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**FROM ALGERIA TO IRAQ:
ON THE CONDUCT OF COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS
IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST**

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ABSTRACT

The Algerian War of Independence offers relevant lessons on the conduct of counter-insurgency operations in a large, semi-desert country affected by a nascent rebellion conducted by nationalist groups operating in urban and rural settings such as that faced by the Coalition authorities in Iraq

INTRODUCTION

The offensive phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched by a United States-led coalition of nations on 19 March 2003.[1] The ground campaign was designed as a lightning strike, a decisive blow driven along two axis of advance up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in order to smash Iraqi resistance on the way to the capital.[2] The push to Baghdad appeared to be an unmitigated military success, clearly outlining the way ahead for combat in the 21st century: highly mobile, lightly mechanized troops supported by air and naval fire power as well as widely disseminated Special Forces, achieving strategic effects while limiting the number of forces deployed and minimizing both casualties and collateral damage.[3] Politically, the aim was to effect 'régime change', ridding Iraq of its dictatorship in order to replace it with a stable, pro-western democracy. The first objective was realized in three weeks, symbolized by the toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue in Baghdad's Firdos Square on 9 April.[4]

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[1] Operation Iraqi Freedom is often dubbed the second Gulf War in contrast to the first Gulf War of 1990-1991, while others also refer to it as the third Gulf conflict if one accounts for the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988. This will retain the use of the second Gulf War moniker throughout. The coalition was overwhelmingly dominated by the United States in terms of troops and resources, augmented by large contingents from Great Britain and Australia as well as much smaller detachments from twenty other countries. Tommy Franks and Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: HaperCollins Publishers, 2004), 433.

[2] Despite their lack of political objectivity, two books published shortly after the fall of Baghdad provide excellent eye-witness accounts of combat operations at the leading edge of the two-pronged offensive. The drive up the Tigris River was primarily a United States Marine Corps responsibility while Army formations led the way up the Euphrates. The former is detailed by Bing West and Ray L. Smith in *The March Up – Taking Baghdad with the 1st Marine Division* (New York: Bantam Books, 2003), *passim*; while the latter is addressed in Rick Atkinson, *In the Company of Soldiers: A Chronicle of Combat in Iraq* (New York: H. Holt, 2004), *passim*.

[3] The famed historian John Keegan published an early but detailed account of the military campaign, drawing such an optimistic conclusion in *The Iraq War* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2004), *passim*.

[4] Anthony Shadid provides a vivid eyewitness account of the scene in Firdos Square, including a rendering of the emotional reactions in the large crowd of Iraqis present that day in *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005), 123-125.

The American President, Georges W. Bush, declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq on 1 May 2003. This statement was premature as the process of régime change could not be completed through the timely instauration of a stable government. On the contrary, the 'catastrophic success' gained in Iraq resulted in the rapid breakdown of law and order throughout the country followed by a growing insurgency in certain provinces.[5] This latter development was mainly focused in the 'Sunny Triangle' and some Shiite quarters but it rapidly grew in importance and became the main concern of American authorities.[6] Within months, attacks on coalition forces resulted in US and allied casualties surpassing those suffered during the offensive phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The dreaded 'quagmire' word appeared in the media as early as the fall of 2003. By then, an operation dedicated to the quick and efficient 'liberation' of Iraq had turned into a long-term occupation taking place in the midst of a widespread insurgency that verge on the edge of civil war today.

This unforeseen development forced some profound, and often reluctant, changes to doctrine and procedures for the conduct of operations in Iraq. Numerous observers have blamed the American military for its failure in adapting to the new security environment since the end of the Cold War and more particularly in the wake of

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[5] Catastrophic success refers to the immediate and irretrievable collapse of military and governmental authorities in the face of a large-scale military assault, implying the loss of police control in the streets as well as the failure to sustain public services and infrastructures in the wake of defeat. Planning for such a contingency in the months leading up to Operation Iraqi Freedom is only briefly mentioned twice by General Tommy Franks, Commander in Chief of Central Command, in his previously cited memoirs, *American Soldier*, 392 and 442. The breakdown of law and order in Iraq, which commenced as early as 10 April 2003, is detailed in Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 129-135 and George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 135-139.

[6] The exact definition of the 'Sunni Triangle' varies from one author to the other but it is generally recognized as "… the swath of central Iraq dominated by Sunni Muslims that stretches (from Baghdad) north along the Tigris and west along the Euphrates…" (Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 201). In other words "… the areas of Iraq's center, west and north between Baghdad, Ramadi, and Mosul." (Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 300).

September 11th, 2001.[7] Even following the defeat of Taliban forces in Afghanistan and

the continued unrest in that country preceding Operation Iraqi Freedom, the conduct of

counterinsurgency operations (COIN) did not gain attention from higher military

authorities, a tendency that continued despite developments in Iraq.[8] It is only very

recently that American officials accepted the term "insurgency" to describe the violence

plaguing Iraq and promulgated a detailed strategy to deal with it.[9] Nevertheless,

developments on the ground had already forced a renewed interest in COIN theory and

practice within the lower levels of the military hierarchy and wider academic circles.

The last two years alone witnessed the publications of numerous books and

articles on the subject of counterinsurgency while the U.S. Army started implementing

some reforms in the training of formations preparing to deploy to Iraq.[10] A natural

tendency was of course turning to history, seeking lessons learned in the past in order to

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[7] The literature on this subject is vast and varied but the following references are typical of the on-going debate. Thomas P.M. Barnett proffers solutions at the geo-political and strategic levels in *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2003), *passim*; and its follow-on volume *Blueprint for Action: A future Worth Creating* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005), *passim*. Douglas A. Macgregor addresses doctrinal and equipment issues in *Transformation Under Fire: Revolutionizing How America Fights* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), *passim*.

[8] "So deeply ingrained is the Army's focus on conventional warfighting that even when HQ 3 Corps was preparing to deploy to Iraq in early 2004 and must have known it would be conducting COIN… with all that that should entail in terms of targeted preparation, its pre-deployment training still focused on conventional operations." Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* (November-December 2005): 8. The author, a Brigadier in the British Army who served throughout the year 2004 as Deputy Commander of the Office of Security Transition in the Coalition Office for Training and Organizing Iraq's Armed Forces, delivers a blistering attack on the US Army's inability to adapt to the requirements of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq. Similar doubts are expressed with regards to Air Force operations and training by Todd Kemper in *Aviation Urban Operations: Are We Training Like We Fight?* (Maxwell AFB: Air War College, 2004), *passim*.

[9] National Security Council, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (Washington: NSC, 2005), *passim*.

[10] See for example Anthony J. Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), *passim*; Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters* (Summer 2004): *passim*; and Lee Grubbs and Michael Forsyth, "Is There a Deep Fight in a Counterinsurgency?" *Military Review* vol. 85, issue 4 (July/August 2005): *passim*. On the new training approach, see "American Military Tactics: How To Do Better, " *The Economist* (December 17th 2005): 22-24.

establish a general body of theory as well as practices that can be applied to the Iraq situation today. It is notable, however, that this effort remains primarily focused on combat against communist insurgencies in the jungles of Asia such as the American experience in the Philippines and Vietnam as well as the British example in Malaya.[11] Some interest is also shown for smaller-scale conflicts in Central America (Belize, Nicaragua, El Salvador), sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Rhodesia) and the rim of the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen, Oman).[12] Much less exists when it comes to drawing lessons regarding the conduct of operations in a geographically large, semi-desertic country where a widespread insurgency is conducted by differing elements of a Muslim population motivated by nationalist and Islamist aims such as that occurring in Iraq.

The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) does provide such a model in terms of geography and topography (physical dimensions, desert plains, mountain ranges); social make up (mainly Muslim population divided in three basic groups hardly united in purpose as well as a small local elite collaborating with the occupier); open borders allowing the influx of foreign support; attempts by the occupier to provide greater local autonomy within a larger alliance; and a technologically advanced army

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[11] This has resulted in the common trend of comparing the cases of Vietnam as a failure in counterinsurgency and Malaya as a success. This tendency was demonstrated as early as 1966 by Richard Clutterbuck in *The Long, Long War: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport: Praeger, 1966), *passim*; continued in the post-Cold War era by Sam Sarkesian in *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Area: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), *passim*; to the recent publication of an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), *passim*. The putting down of the rebel movement in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century is also being touted as an American success that deserves greater attention in pieces such as Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters* (Summer 2004): 80-81; and Brian McAllister, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 333-342.

[12] The overall American and British experiences in fighting insurgencies are more fully explored in such books as Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), *passim*; and Thomas Ross Mockaitis, *The British Experience in Counterinsurgency, 1919-1960* (Ann Harbor: University Microfilms International, 2005), *passim*.

fighting militarily inferior forces resorting to terrorism and guerrilla tactics. The French however lost Algeria after eight years of fighting and this defeat does not at first recommend itself as a source of inspiration for the conduct of a counterinsurgency campaign. The subject is further obscured as the study of military operations against the Muslim insurgents is overshadowed by the controversial tactics used on the ground such as the recourse to torture for intelligence purposes. Finally, conditions specific to a troubled France such as the profound political tensions between the *métropole* and the French immigrants in Algeria, the fall of the IVth republic and the return of de Gaulle to power muddle the issue even further.

It is this author's assertion that, once these various circumstances are peeled away, the Algerian War of Independence provides valuable lessons, truly relevant to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in today's security environment. It will be demonstrated that French military forces actually waged a successful campaign in Algeria, virtually eliminating the insurgent forces in the field but losing the war in metropolitan France. The French identified the support of the local population as the enemy's center of gravity and external assistance as a critical vulnerability, making the isolation of the insurgents the focus of the campaign through i) the deployment of large static and mobile reserve forces to secure inhabited areas and intervene against enemy concentrations; ii) the control of the land, sea and air approaches to Algeria; and iii) the conduct of coordinated civil action as well as the growth of local authorities and auxiliary forces in secured areas. It will be argued that the inclusion of these same measures in the planning of Operation Iraqi Freedom would have prevented the spread of the insurgency in Iraq by i) insuring the deployment of the required number and type of troops as well as

their proper stationing throughout the country to maintain security and defeat enemy forces on the ground; ii) establishing control of the borders to prevent the influx of jihadist and financial support that resulted in the radicalization of the insurgency; and iii) preventing the disbandment of the local military and baathist authorities contributing to maintaining security and order while conducting the coordinated civil action required to gain the support of the local population.

Both the Algerian War of Independence and the Iraqi insurgency evolved over time. It is thus necessary to focus this paper on those periods which are most pertinent to drawing relevant lessons learned in the first instance and that when the implementation of such measures would have proved most effective in the latter case. The French counterinsurgency effort reached its effective height with the execution of the *Plan Challe* (named after the general commanding forces in Algeria at the time) from January 1959 to March 1960. It was by the beginning of that period, more than fours years into the conflict, that French authorities had finally assembled all of the elements required to conduct the coordinated civil and military campaign that resulted in the virtual defeat of the insurgency on the ground. A similar campaign, inaugurated in the very first stages of the American occupation in Iraq, would have prevented the initial spread of the insurgency which has since developed into the chaos witnessed today. This make the period from 1 May (when combat operations were declared over) to the end of August 2003 (with the insurgency well underway) key in, first, understanding what went wrong in Iraq and, second, outlining how the implementation of lessons drawn from Algeria would have contributed to success during that fateful period.

In order to achieve such a goal, this paper will remain closely focused on the *objective* evaluation of the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in these two campaigns. While the greater political and strategic contexts will be addressed, as they must be considered for the formulation of a successful campaign, the validity of French claims in Algeria and American ambitions in Iraq are not relevant to this effort. In both cases, this study will rather concentrate on the planning and execution of the campaigns at the operational level.[13] This approach will provide some of the initial and very basic elements of a framework that could eventually lead to a generic model for the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in the Greater Middle East (herein defined as ranging from North Africa, through the Arabian Peninsula, to Iran) pending further research.

In order to do so, it will be necessary to explore the Algerian War of Independence in depth by detailing the relevance of the conflict today and then exploring the conduct of operations in the field prior to drawing the pertinent lessons at the operational level. One element that goes beyond that realm however will also be considered and that is the importance of domestic support whereas the impact in metropolitan France of certain disputable methods at the tactical level directly affected the outcome of the conflict. This study will then attempt to demonstrate how these lessons could have been integrated in the planning of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the likely impact of their execution in the field on the nascent insurgency in the months that followed the invasion. First though, one must understand what went wrong in

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[13] In Canadian terms, the operational level of conflict refers to that "… at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or areas of operations." This is in contrast to the strategic level where "… a nation or group of nations determines national or alliance security objectives and develops and uses national resources to accomplish those objectives"; and the tactical level "… at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units." These doctrinal definitions are found in the Department of National Defence publication B-GG-005-004/AF-000 *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2000), 1-4 and 1-5.

contemporary Iraq in order to draw inspiration from the past. The planning and

execution of counterinsurgency operations during the critical first months of occupation

will thus be examined initially.

CHAPTER ONE

FAILURE IN IRAQ

Standing on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN in front of an oversized banner proclaiming "Mission Accomplished", President George W. Bush boldly declared on 1 May 2003 the end of major combat operations in Iraq.[14] Mounted as much for the benefit of the troops as for its public impact at home and abroad, this episode is bound to be remembered as one of those deeply flawed moments of history when a Commander-in-Chief claims victory as an unexpected opponent is about to unleash a surprise attack.[15] On that very day, lawlessness was spreading through the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities while, more disquietingly, USCENTCOMHQ had already commenced reporting dispersed attacks on coalition forces and isolated incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[16] As the number of dead and wounded mounted during the following months,

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[14] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 412.

[15] General Franks suggests in his memoirs that he is the one who first recommended that the president proclaims in public the end of combat operations in Iraq. He estimated that his troops would appreciate such a gesture while the declaration might encourage allies which had previously refused to get involved in combat to commit forces to the 'peaceful' rebuilding of Iraq. Franks, *American Soldier*, 522-523. He did not specify a forum for this event and no other sources identify the source of this concept, which included the broadcasting of the president landing on the carrier at sea to make his proclamation dressed as a naval aviator. See Elisabeth Bumiller, "Cold Truths Behind Pump," *New York Times*, 2 May 2003, A1.

[16] The United States Central Command, referred to as CENTCOM in this essay, is the regional combat command responsible for the conduct of Operations Iraqi Freedom. For early reports of coalition casualties after the conclusion of major combat operations in Iraq, see Michael R. Gordon, "Between War and Peace," *New York Times*, 2 May 2003, A1; Niko Price, "Police Return to Work in Baghdad But Few Feel Safe, " *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 2003, A10; and Susan Sachs, "2 More Servicemen Killed In New Attacks in Baghdad," *New York Times*, 9 May 2003, A15.

American authorities denied the existence of an actual insurgency, rather blaming the violence on common criminals and a minority of Hussein's supporters on the run.[17]

This vision was irremediably shattered in August 2003 as attacks on coalition forces kept increasing while the list of targets expanded well beyond American military troops, convoys and bases. Iraqis were being killed, wounded or kidnapped at an alarming rate and national infrastructures such as oil pipelines and electricity-generation utilities as well as foreign governments and aid agencies buildings suffered drive-by shootings and bomb attacks. The latter phenomenon came to the fore in dramatic fashion that month with violent attacks on high-profile targets. Spectacular explosions in Baghdad successively rocked the Jordanian embassy (7 August, nineteen dead) and the United Nations headquarters (19 August, twenty-three dead including the UN chief envoy in Iraq) as well as a crowded market next to a Shiite holy shrine in the city of Najaf (29 August, eighty-two dead).[18]

Washington's rhetoric regarding a dilapidated opposition on the wane no longer seemed adequate as an apparently coordinated campaign of terror was growing in the wake of the coalition's catastrophic success. Also worrying was the obvious radicalization of the insurgents with increasing occurrences of suicide bombings and the continued willingness of rebels to die when attacking superior US forces in the open.

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[17] Despite the death of 30 US and British soldiers in the preceding two months, the US Secretary of Defense Ronald Rumsfeld mused in early July 2003: "I guess the reason I don't use the phrase guerilla war is because there isn't one." Quoted by Romesh Ratnesar *et al* in "Life Under Fire," *Time* vol. 162, issue 2 (17 July 2003): 24. Referring to Hussein's supporters, he also used the pejorative expression "a few dead-enders" while CENTCOM officials variously referred to FRLs (former regime loyalist), FREs (former regime elements) and eventually AIFs (anti-Iraqi forces), continuously refusing to use terms such as insurgents or guerillas. One anonymous senior official is also quoted as indicating that a new acronym was widespread among US forces serving in Iraq - POIs, pissed off Iraqis. Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 300.

[18] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 253-256; and "Iraq After Ayatollah Hakim's Murder," *The Economist* (4 September 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=2042764 ; Internet; accessed 14 Apr 06.

Regime change was floundering while the occupation suddenly seemed a much more dangerous and longer term process than expected. What had gone wrong in the months following the brilliant three-week spring offensive? Critiques rapidly turned their attention to the subject of post-conflict planning and coalition preparations for what would become the hotly debated Phase IV of Operation Iraqi Freedom.[19]

1.1 Phase IV Planning

While the legitimacy of the American intervention in Iraq is outside the scope of this paper, the planning of the post-conflict phase is relevant in that it is where one can find the source of success or failure. The challenge of such a study however resides in the secrecy in which the planning was conducted at the time and the highly partisan views that continue tainting most accounts by participants and observers alike to this day.[20] Regardless of these diverging views, most reports agree that two developments originally affected the coalition's approach to phase IV planning. Responsibility for this fundamental element of regime change was first transferred from the U.S. State Department to the Pentagon in the months leading up to the war, which in turn led to a

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[19] Although "(t)here is no standard format for a campaign plan…, it provides the framework within which operations are planned and executed." MND, *Canadian Forces Operations*, 3-5. This doctrine, widely accepted by NATO countries, results in the formulation of plans at the operational level based on successive phases in order to fashion the campaign in accordance with the commander's intent. For Operation Iraqi Freedom, General Franks formulated a plan based on the execution of four phases in succession over time: I – Preparations and deployments of forces; II – Air-centric operations; III – Decisive combat operations; and IV – Post-hostility operations. Franks, *American Soldier*, 366. Originally based on the first Gulf War model, the plan was eventually modified as phases II and III (air strikes and ground offensive) were gradually compressed in time until ground troops were ordered to enter Iraq *before* the start of the strategic air campaign in order to prevent the destruction of the oil fields of southern Iraq, a lesson drawn from Iraqi actions during the retreat from Kuwait twelve years earlier. Ibid., 436-440.

