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THE UNITED STATES AND YEMEN: COIN IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT

by

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The problems Yemen faces today seem insurmountable. The geographic divisions widened by imperialism were cemented by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. His heavy-handed suppression of the Houthi rebellion on the border with Saudi Arabia, the Southern secessionist movement, and the Arab Spring protesters delegitimized the regime in the eyes of the Yemeni people. With President Saleh at the helm, water and oil resources were squandered and mismanaged. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has found this volatile, ungoverned environment a welcome area in which to recruit, equip, train, and conduct operations. That their antagonistic narrative continues to find a welcome audience in the tribal areas of Yemen and their securing of safe havens is testament to the failed policies of the Saleh regime.

The United States has focused on eradicating AQAP since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). In its counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign against AQAP, the United States has focused almost all its effort in working with the Yemeni government. While enjoying a modicum of success, this success has been limited to the elimination of AQAP operatives through kinetic strikes. Moreover, the gains were tempered by President Saleh, who at times acted in direct opposition to America's goals of eradicating AQAP. His recent removal will likely do little to counter the array of problems Yemen faces.

In this light, America's foreign policy toward Yemen and AQAP is inadequate in securing our regional interests and needs to be overhauled. To delineate which COIN practices may work best, an investigation of past COIN campaigns was conducted. Malaya, Nicaragua, and Somalia were chosen to provide the widest possible range of tactics used in fighting an insurgency where the host nation government is illegitimate, and represent both success and failure. These three case studies formed the basis of three courses of action: working with the government, circumventing the government and working directly with the tribes, and assisting in the state failure. While all three courses of action have merit, only the third course of action addresses the root causes oftheproblems in Yemen. For this reason, the only way to eliminate AQAP as a threat to the United States is to work through the Yemeni tribes without the central government acting as a roadblock.

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ABSTRACT

The problems Yemen faces today seem insurmountable. The geographic divisions widened by imperialism were cemented by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. His heavy-handed suppression of the Houthi rebellion on the border with Saudi Arabia, the Southern secessionist movement, and the Arab Spring protesters delegitimized the regime in the eyes of the Yemeni people. With President Saleh at the helm, water and oil resources were squandered and mismanaged. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has found this volatile, ungoverned environment a welcome area in which to recruit, equip, train, and conduct operations. That their antagonistic narrative continues to find a welcome audience in the tribal areas of Yemen and their securing of safe havens is testament to the failed policies of the Saleh regime.

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problems in Yemen. For this reason, the only way to eliminate AQAP as a threat to the United States is to work through the Yemeni tribes without the central government acting as a roadblock.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQAY	al-Qaeda in Yemen
BN	Battalion
COA	Course of Action
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CT	Counterterrorism
DoD	Department of Defense
FLOSY	Front for the Liberation of Southern Yemen
FM	Field Manual
FSLN	Sandinista Front for National Liberation (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GO	Governmental Organization
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HN	Host Nation
IO	Information Operations
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
ME	Middle East
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLF	National Liberation Front
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PETN	Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate
SNM	Somali National Movement
SRP	Supreme Revolutionary Council
SSDF	Somali Salvation Defense Front
UN	United Nations
USC	United Somali Congress
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic
YSP	Yemen Socialist Party

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Yemen is a country in turmoil. The Houthi rebellion on the border with Saudi Arabia, the Southern secessionist movement, and the growth of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) are the physical manifestations of deeper issues within the country. The poor use of dwindling natural resources, the pervasive use of selective patronage toward the tribes and clans within its borders, and the lack of good governance are among the issues which the Saleh regime faced, and did little to counter. The dramatic rise of anti-government sentiment and the rapidly dwindling economy have dramatically weakened the Yemeni state. Additionally, the policies of President Saleh seem to have been chosen based on the importance of regime survival rather than Yemeni prosperity. Unfortunately for President Saleh, the forces arrayed against him were too powerful to be ignored. On November 23, 2011, he signed a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered deal by which he agreed to step down from power in exchange for immunity from prosecution.[1] The policies of President Saleh's 33-year rule resulted in large swaths of ungoverned and undergoverned territory, enabling AQAP to increase its power and influence in the region. While the United States has demonstrated its resolve in helping Yemen counter AQAP, the lack of a clear U.S. strategy toward Yemen, coupled with American COIN doctrine, which does not provide a clear roadmap on how to conduct COIN with or on behalf of a weak or illegitimate state, has produced uneven results. With the realization that the central government in Yemen has been ineffective in countering AQAP, how can the United States craft new policies in order to deny AQAP the ability of to harm the interests of the United States? Are there past COIN practices that have been implemented with, or on behalf of, a weak or illegitimate government that can form that basis of this new policy?

In order to determine the most effective course of action (COA) for the United States with respect to the myriad of problems in Yemen, a systematic exploration of the

[1] Vice President Abd-Rabbua Mansour Hadi announced that elections will be held in February 2012.

causes of volatility within the country must be completed. This is especially relevant in light of the recent dramatic increase in (and government suppression of) protest activity. As such, while the U.S. has focused on AQAP as the most pressing threat from Yemen, the possibility of regional instability due to a failed regime should also be considered. The return of President Saleh from Saudi Arabia[2] did not preclude this possibility, and only served to feed the flames of discord among the disaffected in Yemen. Whoever takes the reins of power in Yemen will face these same problems. As a result, a description of U.S. interests as well as a description of current U.S. involvement in the region is also warranted. With a clear vision of the geopolitical and sociological landscape in Yemen, a look at past counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts where weak states faced insurgencies will be explored in order to glean best practices for possible inclusion into overall U.S. and military policy recommendations. To that end, and because of the relatively large body of literature dealing with the case study countries, Malaya, Nicaragua and Somalia will be included in the study. The policy recommendations made in this paper should thus apply not only to Yemen, but to other countries where a weak state has been detrimental to U.S. efforts.

B. YEMEN AND THE DUTIES OF THE STATE

The lack of effective governing mechanisms and practices in Yemen are well documented. However, in order to ascertain the level of poor governance in Yemen, a look at what a state should do to support its population must be delineated. The duties of the state towards its population are rooted in the tradition that the governing institutions must provide for the basic welfare of the people within its borders and, in return, the people support the government, providing the legitimacy for governance. According to Ghani, Lockhart, and Carnahan, there are ten specific areas on which the state should focus, listed in Table 1.[3]

---

[2] President Saleh returned to Yemen from Saudi Arabia on September 23, 2011, where he had been receiving medical care for injuries sustained in attacks from protesters on June 3, 2011.

[3] Ashraf Ghani, Clare Lockhart and Michael Carnahan, "Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State-Building," Overseas Development Institute, London, September 2005, 6.

Legitimate monopoly on the means of violence	Administrative Control
Management of public finances	Investment in human capital
Delineation of citizenship rights and duties	Provision of infrastructure services
Formation of the market	Management of the state's assets (including the environment, natural resources, and cultural assets)
International relations (including entering into international contracts and public borrowing)	Rule of law

Table 1. State Focus Areas (From Ghani, Lockhart and Carnahan, 2005).

It is certainly true that not all nation-states in the world are equally adept at – or capable of - fulfilling each of the ten duties listed above. There are some who argue that the history of Yemen precludes the emergence of a strong, viable nation state capable of effectively governing the country. According to Barrett, "Every ideological group, tribe, clan, and sect wraps itself in its own version of Yemeni identity, leading inextricably to a recurring cycle of conflict that makes chronic instability the norm in political and economic life."[4] Unfortunately, in addition to the problems beyond the control of its leadership such as the sociological landscape and rapidly dwindling natural resources, the Yemeni government is acting counter to most, if not all, of the duties of the nation with respect to its population. Thus, while many authors argue that due to its historical context Yemen is not a proper nation-state, the sheer power of the Yemeni central government dictates that it act in the best interests of the entire citizenry of the country, but chooses to act only on behalf of those who contribute to his power over the country. Thus, with respect to the duties of the nation to its people, the Saleh regime failed much of the population on most counts.

For example, Ghani (quoting from Weber) says that a monopoly on the means of violence is the primary criterion for statehood. However, it is often reduced, especially in a weak state, to "a simple monopoly on violence and then to little more than control of a

[4] Roby C. Barrett, "Yemen: A Different Political Paradigm in Context," Joint Special Operations University Report 11–3, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, May 2011, 4.

capital city."[5] A monopoly on the means of violence simply means that the government is the controlling authority within the country in terms of providing security for the nation – both from threats from external actors and from those within the nation who seek to harm it. In Yemen, the monopoly on the means of violence serves to delegitimize the government by providing security for only a select portion of the population. In other words, while a portion of the population benefits from the security provided by the state, there is a corresponding segment of the population which not only does not benefit from state security, but whose safety and security are actually taken away by the very institutions which are supposed to protect them.

There have been many instances where the Yemeni government has abused its monopoly on violence. First, the Saleh regime recruited fighters from certain tribes to participate in the fight against the Houthis.[6] By doing so, Saleh was not only better able to suppress the rebellion, but he also divided and weakened the tribes, making them less capable of posing any sort of threat to the central government. This abuse of power is highlighted by the fact that to refuse to supply fighters at Saleh's request would most certainly have resulted in a reduction in patronage received by the tribes. A more recent example was seen in March of 2011, when snipers killed more than fifty and injured hundreds of demonstrators in Taghyir Square in Sana'a (the capital of Yemen) who were trapped in the square by burning tires. Most of the gunshot wounds were to the heads or chests of the protestors, indicating that the shooters were professionally trained. Furthermore, according to most news accounts, the shooters were sanctioned by the central government.[7]

There are several other aspects of the government which run counter to the duties of the state toward its people. The patronage system in Yemen contributes to many of these problems. By providing support to only a select portion of its population, the

[5]Ghani et al., "Closing the Sovereignty Gap," 6.

[6]Boucek,Christopher and Ottaway, Marina eds. "Yemen on the Brink,"Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2010, 46.

[7] Adrian Blomfield, "Yemen Protests: Evidence Snipers Shot to Kill," *The Telegraph*, August 12, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/8392796/Yemen-protests-Evidence-snipers-shot-to-kill.html, (accessed August 12, 2011).

government is simultaneously providing ineffective administrative control of the country, mismanaging public finances, and investing unevenly in the human capital and infrastructure services in the country.

It would be naïve to believe that all nations have the ability to provide for each of the areas Ghani et al. describe. For example, the use of administrative control within the borders of a country with a strong history of tribes and clans would be met with equally strong resentment by the population. However, President Saleh provided support for only certain tribes within the country, thus further fracturing a society which, according to a USAID report, was already heterogeneous along "geographic, tribal, religious and economic lines."[8]

C. THE PERILS OF CURRENT COIN DOCTRINE

There is discussion in the literature about how to improve governance within a weak state, including prospects for other states' assistance. However, the literature only offers generalities regarding how other states can conduct COIN operations on behalf of a weak or illegitimate state. This issue is particularly troubling because, in the absence of legitimacy, the population within undergoverned or ungoverned territory is unlikely to cooperate with either the state or outside intervening forces, no matter how altruistic their intentions may be. In many cases, these areas have been repeatedly neglected or abused. The disproportionate use of patronage among the tribes, unfavorable land appropriation, unfunded civil projects, and unjust incarceration of tribal sheikhs has all contributed to tribal resentment of the Saleh regime.

One of the effects of these injustices is the large swaths of undergoverned territories within Yemen. The vacuum created by the lack of attention by the central government has enabled AQAP to find safe havens, training grounds, and willing recruits to bolster their ranks. Part of the flow of extremists to undergoverned areas was prompted by the increase of counterterrorism efforts in Saudi Arabia. According to Christopher Boucek, al-Qaeda operatives were encouraged by their local Saudi

[8] United States Agency for International Development, "Yemen Corruption Assessment," ARD, Burlington, Vermont, September 25, 2006.

commanders to relocate to Yemen in order to find respite from attacks by the Saudi forces.[9] More importantly, however, the opportunity for such relocations was made available by the simple existence of areas where the government exerts no control, or is viewed negatively by the local population.

D. AQAP AND U.S. INTERESTS

The existence of AQAP, with a proclamation of wider goals since its inception, is a drain on both Saudi and Yemeni resources, but contributes to regional instability as well. More germane to U.S. interests, however, is the proven ability of AQAP to commit acts of violence against the interests of the United States. This has been seen in the attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000 to the attempted Christmas Day attack on the Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit in 2009 as well as the plot to put bombs in packages bound for the U.S. via UPS and FedEx. To counter the waxing power of AQAP, the United States has recently increased its focus on Yemen as a partner in the war against transnational terrorism. The U.S. provides direct economic and advisory support in order to bolster the Yemeni government as well as supporting the districts far removed from, and little supported by, the central government. In addition to economic support, the U.S. has been aiding Yemen's fight against AQAP by giving military aid and assistance to Yemen over the past several years. Despite recent successes, the evidence of AQAP deterioration is suspect.

E. METHODOLOGY

The United States, thus, finds itself in a quandary in how to deal with the situation in Yemen. The problems which beset Yemen are systemic and enduring, and many feel that the Saleh regime did as much to prolong the fight with AQAP as it did to win it. In order to counter the threat from AQAP, the United States must therefore craft its policies and military strategy with a realization of the importance of state and tribal dynamics,

[9]Christopher Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," from *Yemen on the Brink*, Boucek, Christopher and Ottaway, Marina, eds., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010, 14.

resource scarcity, ineffective governance, and how these problems allow for AQAP to be seen as an attractive alternative to the status quo.

1. Chapter II: Yemen as a Failing State

In order to do so Chapter II will identify how Yemen fits the description of a failing state. Essential to this argument is a discussion of the history of Yemen, with an emphasis on the rise, rule, and demise President Saleh. Just as important, however, is a thorough understanding of the sociopolitical dynamics within Yemen, especially with regard to the tribal confederations. Through this lens, we will show that the pervasive use of patronage and associated corruption within Yemen, when combined with the dwindling resources and shrinking economy of Yemen have dramatically weakened the ability of the government to deal with the host of problems with which it is beset. The result is not only increased dissension in the general population, but the creation of a power vacuum, especially in ungoverned areas, which AQAP seeks to exploit through violent and non-violent means. This chapter will also show that the current U.S. involvement and strategy toward Yemen, while growing in scope, has proved to be largely ineffective, and will continue to decrease in effectiveness if not changed.

2. Chapter III: Analysis of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

While Chapter II discussed the Yemeni landscape and how it is particularly susceptible to the growth of insurgents, Chapter III will delve into AQAP itself. Included in this discussion is its formation from the Saudi and Yemeni AQ affiliates into a single entity. This chapter will also explore how AQAP has used a grievance-based narrative to find a sympathetic audience in some of the tribal regions in Yemen. Finally, this chapter will describe potential weaknesses within the AQAP narrative and associated operations which can be exploited.

3. Chapter IV: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Practice

To that end, this thesis will explore how best to conduct COIN operations in partnership with or on behalf of the weak Yemeni government, to fight the influence of AQAP, an international terrorist organization seeking to export violence to western

nations. In order to provide a systematic, defensible approach, the study will first explain what COIN is and how it is relevant to fighting insurgencies in places like Yemen. We will identify why we believe COIN is a better option to other methods available to strategists and how its proper implementation has the ability to disrupt or contain the violence that AQAP has the potential to spread.

4. Chapter V: Case Study Analysis

Chapter V will use case study analysis in order to extract best practices for possible inclusion in a revised U.S. strategy toward Yemen. In order to choose the most relevant historical cases, it was necessary to find examples of countries with illegitimate central governments which also had insurgencies within their borders. To that end, we have selected the British Malaya, the Somoza Regime in Nicaragua, and the Barre Regime in Somalia, for inclusion in this analysis. Each case study will describe the sociopolitical landscape within the country and a description of the insurgency with which it was faced. It will then systematically explore the methods used to counter the insurgent forces and whether or not they were successful.

