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Political Sustainability of Population-Centric Counterinsurgency Strategy in the United States

Politična trajnost ameriške strategije boja proti upornikom

Magistrsko delo

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Mentor: doc. dr. Iztok Prezelj

Somentor: red. prof. dr. Marjan Malešič

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Zahvala

Biti spet študent je res lepo darilo! To magistrsko delo, ki je rezultat mojega tokratnega učenja in raziskovanja, je posledica številnih odrekanj moje lepe žene Carolynn, ki se je odpovedala svoji karieri, da bi se lahko skupaj preselila v Slovenijo, vizija in velikodušnost United States Air Force in Olmsted Foundation, ki sta mi dala to priložnost, ter nezaslužen blagoslov Boga, ki ljubi vse nas in ki je poslal svojega sina, da umre za nas. Poleg tega brez intelektualne modrosti in težkega dela mojih mentorjev, dr. Malešiča in dr. Prezelja, in moje slovenske učiteljice Anje Figelj to delo ne bi bilo mogoče.

Politična trajnost ameriške strategije boja proti upornikom

ZDA in nekatere druge demokratične države so se od leta 2001 dalje oprle na 'na prebivalstvo osredotočen boj proti upornikom', kot eno od sredstev svoje zunanje politike. Med izvajanjem operacij boja proti upornikom v Iraku in Afganistanu je ta doktrina prinesla taktične in operativne zmage, ni pa prepričljivo vodila k strateškemu uspehu. Vsaka od operacij boja proti upornikom je povzročila veliko število smrtnih žrtev in visoke finančne stroške, poleg tega pa je predolgo trajala, kar je vplivalo na politično sprejemljivost strategije na sploh. Da bi lahko ocenil politično sprejemljivost doktrine na prebivalstvo osredotočenega boja proti upornikom, v magistrskem delu analiziram njene stroške in vpliv teh stroškov na notranjepolitično podporo ter preverjam, kako se ta podpora ali njeno pomanjkanje prenašata v politično odgovornost in kako ta odgovornost vpliva na spremembo ameriških zunanjepolitičnih odločitev. Rezultati sugerirajo, vendar ne dokončno in v celoti, da ameriške operacije boja proti upornikom oblikovane v omenjeni doktrini in izvajane v Iraku in Afganistanu, niso dovolj zanesljiva zunanjepolitična izbira, ki bi v sorazmerno kratkem času omogočila ameriški strateški uspeh. Predvsem zaradi prevelikih negativnih učinkov na javno podporo doktrini, ki prinaša visoke izgube v smislu povzročenih smrtnih žrtev, porabljenih finančnih sredstev in dolžine trajanja.

Ključne besede: boj proti upornikom, na prebivalstvo osredotočen, vojni davek, politično odgovornost

Political Sustainability of Population-Centric Counterinsurgency Strategy in the United States

Since 2001, the United States and certain other democracies have increasingly relied on population-centric counterinsurgency as a foreign policy tool. During counterinsurgency operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the doctrine has resulted in tactical and operation victories, but has not clearly led to strategic success. Specifically, each counterinsurgency operation has incurred considerable costs in terms of casualties, financial costs and duration that have impacted the political sustainability of the strategy as a whole. This thesis analyzes the costs of population-centric counterinsurgency operations, the impact of those costs on domestic political support, how that support or lack of support translates into political accountability, and how that accountability alters foreign policy decisions in the US in order to assess the political sustainability of population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine. The results indicate ample suggestive, but not conclusive, evidence that that confirms that counterinsurgent campaigns as conceived by US counterinsurgency doctrine, and executed in Iraq and Afghanistan, are not politically viable foreign policy options because they are not adequately politically sustainably to offer the potential for strategic success for the US due to the large negative effects on public support for the operations stemming from the operations' costs in terms of lives, finances and duration.

Keywords: Counterinsurgency, population-centric, costs of war, accountability

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AO	Area of Operations
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DOD	Department of Defense (of the United States)
FM	Field Manual
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KIA	Killed in Action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OND	Operation New Dawn
RAND	Research and Development Corporation
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
WIA	Wounded in Action
WWII	World War II

1 INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of Americans can describe exactly where and what they were doing when they realized that the United States (US) was being attacked on September 11th, 2001 – it is an indelible mark on the American memory and cultural experience. Tragically, nearly 3,000 American civilians were killed when four separate airliners were hijacked and intentionally crashed in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Scarcely a week later, in a speech to a joint session of the US Congress, President George Bush issued an ultimatum to the ruling Taliban government in Afghanistan to deliver to the US the leaders of "Al Qaida" in Afghanistan, announced the beginning of military action against the Al Qaida network and also a more general "war on terror." Stemming from that strategic vision, Afghanistan was invaded by a coalition of military forces and the Taliban government was toppled. Only 18 months later, the US military, assisted by coalition forces from several other countries, invaded Iraq with the stated aims of ensuring that the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs were terminated, as well as to "remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people" (The Guardian 2003). Both campaigns were met with almost immediate tactical and operation success.   In Afghanistan, the Taliban was toppled from power in a matter of weeks. In Iraq, the invasion phase lasted under a month.

However, while each conflict is unique for a multitude of reasons, both situations quickly evolved into insurgencies that contained aspects of sectarian violence and even civil war. US, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and coalition forces provided military, financial, political and civil assistance to each host nation government, while insurgents from several different groups and for many different stated reasons conducted active and violent insurgent campaigns.   The costs of each conflict, in terms of lives and financial support, skyrocketed as the Afghan and Iraqi governments, as well as US, NATO and coalition forces, designed and executed counterinsurgency campaigns.

While measures of success for counterinsurgency campaigns are difficult to formulate and even more difficult to quantify, both conflicts provided several tactical and operational victories. In December 2006, the US Army released its updated "Counterinsurgency" manual, which codified the doctrine of how the US fights insurgencies, and coincided with a surge of troops and increased levels of success in Iraq, especially starting in early 2008 (CNN 2008). In Afghanistan, the impact of the doctrine had similar effects. According to US Army General David Petraeus and US Marine General John Allen, two International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commanders, ISAF was not using a population-centric COIN strategy until 2009. Since that time, notable tactical and operational successes have been found in such areas such as the increasing capacity of the Afghan government, the training of Afghan National Security Forces and the expansion of security to larger segments of the Afghan population (Hammes 2012, 49). However, on the strategic level, results were much more mixed. As time progressed, international protests grew, coalition members withdrew their support and the publics in the democratic nations involved grew more and more vocally opposed to continuing the war efforts. Leaders and political parties in power in several countries, most notably Tony Blair in Great Britain, were voted out of office or lost political power as casualties of the military operations in Iraq mounted (Washington Times 2003).

This all leads to the question of whether counterinsurgency campaigns, as modernly conceived and implemented in Iraq and Afghanistan, while potentially tactically and operationally viable, are strategically sustainable. The costs incurred are considerable to the constituencies whose support for leaders and policies is pivotal for a modern democracy to execute and sustain a counterinsurgent campaign. In this thesis, I operate from a core proposition that democracies, with their casualty-averse publics, politically accountable leaders and free media, are uniquely vulnerable to the high costs associated with counterinsurgency campaigns.

2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Relevance, Goal and Importance of Study

Population-centric counterinsurgency campaigns executed by democratic nations, as seen in Malaya, Algeria, the Philippines, Ethiopia and Vietnam, as well as more recently Iraq and Afghanistan, have grown both in their importance as a key aspect of "nation-building," but also in their acceptance as a valid tool for the international community. Specifically, counterinsurgency campaigns waged as a part of a foreign military intervention are becoming even more prevalent as the efficacy of economic sanctions and other foreign policy tools are increasingly being questioned (Pickering and Kisangani 2006, 363).

However, repeated case studies give evidence that not only are counter-insurgencies usually both very long and very costly (Fearon 2006), but also require a tremendous amount of political will from the nations involved to sustain the effort for a long enough period to achieve even very limited goals. In turn, modern democratic governments are politically accountable to their electorates, as well as predominantly have short election cycles and political structures that reward short-term political decisions. In addition, modern democratic constituencies are more sensitive to loss of life and televised brutality than in the past.

Consequently, my goal is to provide an analysis of the expected costs in terms of time, resources and political will required for a counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy to achieve moderate goals in future conflicts. This analysis is important, in that knowing the true costs of a particular political and military strategy, such as population-centric COIN, helps decision makers form better decisions by eliminating options that superficially seem viable, but on a deeper level are not. In addition, this analysis will also help illuminate the important tension between long-term strategic policy choices made by modern democracies and the inherent short-term political tendencies of those same nations to respond to changes in public opinion.

2.2   Research Question and Hypothesis

My research question is "what are the concrete costs of a population-centric counterinsurgency campaign, and can the US, as a modern democracy, reasonably expect to be able to politically shoulder these costs?" In turn, my hypothesis is that counterinsurgent campaigns as conceived by US counterinsurgency doctrine, and executed in Iraq and Afghanistan, are not politically viable foreign policy options for a period long enough to offer the potential for strategic success for the US due to the large negative effects on public support for the operations stemming from the operations' costs in terms of lives, finances and duration.

2.3   Methodology

In terms of methodology, I will first perform a descriptive analysis of the conceptual starting points that lay the foundation for my research. Then I will perform inductive research with a goal of inferring theoretical cost patterns and relationships in the form of a statistical analysis of secondary data and case study analysis of population-centric counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In turn, I will perform bivariate analysis to examine how the casualties and financial costs are related to duration in order to predict the costs of future counterinsurgency campaigns using extrapolation based on the number of American troops required for each operation. In addition, I will perform a content analysis of the governing manual of doctrine for population-centric counterinsurgency. Finally, I will conduct explanatory research in the context of the existing body of theoretical research to define the impacts of these costs on American public support for the operations, and in turn the impacts of American public support on Presidential decision making.

My argument proceeds in five stages. First, I will estimate the actual costs of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that have the greatest impact on the US public. Second, I will clarify my understanding of how these costs impact public opinion and place my understanding within the extensive research on this topic. Third, I will briefly outline the broad requirements of the current iteration of population-centric counterinsurgency has described in the US Army's Counterinsurgency

manual. Fourth, I will predict the costs of a counterinsurgency campaign in the future as well as how those costs would affect public opinion, and then explore the impact of public opinion on the decision making of the President of the US. Finally, I will draw conclusions about whether a population-centric counterinsurgency is a politically viable and sustainable option for the US on the strategic level.

3   THE INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC OPINION ON FOREIGN POLICY

The relationship between domestic political support and foreign policy decisions in a democracy has long been the focus of much thought and research. Immanuel Kant reasoned:

> If, as is inevitably required under this [republican] constitution, the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise. For this would mean calling down on themselves all the miseries of war. (Reiter and Tillman, 2002, 813)

Similarly, neoclassical realists, such as Randall Schweller, have long reaffirmed that democratic constituencies and domestic political considerations can undermine the pursuit of national interests by democratic nations. Neoclassical realism was developed as a response to the realization that neorealism was primarily only useful for explaining political outcomes, but had little explanatory power in regards to the behavior of particular states. Consequently, building on the foundation of neorealism as expounded by Kenneth Waltz, neoclassical realism introduces domestic intervening variables between the incentives inherent in the international system and a state's specific foreign policy decision. More specifically, "complex domestic political processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate, and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces" (Schweller 2004, 164). At its core, neoclassical adherents argue that the character of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its standing in the international system, and specifically by its material power relative to other states, which is why the theory is "realist". However, they argue further that the impact of such power on foreign policy is both indirect and complex,

because pressures from the country's internal politics must be translated through intervening variables, such as governmental structure or political accountability in the case of democracies, at the national level (Rose 1998, 146). This is why the theory is "neoclassical." In terms of an analytical framework, neoclassical realism asserts that foreign policy decisions are a consequence of:

> (1) elites' preferences and perceptions of the external environment, (2) which elites' preferences and perceptions "matter" in the policymaking process, (3) the domestic political risks associated with certain foreign policy choices, and (4) the variable risk-taking propensities of national elites. (Schweller 2004, 169)

Of these factors, my analysis will focus on the domestic political risks involved in the decision-making process, specifically decreased public political support catalyzed by the high costs incurred during a counterinsurgency campaign.

In a similar way, but starting from a different theoretical starting point, liberal international relations (IR) theory offers explanations that link variations in domestic political representation to foreign policy (Moravcsik 2001 , 2). Liberal IR theories such as democratic peace theory rest on normative logic, which asserts that one important effect of democracy is to socialize political elites to act on the basis of democratic norms whenever possible which leads to mutual trust and respect between democracies (Rosato 2003, 586), as well as institutional logic, which says that democratic institutions and processes makes leaders accountable to a wide range of social groups that may oppose war (Rosato 2003, 587). In turn, operating from the assumption that political elites want to remain in office, there are opposition parties that are looking for opportunities to capitalize on unpopular policies. In addition, there are regular opportunities for democratic publics to remove political elites who they perceive as not acting in their best interests.

Liberal IR theory also offers explanations of why constituencies within a democracy can be expected to oppose costly or losing wars. The concept of "public constraint" asserts that political leaders respond to the general public's aversion to war. "Group constraint" asserts that specific domestic groups may oppose war because it is costly, for potential political gain, or because they view

war as morally unacceptable. In terms of bearing costs, economic interdependence has created interest groups that are opposed to war because conflicts inevitably disrupt international trade and investment. In terms of political gain, certain groups may oppose the decision to initiate conflict almost entirely due to an unpopular domestic policy. Finally, in terms of moral objections, public opinion elites may oppose war due to the war's perceived violation of certain national precepts or principles. Specifically, within every democracy there are several groups, such as the general public, groups which benefit from an open international economy, opposition political parties and liberal opinion leaders which would potentially bear considerable physical, financial and moral costs during war (Rosato 2003, 587).

Focusing on the relationship between public opinion and the costs associated with national security, during the Cold War, a series of analyses and scholarly papers painted a picture of a "rational public." (Russett 1990) In a democracy, a rational public is able to respond to elite debates concerning foreign policy choices, weigh the complexities of foreign policy, and make a comparison between the ends sought by certain actions of the government and those actions' associated costs. The major components of the calculation have been found to be beliefs about perceived benefits, associated risks and costs, as well as prospects for success (Byman, Waxman and Larson 1999, 62). This cost-benefit calculation fits the historical data analyzed in different studies, and consequently the scholarly consensus is of a "rational cost-benefit" model (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 12). In general, the more vital the interests at stake, the higher the costs a rational public is willing to bear to secure those interests. In theory, cost tolerance varies along a continuum from an "unwillingness to absorb any human or material costs in pursuit of an objective to the acceptance of any and all costs that must be borne to prevail." (Sullivan 2007, 501) In addition, most scholars who have examined public opinion polls have concluded that the American public is not casualty phobic; i.e., for the accomplishment of certain goals, the public will accept considerable costs.

In addition, a foundational assumption of this theory is the existence of a free, open and accessible media in a democratic nation. If the information that the

public is using to make its rational calculation is unavailable, heavily controlled, openly biased or simply inaccurate, then rational decisions are hard or even impossible to make. In order to make a decision about the severity of the costs involved compared to the merits of the gains sought, the public needs accurate information about both sides of that equation that only an open media can provide. Consequently, I assume that modern democracies have predominantly free medias, and the US in particular has a relatively unhindered media.

Finally, as mentioned above, in a democracy where the public is making rational decisions about the relative gains versus costs of certain foreign policy goals and then expressing their preferences either through public opinion or electoral means, then the democratically elected government is being held accountable to the voting constituency. In its most basic sense government vulnerability focuses on the likelihood that the current political leadership will be removed from power (Schweller 2004, 173). While there have been no efforts to quantify how vulnerable certain democratic forms of government are to domestic political opposition, historical experience reaffirms what James Morrow observes: "leaders and domestic groups often disagree about the appropriate response to a threat. Leaders choose policies for their ability to counter a threat and to provide domestic support. Without the latter, security policies will fail to do the former." (Morrow 1993, 216) In fact, one explanation for "democratic peace" theory is that leaders of democratic nations are more apt than authoritarians to pay high political costs if wars go badly, and consequently choose to fight fewer wars (Karol and Miguel 2007, 634).

