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# A Separate Peace: Explaining War, Crime, Violence, and Security During and After the Surge in Iraq

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## 1. Introduction

In 2007, Iraq entered a brief period of relative peace and security. How this happened is not clear. Some have argued that a 2007 Surge in U.S. forces and/or a Sunni Awakening movement led to this short-lived peace. Others suggested that a partition of Iraq's sectarian or ethnic groups alone<sup>1</sup> could have delivered such a result, even temporarily. We use an endogenous conflict perspective to explain how the transitory peace emerged.

Much has been written about Iraq, (e.g. *Packer* 2006; *Ricks* 2006/2009; *Chandrasekaran* 2006; *Gordon/Trainor* 2012; *Filkins* 2008), but these accounts are highly anecdotal and view the Iraq conflict largely through the American lens framed by domestic politics. These debates reached their peak in 2006 over the decision to Surge additional American troops in Iraq.

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1 We refer to ethnic and sectarian groups interchangeably in this paper and intend the use of both concepts to refer to ascribed divisions associated with religion or sect in Iraq (cf. *Horowitz* 1985).

We argue that the resulting Surge/partition debate neither revealed nor stimulated understanding of sectarian separation in Iraq. Building on the work of *Kalyvas* (2006/2008); *Kalyvas* and *Kocher* (2007), we note that opposing American arguments in favor of both the troop Surge and partition positions had roots in a reductionist and essentialized ethnic war theory, which gives single-minded attention to presumed and unvarying sectarian divisions. This conflict based approach addresses contradictory aspects of the counter-insurgency doctrine underwriting the Surge policy and deficiencies in an ethnic war theory that has driven key aspects of the Surge and partition perspectives.<sup>2</sup> However, before we present this perspective and an empirical examination of its predictions, we first review proposals for the Surge, the Awakening program, and the partitioning of Iraq.

## 2. The Surge and Counter-Insurgency Doctrine

Wars often evoke taken for granted assumptions and related lay theories (*Brubaker/Laitin* 1998). A counter-insurgency doctrine [called COIN] emerged and was applied previously by the United States in Vietnam. A popular journalistic account of COIN by *Fred Kaplan* (2013; see also *Kagan* 2009) argues that General *David Petraeus* revived this “doctrine” as the intellectual foundation of a “plot to change the American way of war.” *Petraeus* earned a doctorate at Princeton University, where he wrote a thesis about counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam. He also taught courses on COIN at West Point, drawing on the work of the French military analyst *David Galula* (1964; and also *Nagl* 2005).

*Petraeus* recruited followers for a renewal of the COIN doctrine with an emphasis on “winning hearts and minds” and cultural sensitivity to local populations. However, we argue COIN simplified and underestimated the importance of community level processes of sectarian separation. When he was appointed commander of the Coalition forces in Iraq, *Petraeus* became commander of an occupying military force with little knowledge of the community-level sectarian separation that was already well advanced across the country.

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<sup>2</sup> *Kalyvas* (2008, p. 352) notes that there is a constructivist aspect of the counter-insurgency doctrine which contradicts ethnic war theory by assuming sectarian identities could easily be manipulated, for example, with payments to Sunni insurgents.

Patraeus promised increased civilian protection and security in Iraq. He (e.g. 1986) produced a new counterinsurgency manual for the military (see *Review Symposium* 2008) designed to reverse the prior military strategy of General *George Casey*. In 2006, *Casey* had adopted a “leave-to-win strategy” that removed American soldiers from population centers. In early 2007, President *Bush* replaced Defense Secretary *Rumsfeld* with *Robert Gates* and announced *Petraeus* as the new U.S. commander to replace General *Casey* in Iraq.

In Baghdad, a high level advisor (*Sky* 2008, p. 31) explained that “population protection became the driving mantra of the command environment.” However, the new strategy also called for the Surge of an additional 30,000 troops, and the repositioning of forces in neighborhoods and villages. The goal was to separate insurgents from civilians, secure and protecting local environments, earn public trust, and gradually recommit the citizenry to the newly installed Iraq government.

Attached to the Surge was a program known originally as the Anbar or Sunni Awakening and later as the Sons of Iraq. This program involved hiring Sunni militiamen and former soldiers who were to patrol neighborhoods and villages and join the fight against insurgents. U.S. funds were used to pay the Awakening forces with the expectation that the Iraq government would later assume the costs and integrate these forces into its army – an expectation that proved problematic.

*Petraeus* and other architects of the Surge incorporated important contradictions within its new counter-insurgency strategy, increasing use of force and coercion and raising military and civilian casualties. The coercive aspect of the Surge was expressed in a 2006 memo drafted by former Senator *Charles Robb*, who wrote, “It’s time to let our military to do what they’re trained to do on offense – without being overly constrained by a zero casualties or controlled collateral damage approach” (quoted in *Gordon/Trainor* 2012, p. 276). This attitude toward collateral damage, reminiscent of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, raised the prospect of unnecessary attacks on civilians – which constitute war crimes<sup>3</sup> – and contradicted the trust-building, protection, and security mantra of COIN.

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3 Attacking civilians is a serious war crime and human rights violation. Targeting civilians violates the most fundamental requirement of international humanitarian law to distinguish combatants from non-combatant civilians and to treat the latter as immune from direct attacks (see *Dormann* 2003).

Underlying this aggressive posture was the view that “some of these insurgents – maybe a lot of them – were irreconcilable” (*Kaplan* 2013, p. 219). This “assumption of irreconcilability” is a key premise of ethnic war theory that sectarian conflicts have deep historical – if not primordial and essentialist – roots (*Kalyvas* 2006).