5. Chapter VI: Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Chapter VI will focus on COIN application towards three separate courses of action and policy recommendations. The best practices culled from case study analysis will be further investigated to see if they can be used in Yemen. If applicable, they will be included as recommended changes in U.S. policy toward Yemen. These recommendations will include both short-term and long-range goals that, when used as part of a systematic plan, will provide the surest way to secure U.S. interests in Yemen.

II. YEMEN

A. YEMEN: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Yemen is a weak state for numerous reasons, including its relative newness, tribal heterogeneity, geographic divisions, and its dwindling natural resources. Moreover, imperial influences in Yemen from the Ottoman Empire in the north and the British in the south solidified the divided structure of the country, which have been widened by counterproductive governmental policies over the last several decades. The cleavages and tensions have manifested themselves with growing alacrity in recent years, and have made it easier for AQAP to become deeply entrenched in Yemen. Without a clear understanding of these problems, it will be difficult to prescribe effective policy recommendations to further U.S. interests in the region.

1. Yemen and Imperial Hubris – The Delineation of Geographical and Tribal Fractures

Yemen has been subjected to foreign occupation many times in the past, most notably by the Ottoman Empire and the British. The Ottomans learned quickly that the tribal loyalties were fleeting. This was especially true of the northern highland Zaydi tribes, who objected even when outside rule was imposed by fellow Muslims, marching with the platform of uniting the *umma*.[10] While the Ottomans held sway over Yemen for years (until the empire's collapse in 1918), it was the British experience which had the larger historical impact. Initially, Britain was only looking for a deep water port to refuel its ships transiting from Suez to Bombay. To that end, Britain conquered and held the southern port of Aden from 1839,[11] and continued to use the port after the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Misunderstanding the nature of the tribal system and the style and form of the leadership of the sheikhs and imams within Yemen hampered British rule of Aden from

[10] Victoria Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 44.

[11] Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes*, 31.

its beginning in 1839 to their departure in 1967. The British thought that the leaders within Yemen would follow the same system of rule followed in the western world. According to Clark, the Arab world holds very different ideas on the rule of governance. This is especially true among the tribes in Yemen, who believe that the idea of 'rule' is centered on wisdom, arbitration, and justice. Further, the idea of absolute power in governance was also a foreign idea. Clark goes on to point out that in Yemen, the sheikhs were not absolute rulers and only continued to hold their position to the extent that they could provide for their tribes. The British did not recognize this stark reality within Yemen, and treated the sultans like absolute monarchs, reinforcing their power by doling out concessions based on how acquiescent they were to British dictums, rather than how good they were in the administration of justice, which was their traditional source of power.[12] In this way, tribes learned to make promises of obedience but to act in their best interest whenever it suited them. For example, one Sultan bought the loyalty of several other tribes and tried to retake the port from the British by force. This line of thinking was anachronistic to the British, but was actually quite normal for the tribes, whose loyalty was never absolute.

Despite these misunderstandings, the British (often through force) kept their stronghold in Aden until 1967. The British never held ambitions for expansion of their control past the port of Yemen and its immediate surrounding areas. To that end, they agreed with the Ottoman Empire to divide Yemen into Northern and Southern geographical areas. These geographic lines were set down in the Joint Anglo-Turkish Boundary Commission of 1902–1905, with the addition of the "Violet Line" in 1914.[13] The British used this geographic line as a buffer against incursions by the northern Zaydi tribes. However, Imam Yahya (who was Imam of Zaydi tribes) continually pushed these boundaries, as he claimed that the Zaydis were the rightful rulers of all Yemen.[14] While

[12] Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes*, 34.

[13] John M. Willis, "Leaving Only Question-Marks: Geographies of Rule in Modern Yemen," in *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen*, eds. Madawi Al-Rasheed and Robert Vitalis (Gorndonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 128.

[14] Victoria Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes*, 43.

it made sense at the time, the separation of Yemen into Northern and Southern geographical lines calcified a sociopolitical division in the country which reverberates even today.

Figure 1. North and South Yemen (From Carnegie Endowment).

Northern Yemen was given de facto independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 due to its loss in WWI. Subsequent to the Ottoman departure from Yemen, Yahya steadfastly kept the north isolated from the rest of the world. He limited travel into the country, but also forbade travel outside Yemen until 1947.[15] After Yahya's death, his son Ahmed broke with the isolationist tradition of his father, and signed onto the United Arab States confederation (a part of the United Arab Republic—headed by Egypt and Syria). The Yemeni military began sending their officers to Egyptian schools and other

[15] Sarah Phillips, *Yemen's Democracy Experiment in Regional Perspective:* Patronage and Pluralized Authoritarianism (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 43.

training venues, which held great impact on them.[16] In the civil war that followed shortly after, the republican forces were supported by 70,000 Egyptian military forces that were sent to Yemen. In this civil war, the tribesmen were able to hold off the forces and come out on top.[17] The government which came after was a mixture of modernity and traditional tribal norms. It was able to wield enough power to counter the government in southern Yemen after the British left in 1967.

Yet even before they left, the British never fully understood the various tribes, affiliations, and the turbulent struggles which ensued as a result. This was compounded by the creation of both the Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Southern Yemen (FLOSY), both of which were dedicated to the removal of occupation powers. The NLF was supported by Egypt's President Nasser, whose ideas of pan-Arabism were gaining ground throughout the region.[18] FLOSY was the main competitor of the NLF. While Nasser tried to unify both groups, they went to war with each other instead, which set south Yemen toward a Marxist future.[19]

As discussed above, the British did not devote resources to the immediate area outside the port of Aden. These disenfranchised tribes sought to wrest control of southern Yemen from the British, which became easier with the waning power of the British in the area. The British recognized that they couldn't stay in Aden indefinitely, and issued a defense white paper in 1966, which signaled the end of their presence in Yemen. All agreements between the British and the sultans, sheikhs, and tribes in the region they had co-opted with monetary disbursements were considered to be invalid after 1968. The lines of demarcation between North and South Yemen were thus complete, and the two sides continued to go down very different paths.

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16 Mohammed A. Zabarah, *The Yemeni Revolution of 1962 seen as a Social Revolution in Contemporary Yemen:* "Politics and Historical Background," ed. P.R. Prinham (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 78.

17 David M. Witty, "Egypt in North Yemen, 1962–1967," *The Journal of Military History* 65, no. 2 (April 2001): 401–439.

18 Joseph Kostiner, *The Struggle for South Yemen* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 120.

19 Robert W. Stookey, *South Yemen: A Marxist Republic in Arabia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 63.

Free from British rule, the Marxist NLF moved for Yemeni unity through a platform of Arab solidarity. However, while they felt that all Yemeni people were part of a single unit, they emphasized unity chiefly among the local tribes in South Yemen.[20] Furthermore, the NLF sought to eliminate "tribal spirit" (al-Ruh al-Qibliyyah), as well as the schisms they felt were brought about by the British. On the other hand, the former Imamate in the North continued to support the tribes. Now a republic, it supported both the Hashid and Bakil tribal confederations, and included them in their leadership structure. The divergent paths of the north and south made it impractical for unification between the two sides until the profits from the sale of oil began in the 1980s. By this time, the north had become the dominant player in Yemen, and was led by its president —Ali Abdullah Saleh, who came to power there in 1978.

2. Saleh and the Road to Disunity

The period between Saleh's rise to power in the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the unification between it and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south in 1990 was fraught with both internal struggle and external tensions, much of which centered on its relations with Saudi Arabia.[21] Faced with the pressure of office, Saleh looked outside his regime for help. While Saudi Arabia had provided assistance in the past[22], it angered Saleh by claiming areas within Yemen, including the Hadrahmaut region, part of the Shabwa region, and by distributing passports to Hadhramis.[23] Thus, instead of courting additional support from Saudi Arabia, Saleh alienated his country further through his support for Saddam Hussein and Iraq, during the first Gulf War in 1991. To that end, the YAR founded the Arab Cooperation Council along with Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq. This pleased Iraq, as Saddam Hussein wished for a stronger Yemen to counter the powerful influence of Saudi Arabia in the region.

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[20] Joseph Kostiner, *The Struggle for South Yemen* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 84.

[21] Robert D. Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic:* "The Politics of Development 1962–1986," (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1987), 94–97, 118.

[22] Yemenis working in the Saudi Arabian oil fields sent millions of dollars in remittances back to Yemen.

[23] Clark, *Yemen:* "Dancing on the Heads of Snakes," 133.

The merger of north and south Yemen in 1990 brought together two very different regions under one banner. It was therefore inevitable that tensions flared in the newly united country. In 1990, especially due to the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent disappearance of the support it gave to the PDRY, the YAR was in a strong position to lead the country. Unfortunately for Yemen, and fortunately for President Saleh, the country was in need of support from any source that was equipped to support it through revenue-bearing projects.[24] President Saleh pinned his hopes on the oil fields in Yemen, with the desire that they would enable Yemen to pull itself out of its impoverished state.

3. How to Lose Friends and Alienate People – Divide and Conquer?

The constitution by which Yemen began to govern itself gave a large amount of power to the executive branch. Based on a 1972 draft, the constitution was based on international norms, rather than on the political realities within Yemen.[25] The document was further modified in 1994 and 2001, scaling back some of the more liberal promises made, giving even more power to the central government. While the constitution gave considerable power to the executive, the new Yemen did little to ease the apprehensions of the people it purported to rule. For example, Saleh used his army to—in a heavy-handed way—protect the oil installations which provided the income his country desperately needed. In doing so, he exacerbated tribal feelings of alienation.

While it seemed the best course of action, the increased bonds of friendship between Yemen and Iraq couldn't have come at a worse time for Yemen. Merely two months after the merger between north and south Yemen, Iraq invaded Kuwait. When asked by the United States to support its efforts against Iraq, Yemen chose to side with Iraq, thus solidifying the rift between it and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia quickly revoked the preferential terms it had given to Yemeni workers within the kingdom by telling all 800,000 expatriates they had one month to leave the country.[26] Not only did this put a

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[24] Clark, *Yemen*, 131.

[25] Sarah Phillips, *Yemen and the Politics of Permanent Crisis* (Routledge, Oxon, UK, 2011), 40.

[26] Clark, *Yemen*, 136.

strain on the already weak job market within Yemen, the remittances that had been coming from Saudi Arabia to Yemen from these workers ceased as well. Yemen's support of Iraq also meant the cessation of financial assistance from the United States. Despite clear warnings from Secretary of State Baker, Yemen did not take the matter seriously and thus lost the $70 million per year the United States had been giving to the country. While it cost Yemen millions of dollars to do so, siding with Iraq played well to the domestic audience because of the seeming quickness with which Saudi Arabia let the infidel into its country. In this way, Saleh yet again weakened his country for the short-term gain of solidarity with Iraq without thinking of the longer-term consequences of alienating his allies in the region.

The speed with which Yemen lost a large portion of its income must have alarmed Saleh more than he was willing to admit. Even at this early stage in a united Yemen's history, Saleh and the highland Zaydis had consolidated control over the finance and defense sectors of the country, and there was little that anybody could do about the already-present patronage system which was growing larger with each passing month. One of the methods for the north to receive their patronage was through the funneling of oil revenue (from southern oil fields) directly to the coffers in the north – and there was little that could be done about it. For example, when the southern defense minister learned how much money was being funneled to the northern tribes, his efforts at putting an end to the patronage being doled out "brought him into direct confrontation with members of the president's own clan who occupied many of the most senior posts in the former YAR's army."[27] Thus, even at this early stage the patronage system was quite entrenched within governmental practices.

Even though they had been nominally unified in 1990, the tensions between the south and the north were still present and came to a head soon afterward. The parliamentary elections in 1993 were part of the tension, as the leaders of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) felt compelled to leave Sana'a in the weeks directly prior to the elections in order to voice their displeasure with the regime. Al-Bidhi, the leader of the YSP, left Sana'a again in August of 1993, this time detailing the grievances shared by

27 Clark, *Yemen*, 139.

those in the south, and further demanding that the issues be resolved before his return to Sana'a. Although there were strong efforts at mediation (led by Egypt, Oman, and the UAE), there were no agreements for over a year. In fact, on the first anniversary of the 1993 parliamentary elections, elements of the militaries from both the north and the south began fighting, thus starting the civil war of 1994. The south formally seceded from the north in May of 1994. The north, under the leadership of Saleh, regained the south in July of 1994.

While Saudi Arabia supported southern secession through the provision of Saudi weapons, the south was doomed to fail for two key reasons. First, the United States was pro-unification, which ensured that the actors in the region would not go overboard in their support for the YSP in Aden. More importantly, president Saleh was quite adroit at playing to the fears of the Yemeni people. Saleh portrayed the separatists as malevolent actors bent on destroying the high ideal of a unified Yemen. President Saleh also used the words of religion in his favor, deeming the southerners who wanted to secede as 'godless Marxists.'[28] Saleh also had the backing of the northern religious leaders who supported the war by calling it a jihad in the name of God, and further claimed that the northerners were going to heaven while the southerners were going to hell. In these key ways, the rift between the north and south was not only present before 1990, but solidified by the policies of the Saleh government subsequent to the unification.

One of the biggest divisions between the north and the south is seen in the pervasive patronage system in Yemen. The wealth within Yemen began to shift from the periphery to the core with shocking speed. The loss of remittances from foreign workers coupled with the new income from oil meant that the money was coming directly to the central government, and not to the poorest of the population who sent their sons away to find a better life. The shift of power and wealth affected the ability of the central state to influence all facets of life grew as well. The government found that it was able to dole out money and favors in order to earn the loyalty of the tribal sheikhs. The importance of this shift in loyalty cannot be overstated. Indeed, the legitimacy of the sheikhs no longer rest on their ability to provide for the welfare of their tribe, but on their willingness to

[28] Clark, *Yemen*, 143.

show loyalty to the government. The shift of the sheikh's loyalty meant that the bond between the sheikhs and the tribal members weakened, lessening the solidarity and thus the power of the tribe. Therefore, when the government finds itself unable to suppress a rebellion, it can simply ask the tribe to do it instead—or face the end of funds and favors being handed to the tribe.

Patronage within Yemen is truly systemic. Some tribes benefit from patronage while others do not, and the government must be careful with how resources are doled out or face the prospect of civil strife yet again. In fact, it seems the only prerequisite to the receipt of patronage is to be seen as influential by the government. This could mean that the receiver is influential within their own limited circle, but it could also be that they are part of a balance of power scheme by the government.

In order to maintain a balance of power, Saleh was more inclusive in patronage than otherwise would be expected. The inner circle of the Yemeni government is comprised of Saleh's family members, who also control key posts within the military. The top posts within the military are also given to Saleh's tribe – the Sanhan. Furthermore, the patronage system within Yemen is not comprised of only money, but the provision of civil service and military jobs as well. In this way, the government uses patronage to "co-opt, divide, reward and punish"[29] Yemeni elites through the patronage system, to the detriment of governmental institutions.

Moving the path to affluence from merit to loyalty has weakened the Yemeni economy in other ways. At 35 percent, the tax base in Yemen is the highest in the region. Importantly, however, (in 2010) only 7.3 percent of Yemen's GDP came from taxes. Some companies and individuals can negotiate lower tax rates, while others use two sets of books—one which reflects reality, and the other which they use for tax reporting purposes.[30] The practice of using two sets of accounting books is not only necessary for a company's survival, but it makes them complicit in criminal activities. This type of corruption is not limited to private sector corporations, as both the military and other government ministries (such as the Ministry of Education) use fake employment rosters

[29] Phillips, *Yemen*, 57.

[30] Phillips, *Yemen*, 62.

to increase their funding.[31] It is therefore not surprising that this practice is rampant, as nobody in Yemen expects revenues from collected taxes to be put to good use.