In addition, it must be noted that the exact attributes described above that undergird my hypothesis that democracies cannot politically sustain counterinsurgency campaigns, namely rational publics, politically accountable leaders and an open media, are often cited as responsible for democracies' unmatched success rate in more "standard" and conventional interstate wars. In a study of conflicts involving democratic nations since 1815, Reiter and Stam (2002, 29) found that democracies have won 93% of the interstate wars that they initiated. In turn, the authors found that democratic leaders chose to fight wars only when the odds were heavily in their favor, largely due to those leaders'

acknowledgement of the unique vulnerability of democracies due to their rational publics, politically accountable leaders and open medias.

3.1 Counterinsurgency Operations

In general terms, insurgency is "typically a form of internal war, one that occurs primarily within a state, not between states, and one that contains at least some elements of civil war." (Army 2006, 1-2) In describing an insurgency, "insurgents succeed by sowing chaos and disorder anywhere; the government fails unless it maintains a degree of order everywhere" and "a small number of highly motivated insurgents with simple weapons, good operation security, and even limited mobility can undermine security over a large area." (Army 2006, 1-2)

Consequently, counterinsurgency operations are defined as "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency" (Army 2006, 1-1) and a key component is the creation and maintenance of a secure environment in which the full range of counterinsurgency actions can take place. Consequently, "maintaining security in an unstable environment requires vast resources, whether host nation, US or multinational" and "successful COIN operations require a high ratio of security forces to the protected population…for that reason, protracted COIN operations are hard to sustain. The effort requires a firm political will and substantial patience by the government, its people, and the countries providing support." (Army 2006, 1-2) Finally, "victory is achieved when the populace consents to the government's legitimacy and stops actively and passively supporting the insurgency." (Army 2006, 1-3)

Historically, counterinsurgency operations have been a major domestic and foreign policy tool for numerous countries. In the last one hundred years, major counterinsurgency campaigns have been used in World War I and II, Algeria, Indonesia, China, Malaya, Vietnam, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Northern Ireland, Somalia, China, Cambodia, Russia, Chechnya, Armenia, Turkey, Iran, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Oman, Honduras, El Salvador, Columbia, and Spain.

4   COSTS OF COIN CAMPAIGNS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

In trying to ascertain the exact costs of a specific war, such as analyzing the direct, indirect, future and opportunity costs of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is often to a great extent a conceptual exercise (Skons 2011, 188). In particular, while it is difficult to find appropriate data from unbiased sources, the most difficult task is deciding which factors to include in the cost analysis, which often depends on specific knowledge and perceptions of what the conflicts encompass. For example, it is difficult to set economic values on numbers of refugees, displaced persons, social chaos and breakdown of infrastructure. In addition, costs are also incurred on different levels – the national (domestic) level for countries involved in the conflict, the regional level for neighboring countries, and the global level for the international community (Skons 2011, 173).   But, in general terms, each conflict can be measured terms of its disruptions of trade, loss of cultural heritage, economic impacts, casualties, and environmental damage (Geys 2010, 357).   However, in order to advance my hypothesis that is focused on viewing the voting public as a rational actor, I will focus on tangible costs incurred at the national level.

Consequently, in terms of national and domestic costs, research has shown that voting constituencies are most highly influenced by casualties (Bueno De Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006; Voeten and Brewer 2006), financial costs (Sullivan 2007; Caverly 2009; Geys 2010), and the length of involvement in the conflict (Bennett and Stam 1998; Reiter and Stam 2003; Pickering and Kisangani 2006). Consequently these are the costs that have the greatest impact on the ability of a democratic nation to sustain a COIN campaign. Of note, I am assuming that the vast majority of costs, whether human, financial, or in terms of duration, are observable and able to be experienced by the general public.

4.1   Casualties

In order to estimate the human costs of the conflicts, first I must define the different groups of people to be included, the type of injuries, and the

geographical scope of the included operations. Of the different groups of people involved in the conflicts, I will include the US military, other allied military, US contractors, Iraqi and Afghan Security forces, Pakistani security forces and civilians. While the statistics related to some of these groups are very well documented, such as the military personnel, statistics related to other groups, such as civilians, are not. For example, the amount of civilians killed and injured in Iraq and Afghanistan is impossible to ascertain with a high degree of accuracy due to the non-existence of standardized reporting systems or procedures, the almost complete lack of mortuary and medical services in large parts of both countries, and lack of outside observation and journalist access to many geographical areas. However, an analysis of military operations reports, Iraqi and international news bulletins, as well as United Nations (UN) statistics yields a usable approximation. In terms of types of injuries, I will focus on numbers of dead.

Finally, in terms of defining the time frames and geographical areas of the operations, each counterinsurgency operation includes military installations and locations which serve to support the main efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and consequently must be taken into consideration when totaling total costs in terms of lives. While these other locations are primarily used for logistics, maintenance, detainee detention or support of counter-insurgency operations, loss of life did occur outside of Iraq and Afghanistan. Specifically, for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) I included casualties that occurred between March 19, 2003 and August 31, 2010 in the Arabian Sea, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Persian Gulf, Qatar, Red Sea, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Also, casualties sustained prior to March 19, 2003 were considered part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and personnel injured in OIF who died after 1 September 2010 were included in OIF statistics. For Operation New Dawn (OND), the follow up operation in Iraq following OIF, I used the same geographical area as OIF between 1 September 2010 and 31 December 2012. Finally, for OEF, I included casualties that occurred in Afghanistan and other locations such as Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti,

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

First, looking at US military and Department of Defense civilian casualties, Figure 4.1 shows the break down between the three different operations that encompassed the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In terms of the other groups considered, Figure 4.2 shows the break down among allied military, US civilian contractors, Iraqi and Afghan security forces, Pakistani security forces and civilians, as well as Iraqi and Afghan civilians.

Figure 4.1: US Military and Department of Defense Casualties in OIF, OND and OEF

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) U.S. CASUALTY STATUS * FATALITIES AS OF: January 2, 2013, 10 a.m. EDT					
	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OIF U. S. Military Casualties	4,409	3,480	929	0	31,925
OIF U.S. DoD Civilian Casualties	13	9	4		
Totals	4,422	3,489	933	0	31,925
OPERATION NEW DAWN (OND) U.S. CASUALTY STATUS ** FATALITIES AS OF: January 2, 2013, 10 a.m. EDT					
	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OND U. S. Military Casualties	66	38	28	0	295
OND U.S. DoD Civilian Casualties	0	0	0		
Totals	66	38	28	0	295
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) U.S. CASUALTY STATUS FATALITIES AS OF: January 2, 2013, 10 a.m. EDT					
OEF U.S. Military Casualties	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
Afghanistan Only***	2,043	1,703	337	3	18,167
Other Locations****	119	11	108	0	
OEF U.S. DoD Civilian Casualties	3	1	2		
Worldwide Total	2,165	1,715	447	3	18,167

Source: Department of Defense 2013

Of note in Figure 4.1, the high numbers of non-hostile US military casualties result from accidents, illnesses, homicides, and suicides, and "WIA" stands for wounded in action. In addition, the number of US civilian contractors killed in

Afghanistan is difficult to determine exactly, and consequently was estimated by using the percentage of US citizens among the total of all civilian contractors from all nationalities employed by the US (provided by a 2011 Congressional Research Service report) killed in Afghanistan.

Figure 4.2: Conflict Fatalities by People Group and Location

Group	Deaths in Iraq	Deaths in Afghanistan	Deaths in Pakistan	Source	Time Period
Allied Military	318	1078	N/A	iCasualties 2012	2001-2012
US Civilian Contractors	318	211	N/A	Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction 2012 / Lutz 2011, 1	Iraq: May 03 – Aug 10 Afg: Mar 01- Mar 11
Iraqi Security Forces	10125	N/A	N/A	iCasualties 2012	Jan 2005 - Jul 2011
Afghan Security Forces	N/A	6595	N/A	Chesser 2012, 3-4	2007 - Jun 2012
Pakistani Security Forces and Civilians	N/A	N/A	34242	Crawford 2011c, 25	2005-2010
Iraqi Civilians	122000 to 132000	N/A	N/A	Crawford 2011b, 1	2003-2011
Afghan Civilians	N/A	15500-17400	N/A	Crawford 2011a, 1	2001-2011

4.2 Financial Costs

At first glance, it would seem that the financial costs of war would be fairly discreet, reportable and defined. However, there are several factors that complicate estimating the financial costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. First, the US does not have a functioning system for tracking war costs. Throughout the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, different governmental agencies have attempted to calculate the actual costs of the war, but have failed and complained that the US lacks the basic accounting systems necessary for understanding where money is spent (Three Trillion Dollar War Organization 2012). In addition, the Pentagon continues to be the only department in the US federal government that cannot be subjected to an audit. Second, many of the costs are hidden costs or involve ill defined and often involve intangible opportunity costs. For example, the costs of paying interest on the money that the US government borrowed to finance the wars, the social costs of reservists

losing their civilian jobs, the loss of productivity stemming from spouses and parents who have been forced to stop working and become caregivers for wounded veterans, the costs of refurbishing or purchasing military and National Guard equipment (Three Trillion Dollar War Organization 2012), and the opportunity cost of having to retrain thousands of troops to be effective in their primary specialties following long periods of being deployed doing unrelated duties, are hard to quantify and rarely tracked. Third, corollary costs which stemmed from the way that the US paid for the war through borrowing, such as the raising of the US budget deficit and the increased national debt, had costly, but hard to define, macroeconomic effects (Watson Institute for International Studies 2012).

In addition, other macroeconomic costs, such as the impacts of the increase of the price of oil caused by the conflict, are even more difficult to quantify. For example, the US invasion was one of the primary factors which led to pressure on oil prices which started at around $25 a barrel in 2003 and increased to over $140 a barrel in 2008 (Three Trillion Dollar War Organization 2012). In turn, this rise in oil prices has been cited as a considerable factor in the US Federal Reserve's decisions to lower interest rates, which ultimately was a causal factor in the US housing bubble that precipitated the financial crisis of 2009. Finally, many of the associated costs of the conflicts will actually have to be paid in the future as the country obligates funds for Veterans' Medical and Disability costs. Clearly, these second and third order effects related to the costs of the war are very hard to both analyze and quantify.

However, with that in mind, variations in Department of Defense spending, as well as educated guesses, can provide a reasonable estimate according to authors Stiglitz and Bilmes (Geys 2010). The most comprehensive and non-partisan estimates have come from Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies that released a "Costs of War" report in June of 2011. This comprehensive analysis was compiled by more than 20 economists, anthropologists, lawyers, humanitarian personnel and political scientists as an analysis of the first 10 years of conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan (Watson Institute for International Studies 2012). Specifically, the analysis focused on the

funds that have been spent already and what must be spent in the future to meet present obligations, but did not include estimates of the economic effects of spending money on war instead of other priorities.

Figure 4.3: Estimated Costs of Conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in Billions of Dollars

	CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE	MODERATE ESTIMATE	REPORT/ SOURCE
Congressional War Appropriations to Pentagon	1,311.5	1,311.5	Wheeler
Additions to the Pentagon Base Budget	326.2	652 4	Wheeler
Interest on Pentagon War Appropriations	185.4	185.4	Edwards
Veterans' Medical and Disability	32.6	32.6	Bilmes
War Related International Assistance (State Department/USAID)	74.2	74.2	Dancs
Additions to Homeland Security Spending for the War on Terror	401.2	401.2	Dancs
SUBTOTAL FEDERAL OUTLAYS FY2001 Through FY2011, Constant $2011	2,331.1	2,657.3	
Projected Obligated Funds for Veterans' Medical and Disability to 2051[1]	589.0	934.0	Bilmes
Social Costs to Veterans and Military Families	295.0	400.0	Bilmes
TOTAL OUTLAYS TO 2011 AND ADDITIONAL COSTS OF VETERANS' CARE	3,215.1	3,991.3	
Pentagon War Spending Requested for FY2012	118.4	118.4	CRS[2]
State Dept./ USAID War Related Spending Requested for FY2012, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan	12.1	12.1	CRS[3]
Projected Pentagon War Spending FY2013-2015, w/reduction to 45,000 troops[2]	167.6	167.6	CBO[4]
Projected Pentagon War Spending FY2016-2020	155.0	155.0	CBO[4]
SUBTOTAL FUTURE PROJECTED DIRECT WAR SPENDING	453.1	453 1	
Additional Interest Payments to 2020	1,000	1,000	Edwards

Source: Watson Institute for International Studies (2012)

Looking at Figure 4.3, a couple things must be noted. First, to make comparisons across categories of spending made at different times between 2001 and 2011, the study group converted figures to inflation-controlled 2011 dollars. Second, the table is broken into four major subsections: total federal outlays from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2011 (Belasco 2011; Bilmes 2011; Dancs 2011; Edwards 2011; Wheeler 2011); projected costs for medical care for veterans, disability and social costs for military families (Bilmes 2011); projected future spending through fiscal year 2020 based on conservative estimates (Belasco 2011; Congressional Budget Office 2011; Kronstadt 2011); and additional interest payments for borrowed funds through 2020 (Edwards 2011). Finally, certain substantial costs are not included which bias the total cost estimate in a

conservative direction. Specifically, Medicare costs for injured veterans after the age of 65, expenses for veterans paid by state and local government budgets, $5.3 billion in promised reconstruction aid for Afghanistan, and additional macroeconomic consequences of war spending such as infrastructure and employment (Edwards 2011) were not included.

Taken as a whole, the estimated war costs fall somewhere between $3.2 and $4 trillion, with US Department of Defense appropriations amounting to roughly $1.3 trillion and other costs, such as additional appropriations in the Pentagon's base budget, interest payments, veterans' care, homeland security costs and war-related aid amounting to roughly $1.9 to $2.7 trillion.

For comparison, the annual GDP of the US in 2011 was $15.080 trillion and the US government's operating budget in 2011 was $3.819 trillion (US Office of Management and Budget 2012, 171), which puts annual war-related spending (spread over the 11 years since the conflicts began) at roughly 9.5% of the yearly annual US government budgets between 2001 and 2012 (in inflation adjusted 2012 dollars). Putting these numbers into context, if the 2011 annual income for the US government ($2.174 trillion) was equated to the median annual US income of $26,364 (Johnston 2011), then the government would be spending $46,312 a year (while being $181,904 in debt) and of that annual budget, $4,399 would be spent on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

4.3 Length of Conflict

The length of each conflict is easy to ascertain in terms of its start date, but as each conflict continues in different forms, the total length of the conflicts involving US involvement are yet to be concretely determined. Specifically, in the absence of official declarations of war, I will equate the beginning of major US military activity as the beginning of each conflict. Of note, while OIF officially ended on 31 August 2010, OND describes essentially the same operation beginning on 1 September 2010 and I combine the two operations together for a total length of time.

Importantly, each conflict's current status differs. In the case of Iraq, combat troops were withdrawn for predominantly political reasons by the end of 2011, with remaining troops fulfilling only training and advising roles. In terms of counterinsurgency success, the US commanding general during the final withdrawal asserted that "there is progress" and that "time will be ultimate determiner of how successful we were." (Engel 2010) Other key leaders in the administration, such as Michael Hayden, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief, have asserted that US forces pulled out of Iraq too soon and that the withdrawal was not completely based on the capabilities of the Iraqi government and security forces (Hayden 2012). In the case of Afghanistan, President Obama's declaration of ending major US military involvement by the end of 2014 has concerned American and British commanders who have indicated that potentially the "White House is now being driven by political rather than military imperatives." (MacAskill 2011) In effect, the withdrawals have not been completely based on meeting clear and defined success milestones provided by counterinsurgency doctrine, but instead driven by domestic political considerations. Figure 4.4 summarizes the present unresolved length of each conflict:

Figure 4.4: Length of Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan

Conflict	Start Date	Current Status	Total Length (Months)
Iraq (OIF and OND)	October 2003	Contractor and Training Support Only	112
Afghanistan (OEF)	March 2001	Major military involvement projected to end in 2014	143

Assuming that American troops will not leave Afghanistan until the end of 2014 that makes for a total of 167 months of conflict, I find that the lengths of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are similar to historical norms. Lyall (2008, 20) analyzed a data set of 286 insurgencies from 1800 to 2006, and found that since 1945 democracies fought insurgencies for an average of 137 months.