[20] This challenge was reflected in both media coverage and some initial academic work as the subject of phase IV planning came under greater scrutiny in the fall and winter of 2003-04 in the face of the growing insurgency. See for example David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Time Magazine* (2 November 2003): *passim*; James Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly* vol. 293, no.1 (January-February 2004): *passim*; Anthony H. Cordsman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), *passim*; and Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly* vol. 27, no.1 (Winter 2003-04): *passim*.

very small circle of Iraqi expatriates exercising an undue and overly optimistic influence on American planners.

Throughout the year 2002, American involvement in a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq became the subject of bitter debates between the two departments.[21] State representatives argued that significant amount of personnel, resources and financial investments would be required over the long-term. Defense officials, for their part, envisioned the rapid instauration of a friendly regime sustained by the widespread support of a newly 'liberated' Iraqi people and the long-term involvement of the international community.[22] The more optimistic proponents of the Pentagon's approach even claimed that an American occupation force would be rapidly replaced by a UN or NATO-led military presence if requirements for longer-term stability operations arose.[23]

While Secretary of State Powell succeeded in imposing the adoption of a 'dual-track diplomacy' in August 2002, planning for post-war Iraq became increasingly influenced by the Pentagon towards the end of the year.[24] This occurred following

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[21] Bob Woodward and George Packer published detailed accounts of these debates in *Plan of Attack* and *The Assassin's Gate* respectively. Although these authors had to rely on unnamed sources and unpublished government documents due to the sensitive and partisan nature of the materiel, both authors provide very similar narratives and conclusions.

[22] The State Department position was championed by its Secretary, Colin Powell. He was a military man, having retired following his tour as Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the first Gulf War. Despite his background (or perhaps because of it), his cautious stance regarding a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq is described in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 148-153. The Department of Defense views, repeatedly expounded by Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, are summarized in Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 114-118; and Max Boot, "The New American Way of War," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2003) [journal on-line] available from http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030701faessay15404/max-boot/the-new-american-way-of-war.html ; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.

[23] Leaving aside the unrealistic political assumptions sustaining this view, Andrew Krepinevich outlines the purely practical restrictions posed by the limited number of adequately trained troops that could have been provided by either organizations in *The Thin Green Line* (Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2004), 9-12.

[24] Dual-track diplomacy refers to the intention of continuing the forces build up and contingency planning for a military invasion of Iraq in 2003 while attempting to gain United Nations support throughout the fall

months of disjointed efforts throughout the Washington bureaucracy. In early 2002, the

State Department initiated the "Future of Iraq" project which compiled "… thousands of

pages of reports and recommendations from a range of experts on government, oil,

criminal justice and agriculture in Iraq" but possessed no executive authority.[25]

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense established in September the "Office of Special

Plans" within the Pentagon's Office of Near East and South Asia Northern Gulf

Directorate to conduct similar studies and draft contingency plans but again without

granting it any power of influence.[26] Lastly, a high-level committee made up of the

principal 'deputies' and senior White House officials met regularly under the auspices of

the National Security Council (NSC) to consider the issue of transitional powers once

major combat operations were concluded in Iraq but made little headway in terms of

concrete proposals.[27]

All of this disjointed planning was taking place in Washington as certain circles

of Iraqi expatriates were exercising a growing influence on decision-makers, especially at

Defense. While the movement as a whole was disparate and geographically spread out

around the world, the London-based Iraqi National Congress (INC) had gained much

prominence during the decade following the first Gulf War. It profited largely from the

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and winter of 2002-03. This decision was arrived at in late August 2002 after vigorous lobbying by Powell, despite the opposition of more conservative members of the administration such as Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld and his deputy Wolfowitz. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 154-157 and Franks, *American Soldier*, 400-402.

[25] Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 282.

[26] On the Office of Special Plans, see Packer, *The Assassins' Gate* 104-110.

[27] The 'deputies' involved were the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage, Deputy CIA Director John E. McLaughlin and Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis 'Scooter' Libby Jr. who conducted their meeting under the chairmanship of Stephen J. Hadley, Deputy National Security Advisor. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 280-281.

Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, which authorized active support for expatriate and internal resistance groups opposed to Saddam Hussein.[28] The precise level of influence exercised by such groups within government and military circles in Washington remains to be further researched and documented. Nevertheless, numerous sources state clearly that exile groups, although cut off from the Iraqi reality since the repression years that followed the first Gulf War, acquired a greater standing at the Pentagon by providing intelligence on controversial issues such as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities and the willingness of an Iraqi majority to support regime change initiated from outside the country.[29] Critically though, this rising influence occurred at the very moment when the INC's credibility as an instrument of 'democratic transformation' reached a nadir at the Department of State and within intelligence circles, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[30]

This ambivalent influence and the *ad hoc* nature of phase IV planning continued until the failure of Powell's diplomacy track, all but certain by early 2003, forced a re-assessment of America's role in post-war Iraq. The requirement for the United States to 'go it alone', despite the support of a small coalition of the willing, would inevitably

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[28] The act of 1998, passed by the Republic majority in Congress, declared that it would be the "… policy of the United States to seek to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power in Iraq and to replace it with a democratic government." It further directed the Clinton administration to designate suitable Iraqi opposition organizations to receive financial assistance. The INC became one of the largest beneficiaries of such aid. Quoted in Franks, *American Soldier*, 421.

[29] George Packer actually dedicates a full chapter to the influence of expatriate circles in the months preceding the invasion of Iraq in *The Assassins' Gate*, 66-99.

[30] The rising influence of the INC at Defense is contrasted to the growing skepticism of State and the CIA towards its leader Ahmad Chalabi in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 340 and 432-433; Franks, *American Soldier*, 421-422; Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 78-79 and 90-92; as well as Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 132. Brian Bennett also provide a more extensive coverage of this subject in "Chalabi's Reversal of Fortune," *Time* (16 May 2005) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1059035,00.html ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2006.

result in the need to manage the transition of power and remain on the ground for some time. It was officially agreed in January 2003 that the Department of Defense would take the overall lead on post-conflict planning.[31] Despite the continuing bureaucratic infighting between the two departments, Secretary of State Powell was not opposed to this initiative. He perceived the dire need to centralize planning for such a vital issue and it made sense for him that the military, which would have the bulk of people and resources in place, manages and executes the transition to a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. As long as State and other agencies could *participate* and *influence* phase IV planning, this new unity of command would ensure that the previous months of inconclusive discussions and debates could be made up by adopting a model in some ways similar to the successful occupation of Germany and Japan following World War II.[32] Events in the following months were to prove him wrong.

1.2 Phase IV Implementation

1.2.1 Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs

National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) No. 24, drafted by the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, was signed by President Bush on 20 January 2003 to confirm the overall responsibility of the Department of Defense for the administration of post-war Iraq. [33] It ordered the Pentagon to establish the Office of Reconstruction and

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[31] On the circumstances surrounding this momentous decision, see Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 280-284; and Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 119-120.

[32] On Powell's position, see Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 282. For an in-depth study comparing the American experience as an occupying power, see James Dobbins *et al*, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 2003), *passim*.

[33] The genesis of ORHA is summarized in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 282-284 while its hectic development during the few weeks preceding the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom is detailed in Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 120-135. Of note, NSDP 24 has not been released to the public.

Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) as the executive arm tasked with administering Iraq immediately after the fall of the regime. This new entity faced a formidable task, to be planned in barely seven weeks:

> (ORHA's mandate) included humanitarian relief, dismantling of WMD, defeating and exploiting intelligence from terrorist, protecting natural resources and infrastructure, rebuilding the economy, and reestablishing key civilian services such as food, water, electricity and health care. The interim authority was to reshape the Iraqi military by reestablishing a reformed, civilian-controlled armed forces, reshaping other internal security services, and supporting the transition to an Iraqi-led authority over time.[34]

NSPD 24 laid out a structure whereby ORHA was supposed to become a truly integrated, whole-of-government effort in planning and executing the administration of post-war Iraq. All interagency work done to date, such as the Future of Iraq Project and the Office of Special Plans documents, was to be handed over while the office would be manned by representatives from the departments of State, Treasury, Defense and Commerce, as well as private citizens with relevant experience and selected Iraqi expatriates. The same team that drew up the plans in Washington was to implement them on the ground by proceeding to Iraq, following on the heels of CENTCOM troops.[35] To head this 'expeditionary' entity, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld selected retired Army Lieutenant General Jay Garner. He had distinguished himself when leading Operation Provide Comfort, the large-scale humanitarian intervention in support of Kurd refugees in

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[34] Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 283.

[35] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 120; and Peter Slevin, "U.S. Military Lays Out Postwar Iraq Plan : Officials Brief Congress on Rebuilding Battered Economy, Reshaping Society," *Washington Post*, 12 February 2003, A21.

northern Iraq following the first Gulf War in 1991 and, after his retirement, had served on a presidential panel on space and missile threats chaired by Rumsfeld in the late 1990s.[36]

Time alone negated Garner any chance of success. Designated head of ORHA in late January, he assembled a select staff primarily made up of fellow retired Army officers and moved into his Pentagon offices in early February just as Secretary of State Powell made his last plea for support at the UN.[37] The staff amounted to approximately one hundred when a first 'working symposium' was held for all participants in Washington on 21-22 February.[38] Garner and 169 ORHA members arrived in Kuwait City on 16 March, three days before the war.[39] Including those left behind in Washington, the organization included less than two hundred staff, most of whom had worked together for barely a month. The inter-agency effort grinded to a halt from the start as the core component of ORHA waded through mounds of disparate documents produced over the course of 2002 while trying to quickly set up this new organization as the country was gearing up for war.[40]

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[36] Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 283; Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 121; Franks, *American Soldier*, 422-423. For a detailed biography, see Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, "Jay Garner," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Garner ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006.

[37] On Garner's initial efforts, see Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, 122. Powell's appearance at the United Nations Security Council took place on 5 February 2003 in order to obtain support for an invasion of Iraq based on various intelligence sources linking Saddam Hussein to WMD and terrorism, and his failure to comply with previous resolutions. The intervention failed and, by 10 February, it had become clear that the key veto-wielding members (France, Germany and Russia) would oppose a resolution for war in favour of renewed inspections. See Michael Elliott, "Countdown To War," *Time* (17 February 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1004235,00.html ; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006. Woodward provides an excellent insider's account of the preparations leading up to Powell intervention and the following negotiations in *Plan of Attack*, 288-315.

[38] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 122.

[39] Ibid., 129.

[40] Both Woodward and Packer also report that the Department of Defense, more particularly the Office of Special Projects directed by Douglas Faith (Under Secretary for Policy in the Pentagon), interfered repeatedly with the nomination of personnel from other departments and agencies to ORHA. Nominees

More disturbingly though, the same lack of coordination that had plagued the

planning effort in Washington prior to ORHA's creation was reproduced between the

future civilian administrator of a 'liberated' Iraq and the commander of CENTCOM, in

charge of military forces in the region. Garner was placed under the operational control

of General Franks and it was envisioned that, once American troops were firmly

established in Iraq, ORHA would be co-located in Baghdad with the headquarters of

Lieutenant General David McKiernan, commander of ground forces in theatre. Both

Garner and McKiernan would thus report to Franks but the relationship between the

'civilian administrator' and the 'military occupier' was not discussed any further.[41] By

all accounts, including General Franks himself, CENTCOM was content to leave post-

conflict issues to Garner and the higher hierarchy of the Defense Department:

> The military coalition would liberate Iraq (and) set conditions for civilian
> authority to stand-up a provisional government supported by Coalition stability
> forces. Naming Jay Garner was a good first step. Washington would be
> responsible for providing the policy – and, I hoped, sufficient resources – to win
> the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people: jobs, power grids, water infrastructure,
> schools, hospital, and the promise of prosperity.[42]

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from the State Department in particular were the subject of careful scrutiny and sometimes vetted out,
resulting in long arguments that often had to be resolved between secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell
themselves. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 283-284; and Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 124-126. More
contentiously, Packer also states that the Office of Special Projects would have stopped a proposal by
Garner's chief of staff to draft a political-military plan, "… which would have empowered ORHA to
establish its assumptions, mission, objectives, priorities, and end state, then submit the whole thing to the
other departments for approval." Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 122. Although quite possible and credible
given both authors' objective approach, such interferences and their impact on ORHA's initial planning
efforts remain to be further researched and documented.

[41] Franks, *American Soldier*, 423. Franks dedicates 110 pages of his 550-page memoirs to the planning of
Operation Iraqi Freedom. Of those, three discuss ORHA. Ibid., 422-424.

[42] Ibid., 424. Such short-sighted views are also illustrated by Michael Elliott in "So, What Went Wrong?"
Time (6 October 2003) [journal on-line]; available from
http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1005814,00.html ; Internet; accessed 14 April 2006.

Faced with such a challenge, Garner decided to focus ORHA's work on three pillars: humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and civil administration. Of those, the first concern rapidly took priority and was the only one that could be properly handled by his small staff in the few weeks leading up to the conflict. The preoccupation with humanitarian assistance resulted from Garner's earlier experience with the Kurds and the various intelligence reports provided. Both UN and American sources outlined the potential for disaster on a vast scale: displaced populations, starvation, diseases, large numbers of prisoners of war and the sinister possibility of chemical attacks on coalition troops that would inevitably jeopardize civilian inhabitants.[43] Little time and staff effort could be made available for the remaining two pillars before leaving for Kuwait in mid-March to watch the invasion unfold over the following three weeks.

That period did allow for the production of a single, twenty-five-page paper title *A Unified Mission Plan for Post-Hostilities Iraq* but, dated 16 April 2003 (a week after the fall of Baghdad), it remained an 'initial working draft' which was never forwarded to CENTCOM and Washington for approval or circulated outside the ORHA.[44] The document was stillborn and detached from reality as lawlessness and chaos were spreading throughout Iraq. It envisaged a mandate of ninety days during which Garner's office was to "… reconstruct utilities, stand up ministries, appoint an interim government, write and ratify a constitution, hold elections. By August, Iraq would have a sovereign, functioning government in place."[45] Delayed due to the unstable situation in Baghdad,

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[43] Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 133; and Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 122-123.

[44] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 132-133.

[45] Ibid., 133.

ORHA members finally moved up to the Iraqi capital during the period 21-23 April with this document in hand.[46] The expected humanitarian crisis did not materialize. In accordance with the terms of reference laid out by Garner himself, his team would now turn to the next two pillars of his strategy: reconstruction and civil administration. They would fail just as the administration of post-war Iraq went through another fundamental change.

1.2.2 Transition to the Coalition Provisional Authority

ORHA members arrived in Baghdad two full weeks after the toppling of Hussein's statue in Firdos Square. They established their offices in the Republican Palace on the western bank of the Tigris, in an area that would become known as the Green Zone. The building was bare, office support services (computers, stationeries, etc) minimal. Those affected to setting up new ministries and getting basic infrastructures as well as utilities back on their feet rapidly realized the extent of the destruction and looting that had taken place since the arrival of American military forces in the capital.[47] Nineteen out of twenty-three ministry buildings designated for immediate re-opening were also bare, looted to such a scale that they would not become functional again for weeks. Most Iraqi public servants were not reporting for work, adopting an attitude of wait-and-see during this critical period. [48]

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[46] For some optimistic reporting on Garner's arrival in Iraq, see Mark MacKinnon, "Baghdad: Life Begins a Return to Normal," *Globe and Mail*, 21 April 2003, A1. On the first week of ORHA's presence in Iraq, see Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 139-144.

[47] Ibid., 139.

[48] See "Postwar Iraq: Ferment of Freedom, Fear and Fantasy," *The Economist* (24 April 203) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_TSPTPQS ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2006; and Nancy Gibbs, "When the Cheering Stops," *Time* (21 April 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1101030421-443090,00.html ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2006.

One small core group within the expatriates' movement did not hesitate to step into this vacuum. Having exercised much influence within Pentagon circles in the run up to the war and 'forward deployed' to northern Iraq during the invasion, representatives of factions such as Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress flew into Baghdad even before the arrival of ORHA. Without consultation or coordination with Garner's team, they immediately set about convincing local leaders to accept the formation of a government authority under their leadership. However, their legitimacy among local elites suffered from their years of exile spent abroad and the disturbingly lukewarm support offered by some American authorities in those early days (as stated earlier Chalabi, among others, was already considered *persona non grata* by the CIA, the State Department and eventually Garner himself). As lawlessness and chaos continued to reign in the streets during those critical weeks of April 2003, it suddenly became evident that the hoped for embrace by the 'liberated' Iraqi people of a new regime constructed around a small core of exiles would not materialize in the short term.[49]

This realization dawned early on in Washington and the requirement for a new approach became pressing. One author reports that Garner received a first hint that he would be replaced by another administrator as early as 24 April.[50] The transition occurred rapidly as Washington announced the nomination of L. Paul Bremer III as head of the newly formed Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), with the status of

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[49] On the failed attempt of the exile movement to seize power in Iraq in April 2003, see Brian Bennett, Elaine Shannon and Adam Zagorin, "A Web of Intrigue," *Time* (13 September 2004) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,995099,00.html ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2006; as well as Evan Thomas and Mark Hosenball, "The Rise and Fall of Chalabi: Bush's Mr. Wrong," *Newsweek* (31 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://msnbc.msn.com/id/5040831/ ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2006.