Ethnic war theory is so widely taken for granted in popular policy circles that it is usually invoked without reference to its academic origins (for example, see *Kaufman* 1996). An influential Surge advocate graphically illustrated the power of this theory’s premise of irreconcilable difference when he recalled that during the Anbar Awakening his unit had “killed a particularly nasty insurgent, tied the corpse to the front of a tank, drove it around town for everyone to see, then phoned the dead man’s mother to come pick up the body” (*Kaplan* 2013, p. 221). Treating enemy dead in this manner, of course, is also a war crime (see *Dormann* 2003).

The COIN strategy also assumed a legitimate established government for which counterinsurgency forces would fight. The Shia-dominated Iraq government of Prime Minister *Nuri Maliki* was known for allowing if not supporting secret prisons for suspected Sunni insurgents who were subjected to torture and squalid living conditions, and for knowingly allowing and protecting Shia militia that harassed, threatened, and displaced Sunni residents from their homes and neighborhoods (*Tripp* 2007, Chapter 7). These realities undermined the prospects for creating an enduring trust between the Shia dominated government and Sunni communities – especially during and beyond the relatively short period of the U.S.-led Surge.

A COIN doctrine which incorporated unnecessarily aggressive tactics of military engagement and which endorsed and defended a less than legitimate government, increased barriers between sectarian groups, inviting the predictions of an endogenous conflict perspective considered below.

### **3. Partitioning Iraq**

In the fall of 2006, [then] Senator *Joe Biden* joined with the President of the Council of Foreign Relations, *Leslie Gelb*, to advocate the formal partition of Iraq – including a division of Baghdad. This alternative strategy called for a decentralized federal system of Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia regions. Like the argument for a troop Surge, this policy drew prominently from ethnic

war theory, particularly the versions reflected in *Robert Kaplan's* (1993) influential depiction of *Balkan Ghosts* in Bosnia and related writings about civil wars (*Kaufman* 1996; *Biddle* 2006). *Kaplan* argued that the ghosts of ethno-sectarian animosities were deeply entrenched in the history of the Balkans and created an insatiable appetite for violence.

The *Biden-Gelb* model assumed that a formal and officially sanctioned separation of such enemies could stop their fighting. The *Biden-Gelb* plan implicitly called for a decentralized federalism as the alternative to a centralized and coercive authoritarianism entrenched during most of Iraq's recent history (see also *Galbraith* 2006). *Biden* and *Gelb* (2006) launched their plan with a *New York Times* op-ed that advocated "Unity Through Autonomy in Iraq." They insisted that in Baghdad and the rest of Iraq, "things are already heading toward partition." They argued that Iraqis were growing too fearful of one another to avert a further country-wide sectarian separation.

While the *Biden-Gelb* plan shared some ethnic war premises with the Surge policy, it was also different in notable ways. In contrast to the proposed Surge of 30,000 troops beyond the approximately 130,000 already in Iraq, *Biden-Gelb* instead proposed a reduction to 20-30,000 troops by the end of 2007. *Biden* and *Gelb* were looking for an alternative to both a combative reliance on increased U.S. troop strength and a continuing compromised reliance on a Shia dominated *Maliki* government. However, President *Bush* announced and implemented the Surge in early 2007 and the prospect of partition largely dropped from view – except in Iraq where the separation of the Sunni and the Shia groups mattered most – and where the "un-mixing" of groups was well underway.

The approximate year and a half long Surge ended during the 2008 U.S. election campaign. Presidential candidate *John McCain* insisted that the Surge had succeeded in reducing Iraq violence, while candidate *Obama* gave primary credit to the Awakening movement for reducing violence before the Surge began. Missing in both accounts was an acknowledgement that a continuing American military occupation and its efforts at elite state-making were as much or more a part of the conflict as the sectarian forces that both candidates implicitly blamed for an ethnic war. There was also no consideration of how extensive the separation of groups had already become in Iraq.

#### 4. An Endogenous Conflict Perspective

*Kalyvas and Kocher* (2007; *Kalyvas* 2006) do not question that in Iraq most violence is between ethnic groups. Yet they draw an important distinction between exogenous and endogenous sources of the sectarian cleavages that underwrite this ethnic conflict. The exogenous cleavage thesis of ethnic war theory sees civil wars flowing directly from preexisting and entrenched ethnic hostilities. The endogenous cleavage thesis adds crucial contingencies, including both intervening state actors and domestic political leadership and social movements based in the ethno-sectarian communities they must deal with. Thus the existence of violence between groups will not necessarily or even usually in itself explain what is being observed as “group violence” without taking into account state and non-state actors and their changing relationships with local ethnic communities.

*Kalyvas and Kocher* (2007, p. 185) indicate that in Iraq “a key reason why the sectarian conflict has emerged with such force and violence is to be found in the handling of this country’s occupation by the United States.” This handling includes implementation of the Surge and the Awakening and the U.S. military collaboration with the Iraq government led by *Nuri Maliki*. *Dodge* (2013) refers to the post-invasion relationship of the U.S. with Prime Minister *Maliki* as an “exclusive elite bargain.” This bargain was built on the imposed foundation of the post-invasion destruction of Iraq’s last national and ethnically inclusive institutions: the central government’s ministries, the army, and the Baath Party. The exclusion of Sunni and Sadrists from the new central government triggered recruitment from among these groups into local sectarian militias, which in turn stoked the fires of civil war.