5   IMPACTS OF CASUALTIES AND COSTS ON PUBLIC SUPPORT

The main methodological concern when trying to assess the impacts of specific costs on public support for a conflict is that because all of these costs are incurred concurrently, it is difficult to isolate the impact of a single and specific cost. In essence, in the case of measuring public support, unobserved time-varying political factors such as economic performance, political party affiliation and local politician performance may bias estimated cost impacts. However, although I cannot entirely rule out these biasing effects, most of the studies cited below used a variety of regression specifications, variable definitions and a wide range of political, economic and demographic controls to help increase both the validity and robustness of their results.

5.1   Impacts of Casualties on Public Support

Among the three main costs of conflict affecting public support in democratic nations, costs in terms of human life is the dominating concern. For example, when American voters were asked in a 1967 poll about the war in Vietnam "what two or three things about the war in Vietnam most trouble you personally?" 31 percent cited casualties or deaths, 12 percent said lack of concrete progress and only 7 percent stated rising cost (Lorell and Kelley 198, 27). Mirroring that value hierarchy, in his book on Vietnam named "The Tuesday Cabinet: Deliberation and Decision on Peace and War under Lyndon B. Johnson," Henry Graff reports that the US Secretary of Defense asserted that in democracies, the thing that is prized most is not money but men, and a conflict can be expensive in dollars but must be cheap in life (Caverly 2009, 140). More generally, when asked which factors carry the most weight in supporting the use of US armed forces in hostilities, American voters responded that the loss of American lives dominates their decision-making:

Figure 5.1: Importance of Various Factors in Potential Use of US Armed
Forces (by percentage)

	Very Important
No one wants our nation to get into any conflicts in the future, but as in the past, our leaders might someday decide to use our armed forces in hostilities because our interests are jeopardized. I know that this is a tough question, but if you had to make a decision about using the American military, how important would each of the following factors be to you?	
Number of American lives that might be lost	86
Number of civilians that might be killed	79
Whether American people will support	71
Involvement by major power (e.g., USSR, PRC)	69
Length of time of fighting	61
Possibility of failure	56
Whether allies/other nations will support	56
Fact that we might break international laws or treaties	55
Cost in dollars	45

Source: Byman, Waxman and Larson 1999, 71

However, how exactly the voting population of a democracy experiences casualties is not completely understood. Several studies have found strong evidence that as cumulative national casualties increase, support for leaders goes down (Mueller 1973; Segura and Gartner 1998). Mueller (1973) also found that American voters seems to have become hardened to the wars' costs over time as well; they are sensitive to relatively small losses in the early stages, but only to large losses in later stages (Mueller 1973, 62 as quoted in Gartner and Segura 1998, 280). However, while valid, this effect can be critiqued as "aggregate, cumulative and monotonic," (Boettcher and Cobb 2006, 850) and several studies have found that more localized and contextual understandings of casualty effects are needed. Mesquita and Siverson (1995, 849) found that a "war participation rate," which is defined as the number of battle deaths per 10,000 population, is particularly attractive for being able to measure the decrease in likelihood that a political leader will be retained in office (based on his public support) since is it consistent across time and controls for population size (Bueno De Mesquita and Siverson 1995, 849). In turn, their study finds that high overall battle deaths reduce subsequent time in office for political leaders, and the risk of being turned out of office increases by 8% with each order-of-magnitude increase in the log of battle deaths per 10,000 population (Bueno De Mesquita and Siverson 1995, 851). Similarly, Karol and Miguel (2007, 638)

found that during the 2004 Presidential election, President Bush paid a political price due to war deaths that was large, negative and statistically significant. In addition, they found that the President paid little political costs in states that traditionally had supported his political party, while he paid very large costs in states that traditionally had supporting the opposing political party. Finally, they found that state National Guard and Reservist call-ups and fatalities among them were not more electorally damaging than regular armed forces deaths (Karol and Miguel 2007, 646).

Gartner and Segura (2008) asserted that all politics are still local and found that the political races for seats in the House of Representatives and Senate in the US were most impacted by casualties from the Iraq war that occurred in the individual states where key political races occurred. Analyzing the results of the 2006 national midterm elections, Gartner and Segura found that all of the seats that the Democrats (the opposition party to the party in power) captured from the Republicans came from states that paid disproportionate and recent Iraq War costs in terms of casualties. In effect, states with higher cumulative casualties, expressed in the form of the total number of soldiers from that state killed in action divided by the state population in millions, and states with the most recent casualties on the state level (which occurred in the month previous to the election), expressed in the form of the total number of soldiers from that state killed in October 2006 divided by the state population in millions, dramatically increased the probability that incumbents were likely to pay the war's electoral price (Gartner and Segura 1998, 96). Specifically, Gartner and Segura found that while national casualties are reported in summary statistics, reports of local casualties usually include detailed information, such as pictures and personal information (family members, places of employment, etc.), that transform an abstract cost into a loss that is more tangible and meaningful. In a similar study, Gartner (2008a) found that the character of social ties to those harmed during the Iraq War, not just their personal characteristics, influenced their wartime political attitudes. In effect, the probability of an individual disapproving of the President increases to 74% for voters who "know someone serving who was hurt", versus 68% for voters who "don't know anyone serving"

and 58% of voters who "know someone serving who was not hurt." (Gartner 2008a, 693).

In another study, Gartner (2008b) found that the contextuality of casualties has a major impact in how those casualties affect voting behavior. Specifically, increasing recent casualties and rising casualty trends leads directly to decreased support. More indirectly, casualty patterns provide a contextual lens through which individuals interpret casualties. Gartner operated from the assumption that voters engage in a simple but clear calculation about the expected value of continuing to engage in armed conflict, where the key factors are the outcome, direction, value and costs of the conflict. Stemming from that foundation, he conducted a laboratory experiment with a sample of American voters that found strong relationships between casualty levels, trends and context. Specifically, the study found that both higher monthly casualties and increasing casualty trends erode support for the wars, and without the context provided by casualty patterns, the absolute amount of monthly casualties lacks clear meaning (Gartner 2008b, 103). In a similar way, Boettcher and Cobb (2006, 837) built from a foundation of psychological research which has clearly shown that utility judgments, such as a voter would make in determining his or her support for a war effort in the face of that war's costs, are often based on changes in state (gains and losses) rather than overall static numerical levels. Through two studies, they reached a similar conclusion that the contextual features, such as recent gains or losses in the overall rational calculus involved, considerably impact the relevance of casualty statistics. However, they also argued that "in the current highly politicized context with relatively low casualties, an all-volunteer force, lack of elite dissensus, and little prospect of a military draft, we expect casualty data to have muted effects…the Vietnam War was characterized by high casualties, a conscript force, elite dissensus, and an ongoing draft; in that case, casualty data were highly salient and had strong effects." (Boettcher and Cobb 2006, 849).

Finally, Gartner and Segura (1998) found that marginal casualty figures, as expressions of costs that are temporally proximate (happened recently) are an important additional aspect of human costs and a critical factor in determining

wartime opinion. By modeling wartime opinion formation during the Vietnam War in California, Gartner and Segura (1998, 286) found that marginal casualties are a better predictor of opposition during periods of escalation or continuous fighting, while cumulative casualties are more likely to be accurate during periods of de-escalation. More specifically, while acknowledging that the usefulness of casualty numbers is very sensitive to how those numbers are operationalized and the particular circumstances of the wars in question, recent casualties send a strong signal that the war is not going well and that signal often dominates other cost metrics when the marginal casualty level is increasing (Gartner and Segura, War, Casualties, and Public Opinion 1998, 295). In addition, they suggested that the level of initial support for a conflict, the manner in which the conflict is initiated, and the nature of the goals of the conflict have considerable impact of the society to pay the human costs of the war.

An analysis by Eichenbreg, Stoll and Lebo (2006) of public support of President George W. Bush during the conflict in Iraq found that the casualties in Iraq significantly damaged the President's approval ratings. In the case of Iraq, the authors broke approval ratings into several periods of time. For the initial "combat phase" of the Iraq war, despite combat deaths the President's approval ratings were significantly positive as the American public rallied in support of the President because of high expectations of success (Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006, 788). However, once the postwar insurgency began, the impact of casualties turned substantially negative. Specifically, the authors found that Presidential approval dropped by roughly 1 percent for every 100 deaths of American personnel in Iraq (Eichenberg, Stoll and Lebo 2006, 788). Of note, Voeten and Brewer (2006) conceptualized this process as having two parts where casualties negatively effect perceptions of "war success," and then this perception in turn has a significant negative effect on the President's job approval rating.

5.2 Impact of Financial Costs on Public Support

As shown earlier, quantifying the actual and exact financial costs of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan is very difficult. However, what is of primary importance

is the degree of public awareness of the conflicts' financial costs; in effect, public awareness is important, but detailed knowledge is not. In his paper "Political Costs of War Re-Examined" (2010), Benny Keys conducted a regression analysis of the determinants of US Presidential approval ratings between 1948 and 2008, and found empirical support for the propositions that since the financial costs of conflicts are substantial and these costs are publicly observed and understood (in a general sense) by the voting public, then the financial cost of warfare has a significant negative impact on Presidential popularity (Geys 2010, 370). However, Geys also found that such an effect was much weaker in the cases of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, with a potential explanation being these conflicts are less expensive in terms of U.S total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than the other wars studied (Korean War, World War II and the Civil War) (Geys 2010, 362). In addition, the effects of increasing casualties become increasingly more negative when introducing accompanying negative financial variables (Geys 2010, 365). Geys also found that high unemployment also strongly mitigated the negative effects of war-induced spending on incumbent popularity (Geys 2010, 365). Of note, Geys' study lacked data on whether financial costs related to the different wars were covered by borrowing, taxation or printing money, since current taxation is more directly felt by voters and therefore more costly politically. Also, Geys observed that war spending may stimulate the domestic economy, and thus positively affect incumbent popularity indirectly (Geys 2010, 359).

However, an important aspect of the way that wealthy, industrialized democracies tend to wage war is that they tend to pursue capital and firepower intensive strategies (Caverly 2009, 119). However, those strategies are in direct opposition to the pillars of population-centric counterinsurgency, and actually predispose a military force towards failing to meet its counter- insurgency objectives. In fact, Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson test and find support for the hypothesis that mechanized militaries, which are by nature capital and firepower intensive, are less effective in COIN wars because of the increased collateral damage, poor human intelligence gathering capability and a general inability to adequately secure the population (Lyall and Wilson 2009). In turn, in

order to politically support these increased financial costs, democratic leaders often shift the burden of paying for a nation's defense onto the rich by substituting financial capital for military labor, thereby reducing the costs of conflict for the relatively less wealthy voter who is demographically more numerous (Caverly 2009, 120). Consequently, only the wealthiest voters primarily support the financial costs of an extended conflict. For example, in 2005 the fifth of the US population with the highest incomes paid 69 percent all US federal taxes, while the middle fifth paid only 9 percent (Harris 2007, 1-7). In turn, this unequal bearing of the financial burdens may encourage the average voter to continue to support, or at least mute the negative effects of financial costs on voter preferences, extended and costly war efforts.

5.3 Impact of Length of Conflict on Public Support

As described by Blainey (1973 quoted in Gartner and Segura 1998), opposition to any armed conflict will grow across the duration of any conflict. This duration-based political opposition, labeled as "war weariness", is due to a variety of factors, but has a generally increasing trend over time, despite the initial "rally-around-the-flag" effect that usually occurs at the initiation of conflict. However, in framing this discussion, it must first be established that major COIN operations (defined as having over 1000 intervening troops) are characteristically extended in nature. As shown earlier, COIN operations in Iraq lasted 112 months and COIN operations in Afghanistan stand at 143 months in length and counting. Also, COIN operations in Iraq did not end due having finally reached a successful end state, but were ended for primarily political considerations internal to the US; the operations could have been considerably longer if allowed to continue. These two specific conflicts aside, other research supports the proposition that similar operations are long in duration.

In their regression analysis of 106 developing countries from 1960 to 2002, Jeffery Pickering and Emizet Kisangani found that large scale foreign military interventions, which have over 100 intervening troops, both fail to leave a significant imprint on governing institutions, economic growth rates, or physical quality of life in developing democracies, but also last an average of just over 41
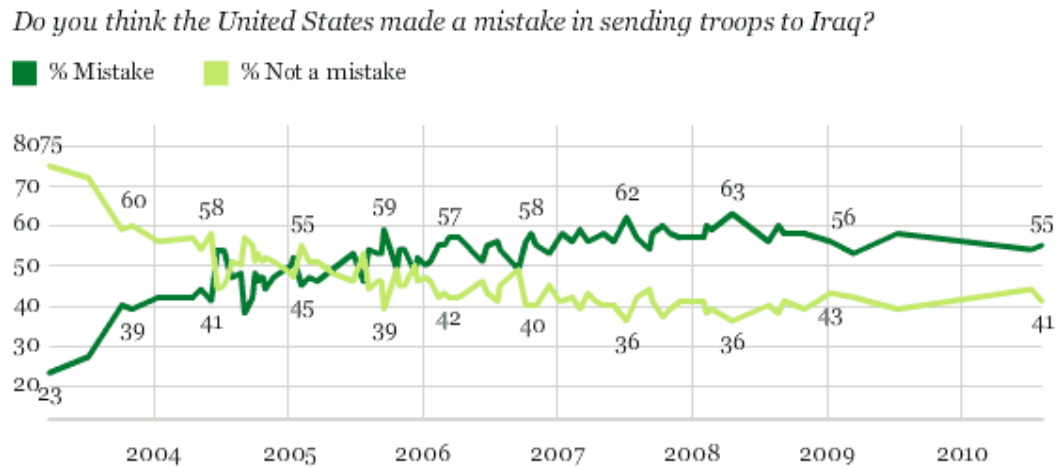
months during supportive interventions which aid the target government (Pickering and Kisangani 2006, 368). In testimony before the US House of Representatives, political scientist and commentator on international affairs James Fearon found that civil wars since 1945, of which insurgencies are one type, have an average duration of over 120 months (J. Fearon 2006). In a more unorthodox approach, another study modeled the insurgency in Iraq using a Darwinian approach which estimated insurgent mortality (insurgents killed or captured), carrying capacity of the Iraqi population, and recruitment rate, and found that if coalition forces did not alter the way they were fighting the insurgency in 2006, the insurgent population was predicted to continue for 20 years into the future (Johnson and Madin 2008, 178). In addition, another body of research provides evidence that the probability of being successful during a counterinsurgency declines precipitously if the targeted insurgents receive help from allies, which would also elongate the duration of the conflict (Sullivan 2007, 512).

Turning to the effects of conflict duration on public support in democratic nations, D. Scott Bennett and Allan Stam (1998) used an attrition approach to study the effects of democracy on war outcomes and how those effects vary over time. They assumed that war can be modeled as a case of two sided coercion, where each side has some willingness and ability to absorb costs, as well as a threshold at which a state will begin to seek an end to fighting (Bennett and Stam 1998, 346). Using a series of 14 independent variables to quantify and describe different types of wars, Bennett and Stam found that "punishment strategies", where the essential target is the opponent's resolve and not its military capability, and consequently is a good approximation for COIN operations, lead to the longest wars (Bennett and Stam 1998, 355). In addition, their results show that over time, democratic initiators of war become less likely to continue fighting, less likely to win, and much more likely to accept some type of draw. Specifically, democratic nations have a 32% chance of continuing to fight after the first year of a war. After a second year of war, this probability actually increases to 46%. However, from that point onward, the probability of continuing to fight drops to 29% in the fourth year, and 22% by the fifth year.