[50] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 144.

presidential envoy.[51] Garner and Bremer met in Qatar on 10 May and the latter arrived in

Baghdad two days later to take up residence in the Green Zone.[52] The Americans also

launched a new diplomatic offensive at the UN to provide this new regime with

international recognition and a mandate to continue the occupation of Iraq for an

undetermined period, which was granted through the UN Security Council on 22 May.[53]

Garner was actually the first head of the CPA as the ORHA was morphed into the

new organization as early as 21 April but it is under Bremer that the Authority acquired a

much wider mandate and benefited from vast increases in personnel and financial

resources.[54] While Garner's ORHA could only handle one of three vaguely defined axis

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[51] Lewis Paul Bremer III was a career diplomat until his retirement from the State Department in 1989. After consulting in Washington for a few years, he was appointed Chairman of the National Commission on Terrorism in 1999 and played a key role in creating the blueprint for the future Department of Homeland Security in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. See Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, "L. Paul Bremer," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L._Paul_Bremer ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006.

[52] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 145.

[53] United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 resulted from weeks of lobbying by the United States and Great Britain at the UN in order to obtain an international mandate for their continued involvement in Iraq. It was also hoped that such a resolution might encourage member countries which had refused to participate in the armed invasion to provide troops and money for the reconstruction of the country. The resolution first granted the United States and Great Britain the legal status of occupying powers in Iraq ("… recognizing the specific authorities, responsibilities, and obligations under applicable international law of these states as occupying powers under unified command (the "Authority")." It also lifted unilaterally the economic and diplomatic sanctions that had been in place since the first Gulf War; winded down the Oil-for-Food programme over the following six months; established a mechanism to manage Iraq oil revenues; renewed the commitment to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction; sought to resolve outstanding issues between Kuwait and Iraq; and established the position of United Nations Secretary General Special Representative for Iraq (the first of whom would be killed the following August as mentioned earlier in this chapter). The promulgation of UNSCR 1483 is announced in "Giving the UN a Role in Iraq's Reconstruction," *Globe and Mail* (23 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v4/sub/MarketingPage?user_URL ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006. The US position on the resolution is detailed in the State Department Fact Sheet "UN Security Council Resolution 1483 Lifts Sanctions on Iraq; International Community Pledges Assistance for People of Iraq," (22 May 2003); available from http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20888.htm ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006. The resolution itself is accessible under "United Nations Security Council 1483," (22 May 2003); available from http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions03.html ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006.

[54] The transition from ORHA to the CPA was surrounded by much confusion and public statements by Washington between April and June 2003 did little to clarify the demise of one group in favour of the other. A report commissioned by Congress a full year later was still unable to clearly resolve how the shift

of action (humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and civil administration), the CPA

vested itself with wide-ranging executive, legislative and judicial authority in order to

focus "… on helping Iraqis build four foundational pillars for their sovereignty: Security,

Essential Services, Economy, Governance."[55] More fundamentally though, Bremer's

appointment marked a radical shift in the Authority's approach to post-war Iraq. Garner

had tried to cut off "… as little of the old regime as possible, removing a handful of

senior Baathists at the top and trying to work with the rest. The idea…was to accept

anyone who was competent and not tainted by crime or corruption."[56] The new

Administrator would reverse this method by taking three momentous decisions.

Through two successive public decrees on 16 and 23 May, Bremer first

announced the expurgation from government services of the entire top four layers of the

Baath Party, a process known as *de-baathification*, and then unilaterally disbanded the

whole of the Iraqi armed forces.[57] Simultaneously, but out of the public eye, he

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was conducted and where the CPA belonged, legally and administratively, within the American government. See the study by L. Elaine Halchin, analyst in American National Government at the Government and Finance Division of the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, *The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA): Origin, Characteristics, and Institutional Authorities* (29 April 2004); available from http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32370.pdf ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006.

[55] Coalition Provisional Authority, "An Historic Review of CPA Accomplishments," available from http://www.cpa-iraq.org/# ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006. This document provides the 'official' history of the CPA from its inception on 21 April 2003 to its dissolution on 28 June 2004.

[56] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 191. See also "False Start: America's First Transition Team Has Failed," *The Economist* (15 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id1781330 ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2006; and Jon Lee Anderson, "Out On The Street: The United States' De-Baathification Program Fuelled the Insurgency. Is It Too Late For Bush To Change Course?" *The New Yorker* (15 November 2004) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/041115fa_fact ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

[57] The Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1 – De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society intended to "… (eliminate) the party's structures and (remove) its leadership from positions of authority and responsibility in Iraqi society… (The CPA) will ensure that representative government in Iraq is not threatened by Ba'athist elements returning to power ant (*sic*) that those in positions of authority in the future are acceptable to the people of Iraq." The order stated that members of the party holding the ranks of

abandoned the effort initiated by Garner to manage the creation of a governing authority

from within local Iraqi ranks. The latter measure resulted in a continued political vacuum

in Baghdad. Various groups (expatriates, tribal leaders, religious figures) renewed their

backroom maneuvering in order to create alliances while others tried ingratiating

themselves with the coalition authorities with little success. Meanwhile, de-

baathification brought the slow trickle of reforms and reconstruction to a standstill as at

least thirty-five thousands mostly Sunni employees of the bureaucracy and the police

services lost their job overnight.[58] This was compounded by the extensive vetting

process pursued through the summer months as the coalition attempted to reconstitute the

Regional Command Member ('Udw Qutriyya), Branch Member ('Udw Far'), Section Member ('Udw Shu'bah) and Group Member ('Udw Firqah) were unilaterally removed from their positions and banned from future employment in the public sector. See section 1 of the CPA, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1 – De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society* (16 May 2003); available from http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAORD_1_De-Ba_athification_of_Iraqi_Society.pdf ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006. The dissolution of the armed forces was promulgated in the CPA Order Number 2 – Dissoulution (*sic*) of Entities, a decree aimed at eliminating governmental organizations and agencies perceived as involved with the Ba'ath Party or having directly contributed to sustaining the Saddam Hussein regime. These entities ranged from the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Information to various intelligence bureaus, all branches of the armed forces (including the Republican Guards and the Saddam Fefayeen) as well as the Youth Organization and the National Olympic Committee, among others. See CPA – *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2 – Dissoulution* (sic) *of Entities* (23 May 2003); available from http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf ; Internet; accessed 12 march 2006. Bremer first unilaterally disbanded the armed forces without compensation but this raised such opposition that he eventually relented and agreed in July 2003 to pay a stipend of between $US50 and $US 150 per month to roughly 250,000 ex-servicemen that could prove they were not past Ba'athists. See "Problems, Problems," *The Economist* (4 July 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.economist.com/agenda/displaystory.cfm?story_id=188907 ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006.

[58] The Baath Party (meaning 'rebirth') was founded in Syria in 1947, promoting secular pan-Arab nationalism, social economics, and opposition to European influence. It came to power in Iraq following a military coup in 1968 and progressively came under the sway of Saddam Hussein through the early 1970s. It is estimated that about 2 million Iraqis, out of a population of 24 million, joined the party as it became all-pervasive and party membership a requisite for assuming higher positions within the Iraqi hierarchy. For further materiel on the Ba'ath Party and the de-ba'athification process in Iraq, see the Background Q & A paper by the Council on Foreign Relations, *Iraq: Debaathification* (7 April 2005); available from http://cfr.org/publication.html?id=7853 ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006; Doug Struck, "My hands Are Not Stained With Blood: Civil Servants Ousted as Baathists Decry Treatment, Become Issue for New Government," *Washington Post* (3 February 2005) [journal on-line]; available from http://wasbingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59279-2005Feb3.html ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2005.

public service, often paralyzing the institutions required to get the country back on its feet

and demonstrate to the people the viability of the new regime[59].

The decision to dissolve Iraq's military forces remains to this day the most

controversial of the CPA's early initiatives.[60] For some, the decree only confirmed a *fait*

accompli since the army had literally melted away during the invasion and there was little

sense in asking the troops to return to their barracks in the uncertainty of the occupation.

The largely Sunni and baathist officer corps did not want to be exposed to retaliation

while the majority of the Shiite conscripts would not abandon their families in the

prevailing security situation. Regardless, the decision unilaterally turned some four

hundred thousands Iraqis into unemployed citizens with little alternatives for work in the

short term, the majority of them with their personal weapon hidden at home and much

time on their hands. In the interim, no more than 170,000 coalition troops would have to

step in and take over the responsibility of establishing a safe and secure environment

throughout the country.

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[59] "Individuals holding positions in the top three layers of management in every national government ministry, affiliated corporations and other government institutions (e.g. universities and hospitals) shall be interviewed for possible affiliation with the Ba'ath Party, and subject to investigation for criminal conduct and risk to security." CPA Order No. 1, *De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society*, Internet. Much confusion arose out of the initial process, culminating with the creation of the Supreme National DeBaathification Commission in November 2003 to continue rooting out former party members and hear appeals from past Baathists of lower ranks. Eventually 15,000 Baathists were readmitted in the civil service but the commission was disbanded by the CPA in April 2004 in the midst of allegations of unfairness and political bias after having passed under the leadership of Ahmad Chalabi. Council on Foreign Relations, *Iraq: Debaathification*, Internet.

[60] Bremer himself defended this decision in his recently published memoirs while also hinting that the order came from Washington. See L. Paul Bremer and Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), *passim*. Various authors pin the decision squarely on the civilian leaders of the Defense Department such as Secretary Rumsfeld, his deputy Wolfowitz or the Under-Secretary Douglas Feith, and deem the initiative an important contributor to the security vacuum that developed in Iraq at the time. See "The Proconsul's Tale: A Crumby Account," *The Economist* (26 January 2006) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=5436820 ; Internet; accessed 5 February 2006; as well as Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 152 and Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 193-195.

1.3 Phase IV Failure

While the contrast in the transition from ORHA to the CPA was dramatic in many

respects, one common trait remained: the awkward relationship between civilian and

military authorities, that same issue which had plagued planning ever since those early

days of 2002 in the United States. Garner had nominally worked under the operational

control of General Franks and was co-located in Baghdad with the commander of

CENTCOM ground forces, General McKiernan, but little coordination had occurred

between the two. The CPA remained a Pentagon responsibility but the new authority was

not in the CENTCOM chain of command. Ambassador Bremer reported directly to the

President through the Secretary of Defense in Washington while the commander of the

coalition ground forces in Iraq continued to report to Franks, whom by then had returned

to his permanent headquarters in Tampa, Florida.[61] As presidential envoy and head of

the CPA, Bremer was therefore perceived as the "man in charge" in Iraq and General

McKiernan could be seen as a subordinate commander but the civilian and the military

leader in fact remained co-equals. There was an entente between them but one could not

direct the other as stated by Bremer himself: "(The military commander) has been

directed by the President to support my efforts … I cannot order (him) to move his troops

to a certain area. But I can indicate commander's intent."[62]

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[61] The CPA's command arrangements are outlined by Halchin in *The Coalition Provisional Authority*, Internet as well as in Wikipedia, "Coalition Provisional Authority", Internet; and CPA, "An Historic Review", 1. CENTCOM Headquarters are permanently located at McDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. In the months leading up to the war however, a large and modern mobile command facility was deployed to Camp As Sayliyah nearby Doha, the capital of Qatar in order to provide the Commander of CENTCOM with headquarters in the Gulf region. Franks, *American Soldier*, 343, 387 and 444-448. Exhausted, Franks actually returned to the United States in May in order to proceed on leave and then retired, turning over command of CENTCOM on 7 July 2003 to his former deputy John Abizaid. Ibid., 533 and Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 413.

[62] Quoted in Ratnesar, "Life Under Fire," 27.

This 'mutual understanding' would take months to develop but, even when the military was alone in Iraq in the immediate wake of the invasion, there appeared to be reluctance in establishing a central authority. As stated earlier, coalition forces were in control of all major urban centers by 9 April while organized military resistance on the part of Iraqi forces had ceased even earlier. Yet, it was only ten days later that General McKiernan issued a first proclamation declaring the coalition to be the military authority in Iraq.[63] This statement was not amplified by additional instructions from CENTCOM nor the Defense Department. The circumstances surrounding this development are not yet documented in unclassified sources. One might nevertheless surmise that the obvious disinclination of American authorities to formalize their presence as an "occupying power" resulted from earlier assumptions whereby the Iraqi people would welcome coalition forces, rally around a new regime and facilitate an early exit from the country by the coalition forces.[64]

The rapidly degrading situation, however, had forced McKiernan's hand. While the initial looting that marked the first few days after the toppling of the regime could have been attributed to the emotions unleashed after thirty years of tyranny, the ensuing lawlessness pointed to a much more serious problem. The first instances of pillaging were followed by a formidable crime wave of the most violent sort, ranging from the reprisal

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[63] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 142. The military occupation of Iraq imposed extensive obligations on the coalition forces in accordance with the customary and conventional law of armed conflict. "The belligerent occupation of enemy territory triggers many legal considerations and obligations such as running the justice system and taxation to the general treatment of the civil population… It is desirable that the invader should proclaim to the population of (the) invaded territory as soon as possible the fact that the territory is occupied and the effects which result from the occupation." Department of National Defence, B-GG-005-027/AF-021 *The Law of Armed Conflict at the Operational and Tactical Level – Annotated* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2001), 12-1 and 12-2.

[64] It was only a month later that the requirement to seek a formal UN mandate became necessary as discussed earlier in this chapter.

killings of baathist officials to kidnappings for purely monetary gains as well as brutal breaking-ins in commercial establishments and private homes alike. [65] A vicious dynamic rapidly developed as the disorder posed a growing threat to police and ministries officials who remained at home or in hiding, in fear for their lives and thus creating an even more destabilizing situation.[66]

This left the coalition forces as the only source of authority capable of restoring some semblance of order. These, however, were still in a war-waging mode and they had not been provided with the training or updated Rules-of-Engagement (ROEs) required in this new environment. Much was made in the media of American troops standing idly by as looters despoiled museums as well as refusing to intervene to prevent the gutting of government buildings and commercial properties.[67] It remained that without a new mandate, or updated instructions and ROEs, the soldier in the street was severely restricted in his ability to intervene.[68] This vacuum was only slowly filled as American troops commenced asserting themselves progressively through extensive foot and vehicle patrols later in April and early May. Nevertheless, violence and prolonged gunfire

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[65] For some of the reports on the breakdown of law and order, see Mark MacKinnon, "Iraq Cities Turn Ugly," *Globe and Mail*, 12 April 2003, A5; and Neal Ascherson, "Iraq and Ruin," *Guardian Unlimited* (2 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://arts.guardian.co.uk/baghdadmuseum/story/0,,994155,00.html ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

[66] The extent of the disorder in April 2003 and the critical impact it made on the Iraqi psyche in the first month of the occupation appear so important to understanding later development that both George Packer and Anthony Shadid dedicated a full chapter of their respective book to this issue. See Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 149-179; and Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 129-155.

[67] For some dramatic and typical reporting of the period, see Mark MacKinnon, "U.S. Helpless in Face of Baghdad Chaos," *Globe and Mail*, 13 April 2003, A1; and Ray Conlogue, "Fighting Over the Spoils," *Globe and Mail*, 19 April 2003, R1.

[68] Brigadier Aylwin-Foster also illustrated that soldiers granted 'robust' ROEs may be led to escalate a situation and create more violence than if they had been provided with more restrictive instructions better adapted to the situation. Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," 4-5.

continued to dominate the daily life of most Iraqi living in large urban centers outside the relatively quiet Kurd provinces to the north.

The requirement to exercise a greater presence in the street shed a new light on the extensive debate that had raged throughout the lead up to the war regarding the number of troops deployed in theatre. The standing war plan for operations in Iraq maintained by CENTCOM staff throughout the 1990s envisioned a replay of Operation Desert Storm, with an offensive launched from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait by massive, mechanized forces numbering close to 500,000 troops.[69] General Franks was first ordered by Secretary Rumsfeld to review this plan as early as November 2001 and the next year saw the number of troops required whittled down to 170,000.[70] This figure was challenged by numerous observers who argued that Franks was sacrificing operational effectiveness and the safety of his troops in order to support the transformational agenda pursued by Secretary Rumsfeld.[71]

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[69] OPLAN 1003 had last been reviewed in late 1998 following Operation Desert Fox. Franks, *American Soldier*, 329; Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 36-37.

[70] The initial instruction to review OPLAN 1003 is mentioned by Franks himself in *American Soldier*, 315. He refers to U.S. Army and Marines personnel as well as the British and Australian contingents totaling 170,000 troops in March 2003, which would leave aside contributions made by the Navy, the Air Force and smaller coalition partners. Ibid., xiii.

[71] As soon as he assumed office in early 2001, Secretary Rumsfeld proclaimed the need for American forces to adjust to the new security environment by shedding the remnants of the Cold War legacy in favor of lighter, more mobile and smarter forces. A great deal was made of the resulting tensions between a contemptuous Rumsfeld and entrenched interests in the Pentagon. For an example of an early report on Rumsfeld ambitious transformation agenda, see Linda D. Kozaryn, "What's Up at the Pentagon?" *American Forces Press Services* (5 February 2001) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2002/02/mil-020206-dod02.htm ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006. Thomas P. M. Barnett is a dedicated supporter of such an agenda and he illustrated some of the arguments that development between both camps within the Pentagon in "Donald Rumsfeld: Old Man in a Hurry," *Esquire* (July 2005) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.keepmedia.com/pubs/Esquire/2005/07/01/884090?ba=a&bi=1&bp=7 ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

The debate broke out in the open in February 2003 when General Erik K. Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff, declared during an appearance in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee that post-war Iraq might require "… something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers" based on his peacekeeping experience in the Balkans. This allegation was publicly repudiated by Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz as "… wildly off the mark" when he appeared a few days later in front of the House Budget Committee.[72]

The brilliant three-week campaign that ensued seemed to prove the latter right but the lightning strike up the Tigris and Euphrates also relied on fundamental assumptions (light forces, little commitment in the post-war) threatened by the escalating disorder in Iraq.[73] Both the scale and length of the commitment came under increasing scrutiny through the spring and early summer months. The deployment of the First Cavalry Division to the Middle East was been put on hold in the heady days of April and Pentagon planners, as late as May, still talked of reducing American troop levels to thirty thousand by August. However, units already present in the field were eventually warned of the probability of their remaining in Iraq for a full year.[74]

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[72] Quotes are from Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 114. The exchange is also describe in details by Eric Schmitt in "Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force's Size," *New York Times* (28 February 2003); available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/attack/consequences/2003/0228pentagoncontra.htm ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006.