Thus the post-invasion American Coalition Provisional Authority initiated and swiftly consolidated a new network of privilege, exclusion, and power around the Shia majority who were repressed under *Saddam*. *Nuri Maliki* was the most successful player in this emergent network. *Maliki* became Prime Minister in 2006 after the peak in sectarian violence that followed the Al Qaeda attack on the Samarra Shrine and that forced his predecessor, *Ibrahim al-Jaafari*, from office. The United States dominated the *Maliki* succession, but without enthusiasm about its choice. In 2008, *Maliki* set a timeline for the departure of U.S. troops, and by the end of 2011 the last U.S. combat troops had left Iraq.

An endogenous conflict perspective acknowledges the likelihood that domestic political elites such as *Nuri Maliki* will often if not usually be better prepared and positioned to manage local conflicts than external state actors who know less about national and local community based political relationships. While *Maliki* and his Dawa Party were explicitly Shia, he also developed a capacity to strategically signal a national secular sensibility that resonated beyond his Shia base. He expanded his political base among Arab Sunni voters in 2007 and 2008 by challenging his rival and fellow Shia, *Muqtada Al-Sadr*. *Al-Sadr's* Mahdi Army and his Sadrist followers alternated between being an asset and a threat to *Maliki*. As explained further below, *Maliki* intermittently gained support from the Sunni community by joining the Iraq Army with the U.S. forces in attacking the Mahdi Army. By 2009, *Maliki* was benefiting from this strategy and peaking in public popularity, although this ascent would also prove transient.

The coalition formed by *Maliki* failed to gain the largest number of parliamentary seats in Iraq's 2010 federal elections. His leading opponent, *Ayad Allawi*, a more secular Shia, secured more seats yet could not form a successful coalition government. It took nine months, again with ambivalent U.S. assistance and a dubious court decision, for *Maliki* to receive parliamentary approval for a second term as Prime Minister.<sup>4</sup> However, *Maliki* subsequently refused to grant the concessions demanded by the U.S. to maintain a residual military force in Iraq, and he instigated criminal charges and more violent measures in moves against leading Sunni members of his governing coalition.

Continuing repercussions of a sectarian realignment of *Maliki's* tactics included Iraq Army attacks on Sunni militias, assassinations of Sunni leaders, and corresponding civilian protests against Iraq's central government in Sunni controlled Anbar province and the north, the heartland of the restive Sunni minority. Of course, *Maliki's* shifting tactics were hardly unprecedented and violent authoritarian politics have been a core part of Iraq's history. *Tripp* (2007) argues that the continuing collective violence of local militias and insurgents represented desperate efforts to counteract the *Maliki* regime's centralized assertion of a familiar type of authoritarian military control in Iraq. He laments that "Western allies often failed to recognize

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4 *Al-Maliki* was selected as Prime Minister on April 22, 2006; his predecessor, *Al-Jaafari*, had been selected as Prime Minister following the contentious elections of January 2005.

how much they were part of this same history and thus ran the risk of once more of succumbing to its baneful logic” (p. 317).

The overlapping accounts of endogenous cleavage by *Kaylvas* and *Kocher*, an elite bargain perspective of *Dodge*, and a new authoritarianism by *Tripp*, anticipated that the invasion, occupation, and civil war in Iraq were the leading edges of a new regime that notwithstanding effective campaign gestures of conciliation and inclusion were committed to elite domination and control. This endogenous conflict perspective suggests several hypotheses that about the observed unfolding empirics of post-invasion Iraq.

## 5. Endogenous Conflict Hypotheses

The first set of hypotheses involves predictable consequences of the 2007 U.S. Surge of forces in Iraq. Despite the focus on protection and security and “winning hearts and minds” in COIN doctrine, *Dodge* (2013, p. 84) insists that “the major change in U.S. policy towards Iraq, launched in 2007, was dominated by military campaigns to the exclusion of all else.” Two operations, Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike, characterized the onset of the Surge during the summer of 2007 (*Gordon/Trainor* 2012). U.S. and Iraq casualties, both military and civilian, peaked during this period, along with insurgent attacks (see [csis.org/files/publication/100217\\_iraq\\_security\\_study.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/100217_iraq_security_study.pdf)).

As noted, *Maliki's* government was Shia dominated and during the Surge it facilitated attacks by the U.S./Coalition forces on Sunni insurgent groups in and surrounding Baghdad. *Maliki* also forbid the expansion of the Surge linked Awakening movement into the Shia south, and this movement never penetrated eastern Baghdad or Shia parts of western Baghdad (*Hagan/Kaiser/Hanson* 2013).

Operation Phantom Thunder also expanded the largely classified role of the Joint Special Operations Command [JSOC] led by Major General *Stan McChrystal*. JSOC operated much like a CIA unit within the Department of Defense, gathering intelligence and conducting largely unreported raids and killings of targeted insurgent leaders. The raids and killings organized by JSOC, especially when they were based on faulty intelligence and resulted in civilian casualties, led to violent neighborhood and government clashes about unnecessary U.S. violence against civilians. During one week alone in

August 2007, JSOC strike forces launched 87 missions in Sunni areas of northern Iraq that killed 59 persons and detained 200 suspected enemy fighters (*Gordon/Trainor* 2012, p. 419).

An endogenous conflict theory thus predicts that Sunni civilians and communities in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq will have experienced the greatest impact of the U.S. offensive actions and associated violence during and after the Surge. Our overarching premise is that attacks in and on Sunni communities during the U.S. Surge and afterwards had notably distinguishable impacts on the lives of individuals within them. In particular, during the Surge:

H1: Individual Sunni and predominately Sunni communities will most often have reported unnecessary attacks on civilians by U.S. forces.

Because of increased sensitivity to this use of offensive military tactics associated with the Surge of U.S./Coalition troops:

H2: Unnecessary attacks on civilians by U.S./Coalition forces will have played a salient role compared to other sources of war violence in lowering perceptions of improved security resulting from the U.S. Surge operations.