Also, the probability of a democracy winning the war drops dramatically over time, from 49% in the first year to 6% if a war continues over 5 years (Bennett and Stam 1998, 361). Drawing conclusions from this data, especially when comparing the results to data describing the behavior of nations with other forms of government, Bennett and Stam concluded that because costs in war rise over time, public support for war tends to decline. In turn, because democratic states are uniquely susceptible to declining public support, it follows that democratic nations become more likely to lose or settle for draws as time passes.
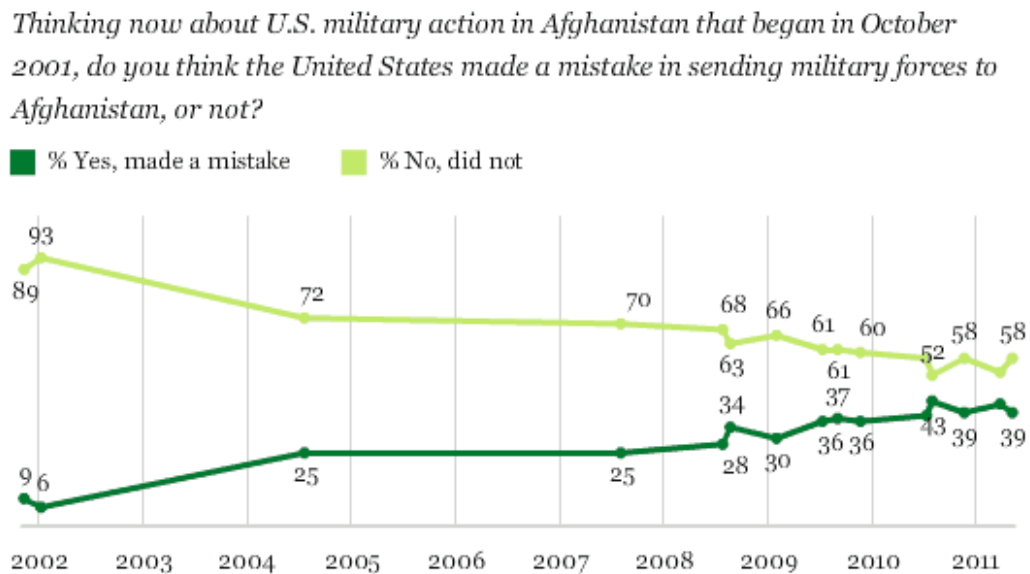
Focusing on the actual expressed approval ratings of Americans throughout the COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a series of polls conducted by Gallup throughout each conflict provide an accurate picture of public opinion. Of note, the initial public support for operations in Afghanistan was much higher at 89% than for operations in Iraq at 75%. Primarily, as described in the next section, this difference stems from the considerably different justifications provided by the US government for initiating each conflict. In Afghanistan, Al Qaida, the organization that was responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, used Afghanistan as its base of operations. Consequently, the American public viewed the operations in Afghanistan as countering a real, tangible, and dangerous threat, as well as having greater international legitimacy, and possessing discrete goals and a clearly defined end state. On the other hand, the American public viewed operations in Iraq as having much less compelling justification. As expressed by the US government, preventing Saddam Hussein from obtaining weapons of mass destruction and removing him from power were not particularly strong public rationales, as well as the operation was controversial even among allies and did not have strong international legitimacy.

Figure 5.2: US Public Support of COIN Operations in Iraq

Do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq?

■ % Mistake   ▇ % Not a mistake

Source: Gallup, 2012b

Figure 5.3: US Public Support of COIN Operations in Afghanistan

Thinking now about U.S. military action in Afghanistan that began in October 2001, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending military forces to Afghanistan, or not?

■ % Yes, made a mistake   ▇ % No, did not

Source: Gallup, 2012a

As predicted by the historical and theoretical studies, US public support for US military involvement decreased over time in both cases. In the case of Iraq, public support decreased from a high of 75% right at the initiation of hostilities in 2003 down to 41% in 2010. In the case of Afghanistan, while the data set includes fewer samples, US public support decreased from a high of 93% in 2002 down to roughly 58% in 2011.

5.4   The Context of Other Factors Impacting Public Support

The impacts of casualties, financial costs and duration on public support must be viewed in the context of other factors that either magnify or mute their effects. While research has found these factors to be the most direct imposed costs incurred by conflicts, their "traction" in terms of impacting public support are affected by a variety of other factors, of which the most important are rationales, degrees of mobilization, types of foreign policy goals sought, presence of allies, the definition of "success" and "rightness" during conflicts, elite consensus or disagreement, and elite cues.

In their study "Comparing Wars" (2008), authors Gray and Martin established a set of 20 categories for comparing and contrasting the different characteristics of armed conflicts.   In particular, their concepts of rationales for conflict and mobilization help describe factors that may increase or decrease the "traction" of the negative effects of the costs of armed conflict on democratic constituencies. Gray and Martin actually break up their category of rationales for war into three subsets of driving forces, triggering events, and public rationales.   "Driving forces" is concerned with social structures and associated belief structures, such as ideologies, that either weakly or strongly propel a society towards initiating armed conflict.   Examples in contemporary societies may include international rivalry, perceived fear of terrorist attack, nationalism, capitalism, or the influence of the military-industrial complex (Gray and Martin 2008, 5). "Triggering events" describe events that provoke or sustain a war, such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 or Pearl Harbor. "Public rationales" are the official, explicit reasons for waging war, and while sometimes congruent with underlying motivations and linked to driving forces, on other occasions the public discourse is staged as a pretext (Gray and Martin 2008, 6).   In general, public rationales usually connect the current conflict with higher values and ideas, such as defending against foreign aggression or extending freedom to other nations. "Mobilization" refers to the ways and degrees to which social institutions are oriented to the conflict in question. In wars that tend toward the "total war" end of the spectrum, such as WWII, every facet of social life is directed towards supporting the war. In other cases, wars can be carried out by

relatively few troops from only certain strati of society or certain geographical regions, and there is little apparent effect on daily life for the majority of citizens or the operation of political, economic and social systems (Gray and Martin 2008, 7).

Taken together, the relative strength or weakness of the factors helps to explain why during some conflicts the American people showed a greater willingness to support the human, financial and duration costs of a conflict. As a general illustration of these effects in Vietnam and WWII, Figure 5.4 outlines the general trends that each factor influences in terms of the American people's exhibited willingness to shoulder the costs of each particular conflict.

Figure 5.4: General Trends of Factors which Affect "Traction" of Costs of War towards Public Opinion in WWII and Vietnam

Conflict	World War II	Vietnam
Driving Forces	Balance of Power (Realism) (strong)	Cold War Rivalry (Realism) (strong)
Triggering Events	Pearl Harbor (strong)	Gulf of Tonkin Incident (weak)
Public Rationales	Fighting Germany's and Japan's Aggression (strong)	Preventing "Domino Effect" (weak)
Mobilization	High	Low
American willingness to shoulder costs?	High	Low

Source: Gray and Martin 2008

While there is wide scholarly acceptance that multiple factors are at work which impact how fast or slow public support declines for a given conflict or mission, different scholars prioritize different factors in terms of their relative impacts. Bruce Jentleson argued that the public bases its casualty tolerance on the principle policy objective given for a military mission, and that the public will support goals, which he describes as being related to "foreign policy restraint" (using force to coerce an adversary attacking the US or its allies) as being important and worth substantial sacrifice in terms of cost (Jentleson 1992, 53). However, other missions more closely related to counterinsurgency such as

"humanitarian intervention" and the public will only support "internal political change" if the costs are low.

Jentleson explained the differences in demonstrated public support by describing how the two general groupings of goals differ dramatically. First, foreign policy restraint objectives tend to lead more easily to strategies that are more military than political, where internal political change goals tend to involve objectives that are much more difficult to translate into an operational military plan with discrete goals and clearly defined desired end states. Second, there is a definite difference in the claims of international legitimacy between the two types of goals, as found in the international system's set of roles and norms (Jentleson 1992, 53). Finally, and most importantly for our discussion, foreign policy restraint objectives carry a greater degree of political legitimacy among the voters in a democracy, as they involve threats to shared basic values which translates into more consensual public responses; the threat being fought is more clear and present. On the other hand, internal political change objectives (such as COIN operations) often involve more nebulous threats based on ideology, which allow for legitimate alternative positions on values and lead to more divisive politics (Jentleson 1992, 54). Another scholar, Steven Kull, asserted that public support for a military conflict will be greater if the public perceives that other countries support the mission and the US does not have to bear all of the costs (Kull, Destler and Ramsay, 1997 as referenced in Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 15).

In addition, the role of definition of "rightness" of a conflict and how to define "success" have been shown to influence American public opinion. Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler (2005) argued that the American public will tolerate large numbers of US combat deaths under certain circumstances. They operated from the assumption that casualties do not by themselves drive public attitudes towards the Iraq war (in the case of their study) and increased casualties do not always lead to a reduction in public support. Instead, they conceptualized each individual in the public lying somewhere on a continuum of casualty sensitivity ranging from minimally sensitive, who view casualties as a necessary cost of war, and maximally sensitive, where almost any casualties will severely affect their

support for a military mission (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 10). Through a close examination of polling data from the beginning of the Iraq war through the 2004 US general election, they found evidence that the US public's tolerance for the human costs of war is shaped primarily by two crucial attitudes: beliefs about the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the war, and beliefs about the odds of success (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 8). The "rightness" of war refers to both the legitimacy of the causes for initiating the conflict (jus ad bellum), as well as the moral legitimacy of the actual conduct of the war (jus in bello). The "odds of success" is the probability that the US will achieve its stated aims. As shown in Figure 5.5, "expectations of success" was found to be the most critical factor. Specifically, casualty tolerance (shown on the vertical scale) does not increase with stronger belief in the "rightness" of the mission as long as expected success is "not likely at all". However, if expected success is anywhere from "not very likely" to "very likely," then increasing "rightness" of the war leads to greater casualty tolerance.

Figure 5.5: Comparison of "Rightness of War" and "Expected Success" on Casualty Tolerance
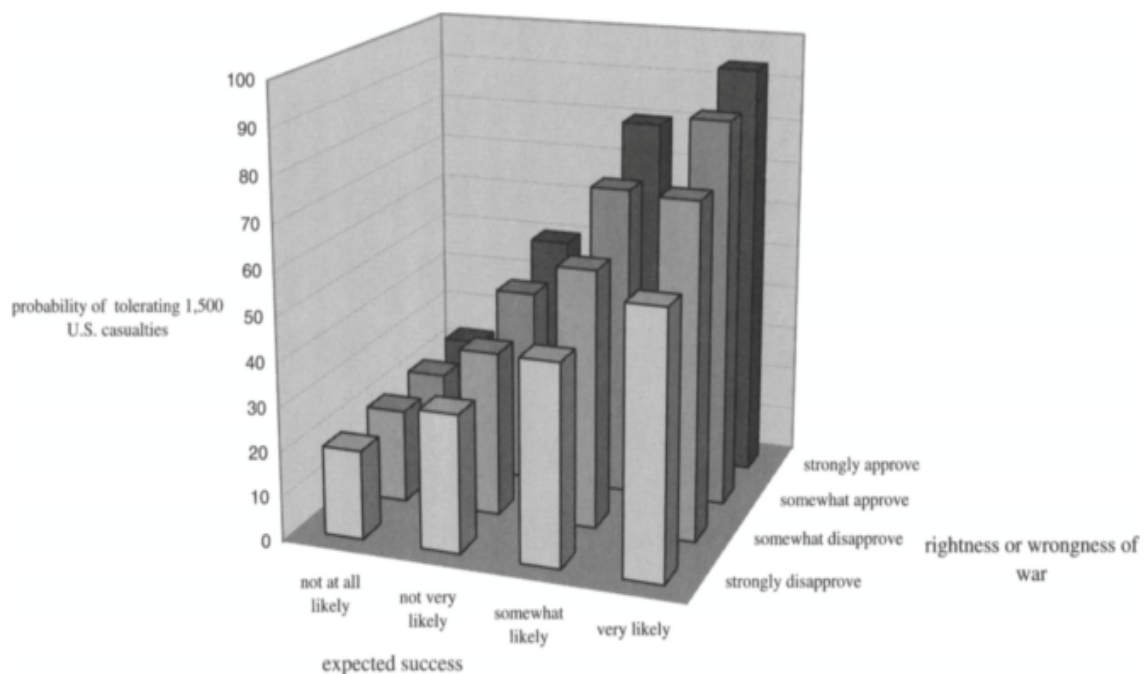
Source: Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 35

Quantifying their results, they found that in a situation where the public has low expectations of success, the approval of the president's handling of the Iraq war

dropped 3% and his overall approval rate dropped 1% for every additional 100 casualties (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 23). However, in an environment with high expectations of success, the public's responsiveness to casualties was reduced. Other studies corroborate these results. In fact, in a comprehensive analysis of American public opinion trends between 1981 and 2004, Richard Eichenberg found that "successful military operations enjoy high support even when the objective is unpopular and casualties are suffered." (Eichenberg 2005, 147)

In addition, a critical point to examine is that elite consensus or disagreement is key factor in the formulation of a state's foreign policy decisions, and has a considerable impact on public opinion in democracies. In effect, elites are important in that "states do not make policy; governments through their leaders do." (Schweller 2004, 170) Building on this idea, Voeten and Brewer (2006) assert elite discourse shaped public support for the war in Iraq to a greater extent than events or casualty reports. Specifically, the authors asked the question of "how does a public judge a leader during wartime when the outcome of that war is yet unclear?" and found that the connection between the news from the war and performance of the president is often ambiguous, which provides room for elite discourse to shape the public's support for the conflict and the president's handing of the conflict (Voeten and Brewer 2006, 810). Analyzing weekly public opinion polls during the war in Iraq in order to correlate the results to events occurring in the war, the authors found that public perceptions about the war's success were more responsive to casualties and events than were beliefs about the war's merits (Voeten and Brewer 2006, 821). In turn, this suggests that support for the war may have been influenced to a greater degree by shifts in the elite discourse that were relatively unconstrained by the actual events and casualties of the war. In the end, their two main findings were first, events and casualties accounted for considerable variation in perceptions of a war's success but did not explain as much variation in support for the war and the president, and second, shifts in war support accounted for shifts in Presidential approval ratings better than did shifts in perceptions of the

war's success or changes in the president's approval ratings for handling the war (Voeten and Brewer 2006, 827).

As a corollary to this "elite cue theory," Berinsky (2007) asserts that during wars large segments of the public possess minimal actual knowledge of the most basic aspects of the conflicts, and consequently while individual-level knowledge of the most basic facts of the war is weak, the power of elite cues is not (Berinsky 2007, 994). In turn, when elites come to a consensus about a certain situation, the public gives them considerable latitude to initiate and sustain conflict. However, when elite political actors take divergent stands on the perceived wisdom of a military operation or initiation of war, the public divides as well (Berinsky 2007, 975). In his analysis of the effects of elite cues during the Iraq war and WWII, Berinsky found that casualty levels do not necessarily define the flow of elite discourse, and the flow of elite agreement or disagreement play a critical role in shaping popular opinion in regards to participation in an armed conflict (Berinsky 2007, 994). Similarly, Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler (2005, 37) found that the explanatory variable of "perceived elite consensus" during the Iraq war led to a 14% increase in the probability that the American public would tolerate at least 1,500 US military deaths, as shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Addition Sources of Casualty Tolerance during Operations in Iraq in October 2004

Explanatory Variable	Change in Explanatory Variable	Change in Probability of Tolerating At Least 1,500 U.S. Military Deaths
Perceived elite consensus	No to yes	+14%
Oppose force without UN approval	No to yes	−6%
Terror is PPO of Iraq war	"Distraction" to "central front"	+10%
Gender	Male to female	−5%
Race	White to nonwhite	−16%
Age	18–29 to 60+ years old	+8%
Education level	No high school to college degree	+18%
Party identification	Strong Republican to strong Democrat	−11%

Source: Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2005, 37.