[73] On the use of the 'drive to Baghdad' to validate the transformational agenda, see the previously mentioned John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, *passim*; and Max Boot, "The New Way American Way of War"; Internet. Thomas P.M. Barnett rather uses this debate to illustrate his theory whereby the success of the Iraq War and the difficulties of the following occupation outline the requirement for the United States to maintain both a 'Leviathan Force' for high-intensity combat operations and a 'System Administrator' component for operations other than war. See his *Blueprint for Action*, 23-43; and *The Pentagon's New Map*, 315-327.

[74] On the delay in the deployment of the First Cavalry Division, see Seymour M. Hersh, "Offense and Defense," *The New Yorker* (7 April 2003); available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/attack/2003/0407offense.htm ; Internet; accessed 12

As CENTCOM and the Pentagon were considering the issue of troop deployment,

new concerns arose on the ground regarding the operational approach and the tactics to

be adopted in the face of disorder and widespread lawlessness. General McKiernan did

not promulgate detailed instructions on these issues but instead relied on the concepts of

'mission command' and the confident delegation of authority to his trusted subordinates

to re-establish and maintain control within their respective area of responsibility. It

ensued that coalition forces adopted dissimilar methods from one sector to the other.[75]

For example, the 82nd Airborne Division relied on very confrontational methods in the

west while the 101st developed a reputation for a more balanced and conciliatory

approach in the north.[76] Such disparity also developed between national contingents,

March 2006. Paul Reynolds described American plans for a radically smaller force in "Iraq Stabilisation Force Takes Shape," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (6 May 2003); available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/after/2003/0506stableforce.htm ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006. The U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division, which had led the western pincer to Baghdad, was expected to be relieved by the newly arrived First Armored Division in June 2003. Both formations remained in Iraq due to the increase violence. Gary Strauss, "More U.S. Troops to Stay in Iraq After Rise in Violence," *USA Today* (29 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-05-29-iraqnews-usat_x.htm ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

[75] Various schemes were implemented following the fall of Baghdad in order to coordinate the occupation of the country. For the sake of clarity, the design currently in effect will be used throughout this research paper. Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) was established on 15 May 2004 under the command of an American general reporting to the Commander of Central Command. The force encompasses all coalition personnel from all elements within Iraq, divided in five geographical sectors. Multi-National Division – Baghdad (also known as Task Force Baghdad) is responsible for the capital region. Multi-National Division – North occupies the area including the northern cities of Balad, Kirkuk, Tikrit, Mosul and Samarra. Multi-National Force – West controls western Iraq, including the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. Multi-Division – Central South is controlled by the Polish military and includes the cities of Kut, Hillah and Karbala. Finally, Multi-National Division – South East is a British responsibility and encompasses the localities of Basrah, Nasiriyah, Samawah and Amarah. Multi-National Force - Iraq, "Operation Iraqi Freedom Overview," http://www.mnf-iraq.com/feature/Mar/060319101.html ; Internet; accessed 15 April 2006.

[76] This controversial comparison was raised by several authors. See Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 240; Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," 5; and Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2004), 9. One must nevertheless admit that troops in the west faced more radical unrest than in the north. The debates remain open but the fate of the two commanders is telling. The 101st Airborne's Major General David Petraeus was promoted to Lieutenant General and returned a year later to oversee America's 'exit strategy' following the dissolution of the CPA while Major General Charles Swannack of the 82nd Airborne was retired. See the flattering

especially when one compared the American and the British 'way of war' in waging what had become a disparate counterinsurgency campaign.[77]

For, by the time General McKiernan turned over command of ground forces in Iraq to Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez in mid-June 2003, the looting and lawlessness of April had indeed turned into a widespread insurgency.[78] While public disorder had receded throughout Iraq in May and June, attacks on coalition troops increased in scale and violence, particularly in the four provinces centered on the Sunni heartland.[79] Coalition authorities saw their priorities altering once more, from that of policing the streets to that of crushing armed groups conducting irregular warfare. Operation Peninsula Strike, the largest military action since the fall of Baghdad, took place from 9 to 12 June 2003 with close to 4,000 American troops swooping around a small peninsula jutting into the Tigris, north of the capital.[80] The operation was deemed a success with no fatalities among the coalition forces while providing for the capture of

portrait of Pretraeus by Rod Nordland in "Iraq's Repairman," *Newsweek* (5 July 2004) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5305713/site/newsweek ; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006.

[77] See Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency," 9-12; and Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 35-55, for such comparisons between the American and British approach to counterinsurgency operations.

[78] Lieutenant General McKiernan retained his role of Commander of CENTCOM ground forces but he returned to the United States in order to resume his theatre-wide duties. Franks, *American Soldier*, 560. Major Commander Ricardo Sanchez, who was the Commanding General of the U.S. Army's First Armored Division in the initial stage of Operation Iraqi Freedom, was promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed McKiernan's responsibilities in Baghdad upon being appointed commander of the German-based V Corps on 14 June 2003. In that role, he eventually assumed responsibilities for all coalition forces in Iraq, first as the Commander of the Combined and Joint Task Force 7 and then as Commander of the previously discussed Multi-National Force – Iraq. For an official biography, see United States Army V Corps, "Biography - Lieutenant General Ricardo S. Sanchez – V Corps Commanding General," http://www.vcorps.army.mil/leaders/Biography-SanchezRicardoS.pdf ; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006.

[79] Paul Koring, "Despite Attacks, U.S. Vows to Hold in Iraq," *Globe and Mail*, 28 June 2003, A13.

[80] Mark MacKinnon, "Iraqi Resistance Flares Anew," *Globe and Mail*, 16 June 2003, A1; Borzou Daragahi, "U.S. Assault Biggest Since War On Iraq," *Globe and Mail*, 13 June 2003, A11; and GlobalSecurity.Org, "Operation Peninsula Strike: June 9, 2003 – June 12, 2003," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/peninsula_strike.htm ; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006.

400 suspects, including five people featured on the U.S. government most wanted list, as well as numerous weapons systems and ammunition.

Peninsula Strike was the first of a dozen such offensives conducted over the summer of 2003, which were eventually referred to as 'pacification operations' in some circles.[81] Although this term was never used officially by coalition authorities, it does provide a useful reference to the large-scale searches which took place in the Sunni Triangle, especially along the Baghdad-Fallujah and Baghdad-Tikrit corridors. These took the form of large sweeps where heliborne troops would cordon off a given area as mounted troops rolled in to capture or neutralize suspected Saddam loyalists, common criminals and other dissenters as well as weapon systems, ammunition and explosive devices.[82] Statistically, such initiatives appeared successful in terms of the number of casualties, captures and seizures imposed on the enemy. These achievements, however, also produced much resentment within the local population. This resulted from repeated and violent searches throughout the targeted localities, large-scale arrests of inhabitants

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[81] Operation Planet X was actually the first action conducted after the declaration of the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003. It took place on 15 May but its limited scale and objectives deprived it of the landmark status assumed by Peninsula Strike. See Associated Press, "Two of Diamonds Seized in Raid Near Tikrit," *Fox News* (15 May 2003) [journal on-line]; available from http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,86931,00.html ; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006; and GlobalSecurity.Org, "Operation Planet X: May 15, 2003," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/planet_x.htm ; Internet; accessed 16 April 2006.

[82] Following Planet X and Peninsula Strike, pacification operations took place as follows: Operation Desert Scorpion (15–29 June), Operation Sidewinder (29 June–7 July), Operation Soda Mountain (12–17 July), Operation Iron Bullet (July), Operation Ivy Lightning (12 August), Operation Silverado (16 August), Operation Ivy Needle (26-30 August). The non-affiliated body GlobalSecurity.Org provides a complete listing of such operations (up to this day) as well as links offering detailed statistics and analysis of each action. GlobalSecurity.Org, "Iraq Pacification Operations," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_ongoing_mil_ops.htm ; Internet; accessed 12 March 2006.

based on dubious intelligence or accusations provided by informants bent on revenge for

some past slights, etc.[83]

More worryingly however, these operations did not reduce the number of attacks

on coalition forces throughout the summer while terrorism spread through the streets of

Iraq's main cities. Launching repeated and uncoordinated sweeps initiated at the sector

level, coalition authorities were reporting positive results but observers were at a loss to

identify actual effects in the Iraqis' daily lives.[84] This awkward situation came to a head

with the wave of large-scale bombings which shook Iraq in August 2003 as described at

the beginning of this chapter. While authorities in Washington vigorously denied the

emergence of such a movement, commanders in the field admitted that they were in fact

facing a diffuse, ill-defined insurgent movement. While Lieutenant General Sanchez

declared in early July 2003 "… we are still at war,"[85] his superior asserted frankly that

the insurgency "… is getting more organized, and it is learning… It is adapting to our

tactics, techniques and procedures, and we've got to adapt to their tactics, techniques and

procedures."[86]

Despite these admissions, however, one can ask if these military leaders were

realizing that, in the words of one expert, "… insurgency is not simply a scaled-down

version of conventional war. Hence those who undertake counterinsurgency by treating

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[83] Packer, *The Assassins' Gate*, 230-244; and Shadid, *Night Draws Near*, 219-244.

[84] Stephanie Nolen, "Attack Seen as Part of Escalating Campaign Against West," *Globe and Mail*, 20 August 2003, A10; Orly Halpern, "Foreigners Set to Flee As Climate of Fear Grows," *Globe and Mail*, 21 August 2003, A1. Tarek Al-Issawi, "Outside Coalition Offices in Baghdad, Thousands of Shiites Decry Lax Security," *Globe and Mail*, 26 August 2003, A15.

[85] Ratnesar, "Life Under Fire," 24.

[86] General John Abizaid, Commander of CENTCOM (and successor to General Franks) quoted by Brian Knowlton in "Top U.S. General in Iraq Sees 'Classical Guerilla-Type War," *International Herald Tribune*, 16 July 2003, 4.

it as such are committing an error with possibly grievous consequences."[87] Coalition authorities embarked on that exact path in the summer of 2003. They avoided using terms with such a charged past as 'seek-and-destroy missions' or 'body count', but the measures of success of their pacification operations were based on the same type of statistics as those of the Vietnam era. Political and military strategies remained disjointed, unity of command was inexistent, resources were inadequate and employed inefficiently. This resulted from the fundamental decisions taken during the months following the demise of Saddam Hussein as well as the refusal to make others in the lead-up to the invasion as demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

The dismal planning and confused execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom Phase IV led to the eventual, but not necessarily unavoidable, development of the insurgency. Failing to deploy the forces required to execute their responsibilities as an occupying power, the coalition authorities could not prevent the breakdown of law and order that followed the fall of Saddam Hussein. Most Iraqis appeared non-committal in April 2003, waiting anxiously to discover who would take charge of their lives and provide them with security. American ineffectiveness during those critical weeks led to the development of an insurgency striving on the growing disorder. The coalition required a campaign plan that extended beyond regime change to immediately implement the elements of a coherent strategy to defeat the nascent insurgent movement. In order to outline a strategy that could have prevented such development, one must now draw insight from a similar and highly relevant conflict from the past, the Algerian War of Independence which started in the morning hours of the *Toussaint* of 1954.

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[87] Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, 1.

CHAPTER TWO

COUNTERINSURGENCY IN ALGERIA

The *Toussaint* is a rather innocuous date in the Catholic calendar. It takes place on November 1st, an annual celebration of 'all Saints' (*Tous les Saints*), one of the many stepping stones to the Christmas festivities. Especially in secular France, nothing distinguishes this particular date with the exception of the year 1954 when an early morning telegram from the office of the Governor General in Algeria reached the French Minister of the Interior that day: "*Vous informe incidents graves et attentats sur l'ensemble Algérie, plus particulièrement départment de Constantine, au cours de la nuit.*"[88] This short dispatch referred to approximately 60 acts of violence, ranging from the murders of French and local Muslims officials to small bombs and incendiary devices setting off in various localities during morning hours of 1 November in what appeared a coordinated wave of violence throughout northern Algeria.[89] Caught unaware, few French officials believed at the time that the *Toussaint* of 1954 marked the beginning of an insurgency that would eventually lead to the loss of France's most prized overseas territory in 1962.

Just as in Iraq five decades later, civil and military authorities did not realize they were facing an embryonic insurgency, admittedly small in number in the beginning but

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[88] "I hereby inform you that grave incidents and attacks have occurred throughout Algeria overnight, especially in the Department of Constantine." Translation by the author. Quoted by Maria Romo in "Le gouvernement Mendès France et le maintien de l'ordre en Algérie en novembre 1954," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 428. The Constantine Department, often referred to as the *Constantinois*, is that Algerian territory next to the border with Tunisia with its capital in the city of Constantine.

[89] Ibid., 429; and Philippe Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française de 1914 à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie académique Perrin, 1999), 414. Actual loss of life amounted to a dozen killed.

with the potential to degenerate into a widespread movement threatening the very

foundations of their power over the territory. "French leaders initially boasted with high

rhetoric, but avoided backing their words with a real commitment … (E)vents in Algeria

were depicted to the public as a set of police operations against bands of outlaws."[90]

Indeed, following the dispatch quoted above, Governor General Roger Léonard only

recommended the transfer of additional CRS formations from the mainland to Algeria as

a show of police force as well as closer surveillance of Algerian circles in the *métropole*

for intelligence-gathering purposes.[91] Military leaders, in the meantime, remained

focused on the greater task of rebuilding the Army in the wake of the humiliating loss of

Indochina, consumed that year with the signature of the Geneva Accords in July 1954.[92]

Within months however, the *banditisme* would become a *rébellion* in the official

discourse although French authorities would not acknowledge *les événements d'Algérie*

as a war of independence until decades later.[93] French military forces became wholly

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[90] Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 99.

[91] Romo, "Le governement Mendès France", 428. CRS stands for *Compagnies républicaines de sécurité* (Republican Companies for Security). These units, created in the weeks following the liberation of France in 1944 to alleviate the breakdown of central authority, are composed of mobile units used a general reserve for the national police. Then, as now, the CRS were used to supplement the police and the *gendarmerie* when confronted with increased violence and disorder such as during riots, general strikes, etc. See the official French government site Ministère de l'intérieur et de l'aménagement du territoire, "Direction centrale des compagnies républicaines de sécurité," http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/rubriques/c//3_police_nationale/c339_sccrs/index_html ; Internet; accessed 17 April 2006.

[92] Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 409.

[93] Despite the scale of the conflict, successive French governments refused to recognize the hostilities as a 'war' but rather called it an 'internal law and order issue'. France did not officially acknowledge the Algerian War of Independence as an armed conflict or a 'war campaign' until 1999, hence the frequent reference to *la guerre sans nom* or the 'War with No Name'. Martin S. Alexander and J.F.V. Keiger, "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy," in *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*, ed. by Martin S. Alexander and J.F.V. Keiger, 1-33 (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 1.

committed to fighting the insurgency, even at the expense of European collective defence

commitments while resorting to the deployment of conscripts to the battlefield, a

development unimaginable in other colonial conflicts such as Indochina. Despite such

dedication to the fight, France lost Algeria and much more as the very foundations of the

French republic were shaken through unprecedented military mutinies overseas and

widespread civil disorder at home. Nevertheless, the thesis of this paper remains that the

conduct of counterinsurgency operations in Algeria proffers lessons that would have been

relevant to the military effort which took place in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Following a brief overview of the history of the Algerian conflict, this chapter will

describe the initial and often muddled French military efforts in order to identify those

features that were successively implemented over the years but would not be properly

integrated until a later stage.

2.1 Introduction to the Conflict

As stated earlier, the events of the *Toussaint* of 1954 provoked bold rhetoric in

French political circles but little in the way of means dedicated to the fight. Prime

Minister Mendès France declared at the National Assembly on 12 November:

> "One does not compromise when it comes to defending the internal peace of the
> nation, the unity and integrity of the Republic. The Algerian departments are part
> of the French Republic. They have been French for a long time, and they are
> irrevocably French."[94]

Such emotional sentiment came from more than one hundred years of trans-

Mediterranean exchanges. French troops first captured Algiers in 1830 and slowly

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[94] Quoted by Alistair Horne in *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London: MacMillan London Ltd, 1977), 98. One must note that Mendès France had just led his country out of the Indochina entanglement without such grandstanding. As well, the attachment to a French Algeria ran across political tendencies. The prime minister was from the center right but the leader of the Socialist Party, Guy Monnet, was as adamant about the sacred nature of the fight in the African colony: "France without Algeria will be nothing." Quoted in Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 90.

penetrated the interior of the country over the next decade. The constitution of the

Second Republic proclaimed Algeria an integral part of France in 1848, leading to the

eventual designation of its three main regions (Oran, Algiers and Constantine, from west

to east) as metropolitan departments and the view that Algeria 'was' France. This

widely-held belief and the presence of an important community of inhabitants of

European extraction in Algeria, the *pieds-noirs*, led to a much more emotional attachment

to that African territory than in the case of more remote colonies such as Indochina.[95]

Despite this bond between *pieds-noirs* and Algeria, the territory could not escape

its geography nor its history. The French had wrestled it from a decaying Ottoman

Empire that could no longer exercise its authority but the colony remained peopled by

Muslims of North-African extraction. The one million of *pied-noirs*, mostly catholic

with a small minority of Jews, were surrounded by ten times that number of North

Africans. The coastal cities were heavily Europeanized but the interior, either

mountainous or desert-like retained a different character. Inhabitants rarely saw

Europeans as colonial authority was maintained through the collaboration of *caïds*, local

tribal leaders and the rare military patrol.[96] Those North Africans living in the cities

were confined to the casbah, the segregated Arab quarters found in the coastal

[95] The *pieds-noirs* numbered 1,025,000 at the outset of the war or 10.4% of the total population of Algeria. Most of them were born and raised in Algeria, identifying as much with their Algerian department as with continental France. See Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 23-79 for an excellent introduction to the Algerian conflict in his description of the French occupation of Algeria from 1830 to 1954.