B. YEMEN'S RESOURCE PROBLEMS – OIL, WATER, AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The use of patronage by the government weakens some tribes, and strengthens others. In the volatile times that Yemen is facing, the only way for it to lessen civil unrest is to either suppress it through force, or to widen its base of support (or solidify its current support) through additional disbursement of favors and money. Both of these tactics have been used widely in the past, but are impossible to sustain. The dwindling of resources within Yemen is one of the most serious problems facing the country today. Oil is the lynchpin of the Yemeni economy. It has provided the government with an income that the country had never before enjoyed. In fact, oil had accounted for over 75 percent of government revenue.[32] However, oil revenues dropped by about 40 percent in 2009, caused not only by a depletion of resources but by a drop in the price of oil on the world market from its high point in 2008. To make matters worse, Saleh announced in 2010 that Yemen became a net *importer* of oil. The government claimed that the export of natural gas would make up for these losses, but the figures claimed by the regime were four times what were actually received.[33] Part of the problem is how the production licenses are set up. There are three separate agreements for the extraction of natural resources – one for oil, one for natural gas, and a separate one for a combination of both. The companies that have a contract for oil therefore do not spend their resources developing natural gas, because the contracts under which they operate does not pay them to do so.[34] Despite these problems, many of which are not beyond the control of the government, nothing is being done to prepare Yemen for a future without oil.

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[31] United States Agency for International Development, *Yemen Corruption Assessment* (ARD, Burlington, Vermont, USA, 2006), 42.

[32] Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 4.

[33] Phillips, *Yemen*, 32.

[34] Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 5.

The same is true for water. Yemen is the region's driest country, and one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. According to Boucek, the water problems are due to rising domestic consumption, poor water management, absence of resource governing structures, and wasteful irrigation techniques. In short, water is being extracted faster than the water aquifers are being filled.[35] The lack of oversight means that anybody who wants water, and has the necessary capital to do so, can dig and extract a much as they want. The importation of water drilling rigs is not subject to customs duties, licensing, or taxation. As a result, the ministry of water and environment has proclaimed that 99 percent of all water extraction is unlicensed. Not only has the central government done nothing to solve the problem, they have transferred authority to the peripheral governorates responsible for their own water procurement[36], thus hiding the fact that much of the territory within Yemen lies outside their control.

One of the biggest contributors to the water problem is the extensive growth of qat, a water-intensive narcotic plant that is widely popular in Yemen. In fact, qat can be grown year-round, and be cultivated within just weeks of being planted. Thus, a farmer can earn much more than they could otherwise receive, especially as there is no regulation in its production. Qat production takes up so much of the arable land within Yemen that the country has become a net food importer. This is quite troubling because the UN World Food Program noted that the country's childhood malnutrition rates are one of the highest in the world, with 97 percent of Yemeni households not bringing in enough money to buy food.[37]

The lack of food in Yemen is becoming more acute due to the high birth rate in the country. At 3.4 percent, it is one of the highest in the world, especially considering the dire economic straits of the country. Over two-thirds of the population is under 24 years of age, and the population is expected to double in the next twenty years to 40 million. Worse, less than one-third of the population lives in an urban environment. The dispersed nature of the population makes the provision of basic resources, including food,

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[35] Christopher Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 6. Boucek goes on to note that water extraction rates in Sana'a are estimated at four times the rate at which they are being replenished.

[36] Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 7.

[37] Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 9.

water, and education, much more difficult to achieve, necessitating self-sufficiency in the tribes. Further compounding the problem is the introduction of a large number of new job seekers into a shrinking job market—unemployment is currently listed at a conservative 35 percent, and continues to grow.[38]

The confluence of problems in Yemen is partly due to the lack of natural resources and the sociopolitical dynamics of the country. However, the problems have been greatly exacerbated by the way President Saleh used patronage to run the country. It fostered a mindset of corruption and made clear that poor governance practices are not mutually exclusive of receiving government payouts. In other words, the resources of the country are being spent foolishly, and the population – especially in the rural areas – is paying the price. Saleh refused to recognize the unsustainable nature of his policies, and put Yemen's future at great risk. The manifestation of these problems is seen in several ongoing movements in the country, including the Southern Movement, the Houthi Rebellion, the Arab Spring, and the growth of AQAP.

1. Manifestation of Tensions – The Southern Secessionist Movement

The division between north and south Yemen has been solidified by the different paths the regions have taken since the occupation by the Ottomans in the north and the British in the south. The Southern secessionist movement began in 2007 as a reaction to the mishandling of the unification between north and south Yemen. Those involved in the movement give voice to the widespread belief that the Saleh regime (as well as his family and the Hashid tribe) has exploited the south in order to expand his power. This includes the movement of oil revenues from Yemen's largest oil field at al-Maseela in the Hadrahmaut province in the south back to the central government. To that end, the southerners have moved from calling for equality among the tribes to a movement whose goal is secession from Yemen itself, and the creation of a 'South Yemen.'[39] While the

[38] Boucek, "Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral," 11.

[39] Stephen Day, "The Political Challenge of Yemen's Southern Movement," from *Yemen on the Brink*, Boucek, Christopher and Ottaway, Marina, eds., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010, 61–62.

movement—at the moment—has little chance of succeeding, if Yemen continues to weaken as a state, the group's agenda could gain traction.

2. Manifestation of Tensions – The Houthi Rebellion

The Houthis are a group of Shi'i Zaidi conservatives who have been in conflict with the central Yemeni government since 2004. The fighting initially began with a protest against the dilution of their religion within Yemen, as well as displeasure about Yemen's cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the United States. However, the group's grievances have expanded to include a general displeasure with the government – without voicing specific grievances.[40] The fighting has been taking place in the Saada governorate on the border with Saudi Arabia.

There have been several rounds of fighting in the conflict. The fighting became more intense, and hit a high point with the government's 'Scorched Earth' campaign in 2010. They deployed over 40,000 troops to the area. The government also deployed the Popular Army, a group of tribal levies and other informal fighters corralled by the government.[41] Furthermore, Saudi Arabia also sent some of its military forces to help Yemen with the fighting. By most accounts, the casualties in this conflict have been relatively low, ranging from several hundred to several thousand. However, the rebellion has cost the government much in the way of financial resources and political and military legitimacy.

3. Manifestation of Tensions – The Arab Spring in Yemen

The Arab Spring that began in 2011 has spread from Tunisia and Egypt to Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The protests in Yemen began quietly at first, calling attention to poverty and corruption within the country. However, these protests quickly gained momentum, and calls for the resignation of President Saleh were soon heard. Despite the government's initial efforts to placate the protesters, Saleh soon began to lose

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[40] Christopher Boucek, "War in Saada: From Local Insurrection to National Challenge," from *Yemen on the Brink*, Boucek, Christopher and Ottaway, Marina, eds., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010, 49.

[41] Boucek, "War in Saada," 54.

support of the tribes, the religious elite, and powerful elements within the military. The government crackdown included killing protesters in Taghyir Square in Sana'a with government-loyal snipers.

The protests reached a crucial point on 3 June, 2011, when President Saleh was severely injured in a rocket attack which also seriously wounded the prime minister, two of his deputies, the speaker of parliament, and the head of the Consultative Council. He received care for his wounds in Saudi Arabia for several months before returning to Yemen on 22 September 2011. The situation in Yemen did not improve with his return, which led the United Nations Security Council to pass Resolution 2014[42], which called for an end to the violence and for President Saleh to resign. Saleh finally agreed, and on 23 November 2011 signed a deal brokered by the GCC—a deal similar to the three which he promised (and then refused) to sign. The controversial agreement provides amnesty for Saleh and his family members, who still control much of the military and intelligence services. Saleh will temporarily retain the honorary title of President, but has handed over all constitutional duties to the Vice President, which will be retained until February 2012, when Presidential elections will be held. Despite the fact that the agreement calls for a new, more inclusive government, many of the protesters continue to demand for the trial of Saleh. Vice President Abed Rabo Mansour Hadi has been charged with forming an interim government, and appointed the leader of the opposition (Mohammed Basindwa) as interim Prime Minister.[43]

Despite these promising developments, Yemen's future is still bleak. Both Sana'a and Taiz are highly militarized, which will be unlikely to change in the near future. Also, restructuring the military – which is part of the agreement—will be difficult because many units remain under the control of Saleh's family and close allies.[44] While the elections in February seem promising, it remains to be seen if the opposition groups can nominate a candidate who will address the many problems Yemen faces. This is

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[42]United Nations Security Council, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014 (2011)," http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/559/61/PDF/N1155961.pdf.

[43] Ian Bremmer, "Stability Remains Elusive For Yemen," *Foreign Policy*, November 29, 2011, http://eurasia.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/29/stability_remains_elusive_for_yemen.

[44] Bremmer, "Stability Remains Elusive," *Foreign Policy*.

especially true as many of the protesters feel that President Saleh should not be given amnesty. If they end up boycotting the elections, the legitimacy of the new regime will be greatly diminished. Furthermore, any new government will find it hard to end the corruption and patronage practices which have been part and parcel of Yemeni politics for decades. Finally, even if they are successful in ending those practices, the issues of resource scarcity, rapid population growth, and high unemployment will only grow worse over time. As a result of these problems, the new Yemeni government will likely try to find a middle ground in the Yemeni societal minefield, and end up satisfying nobody.

4. The Growth of AQAP

The dire straits Yemen finds itself in have been mostly of its own making. Through multiple sustained practices, the government has lost the tenuous support of the people, and is quickly losing its ability to continue its payouts to those on whom it has traditionally relied. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is using these cleavages to great effect. AQAP has discovered that Yemen is the perfect environment to recruit new members, train its operatives, and to plan and conduct operations. While AQAP will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, it is important to mention here that the group finds a willing audience in many of Yemen's poorest rural areas precisely because of the problems described above.

C. YEMEN AND U.S. INTERESTS

The United States has definite interests regarding the current developments in Yemen. The most pressing issue for the U.S. is the rapid growth in the power of AQAP in the country. The U.S. has focused on AQAP as the most pressing threat from Yemen because of its ability to perpetrate violence against western interests. This has been proven several times over – from the attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000 to the attempted Christmas Day attack on the Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit in 2009. Because of this, the United States has recently increased its focus on Yemen as a partner in the war against transnational terrorism.

While the United States has had success in attacking AQAP leadership, the Saleh regime was a vacillating partner. One reason for this is the large areas within Yemen that were continuously neglected by the Saleh regime. The vacuum created by the lack of attention by the central government has enabled AQAP to find safe havens, training grounds, and (at times) willing recruits to bolster their ranks. Additionally, part of the flow of extremists to undergoverned areas was prompted by the increase of counterterrorism efforts in Saudi Arabia. According to Christopher Boucek, al-Qaeda operatives were encouraged by local Saudi commanders to relocate to Yemen in order to find respite from attacks by the Saudi forces.[45] More importantly, however, the opportunity for such relocations was made available by the simple existence of areas of space where the government exerts no control, or is viewed negatively by the local population.

The United States has focused on Yemen as a partner in its efforts against Al Qaeda since September 11th, and against AQAP since its inception in 2009. The United States has a two-pronged approach to Yemen. First, the U.S. seeks to strengthen Yemen's ability to promote security within its borders. The second prong is to assist Yemen with respect to their economic crisis and address limitations in "government capacity, provision of services, and transparency."[46]

In order to increase Yemen's capacity to provide security within its own borders, the United States is providing military aid and training. In FY2009, the Department of Defense allocated $66.8 million in 1206 funds[47] for equipment and training of the Yemeni military, an increase from $4.3 million in FY2006.[48] In fact, Yemen is the largest recipient of Section 1206 funds, with over 20 percent going to support equipping and training its military, as well as providing small airplanes and helicopters for use by

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[45] Boucek and Ottaway, *Yemen on the Brink*, 14.

[46] Jeffrey D. Feltman, "Yemen: Confronting al Qaeda, Preventing State Failure," in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington D.C., January 20, 2010, http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/135505.htm, accessed October 12, 2011, 6.

[47] Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006 allows the Department of Defense to use money from its own appropriations to train and equip foreign militaries in counterterrorism or stability operations.

[48] Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, June 8, 2011, 27.

Yemen's Special Operations Forces.[49] The United States has also been training Yemen's Counterterrorism Unit of the Central Security Organization since 2002. In addition to military aid, the United States provides direct financial assistance (separate from 1206 funds) to the Saleh regime. The amount has steadily increased over recent years, with a current level of $52.5 million (appropriated in P.L. 111–117).[50]

The United States has had decidedly mixed results in its efforts in Yemen. The kinetic operations have resulted in the deaths of some of AQAP's top operatives, but the Saleh regime has not been the ardent supporter the U.S. has hoped it would be. The cleavages brought about by imperial rule and the policies of the Saleh regime greatly weakened the Yemeni state, to the point that Saleh found it impossible to stem the tide against the forces rallying against him. This is certainly true of AQAP, which has been able to enmesh itself in Yemeni society. In order to find the best way for the United States to counter AQAP, a thorough investigation of the organization is necessary, which will be covered in Chapter III.

[49] Nina M. Serafino, "Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, March 3, 2011, 6.

[50] Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 6.

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III. AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA (AQAP)

A. INTRODUCTION

Al-Qaeda was a threat to regional stability the Arabian Peninsula and in Yemen, for at least ten years prior to the September 11 attacks. They transformed themselves from a disjointed group with limited operational capabilities to a re-branded, powerful insurgent organization capable of conducting sophisticated attacks both within Yemen and abroad. Their steady growth in power is seen especially in recent operations in Abyan province in Southern Yemen, and is coupled with a tailored narrative that is pleasing to much of the Yemeni population.

B. GENESIS

The genesis for al-Qaeda in Yemen consisted of Arab Afghan volunteers returning from their fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. These fighters were accorded hero status by much of the Yemeni population, heralded by the Yemeni government, and given positions within the Yemeni military and security forces.[51] The envelopment of these individuals back into everyday society meant that al-Qaeda did not have a base from which to recruit in Yemen in the early 1990s. The precursor to al-Qaeda in Yemen – the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army – was the cause of many of the attacks in Yemen prior to the formation of al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY).[52] The group, with support from al-Qaeda senior leadership, may have been involved in a plan to kill U.S. Marines transiting through Aden in support of Operation Restore Hope in December 1992 as well as being responsible for kidnapping 16 tourists in 1998.

The first attack in Yemen directly attributable to al-Qaeda was the bombing of the *USS Cole* in 2000. The attack was made by a small boat packed with explosives that pulled alongside the Cole while it was docked in the port in Aden. The attack killed 17 Americans and wounded 39 more. Despite the lethality of the attack, al-Qaeda in Yemen

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[51] Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 13.

[52] Aden is a major port city within Yemen located in Abyan province. It is also a historical locus of power for Southern Yemen.

was still quite disorganized. Especially from 2001–2003, al-Qaeda in Yemen was more a collection of individuals and small groups who were unprepared to carry out sustained operations against the Yemeni government.[53] Thus, while they were able to plan and conduct operations, the attacks were limited in both size and scope.

To that end, neither the United States nor Yemen paid particular attention to the group until the U.S. began the Global War on Terror (GWOT). President Saleh knew siding against the U.S. would be to his detriment, which he first learned after siding with Iraq during its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The U.S. halted aid for years after this declaration, and the economic costs were quite severe. Thus, after the September 11 attacks, the Yemeni government began to round up anybody they thought fit the profile of a member of an al-Qaeda militant in order to shore up support from the United States. This includes many who had been in Afghanistan, but many who hadn't been outside the country at all. Thus, hundreds of individuals that were deemed – for little reason – to be a security threat were thrown in prison where they had direct contact with actual al-Qaeda jihadists.[54] These imprisonments served to delegitimize the Yemeni government in the eyes of those who were imprisoned, as well as their family members. Furthermore, in these Yemeni prisons, the seeds of militancy had fertile ground to grow, and many new hands willing to till the fields.

In the nascent stages of the Global War on Terrorism, the United States and Yemen severely crippled al-Qaeda in Yemen. In 2002, the Yemeni government gave its permission for the United States to launch missiles against al-Qaeda members in Eastern Yemen. Six terrorists were killed, including Qaid Salim Sinan al-Harithi, who was the leader of al-Qaeda in Yemen and one of the planners for the attack on the U.S.S. Cole. The new leader, Muhammad Hamdi al Ahdal, was arrested in Yemen a year later.[55] Both the United States and Yemen thought that the problem with al-Qaeda in Yemen had been solved, and placed little priority on keeping tabs on the organization. Therefore, while

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[53] Gregory D. Johnsen, Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 20 Jan 2010, 9.