Finally, despite all of the factors described above, no strict assumptions can be made about how exactly, in a quantifiable and definable way, casualties impact public support. For example, US casualties during WWII were almost four times as high as in Vietnam, but public support remained high. In Vietnam, during the first two and a half years of war, public support remained high despite almost 16,000 US combat deaths (Jentleson 1992, 52). However, both general negative trends and the factors which may increase or decrease the traction of casualties on American public opinion have been identified above and give a general idea of how quickly public opinion in a democracy decreases over time during times of protracted war, such as during COIN operations. Figure 5.7 summarizes those factors below.

Figure 5.7: Summary of Factors Affecting Public Willingness to Support Costs of War

Factor	Effect (Will public support costs of war?)	Source
Foreign Policy Objective - Restraint	Public more likely	Jentleson 1992
Foreign Policy Objective - Internal Political Change	Public will only support if costs are low	Jentleson 1992
Presence of Reliable Allies during Conflict	Public more likely	Kull, Destler and Ramsay, 1997
Perception of "Rightness" of Conflict	Public more likely	Gelpi Feaver and Reifler 2005
Perception of "Wrongness" of Conflict	Public less likely	Gelpi Feaver and Reifler 2005
Perception of Increasing Success	Public much more likely	Gelpi Feaver and Reifler 2005
Perception of Decreasing Success	Public much less likely	Gelpi Feaver and Reifler 2005
Elite Consensus in Support of Conflict	Public much more likely	Schweller 2004
Elite Disagreement over Conflict	Public much less likely	Schweller 2004
Degree of Elite Cues in Support of Conflict	Public much more likely	Berinsky 2007

6   POPULATION-CENTRIC COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

In December 2006, the Headquarters Department of the US Army released Field Manual 3-24 titled "Counterinsurgency" which dictates the US military's doctrine for counterinsurgency operations. While a stand-alone document, in encapsulates the cumulative experience and knowledge in the US military about counterinsurgency operations and draws extensively from counterinsurgency experts David Galula's "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" and Sir Robert Thompson's "Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam." As acknowledged in the preface, the manual seeks to establish fundamental principles, and by definition, is broad in scope. In addition, the primary audience for the manual is leaders and planners at the battalion level and above, which places the manual squarely in the tactical and operational realms of counterinsurgency operations. Operating from these assumptions, it logically steps through a series of eight chapters and five appendixes which provide an overview of insurgency and counterinsurgency, aspects of integrating civilian and military activities to create unity of effort, intelligence gathering during COIN operations, designing COIN campaigns and operations, executing COIN operations, developing host-nation security forces, leadership and ethics during COIN operations, and sustainment.

The manual specifies that in order for counterinsurgent forces to achieve victory, the host nation population must be viewed as the center of gravity: "the protection, welfare, and support of the people are vital to success" (Army 2006, 1-27) and "because of the ease of sowing disorder, it is usually not enough for counterinsurgents to get 51 percent popular support; a solid majority is often essential." (Army 2006, 1-20) Consequently, modern US counterinsurgency doctrine is consistently described as "population-centric." In essence, using Afghanistan as an example, counterinsurgency doctrine is focused on finding ways to "protect the population, develop the capabilities of Afghan security forces, and strengthen the legitimacy of the government in Kabul by improving its capacity to provide security and other essential services to the population." (Yingling 2011)

Importantly, population-centric counterinsurgency is not the only kind of counterinsurgency strategy; it is only one choice among a wide selection of strategies. Several others, such as massive deportation (used by Stalin against the Chechens starting in 1944), ruthless suppression (used by the USSR against the Afghan population during its invasion), and "in-migration" (used by the Chinese government against the Uyghur people by importing a multitude of ethnic Han Chinese settlers) have been used in the past (Hammes 2012, 51). However, counterinsurgency strategy that focuses on the population has been used numerous times by democracies, such as the United Kingdom in Malaya, Kenya, Oman, Northern Ireland and Aden, and the US in the Philippines, Vietnam, El Salvador, Colombia, Iraq and Afghanistan. In particular, the Army's manual draws most of its best practices from the COIN operations by the British in Malaya and Northern Ireland, and the French in Algeria (Hammes 2012, 51). In addition, not all COIN efforts are of the scale and intensity of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In other cases, US support has been limited and focused on only advising security forces or providing fire support or sustainment. The longstanding US support to the Philippines is an example of such limited support (Army 2006, 5-25). Importantly, history has shown that "victories" in COIN have primarily come from governments resorting to atrocities (non population-centric COIN) or negotiating an end to the conflict, which doesn't address the root causes of the conflict.

Furthermore, the complex nature of COIN operations themselves makes both COIN strategy hard to implement and progress difficult to both measure and achieve because the attitudes and support of the people are by nature constantly changing, hard to ascertain across language and cultural barriers, and subject to the influence of a multitude of hard-to-define factors. Consequently, the manual spends considerable time specifying how to quantify progress, as well as what metrics would provide the most accuracy and useful information. Specifically, the manual recommends the use of measures of effectiveness which may include level of violence, number of dislocated civilians, presence and activity of small and medium sized businesses, participation in elections, tax revenue, level of

agricultural activity and the presence or absence of associations (Army 2006, 5-28).

In terms of casualties and length of commitment, one of the manual's "paradoxes of counterinsurgency operations" is that the "ultimate success in COIN is gained by protecting the populace, not the COIN force" and "the more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk must be accepted." (Army 2006, 1-27) The manual consistently reaffirms that the primary objective of any COIN operation is to promote the development of effective governance by a legitimate host-nation government. Consequently, COIN operations always demand considerable expenditures of time and resources, as well as consistent and long-term public support in the US:

> At the strategic level, gaining and maintaining US public support for a protracted deployment is critical. Only the most senior military officers are involved in this process at all. It is properly a political activity. However, military leaders typically take care to ensure that their actions and statements are forthright. They also ensure that the conduct of operations neither makes it harder for elected leaders to maintain public support nor undermines public confidence. (Army 2006, 1-24)

Clearly, the manual both acknowledges and expects that population-centric COIN operations will be long, costly and difficult to sustain politically.

6.1   Force Requirements for Population-Centric Counterinsurgency

In terms of force requirements, a RAND (Research and Development Corporation) study found that ratio of personnel to population required for nation building has stayed roughly stable at 20 per 1,000 since the end of World War II.35 (Quinlivan 2003). Secretary McNamara, in a memo to President Johnson, referred to a 10-to-1 government-guerilla formula (Caverly 2009, 149). Another notable expert in population-centric counterinsurgency warfare, Paul Yingling asserted that a fully resourced counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan would have required about 140,000 troops (Yingling 2011). Stemming from historical experience and analysis, the US Army's counterinsurgency field manual states that "no force level guarantees victory for either side...the conditions of the operational environment and the approaches

insurgents use vary too widely. A better force requirement gauge is troop density, the ratio of security forces (including the host nation's military and police forces as well as foreign counterinsurgents) to inhabitants…most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counterinsurgents for every 1000 residents in an AO [area of operations]." (Army 2006, 1-13)

More specifically, as a clarification of historical force requirements during counterinsurgency campaigns, Steven Goode (2009) created a threshold model based on an analysis of 42 historical cases of counterinsurgency. His model is based on three assumptions: first, that in conflicts where the counterinsurgency forces achieved and maintained the required "threshold" of force ratio, then the violence should drop and stay at a relatively low level; second, if the counterinsurgent forces never achieve the force threshold, violence should increase until the insurgents win a military victory; third, if the counterinsurgent forces are entirely comprised of persons from outside the host nation, the counterinsurgency campaign will fail (Goode 2009, 53). With those assumptions in mind, his model reflected their validity in 17 of 19 cases, which is an accuracy of 89 percent. Applying his method to several conflicts in order to put the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in perspective, and taking both relative violence levels (expressed as KIA [killed in action] per million of the population) and varied foreign versus local counterinsurgent force levels (expressed as 100%, 65% and 10% ratios), he found that in Iraq a ratio of 15 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents precipitated a reduction in violence, and predicted that in Afghanistan a ratio of 11 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents would be required to arrest the violence level in 2008.

Figure 6.1: Comparison of Counterinsurgent Force Requirements

Conflict	Year	KIA per Million Population	Forces per 1,000 Population Required to Reduce Violence		
			100% Local	65% Local Forces	10% Local Forces
Colombian Civil War	2002	28	8	9	18
Afghanistan	2008	50	10	11	22
Malayan Emergency	1951	67	11	12	25
Iraq	2006	120	13	15	31
Algerian War	1958	298	18	21	45
Contras in Nicaragua	1987	460	21	25	55

Source: Goode 2009, 54

Using these refined numbers as a guide, peak U.S troop strength for Iraq in 2006 that resulted in reductions in violence was 171,000 troops (assuming 65% of total counterinsurgents were local forces and allies provided 13% of required forces) and in consequently in Afghanistan would need to be 106,000 troops (also assuming 65% of total counterinsurgents were local forces, but that allies provided 30% of required forces) (Livingston and O'Hanlon 2012, 5). Of course, simply matching or exceeding the required troop to insurgent ratio is not the answer; Russian troops and police have been unable to defeat rebels in Chechnya despite outnumbering them by more than 50 to 1 (Kramer 2004). However, for my purposes of providing a reasonable estimate of forces required for any future counterinsurgency operations, these numbers suffice.

6.2   Instability Scale

In addition, the starting instability state of a society and population is always unique. Also, the progress achieved by a COIN campaign has never, from historical experience, resulted in a completely stable host nation government. On the contrary, they have usually achieved to limited degrees the overarching goal of increasing host-nation government legitimacy, capability and reach. When compared to several other countries and regions in the world today, both Afghanistan (to a lesser degree) and Iraq (to a greater degree) before the

initiation of conflict had natural resources, foreign investment, a functioning central government with limited capabilities, some sort of education system, infrastructure and other advantages. Consequently, future counter insurgency campaigns could be even costlier and longer in duration as the host country could be even more backward, undeveloped, violent and unstable. In order to specify a little more concretely the level of increase in stability that I will refer to as a "successful" counterinsurgency campaign, I will refer to the "instability scale" provided by Markus Gauster (2008, 32-33). More specifically, from the general initial conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, progress in a counterinsurgency campaign can be quantified as increasing the majority of geographic, political and demographic areas from an instability level of 7 ('transition from post-conflict into war zone') to a level of at least 4 ('calm, but not stable'), which is most similar to the initial existing conditions in the majority of areas in Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, in Figure 6.2 below, which applies Gauster's instability definitions to Afghanistan in 2008, notice how the majority of Afghan provinces (25 of 30) lie somewhere between instability level 7 and level 4.

Figure 6.2: Instability Scale

Level	Characteristics	Province
10	'Open War' — Evacuation of PRT personnel	
9	'War Zone' (A) — Situation similar to civil war; daily guerrilla attacks on local civilians, police and internationals; combat operations of OEF/ISAF against MOF on a daily basis; provision of humanitarian aid impossible	Helmand, Kandahar
8	'War Zone' (B) — Civil war tendencies; systematic attacks on local civilians, local police and internationals; increased combat operations of ISAF and OEF against MOF; political motivated violence; massive alienation between local population and GoA; security in the PRT complex only guaranteed by outside support; ordinary PRT-patrolling not possible; population in rural areas depends on the opium crop; PRT or NGO induced development cooperation not feasible	Uruzgan, Zabul, Khowst
7	'Transition from Post-Conflict into War Zone' — Areas of high risk; increased attacks on local officials, police stations, international forces including PRTs; population consult Taliban Shuras for legal advice; reconstruction projects cannot be carried out without protection element; very few NGOs operating; ordinary PRT-patrols ("showing the flag") with light armament very restricted	Kunar, Paktya, Paktika, Ghazni, Nuristan
6	'Instability' — Targeted violence and threats of violence against civilians and members of the military; illegal road blocks; danger of hijackings; cross-country trips without a convoy very dangerous; some NGOs operating; realization of aid projects very difficult; attacks on PRTs e.g. during violent demonstrations	Nangarhar, Laghman, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Badghis, Wardak
5	'Not Calm and Not Stable' — Scattered attacks and threats of violence against government representatives and international forces; attacks on election candidates; increase of violent crimes; organized anti-government demonstrations can turn violent; movement only advisable in convoy; Roadside Bombs and suicide attacks possible	Parwan, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Herat, Balkh
4	'Calm, but Not Stable' — Hidden threats against, and intimidation of, local population; anti-GoA and anti-Western propaganda; cultivation of opium regarded as a generally tolerated source of income for the population; massive corruption	Bamyan, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pol, Samangan, Baghlan, Takhar
3	'Calm' — Insufficient border control leads to increasing tendency towards violent crimes in connection with illegal trade (drugs, weapons, human trafficking)	Nimruz
2	'Calm and Stable' — Minor violent crime; government controls most of the borders and key areas; civilian administration works; development projects can be realized without security problems	
1	'Overall Stability' — Governmental control of the whole area; increase of legal activities	

Source: Gauster 2008, 32-33.

7 THE NEXT POPULATION-CENTRIC COIN OPERATION

7.1 Costs and Public Support Erosion

Stemming from insights provided by counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as modeling, I estimated the approximate human and financial costs, as well as the duration of the next counterinsurgency. Based on the theoretical, analytical and historical foundation established earlier and using the same set of conservative assumptions, Figure 7.1 outlines the general predictions for a population-counterinsurgency campaign potentially undertaken in a hypothetical country "X" that is similar in size and population to Syria.

Figure 7.1: Costs of Counterinsurgency Operations in Hypothetical Country X

Cost	Metric	Sources
Military Deaths	2143	Extrapolated from DoD 2013
Financial Costs	$1.17 - $1.46 trillion	Extrapolated from Watson Inst 2012
Duration	127 months	Average of truncated Iraq/Afghan conflicts
Peak Troops Required to Reduce Violence	118,287	Extrapolated from Goode 2009

The extrapolations are based on the following assumptions:

Military Deaths – Assumes a level of violence and instability equal to the average of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts (expressed in terms of US military soldiers killed in comparison to Iraqi and Afghan total populations as given by DoD (2013)) and scaled to Syria's estimated 2012 population of 22,530,746 (Central Intelligence Agency 2013).

Financial Costs – Assumes a cost that is equal to the average of the costs of the Iraqi and Afghan operations in terms of cost per individual of host nation population (given by Watson Institute 2012) and scaled to Syria's estimated 2012 population. Also includes the total "life cycle" costs of the war (future costs) as opposed to only the costs incurred during the actual operation.

Duration – Average of truncated (which denotes that the operations in Iraq in Afghanistan were (or will be) terminated for political reasons before a successful end-state was achieved) Iraqi and Afghan conflicts expressed in months.

Peak Troops Required – Assumes a level of violence and instability equal to the average of conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan (13 KIA per million of population), that 65% of total counterinsurgents are local forces and allies provide 13% of required forces (similar to the coalition in Iraq). In addition, the statistic denotes the maximum yearly troops ("threshold of force ratio") required to stem the flow of violence based on Goode's model (2009, 54).