[96] Algerians of Arab extraction descended from the migrants that had flowed from the Middle East to the African coast through the centuries of the Muslim Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire. They were found mostly along the coastal strip, in the same territory that came to be occupied by European immigrants. The Berbers and the Kabyles were the 'original' Algerians who had inhabited the land for time immemorial. They converted to the teachings of Mahomet following the Arab conquest but did not assimilate with the invaders. Berber tribes retreated to the south where they maintained their nomadic lifestyle while the Kabyles settled in the mountainous interior, mainly in eastern Algeria. Both groups retained their language and culture while continuing to resist the central administration from Algiers to this day. Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), 434-435.

communities. Resistance to French occupation waxed and waned throughout the first one hundred years but these movements were self-defeating as rivalries between Arab, Berber and Kabyle ethnicities, as well as between particular tribes within each community, could be easily exploited by the French in order to 'divide and conquer'.[97]

Such resistance did not amount to much more than clashes at the tribal levels until modern Algerian nationalism took on an intellectual dimension in the 1930s. As a growing number of Algerians started receiving higher education and others found their way to continental France for employment, the plight of the urban masses segregated in the casbah or the various tribes isolated from modern health services and schooling came to the fore.[98] The Second World War proved pivotal as a humiliated France tried to maintain control of her North African possessions under the American umbrella after 1942. The next year, a delegation of Algerian nationalist presented a petition to the authorities for greater recognition but they were turned back despite the important contribution made by native Algerians to the French war effort.[99] This routine exchange of appeals turned back without ceremony by the authorities continued until the early

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[97] The French Army also developed during these various episodes of armed resistance a very particular and highly efficient way of 'colonial warfare', practiced in the challenging conditions of the Atlas mountain range and the northern reaches of the Sahara desert spreading through North Africa. This 'school' found its origins in the putting down of rebellious movements in Algeria and, during the inter-war period, in Morocco. See the excellent chapter by Douglas Porch "Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1986), 376-407.

[98] On the birth of the intellectual nationalist movement in Algeria during the inter-war period, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 39-41.

[99] On the impact of the Second World War on Algerian nationalism, see ibid., 42-43 ; and Dominique Farale, *La bataille des Monts Nementcha (Algérie 1954-1962): Un cas concret de guerre subversive et contre-subversive* (Paris: Économica, 2004), 39-41.

1950s when Paris started making some minor concessions in the political discourse if not in fact.[100]

Algerian nationalism was impeded by its own divisions. The intellectual movement was dominated by two mainstream parties, the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques* (MTLD) and the *Union démocratique pour le Manifeste algérien* (UDMA). These put forward moderate views, propounding peaceful negotiations with the French. On the other hand, the Second World War also brought about a radicalization of some nationalist circles. The fiery Ahmed Ben Bella, future president of the Republic of Algeria, broke rank with the MTLD in 1946 and assumed a leading role in the *Organisation spéciale* (OS), the first movement to militate for an armed insurrection in Algeria. The OS was rapidly broken up by the French police but its leaders escaped and found refuge in Egypt within the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood.[101]

They spent the next few years militating for increased support from within Algerian ranks in Algeria proper and in France, forming the new *Comité révolutionnaire d'unité et d'action* – CRUA – as their financing arm. The turning point, however, occurred with the rise of the pan-Arab nationalist Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in 1953, followed by the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in the spring of 1954. The radical movement broke all communications with the moderate nationalists of the MTDL and the UDMA, officially founded the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) on 10 October and

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[100] Some reforms in the overall French colonial policy as well as some others specific to Algeria were announced in the summer and fall of 1954 once the government could turn its attention away from the crisis in Indochina. These, however, did not address in practice the most pressing problems as decried by Algerian nationalists. On these initiatives, see Romo, "Le gouvernement Mendès France," 421-423.

[101] On the divisions within the Algerian nationalist movements between 1945 and 1954, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 73-77.

secretly called for a general insurrection to be triggered by coordinated attacks on the

morning of the *Toussaint*.[102]

2.2 Initial Phase: Confusion and Uncertainty

The FLN greatly overplayed its hand on 1 November 1954. Although it

succeeded in coordinating murders and bombings on a wide scale that morning, the

hoped for general uprising of the Muslim majority did not materialize. Worse, the

general proclamation that was issued from Cairo that same day was generally ignored in

Algeria, failing to reach the masses.[103] The FLN acronym would not be recognized as a

potent sign of nationalism for some time to come, while the more moderate movements

denounced the use of violence against authorities that appeared on the verge of

compromising within a peaceful context of negotiations. FLN leaders performed even

worse in the following days as it became clear that they did not have an alternate strategy

to that of the general uprising. When this failed to occur, their forces simply withdrew

from the cities into the mountains in an awkward silence, awaiting further instructions

and hoping to escape the counter-offensive.

French intelligence did not perform much better in assessing these events. They

ignored the founding of the FLN announced publicly on 10 October and disregarded the

proclamation of 1 November. They immediately arrested 2,000 militants of the MTDL

and focused on a police response in the urban centres, hence the call for additional CRS

formations to supplement the 5,000 *gendarmes* and 7,000 members of other police units

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[102] On the radicalization of the nationalist movement and the foundation of the FLN, see ibid., 78-79.

[103] The little impact of the *Toussaint* events on the average Algerian outside the main urban centers is reflected by Saïd Ferdi in "Les débuts de la guerre d'Algérie," in *Stratégie de la guérilla – anthologie historique de la longue marche à nos jours*, ed. Gérard Chaliand, 119-125 (Paris : Gallimard, 1984), 119-122. The FLN proclamation of 1 November 1954 issued from Cairo is reproduced in its entirety in Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 94-95.

present in Algeria.[104] Within weeks, however, it was realized that the bulk of the armed

opposition had escaped the coastal cities to find refuge in the mountains to the south.

The Army was then tasked to undertake a series of sweeps through the Aurès region,

developing the tactics of *ratissage* and *accrochage* in order to find and engage the enemy

in their mountain hideouts.[105] This proved onerous work for a limited force. General

Paul Cherrière, Army Commander-in-Chief in Algeria counted between 55 and 58,000

personnel in garrison on that territory but barely 3,500 of those were available for

military operations in the field.[106] While these forces made up more than half of the

army presence in French North Africa, the remainder was primarily concerned with

growing disorder in the neighbouring territories of Morocco and Tunisia, and unavailable

in the short term for operations in Algeria.[107]

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[104] These numbers are cited in Romo, "Le governement Mendès France,, 424 and Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 100. The police services were divided in a number of entities with little unity in purpose and greatly lacking in coordination of effort. These services were the *police judiciaire*, the *police des renseignements généraux*, the *police administrative*, and the *direction de la sûreté du territoire* (DST). Romo, "Le gouvernement Mendès France," 424. The *gendarmerie nationale*, then as today, was a paramilitary organization providing 'uniformed' law and order services in both the urban and rural setting, relying on a much more integrated and efficient chain of command. Jacques Frémeaux provides a good introduction to the *gendarmerie* actions during the Algerian War of Independence in "La gendarmerie et la guerre d'Algérie," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 73-90.

[105] The Aurès encompasses that mountainous region between the coastal plain where the main cities of central and eastern Algeria are found and that of the Sahara proper. *Ratissage* can be translated as combing through an area, while *accrochage* literally means hooking.

[106] The army personnel garrisoned in Algeria but unavailable for service in the field were mainly those recuperating from operations in Indochina as well as those involved in the training cadre and various administrative duties. Alban Mahieu presents a thorough analysis of French troop numbers in Algeria throughout the war in "Les effectifs de l'armée française en Algérie (1954-1962)," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 39-48. The *25ᵉ Division de parachutistes* (25 DP) was the first large formation of the regular army dispatched from France to Algeria as reinforcement. It arrived in theatre in mid-November 1954 and immediately took a leading role in the sweeping operations conducted in the Aurès mountains. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 102-103.

[107] Unlike the Algerian departments, constituent parts of metropolitan France, Tunisia and Morocco were never formally annexed by France. Authorities sought to extend the French sphere of influence beyond Algeria throughout the years and these territories were eventually made protectorates of France during the

Eventually, the repatriation of the *Corps expéditionnaire français d'Extrême-Orient* (CEFEO) from Indochina and continued reinforcements from metropolitan France during the first six months of 1955 allowed for the rapid growth of army strength in Algeria to more than 100,000 battle-hardened regular soldiers.[108] Nevertheless, they failed to completely strangle the insurrection although the FLN could count on less than one thousands combatants hiding in the mountains.[109] The counterinsurgency campaign was greatly affected by two weaknesses. First, French authorities continued refusing to

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This disunity also reflected the lack of trust of many civilian leaders vis-à-vis the Army officers in these early stages. The reluctance to let the military 'loose' on the insurgents came in part from the desire to avoid a repeat of the 'Sétif incident'. Sétif was a small town to the south of Constantine in eastern Algeria where the victory celebrations of 8 May 1945 had degenerated in murderous riots leading to the massacre of more than one hundred *pieds-noirs* by Muslims mobs. As the disorder spread to neighbouring communities over the following five days, the French Army was sent in to bring back order but, instead, inflicted reprisals on the local communities at a cost of around 3,000 North African lives. The incident was barely noted in metropolitan France but left an indelible mark on the Algerian psyche.[111] Such suspicions towards the military seemed confirmed in the eyes of the new Governor General as the *ratissage* operations in the spring of 1955 rapidly degenerated in the use of grossly unproductive tactics, such as the indiscriminate bombing by planes and heavy artillery of widespread areas suspected of providing support to the FLN. Soustelles was also dismayed to realize that the use of 'collective responsibility', denounced publicly by French authorities, was actively pursued by the military as clearly demonstrated by this telegram from General Cherrière to his subordinate General Allard on 14 May 1955:

> I delegate you powers to decide, depending circumstances, employment machine-guns, rockets and bombs, on bands in new rebellion zone. Collective responsibility to be vigorously applied. There will be *no written instruction given by the Governor*.[112]

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[111] The events of Sétif are summarized in Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 415-416; and recounted at greater length in Horn, *A Savage War of Peace*, 23-28.

[112] Quoted in Horn, *A Savage War of Peace*, 114. Italics were added by Horn.

By the summer of 1955, although Governor General Soustelles had succeeded in getting Cherrière relieved by General Henri Lorillot in June, the war had come to an awkward draw. The French were still building up their forces but could not eradicate the ALN (*Armée de Libération Nationale* as the military arm of the FLN was known). Their strategy was uncoordinated as police and military elements were pursuing different objectives while civilian leaders refused to try bringing the insurgents to the negotiations table. Meanwhile, the *maquisards* were firmly implanted in the Aurès mountains and their numbers were slowly increasing into the few thousands but they could not make inroads in the cities nor rely on widespread support. They had to rely on terror and retaliations as much as the French to obtain food and support from local villagers. Worse, the majority of the *pieds-noirs* daily lives were not markedly affected by the insurgency and news in the *métropole* barely conveyed to the average French citizen any sense of crisis. If the first phase of the war had been marked by confusion and uncertainty, the next period would be recognized by the ineluctable radicalization of the conflict.

2.3 Radicalization of the FLN and French Innovations

The low-key rural insurgency came to an end in the late summer of 1955. Seeking to break the deadlock by provoking the French into a cycle of violent reprisals such as that which occurred in Sétif in 1945, ALN fighters brought the fight to the city. On 20 August, they infiltrated the coastal agglomeration of Philippeville (present day Skikda) and neighbouring communities in Constantine to lead large manifestations that degenerated into the massacres of seventy *pieds-noirs* and close to a hundred pro-French Muslims. The following crackdown by the authorities resulted in the death of several

thousands inhabitants and renewed violence throughout Algeria.[113] Successfully

exploiting these events for propaganda purposes, the FLN greatly expanded its ranks over

the subsequent year from a few thousands to approximately 20,000 guerillas and initiated

offensive operations across northern Algeria.[114]

Throughout that same period however, French leaders realized the full extent of

the problem and considerably expanded their military forces in theatre. Through

consolidation, having granted independence to Morocco and Tunisia in March 1956 as

well as completing the withdrawal from Indochina, and expansion, by redeploying

regular and reserve contingents from the continent, French forces numbered more than

300,000 by the spring of 1956.[115] These developments resulted in another deadlock over

the summer, marked by continued violence in the countryside but neither camp taking the

upper hand.

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[113] Although it deplored the loss of Algerian lives, the Philippeville massacre and its aftermath was a success for the FLN in raising the profile of the war among the *pieds-noirs*, in metropolitan France and on the international scene. However, it also lifted what reserve the civilian leadership in Algeria had in preventing the Army from adopting extreme measures in the field. This is especially true in the case of Governor General Soustelles. Horne offers an extensive discussion on this subject in *A Savage War of Peace*, 118-123. Press coverage of these incidents in France is discussed by Mohammed Khane in "*Le Monde*'s Coverage of the Army and Civil Liberties during the Algerian War, 1954-58," in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2002), 177-178. The impact on the international scene, specifically in Great Britain and the United States, is presented by Michael Brett in "The Algerian War through the Prism of Anglo-Saxon Literature, 1954-66," in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2002), 166.

[114] Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 418; and Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 141.

[115] Mahieu, "Les effectifs de l'armée française," 41. France took two momentous decisions with regards to troop deployment in the spring of 1956. It withdrew forces from garrison duties in Germany at the height of the Cold War, which constituted an open derogation to her collective defense duties under the NATO treaty. This initiative particularly alarmed her British and American allies, especially the latter as important stocks of military equipment donated under the alliance terms were also taken from the European theatre to be employed against the Algerian insurgents. This greatly strained Franco-U.S. relations throughout the later part of the 1950s as discussed by Henry Kissinger in *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 603; and Charles G. Cogan in "France, The United States and the Invisible Algerian Outcome," in *France and the Algerian War, 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 140-141. The other decision was of course the deployment of conscripts to the front, thus bringing the war much closer to the average French family.

Despite these ambiguous results, French forces had adopted a number of successful initiatives in the field since the beginning of the war. Civil and military leaders progressively realized that native opinion was very much up for grab in this conflict. The support of villagers in isolated communities and that of the inhabitants of the casbah basically lay on the side providing them the greater level of security and prosperity. Neither the fiery nationalistic and pro-Muslim propaganda of the FLN nor the grand statements of Parisian politicians were likely to sway individuals and tribes that listened first and foremost to the local *caïds*.

As early as May 1955, Governor General Soustelles instructed the army to create the *Sections administratives specialisées* (SAS). Also know as the *képis bleus* due to their distinctive headgear, sections were established permanently in assigned villages across the Algerian country side. The corps eventually numbered 5,000 men and a small number of women distributed between 800 rural centres by 1959. Their role was to counter the chronic lack of administrative presence outside the cities. These officers and senior enlisted personnel conducted widely different tasks, ranging from providing medical care and schooling to training and leading security detachments of local Muslim inhabitants. In the words of one historian:

> (T)he purpose of the SAS officer was to reach out to the Muslim masses, teaching them about construction work and agriculture, as well as clothing, health and justice. From the beginning, therefore, the SAS officer skillfully cultivated the language of protection and education. Part administrator, part teacher, part soldier, his role was not only to shield the population from ALN terrorism but also to win them over to the French cause and in this precise sense he was the very personification of the civilizing mission.[116]

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[116] Martin Evans, "The *Harkis*: the Experience and Memory of France's Muslim Auxiliaries," in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experience, Images, Testimonies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 120. The SAS, or Specialized Administrative Sections, are also discussed in Noara Omouri, "Les Sections administratives spécialisées et les sciences sociales: Études et actions sociales de terrain des officiers SAS et des personnels des Affaires algériennes," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la*

The French also continued the long Algerian tradition of employing local Muslim auxiliaries in the fight. [117] These, the *harkis*, served in independent military formations officered by Europeans. Although the term eventually came to encompass all Algerian of North African descent collaborating with the French as part of the police and the local administration, the *harkis* originally referred to those completing some form of military service. By the end of the war, some 20,000 native Algerians were serving in the army as career soldiers while another 40,000 conscripts were in the ranks. [118]

Another category of *harkis* was employed with the SAS. A section of 25 *mokhaznis* was usually attached to each SAS detachment, living with their families in close proximity. Their duty was to provide armed protection to the SAS personnel while serving as their eyes and ears on the ground.[119] Finally, local villagers and farmers were employed as *groupes d'auto-défense* (GAD). These self-defence units were armed and trained by the French in order to provide local security in their communities. They received weapons and basic fortifications were established in their localities to assist them in repelling insurgent advances until military response forces could intervene.[120] It is estimated that more than 200,000 *harkis*, be they members of the French Army,

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guerre d'Algérie, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret et Maurice Vaïsse, 383-397 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 383-389.

[117] Local Berber tribes offered their services to the French within a month of their arrival in Algiers in 1830 as such service was in line with the tradition of working for the Ottoman authorities through the centuries. 170,000 Algerian natives served with the French Army during the Great War and another 250,000 joined during the Second World War. Evans, "The Harkis," 120.

[118] Ibid., 120.

[119] Ibid., 120.

[120] Ibid., 121.

mokhaznis or GAD members, had taken up arms and were actively engaged in fighting

the FLN in some form or the other by 1959.[121]

These troops, however, were never considered as any more than auxiliaries to the

main military effort performed by the French Army. Governor General Soustelles was

surprised in the initial stage of the conflict that the French military had such difficulties

performing counterinsurgency operations.[122] Despite the fresh lessons of Indochina, the

bulk of the army reinforcements arriving from France were still very traditional

formations set up to fight the Soviet bear in the plains of Europe based on the lessons of

the Second World War.[123] Units, other than those of the elite French Foreign Legion and

the battle-hardened *parachutistes*, relied on heavy fire power and did not display the

mobility required to confront the ALN on its own terms.[124] This reliance on large

artillery barrages and slow movement by trucks confined to the rare roads of the Algerian

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[121] Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 418. The pro-French loyalty of the *harkis* was to cost them dearly in the wake of Algeria's independence. Perceived as collaborators by the FLN, they were subjected to widespread reprisals in the summer and fall of 1962 while France refused to evacuate them out the country as she did for the *pieds-noirs* of European descent. The true numbers will probably never be known but it is estimated that between 50,000 and 150,000 *harkis* and family members were killed within months of the independence. Ibid., 446-447; and Evans, "The Harkis," 126-128.