[54] Johnsen, Testimony, 5.

[55] Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 15–16.

the United States was preoccupied with both Iraq and Afghanistan, and Yemen began to focus on the Houthi conflict, al-Qaeda had breathing room to recuperate and strengthen.

In February 2006, AQY became much stronger with the escape of 23 of Yemen's most wanted terrorists. The prisoners escaped by tunneling from their two room cell to an adjacent mosque, where they said their morning prayers before walking out the front door.[56] Most accounts contend that the prisoners had help from inside the Yemeni intelligence service, which is notorious for hiring former Arab-Afghan volunteers and other jihadists.[57] Among the escaped prisoners were Jamal al-Badawi and Jabir al-Banna – both of who were on America's most wanted lists. U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel determined that Al-Badawi was one of the planners for the Cole attack. Unfortunately, Yemen refused to extradite him, despite the fact that he escaped from jail in 2003 and 2006. Although he turned himself in a year later, he was released from house arrest by the Yemeni authorities, who again refused to extradite him.[58] He was subsequently pardoned after he renounced his jihadi ideology and pledged his support for President Saleh. Furthermore, while Yemen claims that al-Badawi is helping them go after more jihadists, the government is complicit in its dealings with other identified U.S.S. Cole bombers. Fahd al Quso, who admitted his part in the plot, was also released from a Yemeni prison in 2010, and was subsequently listed as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" under Executive Order 13224.[59],[60]

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[56] Johnsen, Testimony, 11.

[57] Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 16.

[58] Article 44 of the Yemeni constitution states that a Yemeni national may not be extradited to a foreign government.

[59] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Most Wanted Terrorists," http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/wanted_terrorists/fahd-mohammed-ahmed-al-quso, (accessed November 4, 2011).

[60] Executive Order 13224 was signed on 24 September, 2001 by President Bush. It authorizes the United States to identify individuals and organizations deemed a threat to National Security, and to disrupt their financial holdings. See U.S Department of State description at http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/122570.htm, (accessed November 14, 2011).

C. THE MERGER AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

While most of this group has been killed or arrested, they are representative of the type of members the leaders of Al Qaeda has recruited into their ranks. Furthermore, two of the escapees formed the nucleus for the current al-Qaeda structure in Yemen. While a low-level operative at the time of the 2006 prison escape, Nasir al-Wahayshi is now the leader of AQAP, and Qasim al-Raymi is his deputy and military commander. In a June 2007 audio recording, al-Raymi declared that al-Wahayshi was the new *amir* of AQY. Just as important, the audiotape warned the older generation of militants in Yemen that their tacit non-aggression pact with the government was a treasonous alliance that wouldn't be tolerated.[61] The experience these two men hold makes the threat credible. Both al-Wahayshi and al-Raymi served under Osama Bin Laden, with al-Wahayshi acting as his understudy and personal secretary for four years (in the late 1990s) before returning to Yemen.

After the release of the audio message, al-Wahayshi and al-Raymi focused on building the internal strength of the group. The formation of the "The al-Qaeda Organization of Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula: The Soldiers' Brigades of Yemen" was a cell that was created to perform terrorist operations but was only loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda in Yemen. However, the group was allied with al-Wahayshi, which allowed for its internal development while simultaneously conducting terrorist operations. These operations coincided with a second message, this time aimed at the Yemeni government itself. It demanded the government release al-Qaeda members from Yemeni prisons and promised revenge for the 2002 killing of Harithi.[62],[63]

The most damaging of these operations was the attack of a tourist convoy, which killed 8 Spaniards and their 2 Yemeni drivers. There were also attacks on a Belgian tourist convoy as well as a military compound. Acting on a tip, Yemeni forces attacked a safe house, killing several members, including the leader of the Soldiers' Brigades of

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[61] Johnsen, Testimony, 13.

[62] Johnsen, Testimony, 11.

[63] In March 2007, the group had already assassinated Ali Mahmud al-Qasaylah for his role in the killing of Harithi. Al-Qasaylah was the Chief Criminal Investigator in Marib province.

Yemen, Hamza al-Qu'ayti. The killing of al-Qu'ayti was seen as a major setback for all militant groups in Yemen. However, in September of the same year, the U.S. embassy in Sana'a was attacked, killing 19 people, including the 7 attackers.[64] Furthermore, by the time of al-Qu'ayti's death, al-Wahayshi had built a tenable core from which to expand the group and conduct autonomous operations.

In January 2009, al-Qaeda in Yemen announced that the Saudi al-Qaeda branch had pledged allegiance to their leader (al-Wahayshi), forming a united al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). At this time, AQAP was comprised of Saudi militants,[65] Saudi detainees who had escaped or had been released from Guantanamo Bay or Saudi rehabilitation programs, as well as Yemeni al-Qaeda members who had escaped from prisons in Yemen.[66]

Nasir al-Wahayshi has organized AQAP into both territorial and job divisions. As such, they have a district leader for each of the major tribal areas. They also have personnel assigned specifically for making bombs, operational planning, religious matters and information operations. AQAP uses each of these branches quite effectively, which is largely responsible its recent growth in power.

D. THE AQAP NARRATIVE

According to Alistair Harris, AQAP offers a coherent grievance narrative that is consistent with the tenets of al-Qaeda, but specifically tailored to the local population. They contend that Muslims are suffering at the hands of a nefarious alliance between the Yemeni government and the United States. To that end, they prescribe violent jihad against the west and apostate Muslim regimes and to expel all non-Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula.[67] It is the propaganda arm of AQAP which tailors the message to fit

64 Johnsen, Testimony, 15–16.

65 Most of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia had been killed or captured in Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism operations from 2002–2007. Many of the remaining militants fled to Yemen, where they found it easier to hide and operate.

66 Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 17.

67 Alistair Harris, "Exploiting Grievances: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," from *Yemen on the Brink*, Boucek, Christopher and Ottaway, Marina, eds., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010.

with the local tribes through various propaganda channels: including audio messages, videos, blogs, sermons, and magazines.

One of the most important facets of the AQAP media blitz is Inspire Magazine, which is AQAP's English-language jihadi magazine, published by Al-Malahem Media Foundation.[68] This professional publication is finding a susceptible audience in many locales, including the United States. According to Jarrett Brachman in testimony to the House Committee on Homeland Security, the message they are sending resonates because "AQAP now provides its online community with a compelling, comic book experience, one that equips individuals with the tools they need while demystifying the path they must take, to become their own al-Qaeda superhero."[69] Moreover, Anwar Al-Awlaki, who was AQAP's chief of media publications[70], successfully proffered online video and audio lectures for over a decade. He has packaged his publications in a populist tone, which has made him and the message he gives widely digestible to a wider audience in more geographic locations than ever before. Inspire magazine is the embodiment of this tactic. According to Brachman, Inspire magazine is so successful because it "lowers the proverbial wall that has deterred most online al-Qaeda supporters from actually going operational."[71] Nor is the audience just 'playing jihadi' by accessing these online forums. By providing ready access to these slickly produced jihadi publications, the readers become further entrenched in the social context of radicalism.

The susceptible audience for AQAP information operations is certainly not limited to those who live abroad. As described above, the long-neglected and often abused tribes within Yemen find the media publications of AQAP quite attractive. Online publications are not very accessible to tribal members in Yemen, so AQAP has

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68 Bill Roggio, "Founder of AQAP's Media Arm Killed in Clash in Yemen," The Long War Journal, December 22, 2010, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/12/founder_of_aqaps_med.php, (accessed September 16, 2011).

69 Jarrett M. Brachman, "Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland: AQAP," Testimony to the House Committee on Homeland Security (Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence), March 2, 2011, 2 http://jarretbrachman.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/BRACHMAN-TESTIMONY.pdf, (accessed September 16, 2011).

70 Awlaki was killed September 30, 2011, by Hellfire missiles fired from a drone into his car convoy in Northern Yemen.

71 Brachman, "Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland: AQAP," Testimony, 02 March 2011, 3.

used printed media in its place. This includes media outputs from within Saudi Arabia (Mu'askar al-Battar or al-Battar Training Camp), as well as its more political publication Sawt al-Jihad (Voice of Jihad). Another publication is the widely disseminated "Practical Course for Guerilla Warfare," by former al-Qaeda leader in Saudi Arabia Abdel Aziz Issa Abdul-Mohsin al-Muqrin.[72] AQAP has also focused on audio recordings, as well as interpersonal communications to foster the growth and dissemination of their message.

This message has not fallen on deaf ears. According to Alistair Harris, al-Qaeda's publications give the Yemenis a clear-cut diagnosis of the problems, including a sympathetic synthesis of grievances and apportionment of blame for the problems Yemenis face in their everyday lives. He goes on to point out that each of their publications and interactions provide "… a prognosis for the future, proposing remedies and redress. In other words, AQAP provides both diagnostic and prognostic frameworks to mobilize followers and potential recruits into collective action."[73] The tribes have found the message so attractive that they have long sheltered AQAP operatives, including Nayef bin Mohammed bin Said al Kudri Qahtani. He moved from Saudi Arabia in 2007 (where he was on their 'most wanted terrorist' list), and was sheltered by the Waili tribe with other al-Qaeda operatives from both Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Qahtani founded Sada al Malahim (Echoes of Epics), which is AQAP's Yemen magazine. He subsequently built Malahim Media Foundation (Epics Foundation), which is AQAP's propaganda outlet organization. [74] This also includes Muhammad Saleh al-'Awlaqi, who was harbored in the Shabwa tribal region.[75] The willingness of the tribes to harbor al-Qaeda operatives and turn a blind eye to them residing in ungoverned territories is one of the most vexing problems with regards to AQAP's resurgence. Johnsen points out that "…as Yemen grows weaker and as government power recedes further and further back into urban areas, this opens up a great deal of space in which al-Qaeda can

72 Harris, "Exploiting Grievances," 32.

73 Harris, "Exploiting Grievances," 33.

74 Roggio, "Founder of AQAP." Qahtani was number 6 on Saudi Arabia's most wanted list, and was killed by a drone attack in late 2010. He was linked to the killing of 8 Spanish tourists and other terrorist operations.

75 Johnsen, Testimony, 20.

operate."[76]Indeed, AQAP has used the undergoverned tribal areas, especially in Southern Yemen, as places where they can train and plan their attacks.

E. AQAP OPERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

AQAP and its predecessor organizations have amassed a sizeable number of attacks. Just as important as their number is the breadth of their scope. Many of the attacks have used small arms to attack tourists and government officials. Additionally, several of the attacks have targeted economic interests such as oil fields and pipelines as well as foreign business interests in Yemen. In addition to attacks on Yemeni economic interests and the Yemeni government, AQAP has also conducted operations against Saudi Arabia. The most notable of these is the attempted assassination of Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef. Western interests abroad have also often been the target. From the attempted attack on the *USS The Sullivans* in Aden harbor in January of 2000 and the *USS Cole* attack later that year, to the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, the United States is one of the main targets of Al Qaeda in the region.

More ominous is the ability of AQAP to plan and conduct terrorist operations against American interests outside Yemen. One of the most prominent examples of this expansion in operational tactics was the plot to send explosives-laden packages through the United Parcel Service and Federal Express companies to synagogues in Chicago, Illinois. The second was the plot to destroy an airliner bound for Detroit, Michigan by exploding a device carried by the bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. While both plots failed, there are two important facets of these operations to consider. First, the explosive devices used in these attempts were quite sophisticated compared to other attacks attributed to AQAP. Both explosive devices contained pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN) in sufficient quantities to cause the crash of the airplanes on which they were carried. While Abdulmutallab carried the explosive device in his underpants, the explosives aboard the UPS and FedEx airplanes were contained in printer cartridges, and

76 Johnsen, Testimony, 23.

were connected to timer mechanisms.[77],[78] The sophistication of these devices is testimony to the dedication of AQAP to perpetrate attacks against the United States while still attempting to maintain their ability to simultaneously plan and conduct attacks within Yemen.

More recently, a cadre of AQAP members called Ansar al-Sharia (Supporters of Sharia) was created in order to further the AQAP cause in areas where the AQAP name may not be well-received. The group took over two cities in Abyan province, including Jaar in March, and the southern coastal town of Zinzibar[79] in May, after residents said security forces pulled out of the area. The governor of Abyan province also fled to Aden, leaving an ill-equipped brigade to fight the group.[80] Part of the reason AQAP has been so successful is that the Yemeni population in Abyan, having been neglected by the government, are quite sympathetic to the AQAP anti-government narrative. The transfer of oil revenues from the southern provinces to back to the capital as part of Saleh's patronage network is one such example. More recently, the government suspended 800 members of the armed forces without pay in the summer of 2010. While the government has not given any reasons for the suspension, many speculate it is because of the long-standing tensions between North and South Yemen, which has resulted in widespread animosity toward the government.[81]

There is much discussion about the sheer volume of attacks that AQAP has committed against Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. However, there are aspects of the organization which must be recognized and exploited in order to secure

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[77] John F. Burns, "Yemen Bomb Could Have Gone Off At East Coast," The New York Times, November 10, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/11/world/europe/11parcel.html, (accessed November 10, 2011).

[78] Kenneth Chang, "Explosive on Flight 253 Is Among Most Powerful," The New York Times, December 27, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/28/us/28explosives.html, (accessed November 10, 2011).

[79] Zinzibar is about 40 miles northeast of Aden.

[80] Nasser Arrabyee and Laura Kasinof, "Islamists Seize a Yemeni City, Stoking Fears," The New York Times, May 29, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/30/world/middleeast/30yemen.html?_r=1, (accessed November 10, 2011).

[81] W. Andrew Terrill, "The Conflicts in Yemen and U.S. National Security," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1040.pdf, (accessed November 10, 2011), 60.

U.S. interests. First, there are portions of the AQAP narrative which can be used against it. The most popular grievances AQAP uses in its narrative are "civilian deaths resulting from counterterrorism raids; U.S. efforts to invade, disarm and subjugate Yemen's tribes; the unwelcome presence of Yemeni security forces in tribal territory; and the pilfering of natural resources by the Saleh regime."[82] However, most of AQAP leadership is not from the areas which their messages target, nor does the group acknowledge that they are the reason for many of the counterterrorism raids or drone strikes. Furthermore, AQAP attributes attacks designed to kill its members to the government directly attacking the tribes.

One of the most striking examples of this was seen in the 'Battle of Marib.' A military convoy was attacked on 30 July, 2009 by a dozen tribesmen led by 'A'yd al-Shabwani, an alleged AQAP member. After the initial firefight, the tribesmen returned to their homes, which were subsequently attacked by military forces. Sana'a claimed that collateral damage was minimal, but AQAP produced a video that showed a different story than what the government said. The media boon to AQAP was augmented by an airstrike targeting Al Shabwan in which many of the missiles hit two adjacent farms owned by local sheikhs, instead of their intended target. To add insult to injury, a meeting arranged to negotiate the surrender of the AQAP emir in Marib was hit by a missile strike, killing the pro-government sheikh who had arranged the gathering.[83] In order to counter the AQAP narrative, great care must be taken to practice discrimination in target selection and execution. If not done properly, the media windfalls to AQAP will continue.

Secondly, despite recent AQAP inroads into the southern provinces, the group is not yet powerful enough to provide an alternate means of governance in the area. They have not established methods to resolve tribal disputes, nor have they provided significant (or sustained) financial support to tribes or their leadership. Despite their successes in Abyan province, AQAP has not provided a viable alternative to the central government. In this way, AQAP has not endeared themselves to the tribes in Yemen to

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[82] Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, ed., "A False Foundation? AQAP, Tribes and Ungoverned Spaces in Yemen," Combatting Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy at West Point, 2011, 104.

[83] Koehler-Derrick, "A False Foundation?," 106–107.

such an extent that tribal protection is a certainty. However, the advent of this type of support to the tribes is a possibility that cannot be ignored, as it would give support to AQAP that it desperately needs.