These hypotheses can explain why the Surge was not popular in Iraq and how a foundation was set during the Surge for “a separate peace” that marginalized and disadvantaged Arab Sunni groups in Iraq, setting the foundation for the later advances of the Sunni based Islamic State in Sunni dominated western and northern Iraq.

An endogenous conflict theory suggests that these results were set in motion in Iraq with the elite bargain that emerged from the invasion and during the occupation, and the endogenous form of this theory further suggests that the momentum of these effects would continue to increase and intensify.

## **6. Surveying Iraq During and After the Surge**

A consortium composed of ABC News, USA Today, the BBC and ARD German TV contracted with D3 Systems of Vienna, Virginia and KA Research Ltd. of Istanbul to conduct four cross-sectional population surveys in Iraq from 2007 through 2009 – a period lasting from the beginning of the

Surge to seven months after its completion. The survey used a cluster design with sampling points in neighborhoods and villages distributed proportionate to population in all 102 districts of all 18 provinces.<sup>5</sup>

Interviewers surveyed an average of five individuals within each sampling point from households selected at random intervals, with members picked using the “next-birthday” method and replacement for inaccessible households. Interviewers were able to administer a survey to an individual in 62 percent of contacted households, in person and in Arabic or Kurdish, with supervisors back-checking more than half of the interviews. The two surveys analyzed in greatest detail below respectively include 2186 and 2213 individual respondents within 452 and 443 sampling points that are nationally representative of Iraq.

Figure 1 displays the timing of all four Iraq surveys (including nearly 9000 interviews) from the beginning of the Surge of U.S. forces in February 2007, through the drawdown of the Surge forces beginning in August 2007, to the completion of the drawdown in July 2008, and with the final survey completed seven months later in February 2009. The horizontal lines on Figure 1 chart levels of five key variables reported by the individual respondents in the four surveys: war violence, approval of U.S. forces and Prime Minister *Nuri Maliki*, community separation of Sunni and Shia groups, and perceived security. There is little variation in these five variables in the first two surveys, which is why after reviewing Figure 1, we focus in the remainder of our analysis on the last two surveys below. Descriptive statistics for the latter surveys are presented in Table 1.

We initially see in Figure 1 that in the first pair of surveys, about half (55.3 % to 58.7 %) of the communities were designated by the sampled individuals within them as being either completely Shia or completely Sunni. Individual reports of war violence remained at about 2.5 (2.49 to 2.57) on an eight point scale that included binary reports of nearby bombing, sniping, sectarian attacks, kidnappings, and unnecessary attacks on civilians by U.S./Coalition forces, Iraq Army, Iraq police, or local militia ( $\alpha=.61$ ). And perceived security remained just over five (5.55 to 5.14) on a 13 point scale. This scale included: a four point ranking of neighborhood security “conditions” from very bad to very good, a three point ranking of neighbor-

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5 The sampling was based on 2005 Iraq Ministry of Planning data. Supervisors selected sampling points using satellite images and maps or grids with starting places picked randomly within locations among Iraq’s nearly 11,000 villages and neighborhoods.

hood “safety” from very safe to not safe, a four point ranking of “your family’s protection from crime” from very good to very bad, and a two point ranking of the neighborhood security “situation” from good, neither good nor bad, to bad ( $\alpha=.87$ ). Finally, approval of U.S./Coalition forces declined by about five percent (from 23,4 % to 18,9 %), while approval of Prime Minister *Maliki* was higher but decreased by about 10 percent (42,9 % to 32,7 %).

So during the buildup and soon after the Surge peak in Figure 1, these reports of community composition, war violence, perceived security, and approval of U.S forces and *Maliki* stayed relatively constant or declined. Recall that the Surge began just months after the escalation of war violence and the community displacement associated with the February 2006 Samara Shrine attack. As noted above, in 2006 and the first half of 2007, Shia and Sunni militia across Iraq purged and separated communities, with *Muqtada Al-Sadr’s* Shia Mahdi Army seizing control of the majority of neighborhood communities in Baghdad. The initial 2007 survey results in Figure 1 showing about half the communities in Iraq as being either predominately Sunni or Shia are consistent with the view that the buildup and peaking of the Surge coincided with a consolidation rather than a reduction or reversal of the sectarian separation of Sunni and Shia. *Al-Sadr* finally declared a unilateral ceasefire at the end of August 2007 and a drawdown in Surge troops began the following month.

In contrast, reports of perceived security notably changed in the next two Iraq surveys conducted *after* the drawdown from the Surge began. About six months after *Al-Sadr* declared his ceasefire, in the February 2008 Iraq survey, the average score on the 13 point perceived security scale increased from about five to seven (5.14 to 6.96). On the other hand, reported war violence actually increased (from 2.57 to 2.96), and community separation remained about the same, with about half of the respondents still reporting their areas being completely Shia or Sunni (from 58,7 % to 53,6 %).

Figure 1.