[122] Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 419.

[123] On the initial difficulties for the French Army to integrate the lessons of Indochina and the continued fixation on training for an eventual large-scale European conflict at the expense of that required to face the on-going insurgency, see Sabine Marie Decup, "Operational Methods of the French Armed Forces, 1945-1970," in *The Operational Art – Developments in the Theories of War* (Westport CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 113-114.

[124] Even for the famed French Foreign Legion though, 're-discovering' Algeria proved a challenge in the early years as the corps was being reconstituted after the tremendous losses suffered in Indochina. Military historians assessed that the Legion did not perform again to the expected elite standard until 1958. André-Paul Comor, "L'adaptation de la Légion étrangère à la nouvelle forme de guerre: Recrutement, formation, instructions, désertions, pertes…," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 59-72 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 62-67 ; and Eckard Michels, "From One Crisis to Another : The Morale of the French Foreign Legion during the Algerian War," in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 89-93.

'outback' directly contribute to the failure of the *ratissage* and *accrochage* tactics of the early years in inflicting large casualties on the nimble rebels.

Both Governor General Soustelles and Commander-in-Chief Lorillot identified the requirement for French forces deployed to Algeria to train specifically for that theatre of operations in the tactics required to fight insurgents. While this requirement for specific training was never recognized in the *métropole* where garrisons continued to prepare troops for the Cold War, General Lorillot established in June 1956 the *Centre d'instruction et de préparation à la contre-guérilla* (CIPCG) in the city of Arzew, near Oran.[125] The school "… was intended to instruct officers and non-commissioned officers in the singularities of the place, and the special characteristics of the type of warfare that was taking shape there."[126] The institution could not instruct all of the troops pouring into Algeria at the time but it succeeded in imparting much needed information on those leading forces in the field at the tactical level. The curriculum eventually grew to include not only fighting techniques and procedures but psychological warfare as well to provide a truly all-encompassing counter-insurgency programme delivered by veterans of these operations.[127]

Lastly, much progress was made in the field of close air support and aviation shaping counterinsurgency operations. The French Air Force, as an establishment, did

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[125] See Frédéric Guelton, "The French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation in Counter-Guerilla Warfare' (CIPCG) at Arzew," in *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 35-53 for a complete treatment of the subject.

[126] Ibid., 37.

[127] Ibid., 41-46; Decup, "Operational Methods," 115-116. The inclusion of psychological warfare also led to the preaching of the particular tenets of 'revolutionary warfare' in the context of the Cold War as detailed by John Shy and Thomas W. Collier in "Revolutionary War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 853-854.

not care much for the seemingly trivial nature of the latter. Senior officers focused

throughout the 1950s on developing a modern force of technologically-advanced, long-

range fighters and bombers using jet propulsion to fight in Europe.[128] These expensive

(and fragile) airplanes, however, were not much use in Algeria other than for

indiscriminate bombing of large areas and isolated villages such as those decried by

Governor General Soustelles. [129] Indochina had also left much bitterness between airmen

and soldiers as many within Army ranks unjustly placed the blame for defeat on the lack

of air support, especially during the battle of Dien Bien Phu.[130]

Nevertheless, the Air Force rapidly came around to providing extensive forces

equipped with older but more efficient and resilient propeller-driven aircraft to discharge

a very wide range of tasks in close coordination with the Army.[131] Dedicated formations

of *escadrilles d'aviation légère* (EAL) were formed as early as the summer of 1955 and

the following year more powerful and versatile *groupements d'aviation légère d'appui*

(GALA) were distributed across the Algerian territory under the control of three major

groupements aériens tactiques (GATAC) charged with controlling the theatre-wide

application of air power in direct support to land operations. Responsibilities ranged

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[128] A tendency common to most NATO air forces at the outset of the Cold War. On the larger 'conflict' between strategic and tactical air power during the 1950s, see John Buckley, *Air Power in the Age of Total Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 204-214.

[129] Robert A. Pape offers a very concise précis on the limitation of strategic air power in Algeria in *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 347-348.

[130] On the challenges faced by the French Air Force in Indochina, see Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 406-407. Alexander Zerdouvakis offers a more complete treatment in "Le renseignement aérien en Indochine," *Revue historique des armées* no. 211 (June1998) : 69-84.

[131] On the organization and innovations of the French Air Force in Algeria during the 1955-1956 period, see Marie-Catherine Villatroux, "La reconnaissance aérienne dans la lutte anti-guérilla," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 311-324 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 312-313.

from close air support and bombing missions to reconnaissance, aerial photography, fire spotting, transport. The helicopter was also introduced in Algeria early on in the conflict as troop transport and for casualty evacuation purpose but its potential for the conduct of full fledged air assault would not be recognized until later on in the war.

2.4 Urban Terrorism and French Counter-Offensives

These French innovations did not break the 1956 deadlock. The FLN instead took the lead by promulgating the *Directives de la Soumman*.[132] These documents amounted to the first serious attempt by the FLN leadership to create a unified political and military policy as well as consolidating the organization's structure in Algeria.[133] Another momentous decision was that of undertaking a large-scale campaign of urban terrorism. Without using these specific words, the FLN came to the conclusion that public opinion in metropolitan France constituted the enemy's center of gravity and that Algiers amounted to a critical vulnerability. Focused on the capital in order to exercise the greater impact in the colony as well as maximize its influence on French opinion, murders and bombings would allow the ALN to open a new front in the war while continuing to fix and harass their military opponent in the field. Again taken by surprise, French authorities were slow to react to this new development and allowed a climate of

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[132] These directives were named after the Soumman valley in Kabylia (eastern Algeria) where FLN leaders met in August 1956. The conference confirmed the supremacy of the FLN within the independence movement, created the *Conseil national de la Révolution algérienne* (CNRA – akin to a sovereign parliament to be convened at regular interval) as well as outlined defined political and military hierarchies. Horne provides a summary of the proceedings in *A Savage War of Peace*, 143-146.

[133] The informal politico-military structured in place since the beginning of the war was thus confirmed. Algeria was divided in six autonomous zones (or *wilayas – wilaya* 1: Aurès-Nemenchas; 2: Nord-Constantinois; 3: Kabylie; 4: Algérois 5: Oranie et Sud-Oranais; and 6: Sud-Algérois et Sahara) reporting to the central authority by then established in sovereign Tunisia. Gilbert Meynier, "Le FLN/ALN dans les six *wilâyas*: étude comparée," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 151-173 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 151.

terror to spread through Algiers in the fall of 1956 as the *gendarmerie* proved unable to cope with this threat through regular methods.[134]

This lead to the militarization of police work during what is commonly known as the Battle of Algiers, from January to September 1957. As the situation had clearly degenerated during the preceding months, General Raoul Salan was appointed on 13 November 1956 as the new military Commander-in-Chief in Algeria and granted combined civil and military powers on 1 December.[135] He in turn delegated security and police powers for the Greater Algiers area on 7 January 1957 to General Jacques Massu, commander of the *10e Division de parachutistes* (10 DP). Immediately deploying his elite formation to Algiers, General Massu undertook a violent campaign of repression based on the widespread use of torture in order to gain the intelligence required to gradually eliminate most FLN terrorist cells in the city. This stage of the campaign was concluded on 24 September with the arrest of Yacef Saadi, the FLN leader in Algiers, after 24,000 arrests and 3,000 deaths in custody over the preceding eight months.[136] Both

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[134] See Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 183-187 on the early days of the terrorist campaign in Algiers in the fall of 1956.

[135] Salan replaced a dispirited General Lorillot who had overseen the French participation in the Suez debacle in November 1956 while continuing to direct counterinsurgency operations in Algeria. Ibid., 178-179. Governor General Robert Lacoste made the momentous decision to grant combined civil and military power to the new Commander-in-Chief. Lacoste had been posted to Algeria to replace Jacques Soustelles in February 1956 following the instauration of a new government in Paris under Prime Minister Guy Mollet. Ibid., 154.

[136] The Battle of Algiers and the widespread use of torture by French forces throughout Algeria in the ensuing years have generated much controversy over the years and an extensive literature. Practitioners published emotional memoirs after the war supporting such tactics including General Jacques Massu himself in *La vraie bataille d'Alger* (Paris: Plon, 1971), *passim*; and more recently his subordinate General Paul Aussaresses in *Services spéciaux Algérie, 1955-1957* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), *passim*. At the other end of the spectrum, see Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Crimes de l'armée française, Algérie 1954-1962* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), *passim*. For a relatively balanced approach to such an emotional subject, see Raphaele Branche, *Torture et l'Armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), *passim*. Late in life, General Massu came to admit his regrets on the use of torture during the Battle of Algiers. Florence Beauge, "Le général Massu exprime ses regrets pour la torture en Algérie," *Le Monde,* 22 juin 2000, 5.

Salan and Massu became celebrated figures within the *pieds-noirs* community after eliminating the terrorist presence in Algiers and containing the insurgency in the field. Their methods, however, raised much controversy as support for the war in metropolitan France grew severely shaken during that same period while the Algerian problem assumed an increased profile on the international scene.[137]

Having abandoned the morale high ground but regained the initiative and benefiting from very large forces by then, General Salan launched a series of offensives in the countryside throughout the following year (October 1957 – December 1958).[138] The results of this phase were ambiguous when compared to the clear-cut Battle of Algiers. Salan used large number of troops but continued to apply rather unimaginatively the old tactic of *ratissage*, whereby mobile forces were deployed to envelop a sizeable region which was then combed through by regular formations. Insurgents, however, could still disengage themselves and use their mobility to either hide in local communities or escape in the mountainous south.[139] Meanwhile, the adoption of the *quadrillage* system resulted in numerous detachments spread throughout the territory in order to hold and secure widely disseminated points. These, the *points fortifiés*, and the numerous supply convoys required to sustain them, constituted easy targets due to their remoteness. Each method, the *ratissage* and the *quadrillage*, thus resulted in some

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[137] James D. Campbell, "French Algeria and British Northern Ireland: Legitimacy and the Rule of Law in Low-Intensity Conflict," *Military Review* (March-April 2005): 3-4.

[138] The number of Army troops grew from 366,000 in June 1957 to 412,000 a year later. Mahieu, "Les effectifs de l'armée française," 41-42.

[139] Jean-Charles Jauffret, "Une armée à deux vitesses en Algérie (1954-1962) : réserves générales et troupes de secteur," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 21-38 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 30-31 ; and Farale, *La bataille des Monts Nementcha*, 144-146.

localized success and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy but these short-term victories were also paid for in blood by French soldiers in a slow but steady trickle of attrition. Worse, when used in isolation, they often resulted in relinquishing previously pacified territory. Insurgents could easily move back in after troops departed one area and French forces were often unable to provide security to the local population in the vast expense between the strong points.[140]

In order to facilitate the conduct of *ratissage* operations and reduce the strain imposed by the extensive *quadrillage* system, Salan relied on another controversial tactic. Vast areas were declared *zones interdites*, or forbidden zones. All civilian presence, including whole villages, were evacuated from these regions which became 'free-fire' zone where any personnel could be engaged at will by the French forces. The aim was to cut off the insurgents from local support and separate the inhabitant from the FLN influence. Effective in terms of denying territory to the rebels, these evacuations necessitated the grouping of evacuees in large *camps de regroupement*.[141] By 1958, such forced movements resulted in more than 1.3 million Algerians (10% of the population) to be accommodated in overcrowded and insalubrious camps. Conditions were so atrocious in some of these establishments that they caused another outcry in metropolitan France and on the international scene as treatment of native Algerian by French authorities was

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[140] The *quadrillage* was a system first used by the French in Indochina where it also proved prohibitive in terms of dedicated forces and attrition but General Salan could not envision a better alternative at the time. By 1958, seventy-five sectors were defended by close to 300,000 troops in static positions, with another 80,000 dedicated to guarding the borders with Tunisia and Morocco. This left only 15,000 troops available to conduct mobile operations. Alexander and Keiger, "France and the Algerian War," 15.

[141] For an extensive discussion of both the 'forbidden zones' and the 'regrouping camps', see Charles-Robert Ageron, "Une dimension de la guerre d'Algérie : les 'regroupements' de populations," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 327-362 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim*.

again wildly condemned.[142] Just as in the Battle of Algiers, short-term tactical gains turned into severe losses at the strategic level when France abandoned the moral high ground.

Meanwhile, Salan could claim victory in the *bataille des frontières* or battle of the borders. The FLN established important rear positions in the two former French colonies of Morocco and Tunisia, with the latter proving especially crucial to sustaining the insurrection within Algeria.[143] Safe areas were mounted where combatants could rest, re-supply and train while the bulk of weapons shipments into the colony transited through the remote and isolated border area. French authorities undertook in 1957 to construct vast and extensive static defence lines along the borders in order to prevent the flow of arms and personnel.

The lines included major fortified positions as well as extensive obstacles and sensors that eventually extended along the entire length of both borders. The Morice Line, on the frontier with Tunisia, grew into a formidable complex that, while taxing in terms of manpower and expenditures, imposed a perilous cost on insurgents attempting the crossing.[144] The ALN was eventually led to concentrate its forces in order to punch through these defences but repeated large-scale attempts to cross the border from March to May 1958 were beaten back in what is sometimes called the Battle of the Morice

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[142] Ibid., 335-339; and Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 220-221.

[143] See Benjamin Stora's discussion on the influence of Morocco in the early stage of the war in "Le Maroc et les débuts de la guerre d'Algérie (1953-1956)," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 269-289 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim*. On Tunisia, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 264-265.

[144] Barrages on both borders are discussed in details in Jacques Vernet, "Les barrages pendant la guerre d'Algérie," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 253-268 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim* ; Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 424-425.

Line.[145] During these three months alone, the FLN suffered 3,000 casualties and 10,000 combatants were confined to Tunisia by the summer, virtually unable to take part in the hostilities for the remainder of the war. Ironically, this military success was immediately followed by political occurrences in metropolitan France and French Algeria itself that would eventually result by the defeat of the colonial power.

2.5 End of a Republic, Hope of a New Regime

Events in the colonies were overshadowed throughout the 1950s by growing unrest in metropolitan France. French leaders focused on economic recovery in the wake of the Second World War as well as resuming France's position of influence in the world but their efforts were repeatedly dogged by political instability.[146] The constitution of the Fourth Republic, established in 1946, provided for weak presidential powers while numerous and increasingly radical political parties actively undermined each others and prevented the formation of stable, lasting coalition cabinets. This situation made the formulation of long-term, sustainable, coherent foreign, defence and colonial policies extremely challenging for senior public servants and military officials. There is little doubt that this situation directly contributed to the parsimony imposed on the forces fighting the insurrection in Indochina for example.[147] Algeria, on the other hand, was a concern much closer to home but instability in the *Mère patrie* signified that the French polity would prove much less resilient in sustaining the unavoidable strains of the conflict regardless of developments in the field of battle.

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[145] Vernet, "Les barrages pendant la guerre d'Algérie," 266; and Horne, *A Savage War of* Peace, 263-267.

[146] On the turbulent years that followed the Second World War in France and the resulting political instability under the Fourth Republic, see Jean-Marie Donegani and Marc Sadoun, *La Ve République: Naissance et mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 34-79.

[147] Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 404-405.

These tensions came to a head in 1958, largely as a result of the Algerian conflict. The war was exercising such a burden in terms of personnel and capital that France was unable to fulfill her collective defence commitments on the continent while the very economic recovery of the country was threatened.[148] France was increasingly targeted in the international discourse for her conduct of the war, being loudly denounced in such fora as the League of Nonaligned Nations and the Assembly General of the United Nations. More disquietingly, close friends such as the United States and Great Britain were expressing concerns as to the impact of the war on France as an ally in the Cold War.[149] Ultimately, however, it is the impact of the conflict on the domestic scene that exercised the greatest influence. The Battle of Algiers and growing rumours of disputable methods being used by French troops throughout 1957 led many opinion makers to overtly raise doubts as to the legitimacy of the French position, resulting in the arrest of leading intellectuals such as Maurice Audin and the dismissals of senior military figures such as General Jacques Paris de Bollardière.[150]

The political dynamic went out of control on 15 April 1958 with the fall of the relatively conservative Gaillard government.[151] The socialist Pierre Pflimlin appeared

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[148] On the economic cost of the war to France, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 538-539.

[149] The strains imposed by the Algerian War on the relations of France with the United States and Great Britain are respectively discussed by Charles G. Cogan in "France, The United States and the Invisible Algerian Outcome," in *France and the Algerian War, 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 138-158; and Christopher Goldsmith in "The British Embassy in Paris and the Algerian War: An Uncomfortable Partner?" in *France and the Algerian War, 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 159-171.

[150] Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 220-221 and 338-339; and Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 426. Genral de Bollardière, subordinate to General Massu while serving in Algeria, had made public his opposition to French tactics in the field upon his return to France. Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 114-115.

[151] For an extensive discussion on the fall of the Fourth Republic, see Donegani et Sagoun, *La Ve République*, 65-79.

poised to gather the required coalition to assume the premiership over the next few weeks but his position on Algeria, favoring association rather than union, created considerable divisions throughout France and the colony. Unrest and mass demonstrations were held throughout the late April and early May period, a movement that eventually led to the creation of *Comités de sécurité publique* in Corsica and Algeria, an obvious reference to France's revolutionary past. These included the active participation of popular French military leaders, such as General Massu in Algiers.

By 15 May, commentators were loudly denouncing the prospects of a military coup in Algeria or revolution in the streets of Paris when retired General Charles de Gaulle made a grandstanding declaration of his willingness to "assume the powers of the Republic" following public statements by the various *Comités* asking for him to lead the nation once again. The National Assembly endorsed the World War II savior of France on 1 June. [152] He, in turn, proposed a new constitution granting vastly expanded presidential powers, a proposal endorsed through referendum on 28 September. De Gaulle further consolidated his position following the election of late November where his new party, the *Union pour une nouvelle république* (UNR), gained a large majority in the National Assembly then himself winning the presidential election of 21 December. By the end of 1958, de Gaulle was the uncontested leader of the newly formed Fifth Republic. [153] Determined to return France to a position of influence on the international

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[152] Masson provides as summary of the French Army's involvement in the events of the spring of 1958 in *Histoire de l'armée française*, 427-431. Although dated (1977), Alistair Horne's extensive treatment of the entire episode remains one of the best account covering the various dimensions of the drama unfolding in Paris and Algiers between mid-April and 1 June 1958. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 267-298.