F. LIMITED SUCCESS POINTS TO THE NEED FOR A NEW POLICY TOWARD YEMEN

The recent inroads AQAP has made into southern Yemen coupled with its continued domestic operations and its sophisticated attacks against U.S. interests are detrimental to the national security of the United States. The United States, with a sometimes cooperative Yemen, has killed many of the top leaders of AQAP over the years. Among these are al-Harithi, Qu'ayti, and the American-born Awlaqi. Many more were imprisoned, including former Guantanamo Bay detainee Abd Al-Rahim Al-Nashiri, who was one of the planners of the *U.S.S. Cole* attack in 2000.[84] However, the seeds of the problem have yet to be resolved. As described above, the Saleh regime has proven itself to be more interested in regime survival than in permanently eradicating AQAP from Yemen. Another example of Saleh's duplicity was his treatment of Al-Nashiri. Before being handed over to the Central Intelligence Agency by the government of the United Arab Emirates, he was given high-level protection by the Yemeni government.[85] Thus, countering both the problem of a convincing narrative and the issue of ungoverned spaces in the face of a powerful AQAP in Yemen is the conundrum which the United States must now face. Clearly, the United States must craft a new policy which is cognizant of how powerful AQAP has become with the help of the current domestic political climate in Yemen.

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[84] Al-Nashiri was arraigned in the Guantanamo Bay court on 9 November, 2011, on capital murder charges.

[85] Sharp, "Yemen: Background," 14.

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IV. COIN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

A. INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the decisive victory of the first Gulf War the same year, driving Iraq out of Kuwait, and the lack of any other credible military threat throughout the world led the United States to believe it was capable of defeating any aggression presented. This perception pushed the U.S. to expand upon its capabilities and forge ahead with technological transformations that allowed the military to strike over long distances with speed and precision never before seen. This drive was extolled and "proven" by the success in toppling the regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq between 2001 and 2003. What came next was the type of "shock and awe" that the United States wasn't expecting; A realization that not all enemies were willing to fight in the open and that U.S. strategy and policy wasn't able to cope with the threat that faced it. These threats came from the same people the U.S. government was trying to liberate and protect, creating a complex environment that required a change in strategic thinking and developing policies to protect and fight against the threats.[86]

These changes created a litany of doctrinal words and definitions to be placed into everyday soldiers' vocabularies: Insurgency, terror, terrorism, COIN, counterterrorism (CT) all became commonplace in everyday operations and media accounts. For this chapter we briefly discuss basic insurgent growth factors before focusing on COIN, its background and how it relates to the challenges that are being encountered throughout the world and more specifically in Yemen. The goal is for the reader to take away a better understanding of common COIN principles that will be used to structure future policy recommendations to counter the global insurgent threat of AQAP within the Middle East (ME).

[86] Andrew T.H. Tan, "U.S. Strategy Against Global Terrorism: How it Evolved, Why it Failed and Where it is Headed,"(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 100–109.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

By definition, an insurgency is "a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.[87] In Robert Taber's book, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare,* further distinctions are made with regard to the insurgents' goals to undermine one of the legitimate government's four power bases: "(1) integrity of the borders and composition of the nation state, (2) the political system, (3) the authorities in power, and (4) the policies that determine who gets what in the society."[88] Not all insurgencies have the same goals. Some groups try to create their own ethnic nation-state separated by historical boundaries, some attempt revolutionary reform of their government, while others attempt to subvert the local and national authorities, allowing them to train and grow their organizations so they can export their message of violence to other nations and cultures.

For any insurgent movement to become successful they must garner the support of the population. The legitimate state, through its ability to provide security and civil support, typically maintains the immediate support of its citizens until an insurgency can sway their opinions. Dr. Gordon McCormick, professor of Defense Analysis at the Naval Post Graduate School, identifies distinct characteristics of how insurgents mobilize and grow to a size that creates a "breaking point" for the state allowing an insurgency to dominate. Dr. McCormick contends that in any insurgency or counterinsurgency fight, the population support is the absolute center of gravity. To that end, both the insurgency and the state try to sway the population's opinion in order to gain and maintain popular support.[89]

An insurgency must show the population that it can be as strong, if not stronger, than the state. This can manifest itself through overt and covert means, but ultimately

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87 David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*,(Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), 2.

88 Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*,(New York: Brassey's Inc., 2002), viii.

89 Gordon H. McCormick and Frank Giordano, "Things Come together: symbolic violence and guerrilla mobilization," Third World Quarterly, 28, no. 2 (2007), 295.

requires the insurgency to prove to the population its "perceived" size and strength outstrips the state's security and influence. An insurgency's growth perception is critical to further gain strength, through inputs of people, money and weapons. Insurgents must also protect their core group (cadre) members from destruction or capture. If the core group disappears then the likelihood of the insurgency being capable of further growth is limited if not stopped completely.[90]

McCormick identifies that an insurgency has three methods at its disposal to gain popular support, through symbolic violence, overcoming its numbers deficit when attempting to grow. The first is identified as the "agitation effect," which is essentially armed propaganda that lets the population and the state know that the insurgency is there, watching, waiting, and projecting their vision of the struggle and what they are hoping to gain. The second, "provocation effect," uses violence against the state, forcing the state to recognize the insurgency as a threat and cause the state to over-retaliate. The insurgency is invisible at this stage, and has information dominance over the state, maintaining a low profile is easy and forces the state to seek them out. Over-retaliation, the insurgency's goal, will cause the state to engage in excessive countermeasures and oppressive actions, thus pushing the population towards the insurgency. The third, "demonstration effect," is identified as the most important for an insurgency's growth. Its goals are to make the insurgency appear strong, even if they are not, and make the state seem weak. This projection shows the population that the state is ineffective and the insurgency will win, so the population should join them.

C. COUNTERING THE GROWTH

The focus on COIN during the past ten years has produced volumes of research, data and opinions on how to best combat the growing threat around the world. But this is not a new phenomenon and modern day insurgencies have much in common with perceived struggles a hundred years ago.

[90] McCormick and Giordano, "Things Come Together," 296–306.

1. David Galula

Seen as the foundation for many theories and works on counterinsurgency, David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* presents what he considers four "laws" that are peculiar to a counterinsurgency and the principles deriving from them."[91]

The first law identifies that population support is essential for any counterinsurgent forces' success in keeping the insurgent organization from returning to an area from which they have been pushed. If the population doesn't support the counterinsurgent force, the population will allow the insurgent force to return and rebuild its political institutions.[92]

The second law works towards obtaining the population's support. Galula contends that in every population, during any event "there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause."[93] To sway the population majority in favor of the counterinsurgent, it is imperative to identify and co-opt the minority willing to organize and fight against the insurgent force, bringing about local change against an insurgent group. Their goals would be the same as the insurgent force; sway the local population's support in their favor. This would allow the counterinsurgent force to deny sanctuary to the insurgency providing a victory for the counterinsurgent force.[94]

The third law contents that support from the minority and the population are conditional upon the counterinsurgent's ability to support their efforts against the insurgency. If the counterinsurgent is unable to provide support through successful operations, security enforcement and the establishment/reestablishment of political grass roots organizations then the population will unlikely support the efforts of the

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[91] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 52.

[92] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 52.

[93] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 53.

[94] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 53–54.

counterinsurgent. The population is made up of people with desires and fears that are exploited by both sides. The majority are unwilling to sacrifice themselves for futile operations and propaganda.[95]

Galula's fourth law identifies that the efforts of the counterinsurgent force must be conducted in a methodical manner that utilizes as many resources (assets, personnel &effort) in a particular area until the insurgency has been defeated or moved, allowing the counterinsurgent force to concentrate on a new area while not allowing the insurgent force to return.[96]

Galula further presents an eight step strategy based on these laws:

> In a Selected Area:
> 1. Concentrate enough armed forces to destroy or to expel the main body of armed insurgents.
> 2. Detach for the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent's comeback in strength, install these troops in the hamlets, villages, and towns where the population lives.
> 3. Establish contact with the population, control its movements in order to cut off its links with the guerillas.
> 4. Destroy the local insurgent political organization.
> 5. Set up, by means of elections, new provisional local authorities.
> 6. Test those authorities by assigning them various concrete tasks. Replace the softs and the incompetents; give full support to the active leaders. Organize self-defense units.
> 7. Group and educate the leaders in a national political movement.
> 8. Win over or suppress the last insurgent remnants. [97]

The steps of these operations support his work focusing on the population as the center of gravity. The first four steps are operational in nature and deal with controlling the population and terrain, denying it from insurgent coercion. The next three steps work with the population in setting up the political institutions and pressing the counterinsurgent ideology to re-establish order within the area. Once order has been

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[95] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 54–55.

[96] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 55.

[97] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 54–56.

established within a particular area, these eight steps are to then be repeated in a different area that has been "taken over" by insurgent ideals.[98]

2. David Kilcullen

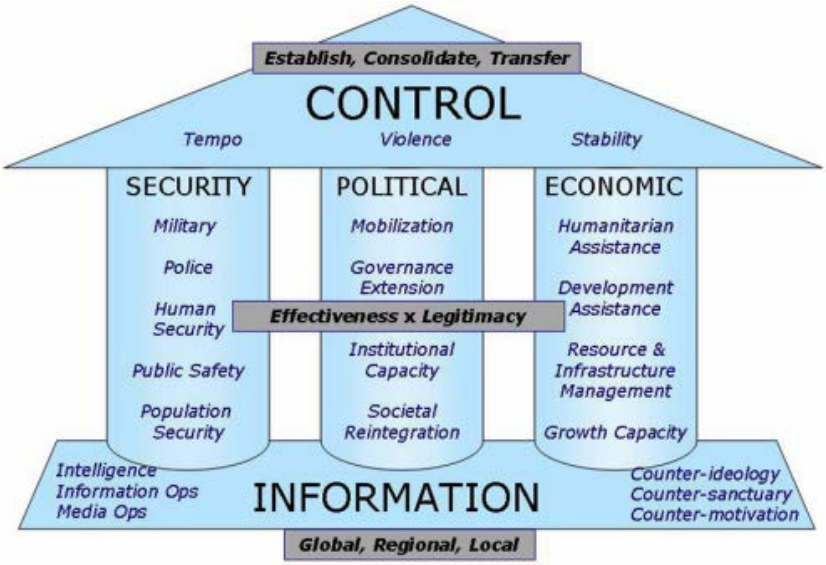

Figure 2. Kilcullen Three Pillar Model (From Air University).

Dr. David Kilcullen's work on the "three pillars" model (Figure 2) presents a simplistic framework for counterinsurgent cooperation between national and global agencies. He identifies that this "approach builds upon 'classical' counterinsurgency theory, but also incorporates best practices that have emerged through experience in peacekeeping, development, fragile states and complex emergencies in the past several decades."[99] Dr. Kilcullen contends that the base or foundation of his model is information. Without a proper information strategy the rest of model will not be effective. This strategy must encompass a unified message that explains the actions taken by the counterinsurgent as well as how to process intelligence when it is received.

[98] Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare," 61–94.

[99] David J. Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency," (Speech presented at the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington D.C., 28 September 2006).

Without this in place there will be confusion between different agencies competing to portray their messages at the local, national and global levels.[100]

The three pillars (security, political, economic) rising up from the foundation identify areas that need to be addressed and built upon in palrallel to one another, ensuring the proper balance to rebuilding an area. Security is all encompassing of not only the military and police but also "incorporates human security, building a framework of human rights, civil institutions and individual protections, public safety (fire, ambulance, sanitation, civil defense) and popular security."[101] The political pillar attempts to mobilize the support necessary from the population. It operates to rebuild the bureaucratic institution necessary for a functioning government to interact with the population. The economic pillar provides immediate and long term assistance with programs to support the population. Management of resources is key to making this pillar function properly. Without proper management, resources can be stolen, or squandered on programs that don't affect the largest population possible.[102]

Dr. Kilcullen identifies that control is the overarching goal of any counterinsurgent force. To regain control is to not necessarily establish stability, a common endstate, but to "return the overall system to 'normality.'"[103] The normality of any region, argues Dr. Killcullen, will look different depending on the types of historical precedents of the society.[104] What may be normal to the United States will not be normal for the tribesmen of Yemen. Therefore, any counterinsurgent forces attempting to operationalize this model and control an area they are unfamiliar with must understand this concept before introducing ideals foreign to the population.

Within the concept of a "global insurgency," Dr. Kilcullen identifies that many of the techniques and policies of past insurgencies must be rethought to take into account the many new nuances of a global threat, such as Al Qaeda. Because classic counterinsurgency doctrine attempts to win over the population and deny sanctuary to the

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[100] Kilcullen, "Three Pillars."

[101] Kilcullen, "Three Pillars."

[102] Kilcullen, "Three Pillars."

[103] Kilcullen, "Three Pillars."

[104] Kilcullen, "Three Pillars."

insurgent threat, he believes this has become inadequate when dealing with groups and organizations. These groups refuse to succumb to the same dilemmas as previous insurgents due in part to the relatively new concept of failing or failed nation states. These regional phenomena have provided ungoverned locations for global insurgent threats to take root and export their brand of ideological violence on whomever they target. To counter this threat, Dr. Kilcullen believes a combination of classical counterinsurgency and counterterrorism techniques are required as the foundation for any new broad strategy to combat them.[105]

3. FM 3–24: Counterinsurgency

The release of the Army Field Manual (FM) 3–24, in 2006, provided the military community a much needed update to how it was to doctrinally fight the insurgencies it faced on a day to day basis in Iraq and Afghanistan. Written for the Battalion (BN) level staff and higher it provides the foundations to the causes of insurgencies and how best to counter them, especially when planning for full spectrum operations. At its core FM 3–24 draws upon the works of David Galula and is further operationalized for the military commander.

The primary objective of the COIN fight, according to FM 3–24, is to provide the assistance necessary to develop the legitimacy of the government with respect to the people. The greater the legitimacy of the state, the greater chance it has to carry out its functions without coercion while an illegitimate state requires force and bribes to ensure population support. It is up to the local commanders to identify how the population defines legitimacy. As discussed in earlier works, not all regions, even those in the same nation state, will define it the same. Any counterinsurgent force can claim initial success in a fight through kinetic operations, but without the successful application of legitimate governance the likelihood for continued long lasting success diminishes with the population's resentment of the government.[106]

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[105] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 191–192.

[106] Headquarters, Department of the Army, "FM 3–24: Counterinsurgency," (Washington D.C., 2005), 1–21 – 1–22.

From the initial stages of a counterinsurgency campaign FM 3–24 recognized the requirement for a unity of effort across multiple agencies within the Department of Defense (DoD). The COIN environment is identified by the multiple personalities, families, groups, tribes and governments. Therefore, to provide the best strategy to combat an insurgency, these agencies must focus on what needs to be done and how to best accomplish this. This grand strategy may have the military take a secondary role in the operations to ensure the population is supported appropriately, with the understanding that the military will encompass an extensive role within the COIN environment. These roles may become kinetic in nature, attacking insurgent networks directly, or they can become static where the military is providing security for other governmental (GO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) while they provide the necessary assistance and training to a host nation's security and support apparatuses.[107]

As with other COIN theory and doctrine, military COIN relies heavily on intelligence. For the military commander intelligence doesn't just include situational templates of the enemy. Since COIN is dependent upon the support of the population information intelligence on the population is essential to successful operations. This relies on the bottom up approach to intelligence gathering. The units on the ground must be able to make an accurate assessment of the needs of the population and the influence of the insurgent force to send up an accurate picture of the situation. Included in these assessments should be the breakdowns of the culture, social structures, norms and authoritative breakdown and anything else that will assist in creating a clear picture of any area. This in turn needs to be integrated and fused at higher levels and shared laterally to insure an accurate representation is shared between services, agencies and other militaries.[108]

Operationally, military COIN doctrine requires five distinct and interrelated efforts for successful execution. The first requirement is the combined effort of the military and the host nation (HN) to devise a plan and define its objectives for tackling the insurgency and restoring the legitimacy of the HN. Second, the HN must establish

[107] Department of the Army, "FM 3–24," 2–5 – 2–14.

