 1). With insurgent attacks reaching a level of 900 a week, it was clear that there was a need for a strategic rethink of the U.S. led coalition, to reduce the number of casualties that coalition forces had been sustaining, as well as preventing the outbreak of a full on Iraqi civil war.

The Surge

In January 2007, General David Patraeus was announced as the new Commander of Forces in Iraq. Petraeus was considered to be somewhat of a counter insurgency expert, overseeing the publication of *Field Manual 3-24* (FM 3-24), the U.S. field manual on counter insurgency warfare. It is clear that Patraeus was the right man for the job, given the conditions that the coalition forces were facing in Iraq at the time and the urgent need to reduce the levels of violence. A few days later, President Bush announced to the nation that an additional five brigades of soldiers would be sent to Iraq, which by the end nearly totalled 30,000 troops. This move is what has come to be referred to as 'the surge'. The primary aim of the surge was "to help Iraqis clear and secure neighbourhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security" (Bush, 2007), a strategy that focused on the protection of the Iraqi population in order to reduce the levels of violence. This would have the added effect of providing the Iraqi government with sufficient breathing space for increased political progression and reform and the 'Iraqisation' of security, paving the way for U.S. withdrawal. The surge signalled not only a massive increase in troop numbers, but also a change of strategy in tackling the insurgency – which Patraeus coined "a surge of ideas" (Patraeus, 2013: 1). This new strategy focused on winning the 'hearts and minds' of the Iraqi people by preventing civilian casualties, protecting the population and building relationships – thereby winning their support and minimising the number of insurgents fighting amongst the Iraqi militias as well as against coalition forces. This was to be achieved by moving the troops away from the large Forward Operating Bases (FOB) that were situated far from the population centres, to living "amongst the Iraqis" (Kilcullen, 2009: 135) in Joint Security Stations (JSS) in the streets of Baghdad alongside the Iraqi Security Forces. This also involved the recruitment and training of Iraqis, many of whom were ex-insurgents and militiamen, into the Iraqi police and army forces. This was a significant aspect of the surge strategy as not only did it bolster the security numbers working alongside the coalition forces, but it also provided jobs for the Iraqi people and vital intelligence against many of their former militias and insurgency groups; which would assist the coalition forces in directly tackling the militias whilst protecting the civilian population.

From 2004 to mid-2007, the situation in Iraq was indeed extremely dire. Iraqi civilian deaths averaged at more than 1500 a month, and the U.S. were suffering a hundred deaths a month on average and over 700 wounded (Biddle et al., 2012: 7). The surge has been widely credited with reducing this level of violence (Kagan, 2009; Crider, 2009; Collier, 2010), both against civilians and coalition forces. However, there was a spike in violence against U.S. forces

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in the first five months of the surge, reaching "a crescendo in May and June [2007], to well over 200 attacks a day" (Patraeus, 2013: 2), which is both predictable and inevitable due to the strategy of moving into sectarian battle lines, removing any pockets of resistance, establishing a JSS and then subsequently defending that new position against insurgent counter-attack. This rise in violence dropped rapidly however, as the JSS's were established and the Iraqi security forces strengthened significantly. By December 2007 U.S. military fatalities dropped from the monthly wartime peak of 126 in May of that year, to just 23 and civilian deaths fell from approximately 1700 in May to 500 in December 2007 (Biddle et al., 2012: 7). Clearly, the surge of U.S. troops to Baghdad and other problem areas had a positive effect on reducing the violence, with Colonel Craig Collier stating that the increase in manpower was "critical to our [the U.S.] success" (Collier, 2010: 88). Furthermore, the introduction of FM 3-24 and the revision of counter insurgency strategy brought by Patraeus's arrival significantly contributed to both reducing violence and winning over the hearts and minds of Iraqis, which is evident in the surge of recruitment for the Iraqi security forces. The security forces were previously described as being fragmented and strongly under the influence of the militias, with one Iraqi stating "Sadr City police do virtually nothing. What happens defies all logic: Mahdi Army members punish the police, not the other way around " (ICGa, 2008: 5). The increase in troop numbers allowed the security forces to become better trained, reinforced by the U.S. military and less suspect to insurgent infiltration – due to the newly-formed relationships between the military and local Sheikhs, who vetted and endorsed many of the new security forces recruits (TISW, 2010). As a result of this, it is evident that the surge did act as a catalyst for reducing violence in Iraq.