[153] On de Gaulle's first months in power and the creation of the Fifth Republic, see Éric Roussel, *Charles de Gaulle* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2002), 601-626.

scene and to renew economic prosperity at home, the general first had to end the Algerian problem.

De Gaulle's position on Algeria remains a matter of debate to this day. He unquestionably made this issue a top priority from the very beginning, visiting Algiers as soon as his political position was consolidated in Paris. Many argue though that his apparent commitment to the *pieds-noirs*, declaring "*Je vous ai compris*" (I understood you) on 4 June 1958, was only a façade and that he had already accepted the eventual loss of the colony. Others claim that he only came to this realization gradually and that his original pledge to a French Algeria was still genuine.[154] While this debate does not require resolving for the purpose of this paper, one must understand the new dynamic de Gaulle imposed on the Algerian equation. He immediately set out to shake up both the military and civil administrations in the colony, realizing that the very men who had supported his rise to power had done it through the threat of military coup and revolution. Not only did he need supporters he could control in Algeria, he required subordinates he could trust in order to implement the unified strategy required to resolve the Algerian problem.

The counterinsurgency campaign had proceeded unevenly since November 1954, with the initiatives going back and forth between the two camps and no single success proving decisive. Both sides appeared tentative and confused in the initial stage of the war until the Philippeville massacres in the summer of 1954. The radicalization that resulted allowed France to increase her deployed strength in Algeria considerably. However, just as in Iraq fifty years later, political and military strategies remained

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[154] For different appreciations of de Gaulle's position on the Algerian question in 1958, see Masson, *Histoire de l'armée française*, 430-431; Horne, *A Savage War of* Peace, 299-305; Roussel, *Charles de Gaulle*, 603-604.

disjointed while unity of command was inexistent and resources were used inadequately under the policy of *quadrillage* and *ratissage*. Having abandoned the moral high ground, French military leaders had gained a number of short-tem tactical victories but failed in turning these into longer-term strategic effects. Whether he wanted to hang on to Algeria or accepted the inevitability of a negotiated settlement, de Gaulle understood that he needed to act from a position of strength in the battlefield. New leaders would provide him with such success in the following year. This is the stage of the campaign that provides the truly fundamental lessons that could have influenced events in the initial stage of the American occupation in Iraq in 2003 as will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM ALGERIA TO IRAQ

De Gaulle himself did not formulate a winning formula for Algeria but two persons came to symbolize the new approach following the shake up he imposed on the Algerian military and administrative establishments. With the assistance of General Paul Ely, Chief of the General Staff in Paris and a dedicated *gaulliste*, the new French President arranged for most of the senior military officers identified as activists in favour of the *pieds-noirs* cause to be either posted out of Algeria or retired through the winter of 1958-1959.[155] All military personnel were also ordered to withdraw from the *Comités de sécurité publique* which had remained in place until October 1958. More importantly though, de Gaulle again separated civil and military powers in Algeria. General Salan had held overall command since December 1956, leading to the abuses of the following year, and the position of Governor General had remained vacant since the last holder, Robert Lacoste, had been evacuated during the troubles of May 1958.

General Salan had overseen a number of military successes in the previous two years, including the Battle of Algiers and the building of the border barrages, and he was an active supporter of de Gaulle. His involvement in the events of the spring, however, and his increasingly vocal support for the *pieds-noirs* interests made him unreliable in the eyes of the new French president. On 19 December 1958, de Gaulle designated Paul Delouvrier as Delegate General of the government and General Maurice Challe as the new Commander-in-Chief for Algeria.[156] Just as the position of Governor General was

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[155] On the purge of the armed forces initiated by de Gaulle, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 308-310.

[156] Ibid., 310-311.

abolished in favour of the less impressive one of Delegate General, implying a closer control of Algeria's affairs by Paris, it was also made clear that the holder ranked above the new military Commander-in-Chief. Delouvrier and Challe, personally committed to the French President and his objectives, understood and accepted these new relationships. The two men quickly set about implementing the various initiatives that would result in the military defeat of the FLN over the following year, in what became known as the strategy of *vaincre et convaincre*, win and convince.

3.1 The Challe Plan

Vaincre et convaincre outlined the requirement for an all-encompassing and unified strategy to simultaneously isolate the insurgents from the general population and defeat them militarily. As outlined earlier, the initial reaction of the French authorities was to approach the counterinsurgency campaign as a police operation against urban terrorism in the cities and to mount military expeditions against what were deemed disparate marauding bands in the countryside. These uncoordinated police and military operations failed in neutralizing a weak rebellion as the latter movement was also unsuccessful in generating a widespread uprising following the *Toussaint* of 1954 and various actions throughout the following two years. As much as French intelligence failed to clearly identify the nature of the insurgent movement in these early stages, it also missed how equivocal the population in general was regarding the FLN and the general claim for independence from France.

Ad hoc Army initiatives did not address the more galling effect of the blatant and frustrating economic disparity between the *pieds-noirs* and Muslim Algerians, especially in the cities. The economic aspect of the campaign was finally addressed with de Gaulle

in power. The Constantine Plan, announced in the Algerian city of the same name on 5 October 1958, laid out the blueprint of a five-year economic and infrastructure investment programme of unprecedented scale in order to fill the gap between European and Muslims.[157] It comprised numerous and wide-ranging measures, including the planned construction of one million new, low-rent apartments and houses; an agrarian reform aimed at redistributing 250,000 hectares of land; renewed emphasis on education and the building of schools throughout the territory; the creation of giant chemical and metallurgical facilities; as well as the initial attribution of ten per cent of governmental posts to Algerian of Muslim descent. The immense cost of such a project to an already beleaguered French treasury, admittedly insurmountable in the long-term, seemed at the time to demonstrate the commitment of the new administration to the advancement of a more equal Algeria.

This sentiment was concurrently demonstrated at the political level on the occasion of the referendum of 28 September 1958.[158] The referendum sought to determine the approval of the new constitution proposed by de Gaulle to establish the Fifth Republic. The Algerian departments, constituting parts of the French polity rather than mere colonies, participated in this consultation as they usually did in presidential contests and elections to the National Assembly. De Gaulle, however, used this opportunity to extend the right-to-vote to all Algerians including, for the first time, men and women of Muslim extraction. The FLN actively promoted a boycott of the referendum but a surprising eighty per cent of Muslims participated in the event, with the

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[157] Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 148-149; Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 340-341.

[158] Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 304-305.

vast majority supporting the new constitution.[159] The occasion was a flagrant affront to an FLN which was not able to influence its potential supporters in Algeria while Muslims seemed to enthusiastically appreciate this opportunity to participate in the French political process.

By the end of 1958, Delegate General Delouvrier was pursuing a dynamic and coherent programme of economic and political measures. The fundamental aim was convincing Algerians of the value of their remaining within the current construct instead of the vaguely defined independence project of the FLN and its newly created *Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne* (GPRA).[160] The challenge remained, however, in defeating the ALN as the military arm of the insurrection. General Challe intended to do just that, relying on vast forces and resources while coordinating the successful but disjointed military measures implemented by his predecessors over the preceding years.

The military effort during that period, specifically from the *Toussaint* of 1954 to early 1956, was impeded by the limited number of troops available for front line duties and the lack of coordination between the various military regions of Algeria. In what initially appeared as a sound approach in facing what was perceived as the disjointed efforts of ill-guided bandit gangs, the authority to conduct large-scale operations was delegated to regional commanders whom undertook offensives without prior central

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[159] Ibid., 305.

[160] The GPRA was envisioned as the Algerian provisional government, founded by the FLN in the summer of 1958 in order to regain the initiative on the international scene. The new entity was recognized by a number of Arab countries and governments of the communist block but otherwise failed in achieving much practical gains until the independence of 1962. Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 93; and Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 315-316.

coordination. These *ratissages* tactics did not break the ALN and often played to the enemy's strengths.

Such operations resulted in sizeable successes in terms of insurgents killed or captured as well as weapons and explosives seized, especially when they benefited from the added advantage of surprise. Too often however, they also brought mitigated success when insurgents could escape through thinly held lines to neighbouring regions which were not occupied at the time or by simply hiding among the local population. More grievous, though, was the departure of the French troops on completion of a short operation without leaving adequate forces in place to provide security to those villages which had collaborated by providing information or provisions to the raiding force. This repeatedly led to the large-scale massacres of local leaders (and even whole villages) by returning insurgents in reprisal for the support provided to the French. Collating intelligence from local sources became increasingly difficult as cooperation with the authorities did not equate with security for the average Algerian but rather with a near certain and gruesome death.[161]

This issue was alleviated somewhat the following year with the implementation of SAS and *harkis* detachments throughout the colony as well as the adaptation of the *quadrillage* instead of the *ratissage* operations. The whole of northern Algeria was divided by General Salan into small operating areas occupied by large forces garrisoned in detachments distributed throughout their assigned region. These forces were secured in reinforced positions capable of resisting assaults in strength while they could launch large-scale sweeping operations to destroy insurgent forces caught by surprise in the

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[161] On the shortcomings of the *ratissage* tactics, see Comor, "L'adaptation de la Légion étrangère," 64-66; and Farale, "La bataille des Monts Nementcha," 72-73.

field. In and of itself though, even the *quadrillage* system would not present an all-encompassing system sufficient to defeat the FLN in the field.[162] The establishment and sustainement of so many garrisons of various sizes throughout northern Algeria was costly and manpower intensive. While providing an improved level of security to local communities, it still left the countryside open to the insurgents between periodic sweeps by heavy, conventional formations.

General Challe took *quadrillage* to the next stage in two ways. While continuing the use of troops on the ground by maintaining large *troupes de secteur* in static garrisons, he was the first to resolve the issue of the *réserve générale*, turning it into a central mobile reserve under his direct command. Elite formations such as parachutist regiments and formations from the battle-hardened *Légion étrangère* had been employed as reserve pools since the beginning of the war, usually split at the battalion or company level. These elements were then assigned to subordinate commanders to reinforce garrisons and supply convoys under attack or to block enemy formations moving in the open.[163] Shortly after taking office, Challe regrouped these various formations in a lesser number of larger garrisons and assumed their direct command. From then on, the *réserve générale* would no longer be a disparate grouping of scattered formations reacting to FLN initiatives but rather a highly mobile, self-sustaining and massive heliborne force made up of the most experienced troops in Algeria. These, while retaining a counter-strike role when the enemy conducted unexpected raids, would primarily be used as

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[162] Jauffret, "Une armée à deux vitesses en Algérie," 27-29; and Alexander Zervoudaki "A Case of Successful Pacification: the 584th Bataillon du Train at Bordj de l'Agha (1956-57)," in *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 58-60.

[163] On the use (or misuse) of the *réserve générale*, in the early years of the war, see Jauffret, "Une armée à deux vitesses en Algérie," 30-31; Alexander and Keiger, "France and the Algerian War," 15-16; and Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 331-332.

concentrated forces for the purpose of large-scale offensives initiated and led by the Commander-in-Chief instead of local commanders.[164]

This new concept of operations allowed transforming the short-terms gains of offensives such as those conducted in support of earlier *ratissages* into meaningful long-term effects. Operations conducted in the past had often been successful but, as the troops conducting the 'combing' of the countryside returned to their garrisons on completion, control and security were not maintained thus allowing insurgents mobility and revenge on local inhabitants. Challe undertook in early 1959 a series of large-scale, rolling offensives which swept northern Algeria from west to east. Adopting an approach likened to that of the 'oil-spot strategy', the new Commander-in-Chief sought to shape operations oriented around securing population centers and then expanding in order to increase control over contested areas.[165]

The French Army improved upon already proven tactics and procedures in order to perfect the coordination of the various elements of the surprise envelopment that contained insurgent elements trying to escape the rake sweeping through a given area.[166] Just as importantly though, forces such as the SAS and properly equipped *harkis*, were left in place to maintain security and prevent the return of insurgents. The first of the Challe Plan offensives, Operation *Oranie*, was conducted in February and March 1959, resulting in 2,420 ALN fighters killed or captured in Algeria's westernmost department.

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[164] The innovations brought in by Challe in the employment of the *reserve générale* are presented by Alexander and Keiger, "France and the Algerian War," 15-17; and Horne, *A savage War of Peace*, 332-333.

[165] Although not discussing the Algerian context, Andrew F. Krepinevich discusses concept of the oil-spot concept in "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 84, issue 5 (September/October 2005): 87.

[166] Improvements to tactics and procedures were also facilitated by the lessons learned being communicated to combatants at the Arzew counterinsurgency centre as discussed in section 3 of the preceding chapter.

Challe then launched Operation *Courroie* in mid-April in order to secure the Ouarsenie to the south of Algiers by June. Operation *Jumelles* taking place in the summer targeted the most physically challenging areas of all by taking on insurgents operating in the mountains of Kabylia and putting 3,700 ALN fighters hors de combat. By the end of the year 1959, FLN bands were on the run throughout northern Algeria and the Constantine department, furthest to the east remained the only area that had not been thoroughly sanitized yet.[167] Tremendous losses were inflicted on the insurgent mobile forces while static infrastructures such as weapons and food caches, workshops and armories as well as FLN-run local councils, schools and military training centres were either seized or destroyed outright.

The Challe offensives conducted by the *réserve générale* and the follow-on extension of the *quadrillage* system based on the deployment of static *troupes de secteur*, SAS teams and *harkis* formations decisively cut off insurgents units from the local population. This isolation was reinforced by the strict control of the borders exercised by the Army through to the barrages build by Challe's predecessor. The strangling of the ALN forces in Algeria was also completed by the French Navy's overwhelming domination of the sea approaches to Algeria developed over the years. An average of twenty large combatants, supported by numerous smaller patrol craft, operated in the area in order to intercept vessels of all sizes trying to smuggle weapons and personnel into Algeria. It is estimated that the Navy seized 1.350 tons of military equipment during the war. The year 1959 proved especially successful when three large shipments were

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[167] For a summary of the 1959 offensives, see Alexander and Keiger, "France and the Algerian War," 16-17; Jean-Philippe Talbo-Bernigaud, "Rouleau compresseur en petite Kabylie," in *Stratégie de la guérilla – anthologie historique de la longue marche à nos jours*, ed. Gérard Chaliand, 256-265 (Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1984), *passim* ; and John E. Talbott, *The War without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Knopf, 1980), 145-147.

captured on board large merchant vessels (the *Lidice* – 581 tons of arms including 12,000 rifles and 2,000 machine-guns; the Diesboch – 200 tons of explosives; and the Trigito – 300 submachine guns and 3 million cartridges).[168]

By 30 March 1960, when General Jean Crépin replaced Challe as Commander-in-Chief, military victory was at hand in Algeria. Based on the tremendous resources in men and materiel made available by the *métropole* as well as the experience gained in the field and the infrastructures laid out by his predecessors, the Challe Plan succeeded in executing the 'win' element of the *vaincre et convaincre* strategy pursued by the general and Delegate General Delouvrier. While the latter promoted the political inclusion and economical prosperity of the population, Challe fashioned a campaign that isolated the insurgents from outside support, through the border *barrages* and naval interdiction of the coast, and from the local population through the extension of the *quadrillage* system. It is estimated that in early 1960, 10 to 20,000 ALN combatants were fixed in Tunisia and unable to influence the Algerian battlefield while ineffective bands of insurgents remained on the defensive inside Algeria proper, greatly limited in their ability to affect the security and stability of the territory.[169] It remained to be seen whether Paris and the GPRA could come to an agreement in order to end the war and promote a long-term solution to the conflict.

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[168] Bernard Estival, "The French Navy and the Algerian War," in *France and the Algerian War 1954-62: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 84. For other complete discussions of the role of the French Navy in Algeria, see Jean Kessler, "La surveillance des frontières maritimes de l'Algérie 1954-1962," *Revue historique des Armées* 187 (June 1992): *passim*; and Patrick Boureille, "La Marine et la guerre d'Algérie: périodisation et typologie des actions," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 91-114 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim*.

[169] For an extensive assessment of the Challes Plan outcome, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 337-340.

3.2 Military Victory, Political Defeat

Regardless of his long-term intentions for Algeria when he offered himself as the 'Savior of France' in the spring of 1958, de Gaulle publicly proposed on 23 October a *paix des braves*, a 'warriors' peace, whereby political discussions would be undertaken with the insurgents following a cease-fire. This offer was rebuffed within days by the GPRA given the military situation in the field at the time. The situation was radically different in June 1960 when disabused FLN leaders, breaking with the official movement, secretly met in Paris with the French president. It was his turn to refuse negotiation as the military situation appeared in hand while the main delegate, Si Salah proposed negotiations for the independence of Algeria instead of the 'associated status' being mulled over by de Gaulle by then.[170]

Concurrently to these secret negotiations however, the war was being lost in the *métropole*. Instead of peace and the expected return to economic prosperity, France had remained engaged in colonial conflicts ever since the end of the Second World War. The clash over Algeria had been running for more than five years by then and hit much closer to home than Indochina. More than 400,000 troops and close to 200,000 Muslim auxiliaries were deployed in the field. The sense that the military dynamic was changed in 1959 did not translate in concrete results in the public eye as French military leaders had been sounding an optimist note ever since the *Toussaint* of 1954. As Cold War

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[170] The episode became known as the 'Si Salah Affaire'. This delegate was in fact head of the *wilaya* 4, the FLN regional organization in charge of the *Algérois*, to the south of the capital. *Wilaya* 4 was badly mauled during Challe's Operation *Courroie* in 1959 and its leaders had taken upon themselves to seek a negotiated settlement with Paris. While this attempt is often cited as an example to demonstrate the success of the Challe Plan, it is also of interest to note that none of the *wilaya* 4 leaders survived the war. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 387-394; and Sadek Sellam, "La situation de la *wilâya* 4 au moment de l'affaire Si Salah (1958-1960)," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 175-193 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim*.

commitments grew, the defence budget spiraled out of control. The deployment of ever larger classes of conscripts, and the inevitable casualties that ensued, also meant a truly personal cost for numerous families throughout France for what remained in the eye of the average Frenchman a disturbing colonial war.[171]

De Gaulle seized on these developments and others to proclaim on 16 September 1959 the Algerians' right of self-determination to be decided by a future referendum. The exact nature of this new relationship was not clear but this grandiose declaration was truly the beginning of the end of French Algeria.[172] *Pieds-noirs* and career soldiers alike, who had put so much faith in de Gaulle's return to power, confronted an insurmountable sense of betrayal while FLN leaders, despite a growingly desperate military situation, took hope that time was now on their side.[173] De Gaulle, as demonstrated during the Si Salah Affaire the following June, first held out for an Algerian autonomy that would maintain close ties of association with France, but he was eventually driven to accept the concept of unilateral independence for the colony. Political developments within the European community and in Algeria throughout 1960 and 1961 largely drove him to this conclusion.