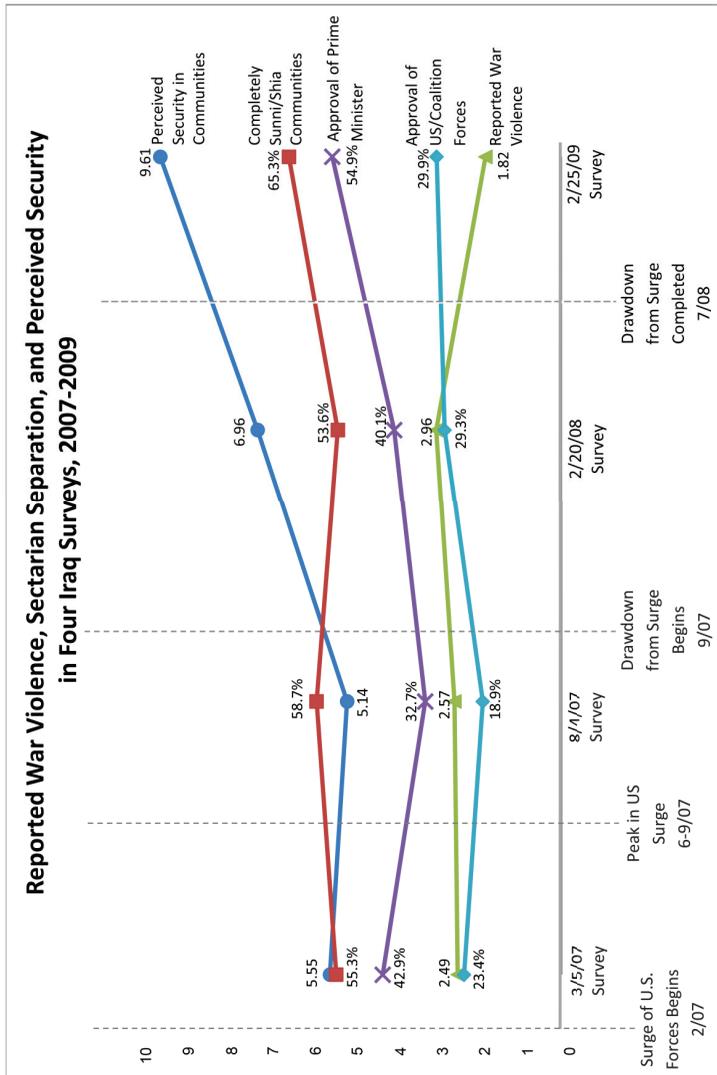


Table 1: Individual and Community Descriptive Statistics: Surge Era Iraq Surveys, 2008-9

Surge Era Surveys	During Surge		After Surge	
Individual Level Characteristics	$\bar{x}$	SD (n=2186)	$\bar{x}$	SD (n=2213)
<b>War Violence and Security</b>				
Reported War Violence (0-8)( $\alpha =.61$ )	2.78	1.88	1.82	1.51
Iraq Army (0/1)	.22	.41	.20	.40
Iraq Police (0/1)	.22	.41	.17	.38
Local Militia (0/1)	.36	.48	.20	.40
Bombing (0/1)	.40	.49	.26	.44
Sniping and Crossfire (0/1)	.35	.48	.22	.41
Sectarian Attacks (0/1)	.35	.48	.17	.38
Kidnapping (0/1)	.45	.50	.33	.47
Unnecessary US Attacks on Civilians (0/1)	.44	.50	.27	.45
Perceived Security from Surge (0-6) ( $\alpha =.75$ )	2.28	2.21	--	--
Perceived Security from Awakening (0-2)	1.36	.74	--	--
Perceived Security (0-13)( $\alpha =.87$ )	7.19	3.89	9.61	3.11
<b>Support for US Forces and Prime Minister</b>				
Approval for US/Coalition Forces (0/1)	.29	.45	.29	.45
Approval for <i>Maliki</i> (0/1)	.38	.49	.54	.50
<b>Background Characteristics</b>				
Kurd (0/1)	.15	.36	.16	.37
Sunni (0/1)	.30	.46	.29	.46
Shia (0/1)	.51	.50	.51	.50
Other Sectarian Identity (0/1)	.04	.19	.04	.19
Male (0/1)	.50	.50	.49	.50
Age (18-83)	35.91	12.78	35.90	12.62
Education (1-5)	3.27	1.24	3.13	1.24
Married (0/1)	.69	.46	.67	.47
Employed (0/1)	.37	.48	.38	.49
<b>Location</b>				
Sadr City (0/1)	.05	.21	.05	.22
Rest of Baghdad (0/1)	.16	.37	.16	.37
Anbar (0/1)	.05	.22	.05	.2
Basara (0/1)	.08	.25	.07	.25

Surge Era Surveys	During Surge		After Surge	
Individual Level Characteristics	$\bar{x}$	SD (n=2186)	$\bar{x}$	SD (n=2213)
Kirkuk (0/1)	.03	.16	.02	.15
Mosul (0/1)	.04	.20	.05	.21
Other (0/1)	.60	.49	.60	.49
Community Level Characteristics	(n =452)		(n =443)	
Predominately Shia Community (0-1)	.45	.38	.47	.43
Aggregate Reported War Violence (0-1)	.34	.19	.23	.15

In the fourth February 2009 Iraq survey, the clearest signs of change emerged. Reported war violence dropped from about three to two (2.96 to 1.88), the proportion of completely Sunni and completely Shia communities jumped from about half to nearly two thirds (53,6 % to 65,3 %), and perceived security continued its increase from about seven to over nine and a half (6.96 to 9.59) on the 13 point scale. The score on this security scale had now nearly doubled (from 5.14). While approval of the U.S./Coalition forces remained constant (29,3 % and 29,9 %), approval of *Maliki* jumped (from 40,1 % to 54,9 %). So the third and especially the fourth survey revealed change, and the remainder of our analysis therefore models outcomes in these two surveys.