[108] Department of the Army, "FM 3–24," 3–1 – 3–14.

control in areas that it can provide the population continuous support, both through security and bureaucratic assistance. Third, the HN must secure its main population areas first, provide security and assistance to the population and then strike out to the more rural areas from its strongholds. This will in effect show its ability to project power and thus strengthen its legitimacy. Fourth, when the HN strikes out against the insurgency it must overwhelm and occupy the areas it is expanding into. This will disrupt and displace the insurgent operational and political bases. If the HN is able to do this and reestablish control over these functions it will be able to support and guide the population back towards the legitimate government. Fifth, all operations whether kinetic or not, need to be accompanied by an aggressive Information Operations (IO) campaign that supports the message the HN is presenting. The war of the people becomes the war of ideas. If the HN is unable to articulate why the population should support the government and why the government is taking actions to disrupt the insurgency, their message will be lost and it will become harder to gain the loyalty of the population.[109]

D. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The multiple theories, doctrines and practices on COIN implementation are varied to the specific environments they are attempting to explain. There are, however, several similarities that can be taken away from them to help model future COIN operations. First and foremost is the understanding that the COIN environment is about the population and not about the insurgent force subverting the legitimate governments rule over it. Any operation conducted by a COIN force must be in support of the population and not subjugate them through force, threats or coercion. The COIN force must also attempt to protect the population while conducting operations, maintaining collateral damages to the minimum in an attempt to not "create" more insurgents. Second, any COIN force hoping to become successful in an insurgent fight must have intelligence, not only on the insurgent forces but on the population, their structure and grievances. Only with a complete picture of the environment can a COIN force hope to tailor is operations to support the people. Third, the COIN force must be able to project security for the

[109] Department of the Army, "FM 3–24," 5–1.

population. This may come in the form of military support, police enhancement, or social structure development within the region it is attempting to regain control over. Fourth the HN needs to insure there is "fair" distribution of social resources to areas that are relatively deprived. These may include social services, humanitarian aid, and or distribution of natural resources wealth.

15 Good COIN Practices	12 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles.	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support.	The primary COIN force was an external occupier.
The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict.	COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.
The government was at least a partial democracy.	Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government.
COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents.	The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.
The government/state was competent.	In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

Figure 3. Good and Bad Practices of COIN (From Paul et al., 2010).

But are there other factors that can be included in these practices? The RAND Corporation conducted a study of 30 insurgencies from 1979–2006, utilizing the techniques in modern literature to identify distinct trends. Their first assertion is successful COIN practices have a tendency to clump together. These factors were identified and verified through multiple rounds of analysis and are seen as positive and negative factors towards COIN outcomes (Figure 3)[110].

These correlations of practices are strengthened by the analytical comparison of Rand's 30 case studies. It identified that the victorious COIN units in the case studies utilized a greater number of "good" COIN practices versus "bad" COIN practices. Conversely, if a COIN force utilizes more negative practices than good practices it can expect to lose the overall fight.[111]

The authors make seven recommendations based off these case studies, which may be used for future implementation and study. The first is the understanding that you must have "multiple mutually supporting lines of operation in COIN [and you must] build and maintain forces that are capable of engaging in multiple mutually supporting lines of operations simultaneously."[112] This entails that all supporting elements in a COIN fight are resourced effectively and are given the latitude necessary to affect its outcome. The next is ensuring that the HN is involved in COIN operations. If the HN government is not part of the fight for legitimacy the likelihood of success in operations diminishes, especially in regions that are alien to the COIN forces. Another recommendation is that the COIN force must maintain situational awareness of its progress with the COIN fight. If they lose focus and the bad practices are utilized more often than the good practices the likelihood of success further diminishes. A key take away is there is always time to change tactics when it is identified that the ones being used are not working. The COIN environment is fluid and dynamic with changing characteristics. The COIN force must recognize this and understand that even though a

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110 Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corp, 2010), xvii.

111 Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, xiv-xx.

112 Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, xxiii.

certain practice worked in the past it may not work in the future and the force must be able to adapt to these changes. Collective punishment and repression are traits of the insurgent forces and must not be adopted by the COIN force, the HN it is supporting or other foreign allies in support. This may exasperate the situation and drive the population further away from the COIN force. Finally, the COIN force must devise methods to strike at the insurgent logistical supply train, whether it comes from the population or from international support, developing a comprehensive strategy to affect it without causing damage to the COIN force's standing within the region.[113]

To further our research we will conduct a case study analysis of several different COIN operations that fit into the construct similar to Yemen. In doing this we've attempted to identify cases that involved weak and/or illegitimate governance with a population disenfranchised by their leadership. We also looked for cases with external COIN force involvement and their contributions for or against the HN.

Through these case studies we will attempt to identify the "good" practices of COIN operations that will allow us to prepare proposals for the future of Yemen and its government.

[113] Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, xxiii-xxvi.

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V. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

A. NICARAGUA: THE FALL OF SOMOZA

1. Nicaragua Introduction

Prior to its downfall, the Somoza regime enjoyed more than forty years of neo-patrimonial rule that used its position of power to subjugate the population and enrich the elite members of its cabinet.[114] The wealthy minority enjoyed the privileges of wealth and status while the rest of the country lived in abject poverty. The majority of the Nicaraguan society was forced to endure a declining quality of life that included a lack of health care, education, decent housing and adequate diet, while living under political tyranny.[115] Over the years several opposition groups rose to challenge the Somoza regime only to be met with crushing defeat. Resilience and determination allowed one such group to grasp the public's attention and provide them with the necessary tools to grow and eventually take over the country.

2. Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional

The Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (Sandinista Front for National Liberation: FSLN) was founded in 1961 by Thomas Borge and Carlos Fonseca. Initially formed as a Marxist-Leninist organization, subscribing to the "foco"[116] theory of insurgency, the Sandinista began attempting revolutionary uprising in the rural areas of Nicaragua in 1963. Their attempt failed to take hold and grow the organization due to the strong Somoza security apparatuses in place at the time. They continued to learn and evolve their tactics attempting to gain access to urban centers and then labor unions, none of which panned out. The Sandinista abandoned the foco theory and rebranded

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114 Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke and Beth Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, (Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 2010), 2.

115 E. Bradford Burns, *At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the politics of Nostalgia*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), 2–3.

116 The "foco" theory of insurgencies states that by creating a small focus group of armed guerrillas, an insurgent group will be able to stimulate a spontaneous uprising from within the population and rapidly overthrow the government.

themselves Maoists in the hopes of alluring more people that may have been opposed to Communist fronts. They attempted again to organize the peasants in 1967 and were met with extreme force by the Nicaraguan National Guard. This force saw the majority of the Sandinista cadre killed or captured causing the few remaining members to flee to neighboring countries where they needed to rebuild their organization and finances. The Somoza regime was convinced that this group of revolutionaries had been destroyed and no credible threat existed to oppose it. Amongst the peasants and revolutionary-minded college students, though, the admiration and lore of the Sandinista grew and over the years steadily filled the organization with young, affluent Nicaraguan students looking for a change to the Somoza regime.[117]

3. Somoza's Government Fails the People

In 1972, a large earthquake destroyed nearly 80 percent of the Nicaraguan capital, Managua, and killed more than 10,000 people. The international community responded with generous amounts of aid that the Somoza regime used to become increasingly wealthy. "The abysmal failure of the government to help the people purely because they were enriching themselves created an issue the Sandinista could use."[118] In the aftermath of the quake the Somoza regime asserted its power and took over areas of the economy typically reserved for the aristocratic elite that weren't associated with Somoza or his regime. This created a new segment of population alienation and disenfranchisement that the Sandinista were hoping to capitalize upon. The Sandinista though were still considered a defeated revolution and needed to come out from the shadows to assert their preeminence over other insurgent organizations, taking the lead to resist Somoza.[119]

In 1974 the Sandinista conducted a daring raid that embarrassed the Somoza regime and pressed the FSLN back into the mainstream of Nicaraguan life. Somoza responded with brutal tactics, imposing a state of siege to wipe out all guerrilla bands in the countryside. The National Guard "imprisoned, brutalized, and killed not only

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[117] Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and The Stone: on war in the 21st Century*, (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2004), 76–80.

[118] Hammes, *The Sling and The* Stone, 80.

[119] Hammes, *The Sling and The* Stone, 80.

Sandinista fighters, but also hundreds of peasants suspected of helping them."[120] Not only was the National Guard attacking FSLN and their supporters, they were publically accused of widespread torture, rape and summary execution of civilians, furthering the disenfranchisement of the Somoza regime from the population and with allies who saw this COIN campaign as a violation of basic human rights.[121]

4. The People Rise Up, the Insurgents Take Control

Through these abuses of power a grassroots uprising amongst the Nicaraguan people took hold. Demonstrations against the government and protest rallies formed, with no apparent organization leading it. The FSLN leadership latched onto this opportunity, coming out of hiding from the mountains and other countries, taking control of the movements, and unifying the multiple factions and political organizations. The National Guard responded to these uprising and demonstrations with indiscriminate killings that further incensed the population. The domino effect of these actions was more violent demonstrations that pressed the Somoza regime for its capitulation. Fighting in the streets and the indiscriminate killing were great victories for the FSLN and damning to Somoza. "International attention was riveted on the carnage. The National Guard's furious assault was the most visible act of bloodletting in recent history."[122] The Sandinista used the media to exploit these events and further their cause. This tactic worked. By the fall of 1978 the fight for revolutionary change in Nicaragua had become international. A flow of arms and supplies began arriving for the FSLN from Costa Rica, shortly followed by Cuba and Venezuela.[123]

The United States attempted to mediate the events unfolding in Nicaragua but Somoza refused to agree to the demands of his strongest ally. This in turn caused the

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[120] Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua 1977–1990*(New York: Free Press, 1996), 28.

[121]Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle*, 29.

[122]Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle*, 43–59.

[123]Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle*, 60.

mediations to fail, forcing the United States to impose sanctions against the Somoza regime for human rights violations in February of 1979, and further boosting Sandinista political unity.[124]

The Sandinista's growth from this point was exponential. The increased support and Latin solidarity against the beleaguered regime swelled the revolutionary ranks. They began offensive attacks against Somoza's forces and cities. Even though they were much smaller and still technologically inferior, they stretched the National Guard out; forcing them to defend selected areas and leaving others open for Sandinista occupation. The National Guard's frustration with the turn in events was evident in their continued use of brutal tactics taken out on the population. But the FSLN continued its attacks until Somoza, with United States' assistance, bartered a cease fire to the hostilities and went into exile. On July 19, 1979, the FSLN took control of the capital of Nicaragua, ending more than 40 years of U.S. backed dictatorship.[125]

5. Nicaragua Conclusion

Comparing the "good and bad" COIN practices used in Nicaragua it is fairly clear why the Somoza regime failed and the FSLN won. First and foremost, the regime failed to provide the population the basic necessities to ensure the regime's legitimacy. The regime's greed and lack of compassion for the population, manifested over several decades, drove a wedge between the government and the population, forcing the population to stand up for itself. The government then failed to interact with the population and reestablish a positive relationship with them to work through their grievances. Instead they sought to eliminate the perceived threat of the FSLN and indiscriminately attack the population, thus furthering their suffering. The FSLN's legitimacy with the population was enhanced over time and was furthered by the support of several other nations. The external support provided by these nations and the sanctions emplaced by the United States, due to the Somoza's brutal human rights

[124]Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle* 75.

[125]Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle*, 83–85.

violations, eventually squeezed the Somoza regime into capitulation and exile, identifying how external actors may influence the overall outcome of a COIN fight.

B. MALAYA: THE BRITISH SUCCESS STORY

1. Malaya Introduction

By the time the British declared a state of emergency in Malaya, in June 1948, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) had established itself as the leading opposition to the British rule with the intent to overthrow British governance and transform the nation into a communist republic.

2. Malayan Communist Party

Established in 1930 as an overseas branch of the Chinese Communist Party, the MCP was organized to push for decolonization of Malaya by creating rifts between the population, its labor force and the British administration. Their efforts leading up to the Japanese invasion in December 1941 were seen as merely a nuisance to the administration and weren't dealt with as a typical insurgency. The MCP was unable to sway a large number of groups or people to their cause since the majority of the MCP's membership was ethnic Chinese, a minority within Malaya's borders.[126]

During the Japanese occupation the MCP established and grew a guerrilla organization to fight the Japanese in the name of the Malayan people. Organized as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), and provided training in guerrilla tactics by the British, these mostly Chinese volunteers were able to gain a considerable amount of recognition and prestige from the Malayans for their efforts to fight from the shadows. This ability and growing lore allowed the MPAJA to swell its ranks and conduct minor attacks against the Japanese. They weren't overpowering in their abilities but were elusive enough to keep the Japanese guessing and labeling them as a "thorn in their sides."[127]

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126 R. W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1972), 1–2.

127 Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948–1960*, (Singapore: Times Academic Press, July 2004), 43–44.

Following the abrupt end to WWII, the Japanese handed Malayan security over to the MPAJA for their administration of small towns and rural areas, which was further advanced by the British, upon their return, with the proclamation of the MPAJA's official military status upgrade.[128] The MPAJA used this opportunity to conduct racial retribution actions against those whom they claimed collaborated with the Japanese. The MPAJA targeted mostly Malays and conducted a "reign of terror" that eroded the MCP's chances of gaining support from the separate racial classes within Malaya.[129]

The returning British administration convinced the MPAJA to disarm and return to their lives as Malayan citizens, providing them with the opportunity for a better future than one of the jungle guerrilla. The MPAJA agreed to disarm and disband as an organization. This allowed MCP the opportunity to step up and create a "number of front organizations of a traditional Communist character."[130] The MCP then spent the years from 1945 to 1948 creating animosity within the labor class towards the British attempting to bring the government down. They affiliated themselves and gained control of labor unions which allowed them to conduct frequent and bitter strikes. They also turned their actions towards killings and abductions, creating an uncertain environment for the British government.[131]

3. The British Return

In 1945 the British returned to a Malaya that was completely different from when they left. Prior to the Japanese occupation, Malaya had been considered one of the most professional and best colonial police forces within the empire. It was administered efficiently and retained some of the most highly trained individuals. To be part of the Malayan police force an individual had to go through time intensive and rigorous training that was rewarded with higher than average pay resulting in the best applicants. This force was utterly destroyed and rebuilding it in 1945 led the British to cut the standards of the applicants and their training requirements that made them such an effective force.

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[128] Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect*, 4.

[129] Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, 45.

[130] Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect*, 5.

[131] Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect*, 5.

The new force was deployed throughout the country in small detachments that were easy targets for insurgent attacks. The MCP used this opportunity to successfully target the British administration and their infrastructure as well as the wealthy business prospects from the rubber plants and tin mines, while gathering ever strengthening support from the population who began to see the British as an occupying force instead of the pre-war colonial force.[132]

4. British COIN Operations – First Phase

From 1948–1951 the British adopted a policy of "coercion and enforcement" to meet the threat posed by the MCP insurgency. This first phase of the British counterinsurgency plan, tied to the ineptitude of the hastily rebuilt police force, showed the weakness in the British's ability, at the time, to fight this type of warfare. Standard practices during this period of time were the detention and deportation of all persons living within an area known to be used by insurgents, whether they were involved with the insurgency or not. The British forces telegraphed their movements, using conventional practices to fight the insurgency, as if they were fighting the Germans in Europe, allowing the insurgents to disperse into the jungle regions before the British ever came close. The Malayan military and police forces were brutal with their tactics to identify and clear insurgents from their safe havens, garnering a reputation that rivaled the Japanese in their treatment of the ethnic Chinese. These tactics created a sense of isolation and despair for the Chinese community and furthered their distrust of the British government, pushing them to actively and passively support the insurgency allowing the MCP to grow to more than 8,000 members in 1951.[133]

5. British COIN Operations – Second Phase

The British, seeing their position in Malaya losing ground to insurgent Communism, appointed LTG Sir Harold Briggs, in 1950, to act as Director of Operations with the goal of bringing the insurgency under control. The Briggs Plan that was

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[132] James S. Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies*, (U.S. Army War College, 2006), 4–8.