However, there are various other developments that occurred at the same time as the surge that can also account for the drop in violence against both Iraqi civilians and the coalition forces. The first, and most significant of these was the rising up of Sunni tribesmen who had rejected continued affiliation with AQI and sought to cooperate with the U.S. forces, commonly known as the 'Anbar Awakening'. This phenomenon will be explored fully in the subsequent section of this essay, as well as its significance in drastically reducing levels of violence. The second development that would have reduced the levels of violence in Iraq was the withdrawal of one of the most prominent Shi'a militias, the 'Mahdi Army'. Muqtada al-Sadr, the highly popular and influential leader of the Sadrist Movement political party, called for a ceasefire of its military wing – the Mahdi Army in August 2007. Al-Sadr initiated much of the Sunni ethnic cleansing by his militia in Baghdad during the height of the sectarian violence in 2006, using death squads to forcibly evict Sunnis from their homes, or to murder indiscriminately. This inevitably led to retaliatory violence from the Sunnis, often through the use of car bombings – thus the withdrawal and cessation of Mahdi Army attacks would have had a profound effect on reducing the levels of violence in Iraq. Moreover, in October 2007 Al-Sadr and Abdul Aziz Hakim signed an agreement to end the conflict between the Mahdi Army and Badr Brigade militia (Arnold, 2008: 25). These two groups were the source of the majority of intra-Shiite violence, with the groups vying for control of the shrines at Karbala, amongst other disputes. The agreement thus marks another important contributor to the decrease in violence in Iraq since the beginning of the surge. It could be argued that the increase in U.S. troops into Iraq influenced al-Sadr to withdraw his militia, as they would not have been able to stand up to the more active and prevalent U.S. and coalition forces. Thus the point could be made that the surge had an indirect effect on reducing the levels of violence by forcing the Mahdi Army's decline through the influx of troops.

However there is evidence to suggest that Iran ordered al-Sadr to withdraw his militia (Tawfeeq and Wald, 2008; Arnold, 2008: 26; Bazzi, 2010) with the surge having little impact on al-Sadr's decision. Without diverging from the scope of this essay too much, it was in Iran's interest for the violence in Iraq to stabilise and the civil war subside, paving the way for the U.S. and coalition to withdraw their troops. Iran had a profound influence over the Iraqi government, with reports claiming that Qasem Suleimani brokered deals with Prime Minister Maliki as well as al-Sadr, guaranteeing Iranian support for their factions in exchange for accommodating Iranian interests (Wright, 2013). Thus it was in Iran's interest for the U.S. and coalition troops to withdraw, allowing them to exert their influence more heavily in the region – providing an explanation as to why al-Sadr withdrew the Mahdi Army, contributing to the drop in violence.

The Anbar Awakening

 The other, and perhaps most significant development that contributed to the dramatic drop in violence in Iraq was the 'Anbar Awakening'. In late 2006, a group of Sunni Sheikhs and their tribes in the city of Ramadi in the Anbar Province grew tiresome of their affiliation with AQI and began rejecting and expelling them from their land, and

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sought to cooperate with the coalition forces that they had previously opposed. There are many reasons behind this decision by the Sunni tribe leaders – they were growing increasingly discontent with AQI's "heavy handed, indiscriminate murder and intimidation campaign" (Smith and MacFarland, 2008: 42). AQI "overplayed its hand in its own collaboration with local Sunnis" (Arnold, 2008: 26), causing anger by beheading Sheikhs, not burying the dead, enforcing draconian Sharia law and "forcibly recruiting teenage and women suicide bombers" (ibid: 26). This came to a head in October 2006 when AQI declared the formation of an Islamic State in Iraq and demanded the Sunni tribes to pledge allegiance to the new jihadist commanders (Simon, 2008: 62). Sunni insurgents that had previously fought with AQI against coalition forces began to negotiate and cooperate with the U.S. forces, receiving between $300-360 a month per combatant to fight against their previous allies, initially being referred to as 'concerned local citizens'. The group came to be known as the 'Sons of Iraq' (SOI), and their numbers totalled up to 100,000.