Syria provides a good frame of reference to scale the hypothetical country "X" after due to its relative size and population, political importance, location in a political and economic center of gravity (the Middle Eastern petroleum producing countries) and its notoriety as the focus of recent calls for international military intervention. However, these cost extrapolations are valid for other potential cases that are similar in size to Syria, as well as conform to the governing assumptions mentioned above. Other countries that would also be suitable for comparison include Mali, Somalia or Yemen. As predicted by experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and acknowledged by the US Army's Counterinsurgency manual, the conflict would most likely be long, costly, have relatively ill-defined goals (at least from the perspective of the public), not involve an existential, geographically proximate or immediate threat, and occur at a considerable distance from the continental US. It is important to note that this snapshot only describes the costs that have the most impact on domestic democratic constituencies, and the costs listed were developed with conservative assumptions.   Examples of very important costs that are not listed include:

- Troops wounded
- Civilians killed
- Allied military deaths, US civilian contractor deaths, host nation security forces deaths, numbers of refugees, displaced persons, social

chaos, breakdown of infrastructure, disruptions of trade, loss of cultural heritage, economic impacts, environmental damage, etc.

In order to help clarify the predictions graphically, Figure 7.2 displays the best and worse case scenarios for military deaths. The best-case scenario is based on similar levels of violence as occurred in Afghanistan (2,162 US military killed), and the worst-case scenario is based on similar levels of violence as occurred in Iraq (4,457 US military killed). Also, the curves were to account for initial invasion deaths and peak violence deaths (at 72 months into the conflict).

Figure 7.2 Best and Worst Case Military Deaths versus Duration of Conflict
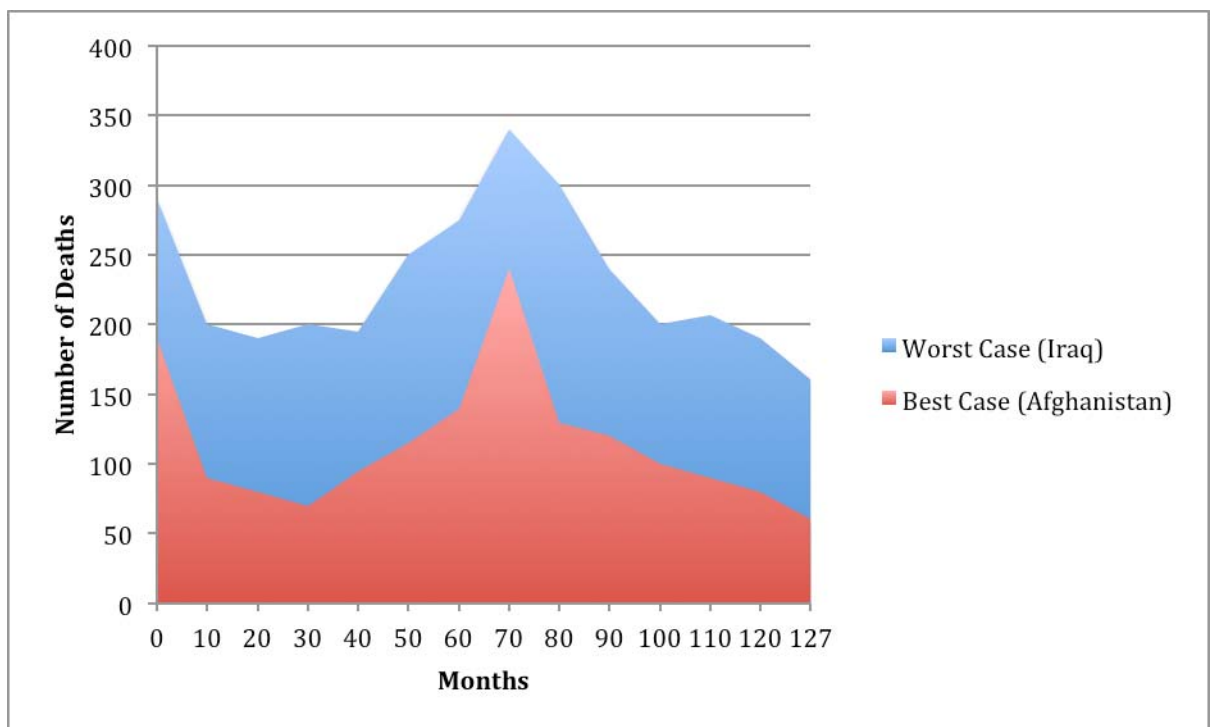

In addition, Figure 7.3 displays the best and worse case scenarios for financial costs, where the best case is the lower bounding cost ($1.17 trillion) and the worst case is the upper bounding cost ($1.46 trillion).

Figure 7.3 Best and Worst Case Financial Costs
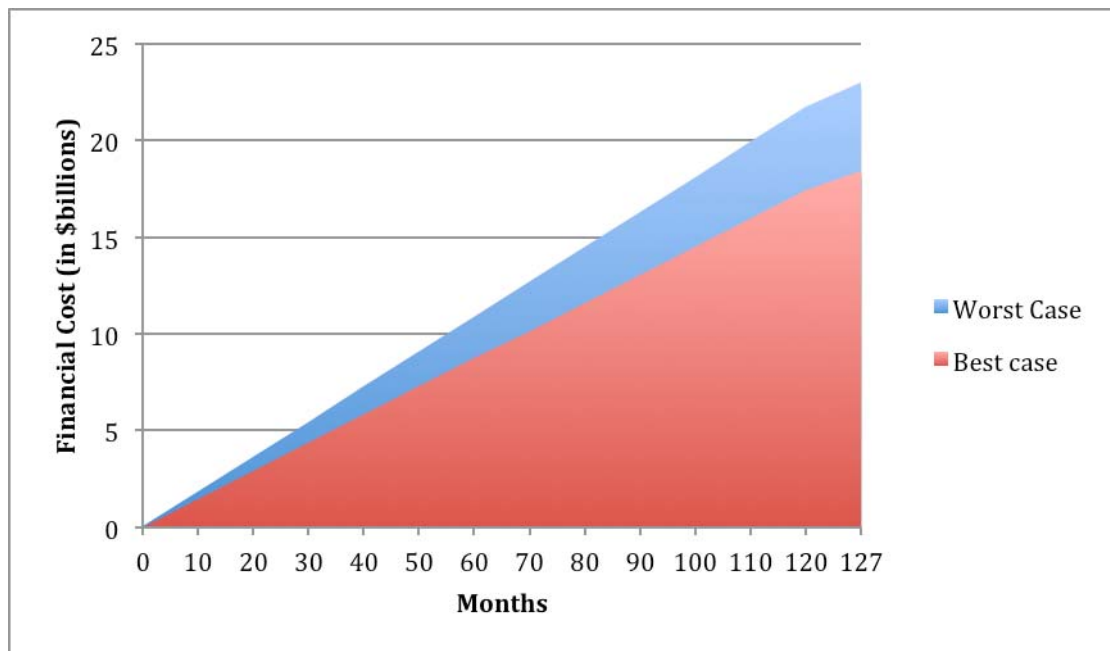
Finally, using US public support of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as best (Afghanistan) and worst (Iraq) cases, I can predict the support for counterinsurgency operations in the future for the first six years of the conflict in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 US Public Support of COIN Operations in the Future
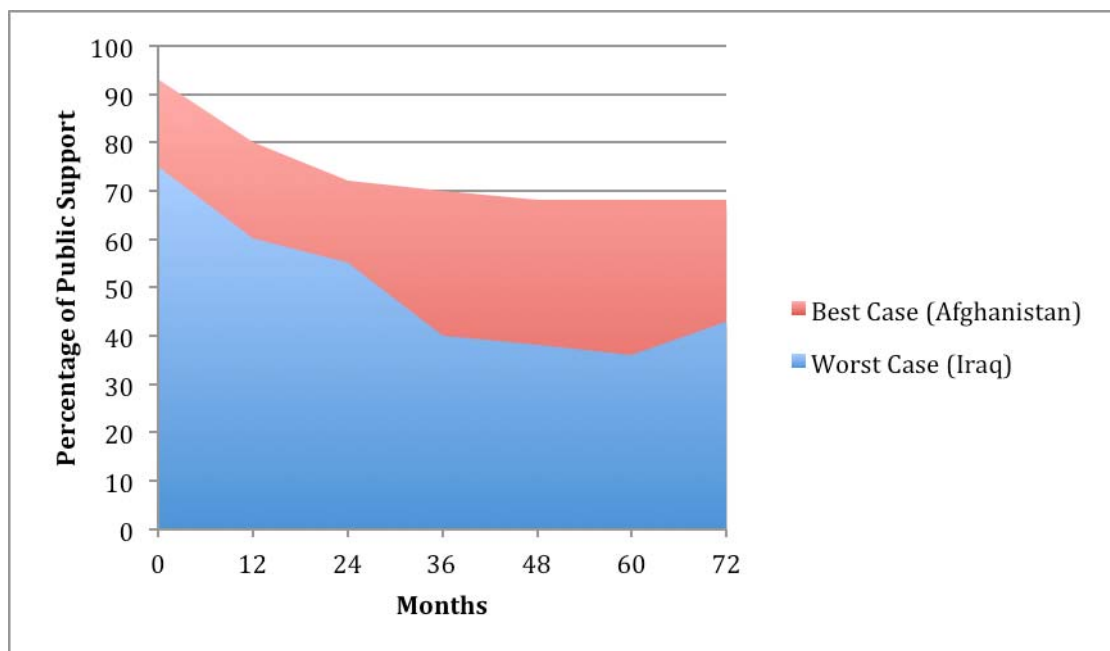
Using the insurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan as case studies and predicting how these costs would impact domestic political support, let's first examine the predicted impact of casualties on public support. First, support would decrease as cumulative national casualties increase towards the 2143 military deaths predicted in Syria, especially by losses in the early stages of the COIN operation. Specifically, the change in public opinion as expressed by voting the incumbent out of office would increase by 8% for substantive increases (every order or magnitude) in war participation rate (battle deaths per 10,000 population). If casualties occurred in smaller states where important political races were occurring, their effects would be amplified by being "temporally proximate," and if the local media effectively transformed the abstract costs of a "dead soldier" into a loss that is much more meaningful, local and tangible, then the chances significantly increase that the incumbents who support the conflict would be voted out of office. While the contextuality of the casualties would be decreased by factors such as an all-volunteer military force or elite consensus, other factors such as high marginal casualty figures and the level of initial support (which are historically relatively low for COIN operations) would amplify public dissatisfaction.

Financially, since the predicted financial costs of a counterinsurgency campaign in Syria would be substantial at $1.17-$1.46 trillion, as well as publicly observed and understood, they would have a significant negative impact on Presidential popularity. Extrapolating that cost over the predicted length of the counterinsurgency effort (127 months or roughly 10.5 years), the government would incur between $111 and $139 billion annually in war-related costs. If these costs were financed primarily by borrowing or printing money, the direct costs felt by the average taxpayer would be lessened, but if taxes were increased to cover the costs on a yearly basis, then the financial costs would immediately and negatively impact voter support. In addition, the increasingly negative financial costs would increase the negative effects of increasing casualties on public opinion. However, if unemployment was high, then these effects would be muted to a certain extent and war spending may also stimulate the domestic economy to a certain degree. Another mitigating effect against negative public

opinion trends is the how the financial burdens would primarily be shouldered by only the wealthiest voters, which may encourage average voters to continue to support an extended and costly counterinsurgency effort.

In terms of duration, as the predicted 127 month long counterinsurgency effort continued, despite the initial "rally-around-the-flag" effect at the initiation of the operation, public opposition to the operation would generally increase over time. If initial support for the counterinsurgency operation in Syria started between 75-93% (similar to the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq), then the level of support would steadily erode to roughly 41-58% after 7 to 8 years of conflict. In addition, the chances of the US continuing to fight, according to Bennett and Stam's research (1998), would decrease to 22% by the fifth year of the conflict, and the probability of the US "winning" would drop to 6% as the war continues over five years.

The impact of all of these costs would be amplified by the other previously discussed factors that affect public support. Weak driving forces, indecisive triggering events, fairly dispassionate public rationales, low societal mobilization, pursuit of "internal political change" goals associated with population-centric COIN operations, lack of discreet goals, reduced international legitimacy, lack of direct and clear threats to domestic security, lack of credible allies contributing to the counterinsurgency effort, unclear definition of the mission's "rightness" in public discourse, low public expectations of success stemming from historical precedents, disagreement by political elites on the merits of the counterinsurgency goals, or even a low degree of elite cues in support of the conflict would all catalyze the public to be less likely or even much less likely to bear the costs of the war.

Taken as a whole, a counterinsurgency effort in Syria or any other nation would most likely face steadily eroding public support. The American public, as a group of rational actors, would be constantly assessing the mounting human, financial and duration costs of war provided by a free and open media, and comparing those costs with the benefits gained by achieving the foreign policy goals associated with a successful counterinsurgency campaign. Unfortunately, while

actually quantifying that erosion in public support is impossible from the research available, the research does clearly indicate that the overall trend would be negative with the severity of that negative trend depending on the multitude of factors discussed.

7.2   Public Opinion and Presidential Foreign Policy Decisions

In the American system of government, as in the case of all democracies, there are multiple branches of government among which power, resources and political influence is split. In the case of the initiation of military operations, the majority of the power is split between the President and Congress. However, no official plays a greater role in the initiation, conduct and sustainment of war than the President (Karol and Miguel 2007, 633). The President is the chief executive and commander in chief of the armed forces, and it is his responsibility to formulate and execute foreign policy, including initiating war. The Congress controls the financial resources of the government and also has the formal power to declare war on another nation. Since 1945 a certain degree of Congress's war-making authority has been eroded in favor of the President. Consequently, the President has been gaining greater "agenda control," where he or she has greater ability to limit legislative input into conflict decisions (Auerswald 1999, 474). For example, WWII was the last time that Congress formally declared war, while in the meantime the US has participated in nine major armed conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the first Iraq war, Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, which were all initiated by the President using his constitutionally-mandated powers. However, in the case of long-term military operations, Congressional support and approval is critical as they have the ability to extend or withhold resources. In the context of that arrangement, I will focus on the impact of public opinion on Presidential foreign policy decision-making.

While it appears that public opinion concretely influences Presidential decision-making, how this happens in concrete terms is less clear. The base assumption is that executive policies depend on maintaining the support of the domestic constituencies to which the leader is accountable. In addition, most research on "audience cost" assumes that executives have a strictly ordered hierarchy of

preferences, valuing national survival over tenure in office, but office tenure over any one-policy alternative (Auerswald 1999, 471). However, executives are elected to carry out polices and programs that they deem as right for the nation, regardless of the ups and downs of public opinion polls. Even when public support is waning, an executive may choose to continue his present course of action while attempting to convince the public to again follow his leadership (Lorell and Kelley 1985, 28). In addition, when a public does disapprove of a executive's policy, it is difficult to determine if the public would prefer an immediate withdrawal, or an escalation in hopes of reaching a rapid conclusion. For example, Lorell and Kelley (1985, 29) found that until the year 1967 during the Vietnam War, the public overwhelmingly preferred a significant escalation to quickly resolve the conflict, while after 1967 the majority favored de-escalation and withdrawal. In addition, majoritarian political systems, such as in the United States, usually reduce the influence that the minority opposed to a war can exert when compared to proportional representation political systems, such as the Parliamentarian system in the United Kingdom (Auerswald 1999).

Accountability of the government in general, and the President in particular, to the American people comes primarily in two forms; accountability during elections and accountability in the absence of an election. The most obvious threat to a political elite's time in office is losing power during an election, especially if a national election is in the immediate future. While the public may not be particularly well informed or knowledgeable of the basic facts of some foreign policy decisions, they are certainly able to ascertain success and failure, apply rational decision-making based on costs versus benefits, and punish governments or political parties for failure or stalemate (Auerswald 1999, 473). For national politicians, often a policy's popularity and its immediate effect on poll ratings matter less than how many votes the particular policy will win (or lose) them during the next election (Karol and Miguel 2007, 634). Similarly, Voeten and Brewer (2006, 827) found that changes in public support for a conflict has immediate and considerable consequences for a US President. Unfortunately for my research, no President has run for reelection during a controversial war that was initiated on his watch for more than a century.