[133] Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, 66–81.

generally adopted called for a change in how units were to operate within the country. Briggs saw the need to dominate and build an area up, and then provide protection and administration. He would do this in a step by step method moving methodically throughout the country to bring it under control again. The plan also called for the relocation and resettlement of the ethnic Chinese population into securable and defensible compounds. This showed the population they could be secured by the legitimate government, provided with basic necessities such as education, health care and clean water and give them a place where they wouldn't be harassed by the police, army or insurgent personnel. Briggs' plan began to show results but he wasn't able to see it through and had to leave Malaya for health reasons in 1951.[134]

Following LTG Briggs, the British entrusted LTG Sir General Templer with the job of defeating the insurgency and communist threat in Malaya and restore law and order. Templer took with him a proclamation from the British Government that Malaya would become a free and independent nation after the insurgency had been defeated. One of Templer's first accomplishments was to unify and energize the civilian administrations. He went out to the settlements and met with the population to hear their grievances and gauge the situation for himself. This allowed him to craft and implement "the Malayan Government's policy…to be known as the 'hearts and minds approach.'"[135]

Templer and his staff increased the professionalization of the police force, improving its reputation with the Malayan communities. They also implemented a "stick and carrot" approach to dealing with population centers that supported or denied the insurgents access. The most compelling of these approaches was the use of food rationing to coerce government support from villages that actively supported insurgent movements. Carrot operations were used to support communities who worked with the government by providing social services and long term land titles. The largest of the carrots was the promise of decolonization and the creation of the independent Malayan state once the insurgency was defeated. In conjunction with these actions, the hearts and

134 Donald Mackay, *The Malayan Emergency 1940–1968: The Domino that Stood* (London: Brassey's Ltd., 1997), 86–100.

135 Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, 140–155.

minds strategy utilized propaganda against the insurgency by targeting population centers with government newspapers and radio messages aiding their attempts to win over the population.[136]

Within a short period of time the shift in policy and professionalization of the security forces began to show positive results. The MCP's operations were shifted from offensive to defensive with the number of attacks steadily decreasing. The government was able to build effective administrative and social service distribution networks as well as provide agricultural land to the population. Intelligence networks increased significantly, allowing the insurgent network to be exposed to the government for targeting forcing the insurgency to move away from population centers and back into the jungles where they lacked logistical support for their operations. By 1954 a stalemate had been declared between the two forces and both sides were looking for ways to expand their organizational bases and regain momentum.[137] It took another six years for the emergency to come to a conclusion, and was made possible by the patient, long-term approach the government took to fulfill its strategy. Eventually, the insurgency's support was eliminated due to the implementation of good governance practices, such as new social support practices and improved security policies. The resulting increased visibility of the insurgent network rendered it visible to attack, because they had to leave the jungle in search for support from other sources. The government claimed victory over the insurgency, ending the emergency in 1960.

6. Malaya Conclusion

The British and Malayan governments were able to claim victory over the MCP insurgency after a long and protracted effort. The initial stages of the insurgency allowed the MCP to grow exponentially not only because of their actions but because of the brutal tactics initially used to fight them. The British attempts to stop the insurgency from 1948–1951 can be classified as classical mistakes of a COIN force. Mass ethnic retribution and brutal tactics were seen as polarizing actions that disenfranchised the

136 Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, 156–184.

137 Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, 187–191.

population and delegitimized the government. The second phase of the insurgency showed the British doctrine could evolve and was capable of changing direction when confronted with a losing strategy. The hearts and minds campaign, forever coined in modern lexicons, showed the necessity to adopt policies that support the population and folds them into society rather than segregate and intimidate them. The collective punishment of food rationing and forced relocation may lead to polarize a population and is seen today as counterproductive COIN practices. These tactics worked for the British in Malaya but to repeat these actions in other countries would have to be done very carefully and after considerable consideration to the effects on the local population.

C. SOMALIA: THE FAILURE OF A STATE

1. Somalia Introduction

The Somali state drastically changed in 1969 beginning with the assassination of the country's President, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, which left the country and the government in a political vacuum. This gaping hole in Somali governance led to a bloodless coup by the top military commander, General Mohamed Siyad Barre, who led the country down a path of wanton destruction from which it has never recovered.[138]

2. Re-identification of the Population

Attempting to change the national identity of the population, Barre dismantled the governing bodies and bureaucracies of Somalia and replaced them with the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), which he presided over, and set up regional councils in its image. The SRC's stated goals were to bring the Somali people together and end the tribal divisions that had "plagued" the country. Barre called for the end of the tribal nepotism and to re-establish a system of governance that stressed economic and social betterment for the entire population and not just the privileged few. His new government would be founded on Scientific Socialism – wealth sharing based on wisdom—that

[138] Maria H. Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State in Somalia: From Statelessness to Statelessness*, (Utrecht: International Books, 2001), 171.

would reshape and restructure the Somali national identity by demonizing the tribal structure that the population had been accustomed to.[139]

To accomplish this Barre set up programs to educate the masses and provided volumes of propaganda on how to become a better Somali citizen. Initially the population supported Barre and the military regime. They had viewed the military favorably, identifying them as one of the main reasons Somalia had experienced early success as a country. But Barre took the transformation several steps further than the population had expected. To maintain his credibility and control over the country, he ordered the SRC to conduct investigations into the lives and political positions of key personnel within the government and the larger community. If they were found to not fully support the Barre regime they were removed from their positions, with common sentences of jail time and even execution. Any acts that were deemed to be subversive toward Barre's regime were dealt with in a very strict manner.[140]

From 1969 to 1975 the transformation provided mixed results. The population enjoyed a measure of self-reliance that produced enthusiasm at the individual level, the education rate increased, and the illiteracy rate decreased due to Barre's adoption of the Roman alphabet, allowing the Somali language to become written and taught to the masses for the first time.[141] In conjunction with his successes though, Barre's regime employed brutal and undermining tactics to maintain his power base which frustrated the society at large and made them hostile towards his policies. "The state authority and domination relied on coercion rather than fair competition between various social forces in society."[142] The state was not legitimized by a foundation in good governance and was prone to political instability that was balanced by Barre's ability to promote and demote public figures as well as divide the tribes he claimed he wanted to bring together. Barre believed that if he was able to balance the tribal influences through systems of patronage and maintain tensions between them, not allowing any one tribe to become too

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139 I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 207.

140 Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 207–209.

141 Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 216.

142 Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State in Somalia*, 175.

powerful, he would be able to maintain his ability to control the entire state. Police, military, special state emergency laws and special units were used in conjunction to coerce the population further entrenching the population within their tribes. The population began to feel as if they could trust no one outside of their closest relatives and lineage members.[143]

3. Insurgent Groups Emergence

By 1975 the population had watched and tired of the extrajudicial killings of its citizens. The ultimate attack against their identity came with the execution of 10 religious figures that refused to preach the teachings of the state in their mosques and maintained their Islamic beliefs. The people saw that the Barre regime wasn't delivering on its promises and began to look for alternatives. The neglect in infrastructure development, issues with large numbers of refugees from persistent droughts, and the direct military rule wasn't the new Somalia they had supported after the coup.[144]

Following a failed invasion of Ethiopia 1977, where more than 8,000 soldiers were killed and more than 600,000 citizens were displaced, several insurgent groups began to emerge and challenge the Barre regime. The Somali Salvation Defense Front (SSDF) formed in Ethiopia, receiving funding from Ethiopia and Libya, and began to conduct cross border operations against easy targets. The Somali National Movement (SNM), funded by the Somali diaspora residing in Gulf states, East Africa and various western countries and the United Somali Congress (USC); founded by members of the repressed Hawiye tribe (largest in Somalia) all began to rise up from the desert and challenge Barre authority.[145]

4. Barre Fails to Defeat Insurgents

Barre's reactions to these new insurgent threats were enough to keep them from growing into organizations that couldn't attempt anything more than hit and run attacks. He expanded his COIN force to 120,000 troops but failed to rebuild the military to

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[143] Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State in Somalia*, 175–179.

[144] Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 213.

[145] Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed*, 48.

effectively deal with insurgent tactics. His forces employed collective repression and escalating indiscriminate violence in attempts to destroy the insurgents with overwhelming forces. Barre's tactics and oppressive policies were aimed at the population as a whole and drove outright support towards the insurgencies. The public began to push the insurgents for more attacks against the regime and to take advantage of the support they offered. From June 1985 through February 1986 the SNM claimed to have killed more than 500 government soldiers in 30 operations. The SNM's leadership had learned from their mistakes and became skilled in developing their organization and leadership bases. Through their attacks they were able to recruit more members into their organization and by 1988 were able to mount complex attacks that Barre's forces were unable to defend against. Their attacks were "so surprising and tactically destructive that [the Barre regime] was rendered incapable of careful, planned and effective resistance."[146] By May of 1988 the SNM captured the cities of Buro and Hargeisa. This is seen as a major turning point for the insurgency, galvanizing the other insurgent groups' resolve and banding them together with the SNM.[147]

Barre's response was brutal and unforgiving. He ordered air strikes and artillery barrages against areas believed to be insurgent strongholds, killing more than 35,000 civilians and displacing thousands more. Somali pilots, ordered to continue the onslaught but appalled by the slaughter, began to defect to Ethiopia. Barre dispatched his special forces to continue the attacks against suspected insurgents, killing all those suspected of being subversive. These forces were more indiscriminate, reportedly conducting widespread looting, raping and killing of the local populous. Mercenary pilots were brought in from South Africa and Zimbabwe to replace the Somali Air Force pilots who had defected. But these forces weren't enough to counter the ability or support the insurgent groups were wielding. By 1991the COIN force had deteriorated, the insurgents were more powerful than the army and the Barre regime had ended in complete disaster.

[146] Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed*, 49–50.

[147] Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed*, 50.

Barre fled the country and the government collapsed, leaving it open for the insurgent groups to conduct infighting for control which has left it incapable of forming a central government to this day.[148]

5. Somalia Conclusion

The Somalia case proved that the support from the population was paramount to the insurgent's success. The COIN force's inability to stop the flow of tangible and intangible support towards the insurgent networks was exasperated by the fact the population felt the government was a worse option than the insurgent groups and their assistance was the pivotal point in the regime's downfall. The insurgents enjoyed sanctuary in ungoverned territory which provided them the space and logistics support necessary to recruit, grow, and educate the force needed to fight. The Barre regime exasperated the use of "bad' COIN practices through its continual self-destructive use of indiscriminate acts of violence, pushing the population to actively support the insurgent forces. The Barre regime's COIN force, stemming from their frustrations to stave off insurgent attacks, fought against the insurgents and civilians with air, artillery, looting and rape, completely delegitimizing the government. The government's policies bolstered the insurgent network's rank and file with eager recruits to fight against Barre, ultimately ending his rule and driving the country into political chaos.

D. CONCLUSION

These case studies' diversity, with the type of regimes fighting insurgents, the outcomes of each fight and how each governing force implemented COIN were specifically chosen to provide a well-rounded view of successful and failed COIN practices. The common thread identified is the need for the government to conduct itself in a manner that doesn't alienate and delegitimize itself with the population. The population is the ultimate factor in a successful COIN campaign and great care must be taken to ensure actions taken by the COIN force are for the betterment of the population and not an attack or suppression of their lives.

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[148] Paul, Clarke and Grill, *Victory has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed*, 50–51.

These factors are important when we discuss how to work with the Yemeni government. COIN doctrine states that we must work with the central government to fight off the insurgents. But what do we do when the incumbent regime is deemed illegitimate within the eyes of the population? How do external actors, like the United States, assist the Yemeni government with its fight against AQAP when the government is besieged by its population, clamoring for revolution, and rolling with the momentum of the Arab Spring? How does the United States maintain its campaign to fight AQAP and maintain its legitimacy while working with an illegitimate government, therefore all actions taken are perceived as illegitimate? In the next chapter we will provide answers to these questions and provide recommendations for future operations within Yemen and how we should work with Yemen to bring about security in the region.

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VI. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

Yemen and the Saleh regime face a multitude of dilemmas that threaten the viability of Yemen as an independent nation state. Even without the threat of a global insurgency, Yemen faces dire resource challenges. It is forecasted to run out of potable water within the next decade, which will directly affect all its twenty four million inhabitants. Its oil revenue, which has fueled the government's ability to maintain its patronage system, is rapidly decreasing due to lower outputs. And the recent uprising in Sana'a in support of the Arab Spring weakened President Saleh's tenuous grip over the country, and his standing in the international community, to the point that he officially resigned as president and handed over his power to his vice president, Abed Rabo Mansour al-Hadi, on November 23, 2011.[149] But this "win" for the people and the country may be shallow and short lived.

The United Nations (UN) support of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) proposal, outlining "a process for a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led transition of power from President Saleh"[150] opens up avenues for international support to flow to the people and assist in redefining the current government structure. But it also is mired in controversy. As a condition for acceptance of the GCC's proposal, President Saleh was allowed retain his title and some privileges until the new elections are held in February. Furthermore, President Saleh has been granted immunity from prosecution protecting him from the multiple human rights violations he has committed during his 33 years in power.[151]

Saleh, we contend, will still be a driving force within the Yemeni government, at least in the near future. As testament to this, Saleh's resignation hasn't taken on tangible

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[149] *The New York Times*, "Yemen – Protests (2011)," http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/yemen/index.html (accessed November 29, 2011).

[150] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2014 (2011).

[151] *New York Times*, "Yemen."

qualities of a deposed leader. He has been very public in his recognition of the protesters and their attacks, and the loyalist militias fighting to keep him in power. He made a public decree on November 27, 2011 to declare a "general amnesty for people whom had committed 'follies' during the uprisings…but made an exception for those responsible for the bombing that badly wounded him."[152]

President Saleh's power base is unlikely to change with the February 2012 presidential election. His Vice President, Mr. Hadi, is currently the only candidate expected to run leaving the status quo unchanged if someone else isn't able to step forward and wrest control away from him. Furthermore, President Saleh's family members maintain critical positions within the military and intelligence services, maintaining a grip on the country.[153] Without significant change to the government, we contend that the Saleh regime in its current form and as discussed above, will stay intact and all the negative factors regarding its illegitimate governance will continue to drive the country to the brink of disaster.

These issues taken together create a situation with explosive possibilities, ones which most countries are not willing to tackle. But the United States has pledged, as one of its primary security goals, to eradicate al-Qaeda and its affiliates no matter where they attempt to find sanctuary. The United States' current partnership with the Yemeni government is one of mutual benefit. It receives substantial monetary aid that is used to entrench the Yemeni elites, ensuring their loyalty to whoever pays them. Also, the United States is allowed to conduct CT missions against identified AQAP members from remote locations like Djibouti. When these missions are successful, it becomes national news to extol the continued effort to fight AQ. However, what *isn't* discussed is how these CT operations may cause more harm than good.

Yemeni tribal society doesn't identify itself with a national moniker. A Yemeni sees him/herself as a tribe member first and foremost, and lives by the rule of the tribe, not the government. Within tribal society there are three types of broad relationships:

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[152]*New York Times*, "Yemen."

[153]*New York Times*, "Yemen."

Patrons to the tribe, clients of the tribe, and partners with the tribe. An outsider must establish himself through one of these relationships in order to operate effectively inside tribally governed lands.[154]

The Saleh regime is mostly viewed as a patron of the tribes and doesn't command their loyalties past the revenue stream provided from Sana'a. As the resources dwindle the support the government is able to buy is proportionately dwindling as well. AQAP is taking a different approach to garner tribal loyalty. They are attempting to, and in some cases succeeding, partner with the tribes. Through a shared identity and distrust of the central government, AQAP's influence and clout increases. They work with the tribes directly, providing security and support the central government is not capable or willing to provide. They are working with the tribal leaders to set up social welfare and education programs for the population, galvanizing tribal support while demonizing the government. Recent operations to overtake two cities in Abyan province show AQAP's resolve to further their cause, while being supported by the tribes who feel neglected by the government.