The Anbar Awakening had a significant effect on the reduction in violence in Iraq as it took the majority of the Sunni insurgency off the battlefield as an opponent, "radically weakening the enemy" (Biddle et al., 2012: 24). When a vast proportion of the enemy is suddenly removed, it is inevitable that the levels of violence against both civilians and coalition forces would drop. Furthermore, by cooperating with the Sunnis, vital intelligence and information on AQI positions, holdouts and leadership was made available to the U.S. forces, which enabled a more effective, precise and successful crackdown on AQI insurgents. The Anbar Awakening is credited with providing the force by which AQI's influence and presence was significantly weakened, however this should be viewed as a stroke of good fortune for the coalition, something that Patraeus admits (Patraeus, 2013: 1), rather than ingenuity on the part of the U.S. forces. The timing of the Anbar Awakening couldn't have been better, with the combination of the influx of U.S. troops, change in counterinsurgency strategy and the Anbar Awakening all affecting the drop in violence in Iraq together.

Although it is impossible to conclude, it is said that either phenomena acting on their own would not have been successful and instead, "a synergistic interaction between the surge and the Awakening was required for violence to drop as quickly and widely as it did", with *Biddle et al.* going on to argue that "both were necessary, neither was sufficient" (Biddle et al., 2012: 7). Had the Awakening occurred without the support and protection of the of the reinforced U.S. military, it is very probably that the Sunni uprising would not have been able to survive insurgent counterattacks and AQI would have asserted its dominance. However, the two working in conjunction led to a sharp decrease in violence in Iraq, and their success in doing so should be judged together, rather than individually.

A Short Term Plan?

It cannot be denied that the surge and Anbar Awakening were successful in decreasing the levels of violence in Iraq, both against Iraqi citizens and coalition forces. However, I will show that the surge and the U.S. sponsoring of the SOI in the Anbar Awakening held only short-term benefits for Iraq that paved the way for U.S. withdrawal. These short-term benefits of violence reduction came at the cost of long-term stability in Iraq after the U.S. forces withdrew, due to the bottom-up approach that the surge and Awakening took, which was "adopted for near-term advantage by a frustrated administration" (Simon, 2008: 58). The bottom-up strategies of the surge and Awakening fostered the retribalisation of Iraq, undermining the authority of the central government and the cohesion of the country; encouraged the growth of warlordism – especially amongst the Sunni tribes; and failed to address the driving forces behind much of the sectarian violence, instead providing a short-term 'band aid' approach to the problem. Moreover, the U.S. failed to use its leverage against the Maliki government to pursue a top-down approach to stabilising the country in the long-term, which should have focused on repatriating the Sunnis back into the political process at an earlier date and brokered a more sustainable power sharing agreement. By addressing these issues, it is apparent that when it withdraws from Iraq, the

"United States will be leaving a country more divided than the one it invaded – thanks to a strategy that has systematically nourished domestic rivalries in order to maintain an illusory short-term stability" (Simon, 2008: 70).

Under Saddam and the Ba'ath Party rule, stability between the sectarian tribes was maintained through a combination of fear and terror tactics, force or by providing Shi'a, Sunni and Kurd tribal leaders with benefits and wealth, cooperating them into the regime (Metz, 1988). The security vacuum that was created as a result of the

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regime's removal from power led to the various tribes vying to increase their power and influence in Iraq. Instead of implementing a top-down approach that focused on consolidation of the tribes into a unified, central government, the U.S. supported, armed and organised tribal militias – such as SOI in the Awakening, "bolstering a set of local actors operating beyond the state's realm or the rule of law and who impose their authority by force of arms" (ICG, 2008b: ii). Moreover, some tribes benefited more than others from U.S. assistance and this redistribution of power most certainly generated both rivalry and instability between the different tribes. This led the International Crisis Group to conclude,

"all of it could amount to little more than the U.S. boosting specific actors in an increasingly fragmented civil war and unbridled scramble for power and resources" (ICG, 2008b: ii).