In desperation, growing numbers of *pieds-noirs* and serving members of the military were by then engaged in the creation of various political parties in the open and, much more gravely, terrorist movements in secret. The *Organisation Armée secrète*

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[171] On the ant-war sentiment growing in France through 1959 and 1960, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 415-417; Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*, 138-150.

[172] On the circumstances surrounding the de Gaulle's declaration of September 1959, see Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 343-346. The sense of relief experienced by FLN leaders is expressed by Meynier in "Le FLN/ALN dans les six *wilâyas*," 160-161.

[173] See Michels, "From One Crisis to the Another," 96-97 for the growing distrust of the military towards de Gaulle's Algerian policy.

(OAS) led such extremist tendencies that would contribute to growing unrest in both Algeria and metropolitan France as well as a failed military putsch in Algiers and two attempts on the life of the French president.[174] These attempts contributed nothing to advancing the cause of the *pieds-noirs* while completely discrediting the concept of a legitimate French Algeria in the *métropole*. This dynamic led to official negotiations being undertaken on 20 May 1961 between the government and FLN representatives in Évian-les-Bains while the French Army was instructed to cease large-scale offensive operations in Algeria proper. A series of agreements were signed on 18 March 1962, implementing an immediate and general cease-fire as well granting Algeria full independence in due course.[175] Despite the disorder that ensued in the colony following this announcement, including the massacre of more than 150,000 Europeans and pro-French Muslims in the following weeks, France recognized the Republic of Algeria on 3 July 1962.[176]

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[174] Active resistance against de Gaulle came out in the open during *la semaine des barricades* (Barricades Week) in January 1960. Large crowds of *pieds-noirs* rioted and occupied government buildings in Algiers as the Army stood aside and did not intervene in a show of silent approval. That crisis was defused through negotiations but the remainder of the year proved wholly depressing for the supporters of a French Algeria. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 363-372. Dispirited *pieds-noirs* and their French supported founded the OAS in the following January to wage an increasingly violent campaign of terrorism against the Muslim population and their French sympathizers, both in Algeria and France proper, throughout 1961 and 1962. On the founding of the OAS and the following terror as well as the OAS' attempts on de Gaulle's life, see ibid., 440-441 and Guy Pervillé, "Le terrorisme urbain dans la guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse, 447-468 (Paris : Éditions Complexe, 2001), 460-463. This rebellious movement culminated in the military putsch attempted in Algiers by a number of retired and serving French military officers, including veterans of the conflict such as Salan and Challe, as well as retired Governor General Soustelles. Allistair Horne dedicates a full chapter to the dramatic events of April 1961 in *A Savage War of Peace*, 436-460.

[175] See ibid., 470-479 and 520-521 for the negotiations and conclusion of the Evian Agreements.

[176] On the last days of French presence in Algeria see ibid., 533-538.

3.3 Lessons from Algeria and Application in Iraq

Disastrous political development in Algiers and in metropolitan France in 1961 and 1962 thus negated the military successes obtained over the preceding two years. The foundations of those victories in the field have since been difficult to determine due to the many intricacies of the Algerian War of Independence but one can more easily identify them when focusing on the execution of the Challe Plan. The French Commander-in-Chief succeeded, in just over a year (January 1959 to March 1960), in asphyxiating the insurgency in Algeria at three levels. He isolated enemy forces from the local population through the extensive deployment of the static *troupes de secteur* and renewed attacks on rebels with the mobile *reserve générale*. He further weakened the ALN by isolating it from exterior support through control of the borders and the sea approaches. Lastly, he completed these wide-ranging dispositions with a vigorous programme of civil action and the formation of large auxiliary forces. Civil action was integrated in the greater economic and administrative reforms proposed in the Constantine Plan while auxiliary troops further isolated the rebels from the people while providing increased security without an undue commitment of additional French troops.

General Challe was able to clearly identify the enemy's critical vulnerabilities and attack them directly with overwhelming force as he still benefited from important resources provided for by French commitment to the conflict. It is only the failure of the national will that allowed the FLN/ALN to weather the storm of 1959 and 1960, realizing that time was on their side. The Challe Plan, the military component of the greater strategy of *vaincre et convaincre,* was a success that provides numerous lessons relevant to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in contemporary Iraq.

Had proper planning been conducted in Washington and Tampa in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom Phase IV, consideration of some key lessons from the Algerian War of Independence could have made an important difference. Events in Algeria demonstrated that policy coordination and unity of command are the fundamental elements required at the strategic plane in order to be able to plan and execute a viable counterinsurgency campaign at the operational level. The Algerian command was divided in the early years between a civilian Governor General distrustful of the military leaders while the latter did not respect the civilian administrator to stand up to the insurgents. Police raids in the cities and military operations in the field were not coordinated and the fight against the insurgents was limited to arresting or 'neutralizing' the rebels without addressing the larger cause of the war or seeking popular support for the French administration. This phenomenon was reflected in 2003 in the convoluted command relationship between policy makers in Washington, the theatre commander in Qatar and then Tampa, the land forces commander in Iraq and the successive civilian administrators Garner and Bremer.

Although the relationship between Delegate General Delouvrier and General Challe after 1958 resulted in unity and effectiveness, the situation prior to that also demonstrated that too much concentration in the hands of the military without supervision by civilian authorities can derail a campaign. The Battle of Algiers, the use of torture in the field and military jails as well as the recourse to population groupings in insalubrious conditions provided military leaders with short-term tactical advantage but at a prohibitive cost in strategic and political terms. These methods did more to feed FLN propaganda and disgust the average French citizen than any other insurgent initiative.

Although massacres and torture on large scale were also performed by the rebels, it is the abandon of the moral high ground by a reckless military that condemned further prosecution of the Algerian War in metropolitan France. Although similar excesses did not occur in Iraq in the months considered in this paper, later development regarding the use of disreputable methods in American-led prisons also did much harm to the western cause both in Iraq and on the wider international scene.

Algeria clearly illustrated the requirement for the very high number of troops required to be deployed across the country in order to fight an insurgency. There is little doubt today that the force assembled by the coalition was sufficient to lead the lightning 'march up' to Baghdad. Just as clearly however, these same troops were insufficient to, first, contain the initial breakdown of law and order and pursue rebel forces in the field while providing security throughout the territory afterwards. This predicament was worsened by the fateful decision to disband Iraq's armed forces and pursue and extended de-baathification of the public services. It took France more than 400,000 regular and conscripted soldiers, as well as 200,000 Algerian auxiliaries, to contain the 10,000 ALN combatants operating within Algeria and the other 20,000 semi-regular troops isolated in Tunisia. The question of 'how many is enough' in Iraq is still open and technology can certainly alleviate some of these numbers but it remains that envisaging fighting a widespread insurgency across Iraq with less than 150,000 soldiers was optimistic at best.

Such forces that are present must be deployed across the country. The initial failure of the *quadrillage* system in Algeria was due to the vision where static forces could be spread around in strength with mobile reserves controlled at the local level. This left the initiative to the rebels, who could manoeuvre virtually at will through the

countryside as long as French troops were not conducting one of their limited sorties for little tactical gains. General Challe resolved this dilemma by concentrating the *reserve générale* in large formations, centrally controlled, and capable of operating autonomously for long periods of time in order to regain the initiative and take the fight to the enemy. Coalition forces in Iraq adopted a posture whereby troops were concentrated in a limited number of 'super-bases' in order to maximize force protection. From these, they conducted limited forays at high speed in armoured vehicles that greatly impeded their interaction with the local population and limited their ability to gather gainful intelligence. The combination of *troupes de secteur*, the *réserve générale*, the *Sections administratives spéciales* and *harkim* detachment dispersed throughout Algeria presented the enemy with more targets and resulted in increased losses in the short-term but, once Challe succeeded in coordinating the employment of all these elements to deadly effect, the insurgents paid the greater price.

These troops must also be prepared to fight a counterinsurgency campaign, which is greatly different from conventional operations. It became obvious early on to French commanders in Algeria that their troops, despite the Indochina experience, were not suitably trained for the conflict at hand but they rather prepared to face down the Soviet bear in Europe. This shortcoming was alleviated with the creation of a dedicated center of 'counterinsurgency excellence' in Algeria proper, to great effect over the long term. American forces deployed to conduct the invasion at the heart of the Operation Iraqi Freedom were neither ready nor prepared to switch seamlessly into that of a counterinsurgency force. While the forces initially deployed by CENTCOM were highly efficient war fighters, they did not have the proper Rules-of-Engagement and they had

not received the training required to execute a smooth transition. Both Algeria and Iraq demonstrated the old adage that 'a soldier who can fight a high-intensity war can conduct any type of operations' does not apply to counterinsurgency, possibly the most difficult type of combat to be involved in today.

Perhaps even more difficult than fighting the insurgency for the typical soldier is the conduct of civil action. French military commanders seized on this essential requirement early in the war. The SAS teams first appeared in the spring of 1955 and were rapidly established throughout the territory in order to, first, alleviate the lack of central administration outside urban centers and, second, to encourage local support for the French cause. Again, this work required a special kind of soldier and personnel assigned to SAS were not rotated in and out of theatre at short intervals. They remained *in situ* for extended periods (at least one year, often longer) in order to become intimately familiar with the community they were affected to and created the relationship required for the collation of actionable intelligence at all levels. Coalition forces also understood this need for the close involvement of personnel in local communities. However, personnel affected to such duties were not necessarily trained to discharge these delicate responsibilities while short tours in any given community did not encourage the formation of the strong bonds required for effective civil action and intelligence gathering.[177]

SAS officers did not only strive to win the local population over to the French cause but they also sought to deny popular support to the insurgents. The French high command identified early on that ALN forces were critically weak once deployed inside

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[177] George Packer present an excellent portrait of an American infantry captain involved in such civil action in the early stage of the occupation in *The Assassins' Gate*, 219-250.

Algeria. They could not operate autonomously for extended periods, requiring food, water and medical treatment in local villages or were forced to return to their safe havens in Morocco and Tunisia. Control of the borders became a major issue during the war as exemplified by the extensive and onerous defenses established along the land frontiers of Algeria as well as the continuous patrolling of the air and sea approaches of the territory. This same issue has become a matter of great controversy in Iraq, whether it is difficult to assess the true extent of the import of foreigners joining the insurgency, training camps and rest being established in the desertic regions of neighbouring countries or the flow of money into Iraq to support the insurgency. Regardless, the lesson to retain from Algeria is not necessarily the need to build such extensive static installations like the Morice Line (in this case, technology can make a difference) but rather that forces are still required for surveillance and interception purposes in order to push the isolation of the insurgent movement even further.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the setting, the examination of any case study can offer particular lessons to the student of history. One, however, might also assume that greater commonality between two situations will result in more accurate and easily discernable conclusions. It is thus striking that the literature dedicated to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations is much concerned with conflicts closer to the British and American tradition of fighting communist insurgencies in the jungles of Asia rather than confronting Muslim nationalism in the greater Middle East. While the difficulties experienced by coalition forces in Iraq have resulted in some renewed interest in American circles for the Algerian War of Independence, much remains to be done in order to draw the political and military lessons relevant to the new security environment.[178]

That is not to say that French authors have been more prescient in drawing such conclusions but the existing literature can nevertheless offer some insight in a conflict that, despite some dramatic differences, also offers a number of commonalities with contemporary Iraq.[179] One striking parallel is the inability of both powers to predict the rise of the insurgencies and the difficult adaptation of their forces to the fight:

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[178] Michael T. Kaufman for example refers to the rising interest of the Pentagon in the Algerian War of Independence in "What Does the Pentagon See in the Battle of Algiers?," *The New York Times* (7 September 2003): 4.

[179] Most French accounts of the Algerian War of Independence are indeed focused on the impact of the conflict on France and her institutions as well as the combatants themselves. See for exemple Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse (ed.), *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2001), *passim;* and B. Stora, *Appelés en guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), *passim;* as well as countless memoirs by French veterans. There still exists today a glaring lack of an Algerian perspective on the conflict, whether by locals having served as auxiliaries to French colonial authorities or by Algerian guerillas themselves. This is largely due to the authoritarian nature of the regime that took power following the independence as well as the violent and murderous Islamist insurgency that followed the end of the Cold War and lasted throughout the 1990s, thus preventing the conduct of further research in

The fact that military planners apparently didn't consider the possibility that sustained and organized resistance could gather momentum and transform itself into an insurgency reflects a pathology that has long afflicted governments and militaries everywhere… The failure to detect early on the signs of incipient insurgency, combined with initially hesitant and uncoordinated responses in terms of meshing political as well as military approaches, gave the insurgents or terrorists invaluable time to entrench themselves in the civilian population and solidify their efforts while the security forces groped and stumbled about. By the time the authorities realized the seriousness of the emergent situation, it was already too late.[180]

Coalition authorities eventually made some important progress in preparing

deploying forces to face the challenge of unconventional warfare in Iraq, just like the

French military took a full four years to implement all of the measures required to

challenge the ALN in the field. Nevertheless, today's continuing chaos is a direct result

of the inability of American forces to contain the initial development of the insurgency in

the critical first weeks of the occupation. Flawed political and strategic assumptions

negated the requirement to conduct serious planning for the fourth phase of Operation

Iraqi Freedom, leading to the loss of the initiative to the insurgents in the summer of

2003. In the words of one conservative analyst:

(The United States) did not prepare for stability operations before the war, did not carry them as needed during the war, and had to improvise both nation building and counterinsurgency operations once the war was over. The US interagency process collapsed … and (individuals) in the Department of Defense shaped a war without any realistic understanding or plans for shaping a peace.[181]

Had such planning occurred in the months leading up to the war, personnel that

were eventually going to be involved with the ORHA, the CPA and CENTCOM would

Algeria itself. On this latter subject, see Jean-Pierre Rioux, "Introduction," in *Militaires et guérilla dans la guerre d'Algérie*, ed. Jean-Charles Jauffret and Maurice Vaïsse (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 17-21.

[180] Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, 3-4.

[181] Anthony H. Cordsman, *US Policy in Iraq: A 'Realist' Approach to its Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 2.

have found relevant guidance to be found in the lessons of the Algerian War of

Independence, ranging from the strategic to the tactical levels of war and applicable to

the development of an effective operational campaign plan. The real difficulty is found

in identifying those lessons by extracting them from the particularities of the French

involvement in Algeria and its impact on France's society and polity through the 1950s

and early 1960s.

Those timeless lessons in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations start at the

highest level, requiring the formulation of an elaborate strategy based on an all-

encompassing policy. The fight against the insurgents cannot be won in the field by force

alone. As eventually demonstrated by the French through their strategy of *vaincre et

convaincre*, the authorities must address the causes of popular dissatisfaction while

simultaneously attempting to contain and destroy rebel forces. The plan elaborated by

General Challe, although extremely successful in meshing together the various initiatives

taken by his predecessors over the years and executed ruthlessly once the required

coordination of its many component was in place, could not win the war simply by

defeating ALN combatants in the Algerian countryside. It required isolating the rebel

movement from the local population and from external support in order to slowly

asphyxiate it. Meanwhile, then deployment of specialized forces (the SAS) and the

creation of large indigenous auxiliary troops (the *harkis*) sustained the security of the

inhabitants and facilitated their providing support to the French administration.

Reflecting on the Algerian experience would have led Operation Iraqi Freedom

planners to reconsider many aspects of the deployment and employment of forces in Iraq

during Phase IV. Containing the initial disorders and eliminating the insurgency before it

could get organized required the employment of the needed number and type of troops as well as their proper stationing throughout the country to maintain security and defeat enemy groups on the ground. Forces would have been needed to establish and maintain stricter control of the borders in order to prevent the influx of foreign fighters and financial support to the insurgency. They would also have been more reluctant to unilaterally disband the Iraqi armed forces and purge the public service of ex-baathists. Finally, the need to conduct extensive and coordinate civil action throughout the country with qualified personnel to gain the support of the local population would have assumed a greater priority.

Studying what went wrong in Algeria is also critical to the conduct of successful counterinsurgency. Unmitigated control of the strategy and employment of forces by military authorities was detrimental to the long-term success of the campaign. While French military leaders were correct in identifying local and foreign support as a critical vulnerability of their opponent, they did not realize that their own center of gravity was in France. The national will required to fight the war to the finish relied on public opinion in the *Mère patrie*. The widespread use of torture, collective responsibility, indiscriminate bombing and other immoral measures would eventually contribute to the unraveling of support at home for the war in Algeria. These events are strongly reminiscent of the debate surrounding certain aspects of the War on Terror and the occupation of Iraq that American leaders should consider over the long term.

The study of the Algerian War of Independence thus provide an enlightening vision regarding the conduct of counterinsurgency operations. Lessons, both in their positive and negative aspects, are as relevant today as they were in the post-colonial era.

This paper demonstrated that the numerous flaws that affected the efficient planning and effective execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom Phase IV could have been prevented or mitigated through the exploration and adoption of lessons drawn from the Algerian conflict. Given the lack of literature and research in this area, much remains to be done to outline a larger framework for the conduct of counterinsurgency beyond the borders of Iraq. Further study of the war in Algeria could nevertheless point to such a scheme applicable to the Greater Middle East were western forces again called upon to fight a similarly challenging conflict in the future.

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