## 7. Modeling War Violence and Perceived Security in Iraq

Our hypotheses include predictions about ethno-sectarian differences in reports of war violence and perceived security at individual and community levels in Iraq. We use hierarchical linear models [HLM] (*Raudenbush/Bryk* 2004) to estimate variation in outcomes within and between communities, with adjustments for non-independence resulting from the clustering within these sampling points. For example, our final within community models of perceived security regress individual-level reports of perceived security on individual level reports of sectarian group membership, war violence and other independent variables:

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} (\text{male})_{ij} + \beta_{2j} (\text{ethnicity})_{ij} + \beta_{3j} (\text{age})_{ij} + \beta_{4j} (\text{education})_{ij} + \beta_{5j} (\text{married})_{ij} + \beta_{6j} (\text{employed})_{ij} + \beta_{7j} (\text{perpetrator})_{ij} + \beta_{8j} (\text{forms of victimization})_{ij} + \beta_{9j} (\text{unnecessary U.S. attacks on civilians})_{ij} + \beta_{10j} (\text{location})_{ij} + \beta_{11j} (\text{improved security from Awakening})_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

Our between community models regress perceived security in the more than 440 sampling points – after the individual-level variables are taken into account – on the predominance at the community level of Shia respondents and the aggregate level of reported war violence in these settings:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} (\text{predominately Shia})_{ij} + u_{0j}$$

As suggested above, our measure of ethno-sectarian community predominance is coded in the direction of Shia prevalence, as indicated by the mode within each sampling point of respondent reports of his/her community being completely Shia (1), mostly Shia (.6), mixed (.5), mostly Sunni (.4), or completely Sunni (0). A positive and significant coefficient for this variable thus indicates an effect of Shia community predominance, while a negative and significant coefficient indicates an effect of Sunni community predominance, and a non-significant coefficient indicates no directional effect of ethno-sectarian community predominance.

Our further aggregated community war violence measure is the simple average on the individual eight point scale of war violence scores described above within each sampling point. In the first part of our analysis reported below, we extract the binary measure of unnecessary violence against civilians by U.S./Coalition forces for use as a dependent variable. Almost half (46 %) of respondents reported unnecessary U.S. violence against civilians during the latter part of the Surge, while only about a quarter (26 %) reported this after withdrawal of the Surge troops. This disparity is evidence of the offensive aspect of the Surge, and we have hypothesized that the unnecessary violence against civilians by U.S./Coalition forces is most likely to have resulted from U.S. targeting of Sunni insurgents and allied Al Qaeda in Sunni neighborhoods, while this targeting is also likely to explain negative Iraqi perceptions of the Surge.

Thus our additional individual level variables include a scale measure of the perceived security resulting from the Surge of U.S. forces and the formation of Awakening Councils. A zero to six point Surge scale ( $\alpha=.75$ ) was formed from respondents' rankings of the perceived impact of the increase in U.S. forces as making perceived security worse (0), having no effect (1), or better (2) in the combined nearby area, elsewhere in Iraq, and overall. A similar single item ranking of the impact of the creation of the Awakening Councils was scored from zero (i.e., worse) to two (i.e., better). The Surge

and Awakening measures were not available in the final survey, since the Surge by then had ended.

Most Iraqi respondents did not view the effects of the increase in U.S./Coalition forces during the Surge as favorably affecting their security. In areas where Surge forces were sent, over half (53,1 %) thought that security was worsened; in other areas, nearly half (48,7 %) thought security was worsened; and overall, more than sixty (61,2 %) thought the troop presence made security worse. Respondents were only asked to indicate the effect of the Awakening Councils for the areas where they were created, with about half the respondents thinking their effect was to make security better (50,3 %), versus about half concluding no effect (30,9 %) or that security was worsened (16,1 %). So the Awakening Councils were better received than the Surge forces, but neither was viewed particularly positively.

Individual level binary variables further indicated Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia self-identification, as well as being male, married, and employed. Individual educational levels were ranked from one to five and age was coded in years.

The item indicating individuals' evaluations of Prime Minister *Maliki* was coded as approval (1) and non-approval (0). As noted, this approval was still peaking at the time of the February 2008 survey, foreshadowing the response to his ultimately successful involvement in the March 2008 Battle for Basra. By the 2008 survey, *Maliki* had gained control of Iraq's military and security services and was bringing lower tier Sunni figures into his government while eliminating rivals (*Parker/Salman* 2013).

The geographic location of respondents in several distinct conflict zones of Iraq was indicated by binary variables representing Sadr City, the rest of Baghdad, Anbar province, Basra, Kirkuk, and Mosul. A variable representing the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan was not included because of its colinearity with the Kurdish self-identification variable introduced above.

From the resulting joined analyses of the individual and community level models, we learn not only about individual level sources of variation in perceived security in Iraq, but also with these variables controlled, about the influence of differences following from the separation of respondents into predominately ethno-sectarian communities, about the aggregate level impact of war violence in these settings, and about the impact of respondents' evaluations of the U.S./Coalition forces, the Surge, and Prime Minister *Maliki*.

## **8. Hierarchical Linear Models of War Violence and Perceived Security**

We focus first in Table 2 on models of unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks on civilians reported during the latter part of the Surge, in March 2008. As noted above, unnecessary attacks are classified as war crimes and nearly half of Iraqi respondents reported in early 2008 that such attacks occurred in their nearby neighborhoods. This indicates that these unnecessary U.S. attacks on civilians were perceived to occur across a wide swath of Iraq. Similar proportions of respondents reported nearby bombings (43 %), kidnappings (49 %), Iraqi militia attacks (39 %), sectarian attacks (38 %), and sniping and crossfire (37 %), while somewhat fewer reported unnecessary attacks by Iraqi police (22 %) and Army (22 %).

Because respondents reported in binary form whether or not unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks occurred nearby, we present *Bernoulli* regressions of these reports on individual and community level characteristics in the columns of Table 2. The first column analyzes these attacks in terms of other sources of war violence and individual and neighborhood level characteristics, but without taking into account the specific locations where they were reported. The second column adds these locations into the analysis.