This is evident in the growing violence that re-emerged in Iraq following the U.S. withdrawal of its forces in 2011, especially this year which has seen the highest annual death toll since 2008, with 7150 civilians and 950 Iraqi security forces killed since January (UNI, 2013). The heart of the problem is that "the Shi'a resent American demands for power sharing, while Sunnis are aggrieved by Washington's installation of the Shi'a as the country's rulers" (Simon, 2007: 25), and the short-term sponsoring of Sunni tribe leaders and their former insurgents hardly equates to a genuine and durable trend towards Sunni acceptance of the political process in Iraq (ICG, 2008b: i). However, some Sunnis have recognised that the U.S. had no intention of restoring their supremacy, continuing the status quo of Shi'a dominance of the Iraqi political process. The 2008 de-Ba'athification reform legislation that was passed was "seriously flawed, and did more to spur the Sunnis' anxieties than redress their grievances" (Simon, 2008: 71). Although the reform law allowed former Sunni members of the Ba'ath party to get their governmental jobs and positions in the security forces back, this was largely irrelevant as positions with any real significance in the Iraqi political process remained under Shiite control.

This inevitably re-sparked the widespread sectarian violence after the U.S withdrawal, as "the hard truth for many Sunnis [is] Shiite rule remains unacceptable" (Simon, 2008: 69). Many people speculated that when the U.S. troops left Iraq, the Sunni tribes would be nothing more than "more entrenched armed groups challenging the Iraqi state" (Arnold, 2008: 27). This represents a similar scenario to that of Iraq before the surge, however after the U.S. sponsoring of movements such as the SOI, these militias are more powerful, better equipped and better trained which leaves Iraq in a more precarious position than pre-2007.

An unwelcome consequence of this is the re-emergence of AQI, fresh with the support of many Sunni insurgents again which has bolstered its numbers from approximately 700 when the U.S. forces withdrew, to over 2500 (Freeman, 2013). The increasingly unstable environment filled with violence that constituted Iraq after the U.S. forces left acted as the perfect scenario for AQI to increase their influence again, after they were drastically weakened after the Anbar Awakening and the more effective counterinsurgency operations in the surge. One Sunni commander said, "now there is no cooperation with the Americans…we have stopped fighting al Qaeda" (Simon, 2008: 69), which demonstrates the need for political reform, rather than short-term fixes for stabilising Iraq. The re-emergence of AQI represents not only a significant strategic loss for the U.S., but drastically jeopardises Iraq's long-term future stability, peace and ability to move forward.

Another consequence of the surge and bottom-up approach to relieving the violence in Iraq is the growth of warlordism. Washington pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into supporting various militias during the Anbar Awakening, much of it being largely unregulated and unaccountable. This empowered many Sunni sheikhs both financially and prestigiously, and enabled them to engage in criminal warfare and compete against other tribes due to the military reinforcement of their militias through U.S. support (Brooks, 2007). A House of Commons defence report covered this issue with regards to the British forces in Basra, referring to the other security issues as the warlords and criminal gangs that were operating in the city:

"Although the reduction in attacks on UK forces can only be welcome, this alone cannot be a measure of success. The initial goal of UK forces in South Eastern Iraq was to establish the security necessary for the development of representative political institutions and for economic reconstruction…. This goal remains unfulfilled." (HCDC, 2007: 36)

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This is applicable to the U.S. operations during the surge as well. Although the levels of violence against civilians and U.S. forces declined, this does not represent a long-term fix to the security problem. The growing trend of warlordism which was indirectly encouraged through the U.S. financial support of the tribes contributed to this, and it is apparent that without the reliable security of the U.S. forces to keep the empowered militias in check – the violence has erupted following their withdrawal.