However, history offers several examples of Presidents who were voted out of office primarily due to public opinion about conflicts that they were too slow in extracting American military forces from. The fates of US Presidents Truman's and Lyndon Johnson's political parties in 1952 and 1968 as punishment for stalemates during the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts serve as historical examples of electoral accountability. For comparison with other forms of government, research has found that following military defeat, democratic leaders lose power even faster than do autocratic leaders (Reiter and Stam 2003, 171).

However, if the people punish a President by voting him or her out of office, does that automatically mean that the new President will terminate the nation's involvement in a particular conflict? While not necessarily, the two historical examples I mentioned above support that assertion. President Truman's successor, President Eisenhower, following his election in 1952, within a month had traveled to Korea to learn what might be done to end the conflict and limit the US's role. Shortly following, in July 1953, an armistice was signed between the United Nations and North Korea with heavy US support and pressure. President Johnson's successor President Nixon instituted a policy of "Vietnamization" early in his administration, which was the beginning of troop withdrawals and reduction of support to the South Vietnamese. Announcing this new policy, Nixon said "I am tonight announcing plans for the withdrawal of an additional 150,000 American troops to be completed during the spring of next year. This will bring a total reduction of 265,500 men in our armed forces in Vietnam below the level that existed when we took office 15 months ago." (Upi.com 2011) Huth and Allee (2002, 758) provide context to these examples by finding that counter-elites and opposing political parties will be more active in challenging incumbents when the incumbent's foreign policy initiatives have failed or proven controversial. However, as a corollary, some research has found that divided governments, where one political party controls the Presidency and the other controls Congress, or where Congress does not have a clear enough majority to be labeled in the public's eye as one party or the other, have lower accountability to the people. In effect, the people cannot pinpoint a particular

party or ideology associated with one of the parties on which to pin their disappointment (Geys 2010, 361). Similarly, Koch and Gartner (2005, 889) found that the greater number of political parties involved in a government, the less likely that a single casualty will be part of a particular political leader's constituency.

Accountability outside of an election can take concrete forms, such as legislative dismissal of an executive and other forms of legislative action, or public protest and disobedience on such a scale as to seriously impact a government's ability to carry out its duties. While no American Presidents have been successfully impeached by Congress, Congressionally mandated restrictions such as denial of congressional authorization, disapproving resolutions and specific reporting requirements have occurred. In addition, more informal public protest and disobedience have played major roles during counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam, and have had considerable impact on Presidential decision-making during the counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. That impact primarily takes the form of minimizing the political freedom of action for leaders and enforcing domestic constraints on decision makers that can severely curtail their employment of military force. According to Byman, Waxman and Larson (1999, 60), common constraints on political leadership which stem from political accountability to the public are:

- Declaratory policy (i.e., President Clinton pledged not to put US troops on the ground in Bosnia until a Peace Agreement was in place)
- Restrictive objectives and mission statements
- Limiting US participation to a supporting role
- Demanding a public pronouncement of an exit strategy with a discreet date on which US force will be withdrawn
- Imposing casualty-minimizing measures that may not be consistent with the overall military strategy
- Mandating the use of only the least vulnerable, but not necessarily the most appropriate, military forces available

Operationalizing these concepts into a coherent theory, in *How Democracies Lose Small Wars* (2003) author Gil Merom argued that since the end of WWII, democratic nations have been unable to sustain the casualties and brutality inherent in counterinsurgency operations. Specifically, Merom analyzed two wars, the French war in Algeria (1954-1962) and the Israeli war in Lebanon (1982-1986) and asserted that during each conflict, a minority within society began to apply political pressure towards the state with criticisms about the costs of the war in casualties and finances, as well as moral criticisms about the conduct of the nation's military forces. Consequently, a "normative" gap developed between the governments and society, and the governments responded with manipulation, censorship and deception focused on societal opponents, which in turn further expanded the normative gap by creating perceived threats to democratic rule (Kaarbo, 2004, 502). The government then became unable to keep the focus on the foreign policy goal as the society focused on the perceived threat of the government towards democratic institutions and traditions. Ultimately, this opposition denied the state the broad popular support, political staying power and national consensus that it needed to win during a counterinsurgency campaign, despite its often-considerable military strength and superiority.

The US's experience during the Vietnam War confirms aspects of this theory. In their study on casualties, public opinion and presidential policy during the Vietnam War, Lorell and Kelley concluded that:

- The continuing decline in public support eventually became a decisive factor influencing US policy in Vietnam during the Johnson Administration.
- By 1967 at the latest, the increasing numbers of officials, particularly civilians in the Defense Department, began to view the mounting US casualty levels as one of the more important factors contributing to the general decline in war support. (1985, ix-x)

Generalizing these conclusions, the American government did not adequately acknowledge that limited wars, specifically counterinsurgency, predominantly cost more and last longer than anticipated, public support inevitably declines

over time, and democracies cannot continue fighting limited wars indefinitely with steadily declining public support (Lorell and Kelley 1985, ix).

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the same mechanism is evidenced of eroding public support leading to high political costs to the President and his political party, followed by political accountability in terms of electoral losses, protests and Congressional opposition. Consequently, in both cases, the US government and its allies had to curtail their counterinsurgency operations early primarily due to domestic political considerations. In each case, the "success" of each operation is still in question, even by senior military commanders, despite numerous tactical and operational victories.

What does this mean for potential future population-centric counterinsurgency operations? Primarily, it reduces the viability of population-centric COIN as a policy option. In the absence of completely different circumstances such as a large and robust international coalition or a considerably smaller host nation, a similar lack of long-term strategic results should be expected even with operational and tactical victories. Again, population-centric counterinsurgency does have potential to provide strategic success if the commitment of the counterinsurgents is of such a scale as to allow enough time, and with enough resources, for population-centric COIN to work. However, as discussed above, reaching that horizon where the doctrine might yield strategic success requires a tremendous amount of domestic political will and foreign policy consistency, which the US has repeatedly shown that it cannot provide and sustain.

8   CONCLUSION

At its core, this research paper presents empirical and theoretical evidence that challenges the belief that population-centric counterinsurgency is a complete and politically sustainable strategy. On the operational and tactical levels, counterinsurgency doctrine has resulted in victories, but those victories have not been accompanied by a politically sustainable larger strategy. It can be reasonably predicted that the next population-centric counterinsurgency effort, if similar in size, costs and duration to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, will not be able to be politically sustainable for long enough and with enough commitment to give the doctrine a reasonable chance of securing strategic victory. In turn, this casts doubts on the viability and wisdom of initiating counterinsurgency operations to begin with. Over time, as costs in terms of human lives, finances and duration mount, the American public will use information provided by a free media to weigh the potential gains of a successful counterinsurgency effort against the costs being paid to sustain the effort. Consequently, as rational actors, they will not choose to support a government's costly and long-term commitment to counterinsurgency operations unless the threat is existential, immediate or geographically proximate. In turn, they will hold the government accountable through either electoral or non-electoral means.

At a theoretical level, my results confirm both neoclassical realism's and liberalism's assertions about the impact of domestic politics on foreign policy. Neoclassical realism, with its focus on intervening variables at the national and domestic level that mediate a nation's realist behavior in the international arena, places emphasis on the restraining character of domestic politics on a state's realist, power-maximizing foreign policy behavior (Rose 1998, 147). Within the system of neoclassical realism's causal logic where the influence of the independent variable of systemic incentives (relative power on the international level) is transmitted by the intervening variable of internal factors (domestic politics) before influencing a state's foreign policy choices, my results confirm both the validity of the theoretical structure of the system as a whole, as well as

the power of domestic politics. However, from a neoclassical point of view, the role and power of domestic politics primarily has a negative influence on foreign policy as within the realist construct it is both expected and beneficial for strong states to maximize their advantage to a certain degree, and domestic politics usually restrains a state from bringing its full power and weight to bear through foreign policy.

In addition, my results confirm liberal IR theory's "institutional logic" that asserts that democratic institutions and processes make leaders accountable to a wide range of domestic social groups that may oppose war, as well as estimates the character of that accountability. The impact of "public constraint" which stems from the public's general aversion to war are shown by the general negative trend of public support for COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over time. The impact of "group restraint" which stems from certain powerful domestic groups' opposition to war, is exhibited by the more quantifiable impacts of lives lost and financial costs, and their resulting magnification of public opposition to COIN operations. However, it is important to note that my results diverge from theories such as "democratic peace theory" which rely more on the idea that democracy evokes normative commitments to peaceful resolution of conflicts (Ray 1998). On the other hand, my results verify the idea that leaders in democracies avoid or prematurely end war because they feel that fighting such wars might be harmful to their chances of staying in power. This mechanism of accountability is of primary importance in explaining why a democracy cannot politically sustain a population-centric COIN campaign long enough for it to have reasonable chances for success.

Another key component of this discussion is the evaluation of population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine in view of the data provided by COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. In general terms, the COIN campaigns confirm both the advantages and disadvantages of the doctrine. In terms of advantages, the doctrine has led to discrete operational and tactical successes in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Levels of violence have decreased, increasing numbers of Iraqi and Afghan provinces have enjoyed greater levels of stability and security, numerous public works projects, schools, and hospitals have been built, and importantly

61

the capacities of the Iraqi and Afghan governments to govern have increased. All of these results are the goal of, as well as predicted by, the population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine. In addition, the disadvantages of the doctrine were accurately predicted by the doctrine as well. Specifically, the doctrine states that "maintaining security in an unstable environment requires vast resources, whether host nation, US or multinational" and "successful COIN operations require a high ratio of security forces to the protected population…for that reason, protracted COIN operations are hard to sustain. The effort requires a firm political will and substantial patience by the government, its people, and the countries providing support." (Army 2006, 1-2) Also, the doctrine states that "at the strategic level, gaining and maintaining US public support for a protracted deployment is critical." (Army 2006, 1-24) In essence, the long duration, high casualties, and high financial costs, which led to the difficult political sustainment of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, were all accurately predicted by population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine.

Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan help to clarify that counterinsurgency is a doctrine that should be used at the tactical and operational levels of operations, or as only one of a range of possible options in the formulation of a larger and more complete strategy. More directly, looking to population-centric counterinsurgency's collection of techniques as providing a fully developed strategy is an error. Instead, population-centric counterinsurgency doctrine should be viewed as a set of techniques and tools that helps to achieve operational and tactical successes, most often at considerable cost.

However, achieving success at the tactical and operational levels of military operations while pursuing a defective strategy at the strategic level is not a new phenomenon. Regarding the American counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam, a survey of 10 American historians in 2011 supported President Obama's assertion to Vietnam veterans that "let it be remembered that you won every major battle of that war. Every single one." (Tampa Bay Times 2011) At the same time, Vietnam is widely regarded as a strategic failure that occurred at an enormous cost. As Mack (1975, 177) observed from studying a number of cases of failed counterinsurgency operations, "in every case, success for the

insurgents arose not from a military victory on the ground...but rather from the progressive attrition of their opponents' political ability to wage war."

In addition, having a more accurate picture of the expected costs of a population-centric counterinsurgency campaign before the decision is made to embark on such an operation helps to clarify the decision's costs versus potential gains. Operation Iraqi Freedom serves as case in point. A considerable body of evidence indicates that the key decision makers in the Bush administration severely underestimated the cost of establishing and supporting a politically viable and legitimate US-friendly regime in Iraq (Sullivan 2007, 518). In essence, there is great uncertainty about how much military force will be required, how many soldiers will likely be killed or injured, and how long a campaign will need to be sustained when "success" in a counterinsurgency depends on changing the behavior of an entire population regarding its relationship with its own government. When initial cost expectations are grossly underestimated, even when due to an honest mistake stemming from considerable uncertainties, inaccurate decisions are made, and history is filled with examples of states incorrectly judging their own ability to sustain military operations. In a study of military operations against weak state or non-state targets since 1945, major powers, despite their immense war-fighting capacity, failed to attain their primary political objectives almost 40 percent of the time. In every case of failure, the major power chose to terminate its military intervention short of victory despite the fact that it retained an overwhelming material and financial capacity to sustain military operations (Sullivan 2007, 519). Furthermore, when major powers pursue coercive political objectives as intervening states, the probability that the state will prevail declines to only 20 percent (Sullivan 2007, 516).

In the end, by estimating the true costs of previous counterinsurgency operations, analyzing how those costs impacted public opinion, predicting the costs of future counterinsurgency campaigns and investigating the impact of negative public opinion on US political leadership, I have answered my research question of "what are the concrete costs of a population-centric counterinsurgency campaign, and can the US, as a modern democracy,

reasonably expect to be able to politically shoulder these costs?" Specifically, I found that the concrete costs, as defined in numbers of lives lost, finances and duration, are enormous. Consequently, the magnitude of these costs increases the inherent aversion of the American voting public to losses incurred by armed conflict, especially loss of life, through multiple different social and political factors which increase the "traction" of the impact of these costs on average Americans. In turn, the public then makes a rational decision that the costs of the counterinsurgency operations do not merit the expected foreign policy goals sought, and expresses its political preferences through electoral and non-electoral means, both of which the US President must heed politically according to the unique nature of the US political system and process. Finally, this entire process, where costs of war drive public opinion which influences Presidential decision making, happens in a much shorter period of time than the US government's population-centric counterinsurgency strategy requires in order to offer even limited prospects for success.

In terms of my hypothesis specifically, I find ample suggestive, but not conclusive, evidence that that partially confirms my hypothesis that "counterinsurgent campaigns as conceived by US counterinsurgency doctrine, and executed in Iraq and Afghanistan, are not politically viable foreign policy options for a period long enough to offer the potential for strategic success for the US due to the large negative effects on public support for the operations stemming from the operations' costs in terms of lives, finances and duration."

Why is my hypothesis is only partially confirmed? Current research does outline the broad relationships between the key components in my argument, but unfortunately does not provide sufficient precision to normalize or quantify the exact nature of the causal relationships between costs, public opinion, public accountability and Presidential decision-making. Consequently, while my research exhibits valid credibility, confirmability and transferability, its dependability (where other independent researchers would arrive a that the same conclusions I did) is difficult to assess in the absence of more illuminating research. Specifically, the operationalization of precise measures for the multiple, concurrent and overlapping theoretical constructs which could

potentially explain how the costs of war impact public opinion, as well as how public opinion impacts Presidential decision making, needs to be improved. In the future, clearly defining the relationships between conflict costs, their impact on public support, how that erosion in support translates into political accountability, and how government foreign policy is affected will help challenge decision makers' and political leaders' assumptions about the costs and expectations of success of population-centric counterinsurgency operations.

9   POVZETEK V SLOVENSKEM JEZIKU

V zadnjih letih so Združene države Amerike (ZDA) s svojimi zaveznicami vodile dolgotrajen boj proti upornikom (COIN), ki je sledil napadu na Afganistan in Irak. Obe operaciji sta prinesli takojšen taktični in operativni uspeh zavezniških sil, s strateškega vidika gledano pa so bili rezultati bolj neoprijemljivi. V magistrskem delu izhajam iz ključne predpostavke, da je politika demokratičnih držav ob velikih izgubah, ki so povezane z bojem proti upornikom, ranljiva. Združene države Amerike, imajo kot sodobna demokratična država javnost, ki ne sprejema prekomernih smrtnih žrtev, voditelje, ki so politično odgovorni javnosti, in neodvisne medije, ki so do oblasti kritični.

Več študij primerov dokazuje, da boj proti upornikom ni le dolgotrajen in povezan z visokimi stroški, ampak od vpletenih držav zahteva tudi ogromno količino politične volje, ki bi trajala dovolj dolgo, da bi dosegle vsaj zelo omejene cilje. Moj namen je ponuditi analizo pričakovanih stroškov v smislu časa, virov in politične volje, ki jih zahteva strategija boja proti upornikom, da bi lahko v prihodnjih oboroženih spopadih dosegla vsaj zmerne cilje.