Within this construct, the United States is attempting to assist the government while furthering its cause by targeting and killing valuable AQAP targets. These attacks have mostly been conducted by aerial drones with "smart weapons." These attacks, while effective at maintaining a minimum footprint within the region, are not going to be able to defeat AQAP in Yemen, nor sway public opinion towards supporting the government or the United States' efforts. When remote attacks are exasperated by collateral damage, AQAP is on the ground with the resources necessary to further entrench themselves with the tribes. They call on the tribes to denounce the government as corrupt and a puppet of the United States, further delegitimizing the efforts of both governments to clear the insurgency out. These actions create a positive feedback loop that increases the size of the insurgency with more bodies than the dead ones by the attack.

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[154]Sarah Phillips, "What comes next in Yemen: Al-Qaeda, the Tribes, and State-Building," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 107 (March 2010), 4–5, http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/03/11/what-comes-next-in-yemen-al-qaeda-tribes-and-state-building/376.

To truly counter the growth of AQAP we contend the international community must adopt a multinational COIN approach that attempts to leverage the governing bodies within Yemen. The case studies presented in the previous chapter outline the effectiveness of good and bad COIN practices and their ability to sway the population's opinion and support for or against the incumbent regime. The Malaya case study showed that given enough time and understanding of the local environment coupled with good COIN practices, a regime under siege can become legitimate and maintain its power. Through good governance the population will turn away from supporting insurgent activities and show their unity towards the central government. The Nicaragua and Somalia case studies present the outcomes of bad COIN fights. Indiscriminate repression of the population, human rights violations and patronage systems emplaced to forcibly control the populations opinions have shown to shorten the life spans of the incumbent regimes.

For COIN in Yemen to be effective, a status of legitimacy must be established between the COIN force and the population. Whether or not this is conducted in conjunction with the established government, on their behalf, or without them will be based on the Saleh regime's ability to reverse its current path of destruction and stave off its demise. The next three sections will identify how COIN practices implemented through various methods may or may not be effective. We will first look at how COIN with the current regime may be perceived by the population and its effectiveness. Second, we look at circumventing the central government's authority and establishing a grassroots COIN campaign. Third, we assume the Saleh regime will be resistant to our attempts to conduct COIN in the previous two models, resulting in policy implementation that causes the central government to fail, creating a failed state scenario requiring international support and aid to stave off resulting humanitarian crises.

B. COIN SUPPORTING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

As discussed in Chapter IV one of the primary tenants of COIN doctrine is to work with and build up the central government, expand its ability to provide good governance, improve its relationship with its population, and show its ability and resolve

to project power to strengthen its legitimacy. "Legitimacy of the state…in the Western mindset depends upon the national government's ability to be a meaningful entity in the lives of its citizens, a conception that joins it with sate-centric COIN doctrine."[155]

Building upon the historical frameworks of counterinsurgent academics, FM 3–24 outlines a holistic approach to a COIN campaign that returns a faltering state, under siege of an insurgent threat, to a level that allows it to govern independently from external support. Beginning with the central government, this type of COIN campaign works to bolster and rebuild the security and social apparatuses that have failed the population and allowed the insurgency to take root and grow. These actions would bolster the central government to push out of its entrenched position and reach out to the population it has previously been unable or unwilling to support. These actions would allow the government to secure and provide for the population furthering its goal to regain the legitimacy it had lost.

1. Required Actions

For the United States to consider taking on this problem we must look at how our actions would be perceived. Currently, the government is under multiple attacks from various factions. The Southern Secessionist Movement, Houthi Rebellion and AQAP are all vying to accomplish their goal but aren't the most pressing problem being addressed by the government. The uprisings and demonstrations against the Yemeni government, incensed from the victories of the Arab Spring, have turned deadly. As recently as November 11, 2011, Saleh's regime butchered his own people in an attempt to put down the uprisings in the city of Taiz, killing at least fifteen people and firing artillery upon hospitals that care for the wounded protesters.[156] These actions clearly show a government that was unwilling to work with its population to identify and work through grievances, therefore further delegitimizing its role with the population. Furthermore, the

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[155] David C. Ellis and James Sisco, "Implementing COIN Doctrine in the Absence of a Legitimate State," *Small Wars Journal*, October 13, 2010, 7, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/implementing-coin-doctrine-in-the-absence-of-a-legitimate-state.

[156] Laura Kasinof, "Yemeni Forces Heighten Deadly Assault on Protesters in City Central to Uprising," *New York Times Online*, November 11, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/12/world/middleeast/government-forces-kill-at-least-15-in-yemen.html?_r=1&ref=yemen (accessed November 12, 2011).

actions taken against these armed uprising show the central government doesn't understand that their role is to protect the people, not conduct mass retribution against them.

Any action then taken on the behalf of the central government to help quell the violence and bring these armed rebellions under control will be viewed as illegitimate. If the United States were to come to the aid of the government and attempt to conduct COIN operations and rebuild the state, even without President Saleh's presence, the entire operation would be viewed as "imperialistic" and illegitimate. The propaganda generated by aligning the United States, in a greater role than it is currently involved, would be counterproductive. Like the deposed regimes of Nicaragua and Somalia, the brutal tactics and indiscriminate killings are leading towards the regime's failure. This time of civil unrest and uprisings allows AQAP to continue its expansion and fight against the central government generating support and greater legitimacy for its cause.

COA #1: COIN Supporting the Central Government	
Required Actions:	
1. COIN doctrine provides holistic approach to reestablishing state legitimacy 2. Legitimacy depends on a government's ability to provide security and social services for the population 3. Legitimacy is gained when the population believes the government can provide more than the insurgency can with respect to security and services	
Pros:	Cons:
1. Central government is recognized by the international community 2. United States has working relationship with Yemen government to conduct CT operations against AQAP	1. Government has lost control of its population 2. Any action taken on behalf of an illegitimate government is illegitimate by association 3. Yemen has no history of national identity to tie its population to the government.

COIN in Support of the Saleh Regime

2. Recommendation

The Saleh regime slipped down a path from which it couldn't recover. President Saleh's resignation and the upcoming presidential elections are unlikely to change the societal dynamics within Yemen, especially as the Yemeni population has never had an

identity beyond the tribe. For these reasons, we don't recommend the United States conduct COIN operations in conjunction with the central government. The U.S. actions would not be welcomed nor appreciated. The amount of negative publicity generated by the intrusion of U.S. COIN forces would be enough to polarize the population no matter how much aid would be delivered to the population.

C. GRASSROOTS COIN AT THE VILLAGE/TRIBE LEVEL

Realizing traditional COIN techniques through the Yemeni government will not work; the next step is to consider centralizing all COIN efforts at the tribal level. COIN at this level would consist primarily of security and civil projects to improve the areas of Yemen which were long neglected by the Saleh government. These projects would be led by the international community, as the tribes would look unfavorably on the U.S. leading the effort. While many tribes benefit monetarily from the patronage payments from the government, such payoffs are tied to perceived loyalty. In this way, receipt of such benefits is contingent on whim and not necessity. This course of action recommends bypassing the central government and focusing COIN efforts where they can best be used – at the village level where AQAP has found safe areas from which to recruit, train, and operate.

1. Required Actions

Bypassing the central government is attractive for the same reasons that coordinating a multinational COIN approach through the central government is not feasible. For example, the monies spent would go directly toward improving the areas of Yemen which need it the most. The tribal areas in Southern Yemen have been long neglected by the government. By focusing effort in these areas, the international community can provide the population with such civic services as schools, sustainable farming techniques, and infrastructure and governance needs. The COIN force used would also spend much effort in providing security in these areas against AQAP activities.

Unfortunately, the current situation in Yemen precludes this course of action. While facing many problems, Yemen is still a sovereign nation, and the government is still powerful. It controls most of the military within the country, and still receives substantial monetary support from several international donors, including the United States. As such, it would never allow the international community to conduct counterinsurgency operations without working through his government. The same can be said for the United Nations, whose support would be required in this scenario. The UN would be very unlikely to support any action that does not work through the nation-state.

Another problem with this course of action is that it does not provide avenues for solving several of Yemen's other problems. Among the most important of these is the way in which the government has dealt with the problems it feels are more pressing: the Houthi Rebellion, and the Southern Secessionist movement. While still in power, government will continue to use a heavy hand against his people. In other words, this course of action fails to address the illegitimacy of the government. The tribes have been subjected to repeated foreign intervention. They would therefore likely view the international community with disfavor if it were to circumvent the central government, as this course of action prescribes. The only way the tribes would view an intervening force with favor is if they were to act directly against both AQAP and the Saleh regime, while providing the basic services required for a functioning population. This intervention would provide ample fodder for the AQAP narrative, which is already receiving support from the village level in Yemen as it fills the gaps left by the government.

COA #2: Grassroots COIN, Bypassing Central Government	
Required Actions:	
1. Bypass the central government and target the population directly 2. Work with the tribes and villages to address basic security and services needs 3. Call for International Community to do the same (especially Saudi Arabia and UN) 4. Continue to conduct CT operations within Yemen's borders	
Pros:	Cons:
1. Bypasses the biggest roadblock 2. Involves international community	1. Yemeni government and international community will not allow it 2. Narrative windfall for AQAP 3. It fails to address resource issues in Yemen

2. Recommendation

While the type of regime Saleh created remains in power, this course of action is untenable. The power it wields would make it impossible to provide the tribes with the basic services and security they need. If this type of action is undertaken with the current government still in control, the resulting narrative windfall to AQAP would be catastrophic to those who oppose the group. Still, the merits of conducting COIN at the village level without interference from the Saleh regime cannot be ignored. It is these merits which lead us to our third considered course of action.

D. ASSIST IN FALL OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The third course of action is to act towards a real change in government leadership and practices, while simultaneously fostering sustained relationships with tribal-level powerbrokers. As previously discussed, the Yemeni government is the source of many of the problems the country faces today. The Saleh regime repeatedly hindered the United States' efforts to eradicate AQAP and will likely do so in the foreseeable future. The government has also allowed AQAP to grow more powerful through its uneven efforts against the group. Furthermore, the government has – on several occasions – allowed AQAP members to escape from its prisons and refused to either extradite or prosecute known terrorist members within its borders. Compounding this problem is the government's illegitimacy in the eyes of the Yemeni population. A generation of rampant corruption through its patronage practices, resource mismanagement, and heavy-handed use of its military has squandered what little goodwill the people of Yemen felt toward its central government. It is little wonder that the tribes willingly listen to the AQAP narrative.

1. Required Actions

This course of action posits that the biggest roadblock in countering the growing influence of AQAP is the government itself. In this regard, the United States has been part of the problem. Virtually all of the aid the U.S. provides goes directly to the central government. While the intention was for these funds to be used for Yemen's CT efforts

against AQAP, the Saleh regime diverted these monies for other purposes. Over the years, President Saleh used his American-trained security forces to quash Arab Spring protesters in Sana'a and elsewhere. The United States should therefore cease all monetary donations which go directly to the central government in Yemen until the Saleh regime has been disposed of in its entirety.

Instituting such a policy is not without peril. There is the possibility that somebody much like President Saleh could take over administration of the government, and rule it in much the same way that Saleh has for the past 33 years. However, this outcome is unlikely for two key reasons. First, President Saleh has proved to be unusually adept at manipulating both domestic and foreign audiences into providing support. It is highly unlikely that anybody who takes his place will possess the same amount of skill. Furthermore, the tides that have risen against the Saleh regime are quite powerful. With his removal, the voices calling for change are much louder and clearer than before. Additionally, powerful forces—including military commanders and powerful people from his own clan—have withdrawn their support. These same forces will be wary of any replacement who they feel may follow the same set of policies which the Saleh regime promoted.

On the other hand, there are many positive aspects to this course of action. Most prominent among these is that the type of regime Saleh presided over will no longer hold sway over the population. With no central authority to quell popular uprisings through violent suppression, not only will the previously silenced voices be heard, but the tribes will find once again that they are strong. The importance of the population is apparent when comparing the Somalia case study to the current situation in Yemen. In Somalia, Barre squandered the initial support he had by alienating the population by dividing the tribes through patronage, mass killings, and strong-arm tactics throughout his rule. The Somalia case points to the need for any COIN movement to have the support of the population if it is to ever successes. With that in mind, any government that comes after the Saleh regime will either be more inclusive of formerly disparaged population sets, or will be administered at the tribal level. Either of these prospects is more amenable for the United States to secure its interests, and will be more beneficial for Yemen as well.

For example, the United States will find it easier to coordinate and execute (through tribal power brokers, for example), simple kinetic operations against AQAP. Several studies have shown that terrorist organizations flourish where the state is badly governed, as opposed to ungoverned.[157] Thus, even if Yemen was to completely fail as a state, the conduct of CT operations would be facilitated, not hindered.

Furthermore, Yemen will learn just how hollow the AQAP narrative really is. While it has convincingly argued against the Saleh regime, it does not provide a viable alternative method of governance. With Saleh's removal, AQAP will find itself without a subject for its narrative. Without a convincing narrative, AQAP's attractiveness will quickly wear off.

In order to capitalize on the benefits of a post-Saleh Yemen, the United States should call for, and assist in, increased support for Yemen. Support from the GCC and the UN will be particularly important on this front. Through direct tribal engagement with monies and material resources, the international community will be able to foster sustained positive relations with the Yemeni population. These positive relations will directly result in an information advantage for the forces against AQAP, with a corresponding reduction in safe havens, especially in the southern Yemeni provinces.

Perhaps the largest benefit to be gained from this course of action is that the Yemeni people will be able to guide their own future. While some may argue that the tribes will be unable to solve the problems of scarce resources and an inadequate education system, any action they take will be better than inaction, which has been the hallmark of the government's plans for Yemen's future.

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[157] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2004), 71–72.

COA #3: Assist in Fall of the Saleh Regime	
Required Actions:	
1. Withdraw monetary support for the Saleh regime. Redirect monies toward direct tribal engagement efforts 2. Call for International Community to do the same (especially GCC and UN) 3. Continued CT operations against AQAP	
Pros:	Cons:
1. Removes the biggest roadblock 2. Yemen can chart its own future 3. Removal of AQAP safe havens 4. Unmasks AQAP narrative limitations 5. Easier to conduct CT operations	1. Unclear who would succeed current regime 2. Potential for catastrophic state collapse leading to civil war 3. Requires long term, resource intensive commitment to stabilize country and region while countering AQAP

Assist in the Fall of the Central Government

2. Recommendation

This course of action is the most advantageous, allowing for continued kinetic and non-kinetic operations against AQAP, while treating the root issues which have allowed AQAP to grow in the country. The Yemeni tribes will be able to govern themselves and plan for Yemen's future. As such, it has the best prospects of eradicating AQAP, which is the United States' primary goal.

E. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to identify how the United States can effectively use COIN to counter the AQAP threat emanating from Yemen. The case studies presented identified the good and bad practices of COIN that every policy maker, commander, and tactician must look at before implementation of them. The primary concern of every COIN fight is the hearts and minds of the people. Without their support no COIN force can hope to succeed in creating a long term stable environment that fosters economic growth.

With respect to Yemen, analyzing the many facets of the Yemeni governance, rebellions, succession and AQAP conundrum brings us to a potential chaotic course of action. It is our findings that the current Yemeni state is not viable for long-term success: to counter AQAP influence, to increase quality of life for the population, or to deal with

the resource shortages plaguing Yemen's future. Therefore, we contend that to be able to apply COIN doctrine effectively and further the United States' goal of AQAP eradication the Saleh regime must be removed from power. This goes against long-held doctrine and the current National Security Strategy of the United States which states we should work with failing states and assist in their rebuilding and redevelopment. In this case we contend that assistance in this redevelopment will come after we have assisted, actively and passively, to the demise of the Saleh regime. The regime's removal will allow the international community to assist in rebuilding the country and allow access to the regions within Yemen that are currently off limits to those wanting to identify and destroy AQAP through legitimate means.

Our findings are a framework to begin working towards a Yemen that is free from AQAP influence, but does not sufficiently cover all aspects of considerations needed for implementation. Further study into consequence management and force preparation are necessary before implementing the course of action recommend.

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