Whilst the U.S. has to shoulder much of the responsibility for the re-emergence of violence in Iraq after their withdrawal due to the bottom-up approach that it took to provide a short-term fix to the security problem; the Iraqi government is equally at fault for not addressing the root cause of the problems and seeking to reconcile the various sects and integrate them into the Iraqi political process. The surge provided the Iraqi government with "breathing space, or a window of opportunity to make important political changes" (McCausland, 2008: 26), however as previously addressed, these important political changes did not take place, and the Iraqi government has remained predominantly Shi'a with the increasingly marginalised Sunnis resorting back to violence, which is indicative of the growing discontent amongst much of the Iraqi population. It is evident that "the surge's 'buying time' for the Iraqi government has been a wasted effort" (Arnold, 2008: 27) as the security levels in Iraq have deteriorated back to the pre-surge levels and it would appear that "the Maliki government wants to rule Iraq with a Shiite majority" (McCausland, 2008: 27), showing no desire to make any real political progress. Despite this, the U.S. is responsible for not using its leverage against the Iraqi government to push through more changes to the political process and ultimately "the Bush administration's approach to collaboration in Iraq was flawed because it conceded too much to the Iraqi government" (Arnold, 2008: 27). Instead, the U.S. should have adopted a multilateral approach to rebuilding Iraq, drawing upon the assistance of "neighbouring countries, European allies and the United Nations" (Simon, 2008: 71). A multilateral approach would have been more successful in integrating the Sunnis and Kurds into the government and thus remedying the cause of much of the violence as it is "not conspicuously stage-managed by the U.S." (ibid: 74), encouraging more assistance from various regional actors such as Saudi Arabia who "for their part, would like to see the UN involved and are prepared to use their influence and money to impel the parties in Iraq toward reconciliation" (ibid: 75). Therefore, although the Iraqi government is guilty of not showing much desire to reconcile the various factions into the political process, the U.S. should have used its leverage to force through more thorough political changes to unify Iraq and stabilise the country, with the assistance of other regional actors.

Conclusion

When the U.S. withdrew the last of their military forces from Iraq in 2011, they left behind a country that was still gripped in sectarian violence, with little political progress made that would give hope to ending the conflict. The coalition did not have sufficient post-war plans for rebuilding Iraq and the security vacuum that was created resulted in the emergence of militias that are still continuing to cause violence in Iraq until this day. To argue that the coalition achieved victory in Iraq as a result of the surge and Anbar Awakening would be short sighted, as these two phenomena were only successful in reducing the short-term levels of violence and providing the U.S. forces with an exit strategy, leaving behind a country which has sunk back to its 2007 levels of violence – seemingly moving "from bad to worse" (Nasrawi, 2013). The Iraq war represents a major strategic loss for the U.S.-led coalition. It cost the U.S. government over $1.7 trillion, with estimates that over the next 40 years that could rise to $6 trillion (Brandus, 2013), as well as costing the lives of over 4800 coalition troops. The coalition failed at providing security for the Iraqi people; with the current statistics showing that up to 127,000 civilian deaths have resulted from the violence that erupted after the invasion (IBC, 2013). The Iraq War has created a security threat to the coalition, rather than alleviating it. Al-Qaeda's presence in Iraq before the invasion was non-existent, however the sectarian violence that emerged after Saddam's removal from power acted as fertile breeding ground for extremism and led to the evolution of al-Qaeda's influence, with reports suggesting that AQI are as powerful again as they were before the surge and Anbar Awakening (Freeman, 2013). The biggest victor from the Iraq War was Iran, who have significantly increased their power in the region by exerting their control over many of the Shi'a militias and directly influencing many politicians in the Iraqi government. The unstable and weak Iraq also poses no threat to Iran, whose regional aspirations were previously kept in check before the invasion. It is clear the strategic losses fair outweighed the gains for the U.S.-led coalition, therefore it cannot be said that victory in the Iraq War was achieved.

Despite the long-term problems that the surge and Anbar Awakening had on Iraq's stability, the synergistic

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interaction between the two did lead to a significant drop in violence and in strictly military terms, it was a tactical success (McCausland, 2008: 25). The change in counterinsurgency strategy, bolstered by an additional 30,000 U.S. troops and the support and cooperation of the Sunni militias together were successful in generating short-term stability for Iraq. However, military success "is not sufficient overall…progress must also occur politically, economically, and diplomatically" (ibid: 24). This progression did not take place, and as a result the U.S. have left a country which is still gripped with sectarian violence, growing levels of religious extremism and with a government that appears unlikely to resolve the worsening situation. Therefore, it can be concluded that not only did the coalition not achieve victory in the Iraq War, but the surge and Anbar Awakening were only successful in reducing the violence levels in the short-term and providing the U.S. with an exit strategy; negatively contributing to Iraq's long term future stability.

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