We see across the columns of Table 2 that reports of bombings significantly increased reports of unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks, which may be a result of many of the bombs being directed at U.S./Coalition troops. Reports of unnecessary Iraq Army and Police attacks also were associated with unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks and may have occurred alongside them. Kurds were significantly less likely to report unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks. As predicted in Hypothesis 1, individual Sunni respondents were more likely to report these attacks. However, individual Shia also more often reported these attacks. If respondents evaluated the Awakening Councils as improving security, they were significantly less likely to report unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks.

Table 2: HLM Bernoulli Regression Models of Unnecessary US/Coalition Attacks on Civilians Reported During Surge, Iraq, 2008

<b>Unnecessary US Attacks on Civilians</b>		
<b>Individual Level Characteristics</b>	<b>b(SE)</b>	<b>b(SE)</b>
<b>War Violence</b>		
Iraq Army	.08(.12)	.08(.13)
Iraq Police	.32(.12)**	.38(.12)**
Local Militia	.24(.11)*	.29(.11)**
Bombing	.47(.11)***	.40(.12)***
Sniping and Crossfire	.06(.11)	.41(.11)
Sectarian Attacks	.17(.11)	.11(.11)
Kidnapping	.22(.10)*	.29(.11)**
<b>Background Characteristics</b>		
Kurd	-1.08(.36)**	-1.06(.36)**
Sunni	1.22(.27)***	1.08(.27)***
Shia	1.11(.26)***	1.07(.26)***
Male	.02(.11)	.05(.11)
Age	-.01(.01)	-.01(.01)
Education	-.05(.05)	-.07(.05)
Married	.15(.10)	.12(.11)
Employed	-.14(.12)	-.16(.12)
<b>Location</b>		
Sadr City	--	1.29(.18)***
Rest of Baghdad	--	.63(.15)***
Anbar	--	.19(.22)
Basara	--	-.24(.25)
Kirkuk	--	.51(.33)
Mosul	--	.07(.33)
<b>Security from Awakening Councils</b>		
Improved Security	-.25(.07)***	-.21(.07)**
<b>Community Level Characteristics</b>		
Predominately Shia Community	-.58(.25)*	-.75(.28)**
<b>Intercept</b>	<b>-.38</b>	<b>-.38</b>

At the community level, as also predicted in Hypothesis 1, the negative effect in column one indicates that unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks were significantly more likely to occur in predominately Sunni than predominately Shia areas. So even though individual Shia as well as Sunni respondents

more often reported these sources of violence, overall, these effects were reported more often in predominately Sunni than predominately Shia settings. As indicated, this supports our first hypothesis of greater impact of U.S./Coalition attacks on the Sunni than on the Shia during the Surge, and this is consistent with the endogenous conflict expectation that individual Sunni civilians and civilians living in predominately Sunni neighborhoods were more vulnerable to the targeting of unnecessary attacks associated with the U.S./Coalition Surge.

As indicated in the second column of Table 2, the specific community locations of respondents in several areas of high conflict in Iraq mattered. Respondents in Sadr City reported significantly more unnecessary U.S. attacks on civilians. Sadr City is virtually completely Shia and in the later stages was targeted by U.S. Surge forces. These attacks notably suppressed the net effect (which increased by more than 25 percent) of being in a predominately Sunni neighborhood on these unnecessary U.S. attacks. Civilians living elsewhere in Baghdad also but to a lesser degree reported unnecessary attacks by U.S./Coalition forces.

Before turning to our more fully specified models of perceived security, we next model in Table 3 the impact of the eight sources of nearby war violence on feelings of security perceived as specifically resulting from the U.S. Surge in troops. The first column of results in Table 3 introduces the eight sources of war violence, while the second column adds individual and community level characteristics. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, both columns of results in Table 3 indicate that reports of nearby unnecessary attacks of U.S. forces on civilians – more than any other measured source of war violence – reduced the perceived level of security associated with the U.S. Surge. Unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks decreased scores by an average of three quarters of a point on the six point Surge security scale. The next most influential source of violence in decreasing perceived security was sectarian attacks. Unnecessary attacks by the Iraq Army, bombing, and sniping and crossfire also significantly decreased scores on the Surge security scale.

Table 3: HLM Regression Models of Perceived Increase in Security Resulting from Surge, Iraq, 2008

Individual Level Characteristics	Perceived Increase in Security	
	b(SE)	b(SE)
<b>War violence</b>		
Iraq Army	-.32(.09)***	-.18(.09)*
Iraq Police	.09(.11)	.19(.11)
Local Militia	.05(.09)	.11(.08)
Bombing	-.39(.09)***	-.27(.09)**
Sniping and Crossfire	-.36(.08)***	-.24(.07)***
Sectarian Attacks	-.41(.09)***	-.28(.08)***
Kidnapping	-.06(.08)	-.03(.08)
Unnecessary US Attacks on Civilians	-.76(.09)	-.49(.08)***
<b>Background Characteristics</b>		
Kurd	--	.90(.33)**
Sunni	--	-1.17(.35)***
Shia	--	-.39(.34)
Male	--	-.05(.08)
Age	--	-.00(.00)
Education	--	-.07(.04)
Married	--	.06(.08)
Employed	--	.12(.09)
<b>Location</b>		
Sadr City	--	-2.31(.12)***
Rest of Baghdad	--	-1.63(.15)***
Anbar	--	-1.18(.19)***
Basara	--	.94(.17)***
Kirkuk	--	.24(.37)
Mosul	--	.62(.31)*
<b>Security from Awakening Councils</b>		
	Perceived Increase in Security	
Individual Level Characteristics	b(SE)	b(SE)
Improved Security	--	.43(.05)***
<b>Community Level Characteristics</b>		
Predominately Shia Community	.22(.19)	.26(.25)
<b>Intercept</b>	2.28	2.28

The effect of U.S./Coalition forces' unnecessary attacks on civilians on perceptions of increased security resulting from the Surge is reduced by about one third in the second column of Table 3. Several factors introduced in the second column of Table 3 largely mediate the negative effect of U.S. attacks on civilians on the effectiveness of the Surge in increasing perceived security. These factors include the targeting predicted in Hypothesis 1 of the Sunni in unnecessary U.S./Coalition attacks on civilians and the impact of re-

spondents' locations in Sadr City, elsewhere in Baghdad, and in Anbar province.