Posledično je moje raziskovalno vprašanje naslednje: Kateri so konkretni stroški na prebivalstvo osredotočene protiupornriške kampanje in ali lahko ZDA kot moderna demokratična država upravičeno pričakujejo, da bodo v političnem smislu prenesle te stroške? Moja hipoteza pa se glasi, da protiupornriške kampanje, kot so jih oblikovale ZDA v svoji strategiji in so jih izvajale v Iraku in Afganistanu, niso dovolj politično sprejemljive in trajne zunanjepolitične izbire, da bi omogočile potencialni strateški uspeh ZDA, in sicer zaradi velikih negativnih učinkov na javno podporo operacijam, ki jih prinašajo visoke izgube v smislu smrtnih žrtev, finančnih sredstev in trajanja.

V metodološkem smislu v magistrski nalogi uporabljam deskriptivno analizo, statistično analizo sekundarnih podatkov in študijo primera na prebivalstvo osredotočenih protiupornriških operacij v Iraku in Afganistanu. Hkrati izvajam eksplanatorno raziskavo, da bi pojasnil vpliv zgoraj omenjenih izgub na podporo

ameriške javnosti operacijam in posledično vpliv te podpore na odločanje predsednika države.

Teoretično gledano moja razprava temelji na obstoju racionalne javnosti, politično odgovornih voditeljev in odprtih medijev. Neoklasični realisti, kot na primer Randall Schweller, so vztrajno ponavljali, da lahko demokratično volilno telo in notranjepolitični pomisleki spodkopajo nacionalne interese demokratičnih držav. Neoklasični realizem še posebej zatrjuje, da mora biti notranja politika določene države izpeljana prek intervenirajočih spremenljivk, kot je na primer demokratična politična odgovornost, ki imajo pomemben vpliv na zunanjepolitične odločitve. Tudi liberalne teorije mednarodnih odnosov ponujajo razlago, zakaj je od volilnega telesa v demokratični ureditvi pričakovati, da bo nasprotovalo visokim stroškom vojne, še posebej, če jo država izgublja. Javnost in specifične notranjepolitične skupine nasprotujejo vojni iz finančnih in moralnih razlogov.

Ključen vidik obeh pojasnjevanj je teorija 'racionalne javnosti', ki se lahko odziva na razpravo elit glede zunanjepolitičnih izbir, tehta zapletene značilnosti zunanje politike in primerja med cilji, ki jih vlada zasleduje v določeni akciji ter stroški, ki jih ta povzroča. Prav tako pomembno je, da so vlade v demokratičnih državah odgovorne svojim ljudem, ki vplivajo na vladne zunanjepolitične odločitve. In končno, mehanizem, ki omogoča odvijanje teh procesov so svobodni mediji, ki lajšajo pretok informacij potrebnih za sprejemanje racionalnih odločitev in sporočajo vladi, da volivci niso zadovoljni z njenim vladanjem.

Spodaj je prikazan logičen potek moje razprave.

V magistrski nalogi še posebej pozorno presojam aktualne stroške operacij COIN v Iraku in Afganistanu, analiziram, kako ti stroški vplivajo na javno mnenje in ugotavljam, kako javno mnenje vpliva na sprejemanje zunanjepolitičnih odločitev. Na tej osnovi napovedujem stroške morebitne prihodnje protiuporniške kampanje in njen vpliv na javno mnenje ter sklepam o tem, ali je na prebivalstvo osredotočen protiuporniški boj za ZDA politično vzdržna in trajnostna izbira. Ključne sestavine moje razprave so narava odnosa med stroški operacije COIN, javnim mnenjem in zunanjo politiko (gl. modri puščici na zgornji sliki).

Raziskave so pokazale, da na volilno telo najbolj vplivajo smrtne žrtve, finančni stroški in dolžina vpletenosti države v spopad. Tozadevno so konkretni stroški operacij COIN v Iraku in Afganistanu velikanski. ZDA so izgubile 4.409 vojakov v Iraku in 2.043 v Afganistanu, ocenjeni skupni finančni stroški so nekje med 3,2 in 4 trilijoni ameriških dolarjev, medtem ko je operacija v Iraku trajala 112 mesecev, v Afganistanu pa 143 mesecev.

Zelo pomembno je poudariti, da je glavni razlog za višino teh stroškov v sodobni ameriški protiuporniški doktrini, ki jo nenehno prikazujejo kot 'na prebivalstvo osredotočeno', kar pomeni, da se doktrina ukvarja z iskanjem poti za zaščito civilnega prebivalstva, za razvoj zmogljivosti afganistanskih varnostnih sil in za krepitev legitimnosti vlade v Kabulu, s tem ko ji pomagajo pri povečevanju

zmogljivosti za zagotavljanje varnosti in drugih za prebivalstvo pomembnih storitev (Yingling 2011). V bistvu je na prebivalstvo osredotočena doktrina COIN inherentno dolgotrajna, stroškovno zahtevna in politično manj trajnostna. Posledično je ta doktrina prinesla številne taktične in operativne zmage, tako v Iraku kot v Afganistanu, kljub temu pa ni prinesla strateškega uspeha, saj sta bili obe operaciji zaradi političnih razlogov zaključeni prezgodaj (afganistanska predvidoma v prihodnjem letu).

Med tremi ključnimi stroški oboroženega spopada, ki vplivajo na javno podporo, v demokratičnih državah prevladuje število smrtnih žrtev. Različne študije ugotavljajo, da kumulativno število lastnih smrtnih žrtev, stopnja vpletenosti v vojno, nedavne smrtne žrtve, lokalne smrtne žrtve in kontekst umiranja ljudi igrajo pomembno vlogo pri vplivu na volivce. Na splošno velja, da vsak dejavnik, ki abstraktno izgubo življenja 'prevede' v nekaj bolj oprijemljivega in pomenljivega, povečuje negativen učinek smrtnih žrtev na javno podporo operaciji.

Pri finančnih stroških je pomembno, da se jih javnost zaveda, ni pa pomembno njihovo podrobno poznavanje. Več študij je razkrilo, da ima finančni strošek vojskovanja pomemben negativen vpliv na javno podporo. Vsi dejavniki, kot na primer relativen obseg stroškov (izražen v odstotku bruto družbenega proizvoda), trenutni gospodarski položaj, stopnja brezposelnosti, obseg gospodarskih stimulacij, ki jih prinaša spopad in način pokrivanja stroškov s strani vlade (z izposojanjem denarja, njegovim tiskanjem, z zviševanjem davkov), vplivajo na obseg negativnega odnosa javnosti do spopada.

Če se osredotočimo še na trajanje protiuporniških operacij, lahko ugotovimo, da bo javno nasprotovanje kateremukoli oboroženemu spopadu raslo z dolžino trajanja tega spopada. Vendar pa dejavniki, kot sta narava vojne in strategija, ki jo ZDA zasledujejo (na primer 'kaznovalna' strategija), vplivajo na intenzivnost tega nasprotovanja. V primeru Iraka je javna podpora z visokih 75 odstotkov na začetku sovražnosti v letu 2003, padla na nizkih 41 odstotkov v letu 2010. V primeru Afganistana je javna podpora padla z visokih 93 odstotkov v letu 2002, na približno 58 odstotkov v letu 2011.

Nadalje, vpliv smrtnih žrtev, finančnih stroškov in trajanja spopada na javno podporo moramo opazovati tudi v kontekstu drugih dejavnikov, ki bodisi povečujejo bodisi zmanjšujejo njihove učinke. V bistvu je vpliv žrtev, stroškov in časa na javno mnenje odvisen od različnih dejavnikov, kot so stopnja prepričljivosti javnih razprav o vojni, stopnja mobilizacije javnosti, vrsta zunanjepolitičnih ciljev, ki jih zasledujemo, prisotnost zaveznikov, opredelitev 'uspeha' in 'pravičnosti' med spopadom, pričakovanje uspeha, soglasje ali nesoglasje elit in njihovo vedenje.

Zdaj, ko smo ugotovili, da imajo stroški operacij COIN pomemben negativen vpliv na javno podporo, se moramo vprašati, kako javna podpora vpliva na proces zunanjepolitičnega odločanja. V ameriškem sistemu vladanja nobena uradna oseba ne igra večje vloge pri odločanju o začetku vojne, načinu njenega vodenja in trajanju kot predsednik države (Karol in Miguel 2007, 633). Javno mnenje konkretno vpliva na proces odločanja predsednika prek volitev (neizvolitev v drugem mandatu) ali uporabe drugih sredstev (zakonodajnega odpoklica ali protestov in nepokorščine). Predsednika Truman in Lyndon Johnson sta primer volilne odgovornosti v obliki političnega poraza in v obeh primerih sta vladi predsednikov, ki sta ju nadomestila (Eisenhowerjeva oz. Nixonova), drastično preobrnili ali zmanjšali ameriško vpletenost v korejsko oz. vietnamsko vojno. Opozicijske stranke so bile vedno bolj aktivne, kadar je predsednikova zunanja politika doživljala neuspehe, volilne odgovornosti pa je bilo na splošno manj v primerih politično razdvojenih vlad. Tako volilna kot nevolilna odgovornost se je zgodila med vietnamsko vojno, med katero ameriška vlada ni na ustrezen način priznala, da protiuporniške operacije prinašajo več izgub, stanejo več in trajajo dlje, kot je bilo predvideno, zato je javna podpora neizogibno postopno usihala. V primeru iraške in afganistanske vojne je enak mehanizem usihajoče javne podpore vodil k visokim političnim stroškom za predsednika in njegovo politično stranko, ki so se kazali v politični odgovornosti, v obliki volilnih porazov, protestov in nasprotovanj Kongresa predsednikovi politiki. Posledično so morale ZDA in njihove zaveznice dokaj kmalu okrniti svoje protiuporniške operacije, v prvi vrsti zaradi notranjepolitičnih pomislekov in pritiskov. V obeh primerih je

celo med visokimi vojaškimi poveljniki 'uspeh' operacije še vedno vprašljiv, kljub številnim zmagam na taktični in operativni ravni.

Če uporabimo ta razmerja za okvirno napoved morebitne naslednje na prebivalstvo osredotočene operacije COIN v državi, ki bi bila hipotetično po velikosti in številu prebivalstva primerljiva s Sirijo, bi taka operacija zahtevala 2.143 smrtnih žrtev na ameriški strani, povzročila stroške med 1,17 do 1,46 trilijoni ameriških dolarjev, trajala pa bi 127 mesecev in bi na svojem vrhuncu zahtevala angažiranje 118.287 ameriških (in morebitnih zavezniških) vojakov. Hkrati pa, kot smo že ugotavljali na prejšnjih primerih, operacija ne bi bila politično sprejemljiva dovolj dolgo, da bi ZDA lahko strategiji dale primerno priložnost za dosego strateške zmage. Še posebej, ker izgube v smislu človeških življenj, finančnih sredstev in potrebnega časa rastejo, mediji pa o tem intenzivno poročajo, tako da javnost lahko tehta med uspehom protiuporniškega prizadevanja in stroški, ki so potrebni za njegov potek. Ker je javnost 'racionalni akter', posledično ne bo podprla vladne drage in dolgotrajne zaveze k protiuporniškim operacijam, razen v primeru, ko je grožnja eksistenčna, takojšnja in geografsko bližja. Vlada pa bo morala za svojo politiko odgovarjati bodisi prek volilnih ali nevolilnih sredstev. Posledično to meče senco dvoma na modrost začenjanja protiuporniških operacij in na njihovo trajnost.

Gledano v celoti, predstavljene ideje logično povezujejo empirične in teoretične dokaze, s čimer želimo izzvati prepričanje o tem, da je na prebivalstvo osredotočeno protiuporniško bojevanje v celoti razvita in trajnostna strategija. Na teoretični ravni moji izsledki potrjujejo trditve neoklasičnega realizma in liberalizma o vplivu notranje politike na zunanjo politiko. Ključna sestavina moje razprave je presoja na prebivalstvo osredotočene protiuporniške doktrine v luči podatkov, ki jih prinašata operaciji v Iraku in Afganistanu. Na splošno gledano operaciji potrjujeta tako prednosti kot pomanjkljivosti doktrine. Poleg tega pa je napačno gledati na zbir tehnik, ki jih zagotavlja na prebivalstvo osredotočen protiuporniški boj, kot na popolnoma razvito strategijo. Na prebivalstvo osredotočena protiuporniška doktrina je skupek tehnik in orodij, ki pomagajo doseči operativne in taktične uspehe, največkrat ob visokih stroških. Vendar pa doseganje uspeha vojaških operacij na taktični in operativni ravni, medtem ko

izvajamo napačno strategijo, ni nov fenomen. V zvezi z ameriško protiuporniško operacijo v Vietnamu je v anketi deset v vzorec izbranih ameriških zgodovinarjev podprlo trditev predsednika Obame, ki je v govoru vietnamskim veteranom dejal: 'Zapomniti si moramo, da ste vi zmagali v vsaki večji bitki te vojne. V čisto vsaki' (Tampa Bay Times, 2011). Hkrati pa na vietnamsko vojno v glavnem gledamo kot na strateški neuspeh, ki je poleg tega povzročil velikanske izgube. Kot je na podlagi proučevanja več primerov neuspešnih protiuporniških operacij ugotavljal Mack (1975, 177), 'v vseh primerih uspeh upornikov ni bil posledica vojaških zmag na terenu…, ampak bolj posledica hitrega upadanja politične sposobnosti voditi vojno pri njihovih nasprotnikih'. Natančnejša slika o pričakovanih izgubah na prebivalstvo osredotočenega protiuporniškega boja pred sprejemom same odločitve o začetku operacije, bi pripomogla k razjasnjevanju razmerja med stroški in koristmi.

V zaključku magistrske naloge odgovarjam na svoje raziskovalno vprašanje, 'kateri so konkretni stroški na prebivalstvo osredotočene protiuporniške kampanje in ali lahko ZDA kot moderna demokratična država upravičeno pričakujejo, da bodo v političnem smislu prenesle te stroške'? Prišel sem do večjega števila sugestivnih, vendar ne dokončnih dokazov, ki delno potrjujejo mojo hipotezo, da 'protiuporniške kampanje, kot so jih oblikovale ZDA v svoji protiuporniški strategiji in so jih izvajale v Iraku in Afganistanu, niso dovolj politično sprejemljive in trajne zunanjepolitične izbire, da bi omogočile potencialni strateški uspeh ZDA, in sicer zaradi velikih negativnih učinkov na javno podporo operacijam, ki prinašajo visoke izgube v smislu smrtnih žrtev, finančnih sredstev in trajanja'. Ugotovil sem, da so konkretni stroški operacij, opredeljeni s številom izgubljenih življenj, finančnimi stroški in njihovim trajanjem, velikanski. Obseg omenjenih stroškov posledično povečuje inherentno prisotno nasprotovanje ameriškega volilnega telesa izgubam, ki jih povzročijo oboroženi spopadi, še posebej smrtnim žrtvam. To se dogaja prek večjega števila različnih socialnih in političnih dejavnikov, ki krepijo vpliv teh stroškov na mnenje povprečnega ameriškega državljana. Javnost potemtakem sprejema racionalno odločitev, da stroški protiuporniških operacij presegajo vrednost pričakovanih zunanjepolitičnih ciljev ter z uporabo volilnih in nevolilnih

sredstev izraža svoje politične preference, ki jim predsednik mora posvetiti ustrezno politično pozornost, saj je to v naravi ameriškega političnega sistema in procesov. In ne nazadnje, celoten proces, v katerem stroški vojne učinkujejo na javno mnenje, ki vpliva na predsednikovo odločanje, se začne odvijati tako zgodaj, da na prebivalstvo osredotočeni protiuporniški strategiji ameriške vlade ne daje niti omejenih možnosti za uspeh.

Zakaj je hipoteza le delno potrjena? Raziskovanje izpostavlja širša razmerja med ključnimi sestavinami moje razprave, vendar na žalost ne prinaša zadostne natančnosti za normiranje ali kvantificiranje narave vzročno-posledičnih povezav med izgubami v oboroženem spopadu, javnim mnenjem, javno odgovornostjo in procesom predsednikovega sprejemanja odločitev.

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