## 9. Discussion and Conclusions

From the Balkans, through Sudan and Darfur, to Iraq, a dominant view in U.S. policy circles has been that unchanging and irreconcilable differences between ethnic groups can sufficiently explain sectarian violence in conflict zones (cf., *Scheffer* 2012). The assumption of unchanging and irreconcilable differences has motivated aspects of policy proposals as different as the military Surge and the national partition of Iraq.

We have argued that the Surge policy ultimately adopted in Iraq influenced and changed the form and scale of sectarian conflict, as did also the realignment of the elite political leadership of this country. At the very least, following *Kalyvas*, we have argued that the static and simplistic assumptions of an exogenously driven ethnic war theory must be modified and expanded to take into account the contingencies of endogenous change that have dynamically influenced sectarian conflict in Iraq, and by implication, elsewhere. Conflicts are not simply caused by enduring ethnic differences.

In place of an ethnic war theory, we have proposed and tested hypotheses from an endogenous conflict perspective using survey data collected from 2007 to 2009 in Iraq – a period which included the Surge and the subsequent withdrawal of Surge troops. We began with the overarching premise that disproportionate attacks in and on Sunni communities have had important impacts on the lives of individuals within them. We have found that unnecessary attacks by U.S./Coalition troops on civilians were disproportionately reported by both Sunni and Shia individuals, but that they were most often reported in predominately Sunni communities. We have further found that these unnecessary attacks played a uniquely salient role in lowering perceptions of security resulting from U.S. Surge operations. These findings are consistent with the endogenous focus of a conflict perspective on the effects of interventions by outside states, and they further help to explain why the Surge was relatively unpopular in Iraq. These findings also begin to explain how the U.S. Surge marginalized and disadvantaged Arab Sunni groups relative to Shia and Kurdish groups in Iraq, setting the foundation for

what we have called a separate peace – an unstable peace that is proving to be precariously violent.

However, an endogenous conflict perspective does not simply focus on external state intervention. It also is concerned with domestic political leadership, and in the case of Iraq, with a leadership that was selectively installed by the U.S. led Coalition and that favored formerly exiled and elite Shia opposition figures. *Nuri Maliki* emerged out of this U.S. led process as a two term prime minister. In this role, he proved to be another source of endogenous influence on the unfolding sectarian conflict in Iraq. *Maliki* channeled and facilitated the U.S. concentration of offensive operations against Sunni based opponents, but he also deflected blame for these operations by creating a newly named State of Law coalition with Sunni and Kurdish representation. He strategically mounted electoral campaigns designed to mitigate the political opposition emanating from the reversal of fortune suffered by the Sunni following the defeat of *Saddam Hussein's* Sunni dominated Baathist regime.

In *Kalyvas and Kocher's* (2007, p. 184) terms, *Maliki* was projecting the goals of a unified state and attempting to counteract the effects of state fragmentation in Iraq. At the time of the 2008-2009 surveys we have analyzed, *Maliki* proved himself perhaps surprisingly adept in these efforts. Perceptions of security continued to improve among both the Sunni and Shia during 2008 and 2009, and favorable outcomes were particularly evident for the Shia in the immediate years after the departure of the Surge troops.

We have used an endogenous conflict perspective to predict a separate peace that in 2008-2009 brought improvements for both Sunni and Shia, but greater benefits for the Shia. The nationally representative Iraq data we have analyzed from 2007 through 2009 are consistent with these predictions. Approval of the *Maliki* government grew notably between 2008 and 2009, and may have peaked in 2009; yet even then there remained substantial differences, with Sunni living in predominately Sunni communities still least likely to approve of *Maliki's* governance. The disparities predicted by an endogenous conflict perspective and the findings we have reported therefore anticipated continued instability in the separate peace we observed. After the invasion and during the subsequent occupation, the U.S. led Coalition Provisional Authority disbanded the military and purged the Baathists from government agencies. A replacement army and bureaucracy was enlisted

and trained under the supervision of the U.S. military. It was perhaps predictable going forward, then, that the new Iraq Army might be used to suppress the residual Sunni militias and insurgents that continue to protest and challenge disparities and imbalances between the Shia and Sunni. When Sunni protesters mobilized peaceful demonstrations at the end of 2012, they were met with a military and police crack-down rather than negotiations or reforms. The result was a resurgence of Sunni militants and Al Qaeda in Iraq attacks that reignited the nascent sectarian conflict.

The *Maliki* led and Shia dominated Iraq government increasingly concentrated the use of force by its security forces against Sunni dissent (*Dodge* 2013). The Shia and Sunni communities increasingly occupied separate and unequal places in Iraq society that formed the mirror image of the era of *Saddam Hussein*, with the Shia increasingly advantaged and secure and the Sunni less advantaged and more insecure. The disadvantaged and insecure place of the Sunni in predominately Sunni parts of Iraq – such as Falujah and Mosel – would soon form fertile settings for advances by the Islamic State from Syria into Iraq.

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